

Memories of an Assassin

Rosh Nyine, #12671

My name is Rosh Nyine.

I see the emptiness of space ahead of me, the same emptiness that threatens to devour my will at each step in my tumultuous life. It's always like this when I travel alone in the dusty cockpit of my transport after a war, a battle, a new fallen target. It takes hold of me and doesn't let go until the transport lands safely and releases me from the nightmares that rule my thoughts.

I shiver as I punch the coordinates that will take me back to Caina, knowing that these thoughts, these nightmares, will be the only ones that will accompany me through hyperspace. Once the trajectory has been calculated, I jump into hyperspace, and then it's when it starts.

As always, it begins with visions of my past. My parents, being killed by the so called "liberation" operation of the New Republic over my homeworld. My sister, consumed and destroyed by noble diplomats that took her away in the name of civilization and galactic freedom. My first assassinations, revenges masked under the pretense of being a Senator bodyguard.

But that happens in just an instant, so fast that I can barely feel the pain and anger that such memories bring to me. No, my nightmares are far cleverer, they want me to focus on the present. They want me to create more memories, to feed themselves, to grow. I break under their pressure, and then I'm back on Mygeeto.

They walk across the streets, killing everything on their way. I know them well, I've seen them in action many times. The experiments of Macron Sadow, the master alchemist of my former Clan, are not human anymore, but monstrosities enhanced by biological means with the help of the Force. They look like skinned humanoids, distorted versions of their former selves, more like a dissected body than a living being. Their own blood covers their path and mixes with those of their victims, as they viciously claw and dismember them. Enemies and natives alike, they all suffer the same fate, and those who use their blasters barely stop these creatures' advancement.

So inefficient, so impractical.

Most think that an assassin like me has no feelings at all, and that's why we can kill innocents without any remorse. There's some truth in that, but it's just an oversimplified way of seeing us. I do feel, but I know that when I harvest another weak life I'm doing them, at the end, a favor. This world is too cruel for those who cannot protect themselves, and innocents usually fit the profile. I always do it cleanly, no suffering involved, no time to think why fate has decided that they are not needed anymore amongst the living.

These creatures, these monstrosities, are not clean killers, they don't even serve any purpose but to inspire fear and terror. That was the intention of Macron when he turned them and they do their purpose. Turns out, I don't like messy and pointless killing. Ironic, considering what I am.

The shadows are my allies, but I don't need them this time. The abominations have as much strength as they lack brain, and don't care about just someone else walking towards them. Not

even when that someone, myself, is carrying an ignited lightsaber. I hack and slash one after another with surgical precision, as I was taught, until the last one of them is cut into pieces. It's not an easy job, they won't stop moving even when their head has been cut off and it requires patience until they finally give up and whatever animates them finally disappears, but it's needs to be done. These creatures defile all what we Sith respect in terms of freedom. They're strong, but not anything but slaves, a mockery of life. There's no redemption for them, just oblivion.

As the last of the pieces stop moving, a young kid runs towards me, holding my uniform in his hands. He cries and thanks me for saving his life and those of his neighbors. His parents were slaughtered in the conflict between the Empire and Naga Sadow. Poor kid, I was once like him.

I don't turn my head to look down, that would make it more difficult. Despite being innocent, they have seen too much, enough to draw attention towards the Brotherhood. Enough to pass from myth to a matter of interest for other powers in the Galaxy. The Iron Throne wouldn't like that. Damn Macron, Son of Sadow, you're too careless.

The culling begins with the kid, and soon the others follow. It's a quick dead, and I'm saving them from worse fates, but they don't understand. Some try to run, thinking that I'm not but another monster, only that this time the monster doesn't look like one. Others are just too scared to move. I reap their lives one by one with methodical efficiency until there are no more witnesses. The Brotherhood's secrecy remains intact.

Another victory for the Empire, another nightmare to deal with.

I come back to the present, and I see the blue lights of the hyperspace dancing in front of me. I lose control and scream, the echo through the Force so strong that my weak telekinetic powers throw everything that is not secured in the cockpit away from me. Rage burns strong as I recall the same event for what seem to be ages. But nothing is eternal, and eventually I come back to my senses, covered in sweat.

I don't know how much time has passed, seated in this cockpit. Am I close to arrive? I want to look at the navigational computer, but fear has me tied to my seat. That's how it works, my acts triggering body responses that are buried deep in my past. It only happens here, in solitude, but it happens.

The nightmares take me back and force my mind to return to Mygeeto. They're still hungry, they want more.

I know there's only one way to deal with alchemical abominations like these, to stop them once and for all. I have a name and I have a face, and that's usually everything someone like me needs. Macron Goura is the head of this whole mess, and his experiments have to stop. Not for mercy or mercy towards his victims, but for the good of the Brotherhood and the safety of the Empire.

This time, though, I'm not targeting just a criminal, or a political enemy, or someone who knows too much to be let alive. This is a Son of Sadow, and one of the most powerful of them on top of that. As I run through the streets, I realize that the chances that I might live through this are, at best, slim. No one strikes at the Sons of Sadow, the same that no one messes with the Palpatines. What can I say, if no one else attempts to take a target down, that's where an assassin comes in. We do what no one else dares to do, and we're good at that. Not because we're skilled, but because we're the only survivors.

Common assassins don't live long.

The streets take me to lonely alleys and buildings crumbling after the orbital bombardments. Night is falling and the temperature is decreasing rapidly, but I can clearly feel the ripples through the Force. One of them is close, a Son of Sadow. But who? This is not where they're supposed to be, alone by themselves.

Then is when I see him, standing in the middle of what once probably was a market square. Malik, former Consul of Naga Sadow and my former master. My movements have not gone unnoticed, and they have sent the one that knows me best. They think he can stop me. They're wrong.

There's something different about my former master though. I don't feel the Dark Side coming from him, just peace. Peace and light... what kind of joke is this? My master resonates in the Force with the energy of the Jedi.

It doesn't matter. I cannot let him stay in my way. Two Sons of Sadow will die, or I will.

The nightmares bring me back once again to the present and release me. This time I don't feel afraid. This time is *them* the ones afraid. They know that the light would weaken me, and in turn that would weaken me, they won't allow me to recall the memories about Malik.

I laugh and enjoy the truce between me and my nightmares. They won't bother me for a while, not as long as I keep processing Malik's battle and how he defeated and let me live. I was able to get back on my feet the next morning, when everything was well over. I do my best to keep those memories in my mind, just for the sake of recovering, and I grab the flask I always keep under my uniform. Alcohol doesn't always help, but most of the times they ease the struggle in my mind. I take a drink and put the flask aside, letting the liquor burn my throat and warm me inside. That silences everything, and for some time I just lay back on my seat and let the hypnotic blue tunnel of the hyperspace soothe me down. For once, the light is not my enemy. For once, I can sleep.

Dreams of old memories, back when everything was easy, back when my parents were alive, dance through my mind in my rest. My sister is also there, young and beautiful like a sunset in Naboo. There is no Force leading me, no miseries to go through, and I'm again just a small kid, happy with leading a simple life, free of duties and worries. Would my parents had let me live if they knew what I would become? What would my sister, so idealistic, so noble, think about what I have turned into?

They'd be ashamed, embarrassed, scared of the man I am. I cannot stand these thoughts, the mature Rosh doesn't allow it. My own self wakes me up, angry for this moment of weakness.

Or so I think. I'm not awake, I realize, not yet. The light from the dawn hurts my eyes as I get up, recalling the battle with Malik. I'm still asleep, but now the nightmares have control again.

All my body hurts from the fight, and I walk outside the crumbled house I was using as a shelter, limping heavily on one leg. I walk slowly, focusing all my senses in the many wounds that dot my body and the scarred leg that refuses to obey me. I look as awful as I feel, but it suits my purposes. In my state I'm vulnerable and looking like another poor victim doesn't draw any attention.

My determination in hunting down Macron Goura is still strong despite my defeat against Malik. He knows me well, the alchemist doesn't. I trust my instincts and I keep walking, secretly hoping that I won't be too late to reach the landing point of the Sadowan forces. After some time, the Force has healed me enough to walk faster, and then run once more. I feel terrified of confronting such a rival, but that same fear fuels me to move forward, to find the limits of my strength and my domain over the Force. To do what needs to be done.

The area of the city controlled by Naga Sadow is completely devoid of life. I cannot see even traces of insects or plants. It's like if Death itself had come to devour everything to announce the presence of the dark clan. I welcome the change, it lets me focus on finding my objective.

Is not hard to know where the Sadowans are established. One only needs to follow the path of destruction. Pretty much like Scholae does when they require to establish a base camp in a new planet, orbital bombardment and use of explosives are normal practices. I dislike the brutality in this actions, but I admit that is something that would take way longer using my methods. Also, it's a good way to identify when you're closer to them.

So much for not showing the presence of the Brotherhood.

Dusk is upon me when I arrive at the periphery of the camp, and I sink myself in the shadows cast by the last rays of sun, weaving them around me like a cloak with the will of the Force. Many patrols guard the perimeter, and it seems that the bulk of the forces are still on the planet. Good, Macron could be there.

I advance slowly, subtly moving cameras with the Force and avoiding sensors. Patrols cross in front of me, but their minds block my presence. These ones I spare, as killing them would not do anything but to raise the alarm in the camp. It's not mercy, it's just being practical.

The deeper I get, the harder it becomes to advance. Security measures become stronger and harder, with high tech devices are placed in strategic points all around. The paranoia of this clan, as I well know, borders insanity. Not hard to understand, considering that half of their members would be considered insane by foreign eyes.

I'm forced to kill a guard and adapt his identity, but even that falls short soon. Hidden in a tent, I realize that only a direct, open strike will work at this point. For once, I miss some help. One thing is to hunt a distracted prey and a completely different one is to do so against someone expecting an attack anytime. I'll have only once chance, and then is escaping or getting killed. Us, assassins, are not expected to endure long fights against multiple enemies. I personally have trained myself to be able to defy those expectations, but still, thinking on attacking a whole Clan by myself would be as stupid as trying to fly through a black hole.

I have one chance. I need to make it count.

For long hours I sit, feel, listen and watch. I recognize many old faces, and I can see by looking at them that the Empire has been victorious over Naga Sadow. Embarrassment, hate, anger. I can see all the signs. Patrols begin to relax as time moves on, and I wait patiently for the appearance of my target.

Finally, the somber figure of Macron Goura Sadow appears, and walking next to him the Proconsul of the Clan, Sanguinius. I find somewhat entertaining to see how two persons that were mortal enemies walk now like good friends, next to each other. The Brotherhood's politics will never cease to amaze me.

Suddenly, realization of what I'm about to do fills my mind. This is a personal vendetta, not something done for the Empire, for my people. This is about my pride as assassin, and revenge about those who don't fit to my view of the world. My Clan wouldn't understand.

But Sanguinius, Sanguinius would be a worthy goal for them, wouldn't be?

Then it begins, the Force playing another card on the table. It seems to be on my side today.

Scholae is here.

The order and strong force of the Palatinean army enters in the compound blasting everything around them. Their objective is aligned to mine, and so my plan is decided. I wait until they are close enough and then I put myself in motion.

I strengthen the grip on my lightsaber as I get out of the tent walking towards Sanguinius and Macron. They're alert, and they can see through my disguise, recognizing who I am almost instantly, but I'm just too close to them. Guards are ordered to protect the Proconsul, and they come to me. They don't know yet, but they're dead already.

I start my particular *danse macabre* spiraling towards my objective, claiming the lives of those who dare to stand between me and my prey. Mercenaries, soldiers, weak Force users... they're too small for someone that dances with death, and so they fall, one by one.

Sanguinius is a brave and strong rival, and faces me. I can kill him, but he's not my objective. Macron starts to flee, and I just pay attention to him for an instant, enough to put my plan in motion. Then is when I put my act, and focus all my skills on the Proconsul. He's not so valuable to me, but it is to the Empire. With his dead, victory would be total. Scholae Palatinae would be feared by all the other clans.

He's close, too close. Death circles around Sanguinius as the Palatinean forces advance to eliminate Naga Sadow's forces.

Then, an explosion. Missiles buzzing around, our forces dying. A tank. The Sadowans are all in now.

I have to retreat, Sanguinius will have to wait.

For the last time, the nightmares return me to the present. I recall explaining everything to the Emperor, the lies about my heroic deeds to take down the Proconsul and how I sadly failed. All for the glory of the Empire. There's part of truth in that. Actually, there's a great truth in that, but I think on a bigger picture, on a longer scale.

Fear of being discovered embraces me, as cold sweat rolls over my skin, trying to remind me that all this is now part of the past. No one hides the truth from the Emperor, but sometimes a greater goal requires such sacrifices.

The nightmares seem satisfied, or maybe is just the navigation computer signaling that is time to get out of hyperspace. They retreat, leaving me alone again as I disengage the hyperdrive in my transport. The blue surface of Caina welcomes me, and I prepare myself to be received as a hero by my peers. A cold face, a vague smile, a false pride on my deeds will be my answer to them.

Just to be sure, I double check the location in the small computer on my wrist. The signal from the tracking device I planted on Macron Sadow before he escaped, in the middle of the fight

against Sanguinius, is clear as crystal. Another of many secrets that I have to keep to myself, but then again, that's what people like me do. For the good of the Empire, for the good of the Brotherhood. I smile as I start the descend into Caina's orbit. With my nightmares gone, I enjoy the success of my plan. It was worth it, wasn't it?

My name is Rosh Nyine, and I'm an assassin.