

Head vs. Heart

35 ABY

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The Novitiate Hall cast ominous shadows as it consumed new recruits, young blood fresh from the shuttles that delivered them to the Dark Brotherhood. Everyone walked towards the central atrium, tension cutting the air as their excitement and unease charged the atmosphere. A young Zeltron named Blade was among them, and she was watching everyone most carefully. She was brought here by a Jedi, but she couldn't shake off the feeling that there were a lot of dark characters here. She kicked up her pheromones as a precaution, and did her best to surround herself with the more approachable characters. The crowd eventually came to a halt in front of a wide concrete dais, upon which stood four instructors of clearly different temperaments. A man dressed in shades of gray stepped forward and surveyed the crowd, boring his eyes into them with an icy glare that killed most conversations. It was time for their Initiate Trials to begin.

"Welcome to the Shadow Academy. You have been chosen because you were deemed worthy, but we will see if that is true soon enough. Your first step is to undergo the Initiate Trials, during which you will choose your order. Each of us represent a different order, and we will remain in this hall to answer any questions. Choose carefully!," warned the man.

Blade didn't know which person represented which order, but she was eager to hunt down the Jedi representative. She had spent her entire life serving the values of the Jedi Order, and she couldn't wait to start her formal training. She tracked the four representatives as they moved to their own part of hall, watching the mass of students turn into four different rivers as everyone chose a starting point. Instead of following the crowd, she rushed about the hall in her search for the Jedi representative, cutting lines as she went and grabbing datapads that were arranged at each table. It earned her the ire of her fellow students, but she was on a mission and she really didn't care. Halfway through her search she found a middle aged female Jedi named Soran, who was conspicuous due to the fact that she had chosen to wear the traditional garb of a Jedi in shades of white. Blade approached the table the woman was presiding over, her eyes drawn to a banner hung on wall. It was the famous Jedi Code. She read the already familiar words several times to herself, letting them sink in even further during this momentous moment.

"Care to learn more, young one? Tell me about yourself," asked Jedi Soran.

Blade proceeded to tell her story, often answering uncomfortable questions that the Jedi astutely interjected during the interview. It was meant to be a short discussion, but she found herself telling Soran a lot more than she had intended. Blade wondered if Soran was using the Force on her, uncomfortable with the idea that Soran had guessed at some of her darker deeds. The apparent lack of control over her words was frustrating, which led to anger at herself for appearing stupid in front of the Jedi. She attempted to explain her past actions as an assassin, including the lives she saved, and was met only with admonishments. It was a let down for her, considering she believed it was her destiny to become part of the Jedi Order.

"Peace, young one, that is not justice. It only breeds hate and more pain," admonished Soran.

"Don't listen to the Jedi, you did the right thing. You should consider joining the Sith. We could help you achieve the justice you desire," offered a tall man standing a few feet behind her.

"The Sith are vicious murderers who kill for fun. Why would I join them?" Blade asked angrily.

"You know nothing about the Sith, but still you judge us. Let me enlighten you. The Sith are all about power, not killing for the sake of killing. Take this and find out for yourself," he instructed as he pushed a datapad into her hand.

"Don't do it! That leads only to pain and suffering," warned Soran, "Get out of here Rex!"

"Temper, temper... Don't let the Jedi Code limit you, be yourself Blade," urged Rex as he turned to leave.

Blade watched the retreating figure of the Sith named Rex, unable to banish her hatred of the Sith. This didn't stop her curiosity from winning her over though, so despite Soran's warnings Blade turned on the datapad and read the Sith Code for the first time in her life.

"Peace is a lie, there is only passion.
Through passion, I gain strength.
Through strength, I gain power.
Through power, I gain victory.
Through victory, my chains are broken.
The Force shall free me."

The words resonated with her, causing her to immediately become disgusted with herself. How could she betray the Church of the Force and even consider these words? Regardless of her shame, they made a lot of sense to her and she felt a connection with them. How could she be a Jedi if the Sith Code spoke to her?

"Please don't do this, it's not right," pleaded Soran.

"That's what I've been told," Blade answered petulantly.

Blade peppered the Jedi with more questions, using them to learn more about both codes. This brought her no joy, since each question seemed to confirm her preference of the Sith Code. The Jedi vilified the Sith as butchers who brought destruction, but she had heard all of this before. She needed time alone to think. Abruptly walking away from the Jedi, she found a quiet place to think in an empty corner of the hall, using it to peruse all of her datapads on the other orders. The Sith Code had been such a shock that she felt it worth her time to keep an open mind. In the end, only the Sith and Jedi peaked her interest, and she spend the next few hours talking with the other students to get their opinions. They were very forthcoming, her pheromones an unfair advantage. More importantly, she met aspiring Sith students that she would gladly kill due to their vicious crimes, but others were simply power hungry.

The room slowly thinned out as everyone made their decisions, but Blade was left undecided. She sat on the dias, with the Jedi and Sith datapads in her hands, and contemplated the totality of her life up till now. She knew what her head wanted, but her heart wanted something very different. She let the images of her life so far flash before her, proud of her achievements and the acts she undertook to save others. No matter how much she hated herself for it, the simple fact was that the Sith Code fit her perfectly.

Her reflections lasted until she was the last in the room, her stomach started to grumble for her evening meal. Soran and Rex had stayed in the hall, the Jedi meditating and the Sith quietly staring into her eyes. Blade sighed in relief and collected her thoughts, leaving one datapad behind as she walked toward the remaining instructors..

"I choose the Sith Order," she declared..

"Please reconsider. That is not the way. Come back to the light!" pleaded the Jedi.

"Why are you worthy to join the Sith?" questioned Rex.

"I will use the freedom of the Sith Code to reach my full potential, and enforce justice in the galaxy at any cost," pledged Blade.

"You will make a fine Sith. Come!" he ordered, concealing a grin. It brought Rex so much pleasure to beat a Jedi. He thought that Blade was rife with internal strife, but that conflict would prove most useful to her as a member of the Sith Order.

Blade felt both ashamed and happy. She was letting down both her parents and the organization that had raised her as a child. She looked pleadingly back at the Jedi for forgiveness and found only sadness. She looked resolutely ahead of her, and made herself a solemn promise to never kill for killing's sake. She would use the Force for her own end, but wouldn't result to butchery. She would be a different kind of the Sith.