**“Practice Makes Perfect”**

By Braecen Kaeth (4520)

*An Arcona Competition: “Training Day”*

**The Citadel**

**Estle City, Selen**

**Dajorra System**

Bare feet on the sparring mat felt odd to the Corellian. He had spent a lifetime at war in the Brotherhood. And when he hadn’t been at war, he had been dispatched as a Lost Son of Plagueis to fight against shadows and rumors of a new Dark Lord of the Sith. One that had eventually enthralled all of House Plagueis. With the Dark Lord’s renewed power, House Plagueis had risen to Clan status and dominated the Brotherhood for a short moment. It was Clan Arcona that had been able to beat back the forever-darkness; the only reason Braecen had turned from his sworn clan to the Shadow Clan. Yet, even their combined might had not been able to hold Darth Pravus at bay.

He wiggled his toes and attempted to gain purchase to the floor with his digits. He was satisfied that the material would not deteriorate his skills; though he knew he was in for a harsh lesson at the hand of two individuals today. Before him stood a pair of Mandalorians. One was adorned in simple vestments that spoke of utility over fashion. The second wore his armor proudly - including a smirk that never seemed to shatter despite how thick the battle got. The similiarities did not end there, though. Braecen was amused that both men were commonly called by the same nickname - *“Cel”* - and one had been the Quaestor of House Qel-Droma while the other currently occupied the seat of power in Clan Arcona. If that had not been enough, they belonged to the same cursed family of Mandalorians that had been propping up Clan Arcona since the Ninth Great War.

*“Are you ready?”* came the soft, wistful voice of Lieutenant Colonel Celevon. The pair began to fan out, not waiting on the Elder’s response. *Of course he was ready,* their steps betrayed their thoughts. Even the Sith Adept did not need the Force to see that. Instinctively, Braecen began to retreat towards the edge of the mat to keep both combatants before him. He knew that Celahir was armed only with his fierce fighting skills and those bare knuckles. Celevon appeared to be unarmed, but the Elder knew his opponent was concealing two decidedly lethal blades somewhere on his body.

The Dark Side whispered that the first attack was from the right. Braecen somersaulted forward and leapt forward. The first move had taken him away from the Battlelord, the second had spared him a slash to his back from the Colonel. The pair of aggressors was undaunted, though, their pursuit came fast and fierce. The Quaestor of Qel-Droma charged forward with a series of lightning fast blows - ***right, left, kick, jab*** *-* the hits landing upon the defensive formation of the Quaestor of Galeres. Flanking with incredible speed, Celevon moved into a position to land a fell blow to the back of their combined opponent. Braecen pulled the essence of the Dark Side about him in a heartbeat before flinging his arms outward in both directions. An orb of light and shadow coalesced about him and prevented either opponent from penetrating his inner defenses.

Celahir continued to hammer at the orb of Dark Side energy while Celevon retreated several paces. The continual pounding shattered the orb, but had allowed Braecen to position himself to defend against the onslaught. The blows came with a savageness that reminded the Elder of his peer: Sashar Erinos Arconae. It was apparent that this young Mandalorian was an Apprentice of the Juggernaut. Celevon, also an Apprentice of the Elder Sashar, moved forward again with his blade at the ready. The pair leapt from different angles their weapon’s baring their teeth. Braecen scowled at he attempted to negotiate a defense without weapons of his own. Pushed to a no-win situation, his body flushed with power and blue-white lightning wrapped itself around his body - a snake ready to strike at his Master’s discretion.

The pair of attackers landed on their feet a safe distance away from the Force Lightning. *“That is definitely cheating, Brae.”* The young, mirthful voice of Celahir quipped. The power immediately vanished from the Elder as quick as it had come. A sudden rush of power dispersed through the Force into the surrounding area. The power was heady and gave both men a moment of vertigo as they considered what they could do with such power in service to the Serpentine Throne of Clan Arcona. Braecen gave an all too knowing smile that confirmed their hunger for such knowledge had not been kept secret.

*“I would have been dead,”* Braecen said honestly. It was the fourth time he had failed the exercise with both men. While considered a preeminent Master of Jar’Kai with dual lightsabers, he was woeful in his hand-to-hand skills; further, he had no surefire defenses against the twin blades of Celevon without his own weapons. The drill was meant to help Braecen improve, but honed fight-or-flight skills with the Dark Side continued to intercede in the drill. That had been the third time that Lightning had appeared, but the only time it hadn’t attempted to arc to both opponents. A slight burn on Celevon’s arm proved the lightning was not for show.

*“We will get it down,”* Celevon said evenly.

*“It just requires training,”* Celahir laughed and the trio moved to take their positions at the center of the mat again.