



The Shadow Within

An original fiction from the writings of:

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Something Stirring in the Verse

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With the resurrected old gods left by the Infinite Empire vanquished and the original cult members of Emperor Vanis' Pacre datship, including the Emperor himself had been eradicated. Unfortunately the unliving fungal disease he brought forth spread throughout the city of Ohmen like wild fire infecting much of the population. Thankfully the brave and heroic members of Clan Scholae Palatinae under the guidance of Emperor Xen'Mordin Vismorus fought back to contain the fatal infection. Most of the unfortunate disease stricken population had been destroyed leaving small groups of stragglers behind, easy pickings for the clean up crews of the Shadow Guard, loyal elite members of House Imperium. Kyo Akumu, a young noble dark jedi was one such member of the Shadow Guard. Recently appointed to the rank of Knight he had been assigned to aid in hunting down the last remaining undead within the city so they could soon focus on rebuilding the great society that once was.

Kyo had just cut down several of the shambling monsters when he picked up some interference through his hand held monitor, it seemed to be some kind of signal that was coming from outside the main city. The inquisitive nature of the young knight got the better of him deciding to report this only after he had been to see for himself.

Following the signal it was getting stronger as he passed through the outer city walls drawing him further out into the surrounding wilderness and up into the hills. It was now mid afternoon, Kyo started to feel his stomach moaning for some substance, if only he had packed a snack earlier. Fortunately he had observed his old master Lexiconus Qor and picked up some survival tips from him. Looking round the fauna he spotted some mushrooms growing.

“Surely these are the edible ones” he said to himself picking them from the root, yes they had to be.

With no time for cooking Kyo decided to eat them raw. They were odd tasting, a bit like sunflower seeds not nearly enough to fill him up but just enough to tide him over till he returned to base.

Continuing on Kyo began to feel a bit strange, his head felt dizzy and his mouth dry, his skin felt as though it was sweating constantly, maybe he should head back he thought but then he located the source of the beacon. It was an entrance leading into a cave hidden by overgrown plants. Pulling back the vines he felt a wave of power flow past him out from inside the cave, hesitantly Kyo carried on entering. The air inside was dank with dew covering the walls, unusually the cave was not dark but seemed to be strangely lit with no lights present. The scanner had stopped emitting however Kyo did not need it, he could feel the signal that was on the screen in his head pulsating drawing him further into the cave.

Suddenly something cracked beneath his feet. Looking down Kyo had stepped on the foot of a dusty old skeleton draped in rags, from what he could tell they were once fine robes, the hilt of an ancient looking lightsaber was still clutched in the fingers of the skeleton. Kyo removed the hilt from it's grasp, he attempted to activate the saber however it appeared to be missing it's crystal. Then something caught his eye several feet from the remains of the body, and there it lay a rose coloured crystal the origin of what drove him here.

Kyo collected it from the ground staring into the heart of the crystal he noticed a swirl of patterns

on the surface however they didn't match up. As he inspected the markings more part of the crystal twisted and some of the markings married to each other.

“A puzzle” he whispered

The next ten minutes were spent frantically flicking through combinations of twists and turns until finally all the pieces matched. The crystal illuminated in a bright pink light, patterns swirling all over the crystal as if a thousand snakes writhed over each other until suddenly the crystal broke in two. Kyo held the two halves one in each palm, the pink light turned to white and the two halves melted into his hands as they two began to emit the same light. He dropped to his knees and then unconscious.

Kyo awoke to the sound of a voice calling to him.

“Wake up young one..” again the voice bellowed “Arise and seal your fate”

Clambering to his feet Kyo looked around, he was no longer inside the cave but surrounded by green fields of tall grass, the clouds were blue and the sky pink, as if they had switched on the spectrum.

“I see you have found my phylactery young one”

Spinning round at the sound of the voice again Kyo faced a figure, or rather a shadow of a man. He could make out no distinguishing features to go with the voice other than a small pink glow set around the chest of the figure.

Kyo paused for a moment trying to take in everything that happened then he remembered the crystal and the skeleton.

“Phylactery?” Kyo questioned.

“Yes... I can sense you are a user of the force young one.. Have the ways forgotten all of the old tricks?”

“I believe first meeting require an introduction” Kyo stated.

“Forgive me.. young force user... Despite your brave face I can tell you are frightened and confused, My name is Byron. Long ago I discovered the secret of immortality through manipulating the force, however unlike the soul the body decays over time and I had to take drastic measures to make sure my legacy will remain.”

“The lightsabre crystal!”

“Yes... By entombing the soul within it I can merely wait for foolish beings such as yourself to find it for me and I can live again within a new host... Your only chance of survival is to defeat me.. Now being as though you warrant formalities what is the name of my new body”

Kyo activated his saber, a flash of purple extruded from his curved hilt as he took stance

“I am Viscount Kyo Akumu, heir to the Akumu family. Shadow Guard within House Imperium, Clan Scholae Palatinae. You shall not have this body.”

Byron snorted “My.. My..Such a mouthful for such an insignificant speck. Very well, let us begin.”

The Shadow of Byron lunged forward towards Kyo reaching out towards his throat catching him offguard. Kyo managed to narrowly avoid the grasp diving to the floor.

“haha, very good” Byron laughed

Kyo clambered to his feet and again took up the standard Makashi Form stance. Again the shadow came at him this time Kyo was already shifting his feet to the left slicing his saber blade through Byrons arm which fell to the floor and disintegrated. Byron turned back holding aloft what was left of his arm.

“Indeed a good strike, however that will not help you here”

To Kyo's astonishment the arm weaved itself back as if nothing had happened. One thing stuck in his mind

“How the fwec”

“The power of the phylactery is too great for you to comprehend, I told you.... Immortality”

Byron charged, again.

Kyo stood his ground waiting to see an opening that may cause damage.

Byron let out a roar just before impact upon Kyo and disappeared into the ground before immediately reappearing behind Kyo.

“Surprise” he shouted

Kyo managed to turn in just enough time to pull his blade upwards through the shadows mid section, again it passed through the shape without causing a fatal wound. A heavy blow hit Kyo in the face sending him to the floor.

“I told you the phylactery is limitless.. Accept your fate”

Kyo lay on the ground as the the shadow came looming over him. Then he spotted the pink glow.

“That's it” Kyo shouted as he reached up and grabbed the glowing object within the chest.

The shadow let out an almighty scream as bright beams of light flared from his torso as Kyo ripped it from him.

Kyo awoke again, this time in the cave. The crystal firmly back together. The patterns had reset back to their original state. He quickly grabbed the hilt that was on the floor and hurried out of the cave still clutching the pink crystal.

“I must return and figure out the secrets of this for myself” he thought.

“I cannot tell anyone of this”

As he made his way back down Kyo noticed some more of those mushrooms. This time he left them alone.