

## Core Memories – Teenage years

### Rosh Nyine - #12671

#### Innocents – 12 ABY

“They say that life, when is born, is not good nor bad. It lacks any morals. They say that those who follow a good path when they become adults grew up that way, and those that are evil are not guilty of their actions, but the society around them made them be who they are.

Perhaps there’s some true in that, after all. Who am I to debunk the ideas of greater philosophers of old? I’m not sure if others like me created themselves or were part of something greater than them, if they were forced to be the way they are.

I had a choice. I could have been a good person, lead a good life. When the time to choose came to me, though, I didn’t hesitate. Society didn’t create the man I am. I chose to be who I am.”

- From the archives of the Dark Brotherhood, initial interview with potential candidate Rosh Nyine.

For the Empire Remnant’s citizens, planet F-D198 was an example of all that was good in the shrinking Empire. A beautiful blue planet of green plains and snowy mountains, F-D198 was colonized the year before the destruction of the first Death Star, and had evolved greatly in the past thirteen years. Wookie slaves had been sent first to work on the plentiful mineral resources on the planet and shortly after the first TIE shipyards had been set up in orbit to process these minerals and turn them into squadrons and squadrons of TIE-Fighters and Interceptors.

With the construction of the shipyards, many families of engineers were invited to colonize the planet to help in the research and supervision of all the facilities, and many scientists, tired of the crowded life of Coruscant, had heard the call and had moved to small but beautiful settlements. Away from the mountains, dotted with mines and their slaves, these building complexes had been perfectly situated in river deltas, next to spaceports that carried engineers in relaxed working shifts from and to the orbital shipyards. It had not taken long for these settlements to become thriving communities with all kind of shops, amenities, schools and everything one could think about. Of course, this was the work of other people that were attracted to the prospect of a new colony and the rich engineers, but these latest ones were always a privileged class, hard workers but with great salaries that allowed them to live with all kind of luxuries money could afford.

Jarik and Neesha Nyine were both part of this privileged strata of the small planet. They had arrived with the first wave of engineers to work on the schematics and construction of the shipyards and it had not been until eight years later, when the settlements had been completely built, that their kids, Alesha and Rosh, had joined them.

Both Jarik and Neesha were brilliant engineers, but the true talent of the family resided in the young Alesha, a promising student in the Imperial doctrine and a brilliant strategist that had been already considered for the Officer Academy in her first schooling years. Rosh, on the other hand, had never felt interested for anything and used to spend his days wandering

around, exploring every dark corner he could find and usually coming home either covered in dirt or beaten by those older than him.

They had both grown along with the settlement and Alesha, six years older than his brother, had joined the Officer Academy as everyone expected of her at the age of sixteen. Everyone but their parents, that were wary since the death of the Emperor and the birth of the New Republic, were happy of seeing a young colonist girl joining the fight against the terrorists that called themselves “liberators”. Only someone else, Rosh, who was about to lose his sister and only friend leave them, had taken his disagreement to the extreme and had tried to escape the planet in the transport used by his sister.

The idea, of course, had not gone well and had led both brothers to a great deal of troubles, but at the end Rosh had been returned to F-D198 and his worried parents by the System Moff in person. They never knew what their son had done to enrage someone of such importance, and they never asked. They loved Rosh as he was, just too young to understand the consequences of his acts or to be punished for it.

The young kid had returned to a life that could have been qualified as “normal”, and had found new friends to play with. And so, the days became weeks, and the weeks, months. No one would have guessed that one fateful day, in 12 ABY, all the colonists in the planet would suffer the biggest change ever in their lives.

It was a sunny day and everything looked normal in F-D198. People walked around the streets of the cities, farmers were tending the crops, kids played on parks or attended to school, and nothing looked different than the previous day. The only difference, too slight to notice, was an increased quantity of Stormtroopers patrolling the cities, but they did so without too much discipline.

More used to act as slavers in the mines than to be in the front lines, the training that Stormtroopers received daily in their positions was almost a joke, especially since the collapse of the strict military hierarchy that supported the navy before. The Empire Remnant had tried to keep all their domains under the same iron fist that the Emperor had used to, but they just simply lacked enough resources to cover all their fronts.

The New Republic was aware of it.

Rosh was lying on the grass in the outskirts of the city. Since some days ago he had been thinking about his sister and how would she be. Was she fighting for the Empire or what was left of it? Was she doing good? Why wasn't she sending messages home?

Along with this sudden urge to receive news from his sister, he had also felt that someone was out of place. Everything looked the same, or so it seemed, but he was unable to hang with other people from the city anymore. Every time he did that he felt like if he was speaking with terrible people, people that would harm him without any reason.

All these feelings had led him to stay away from the city. Not far enough so he couldn't hear the familiar noises of the city, but far enough to don't be bothered by anyone. He had thought that it was just one of those periods of time that people of his age used to have and it would pass, so he just wanted to stay away until the yearning for his sister and the awkwardness with the rest of the people would disappear.

The skies were beautiful that day, clear of any clouds and of a serene blue that invited to contemplation and reflection. Rosh had been enjoying the day for what it had to offer, but as hours went by, that calm that had reigned inside him had been increasingly replaced by uneasiness, a dread feeling that was shadowing even his recent thoughts. The young man was on the verge of just getting up and visiting a health center when, suddenly, fireworks dotted the sky. First one, then another, and another. Each of them seemed to be so far that there was no noise to be heard, but for some reason Rosh felt each one of them like a knife ripping through his skin, stabbing him over and over.

Then he realized that he was not watching fireworks. He was watching the destruction of the shipyards. He was watching his parents being killed.

Reality shattered to pieces in the young mind of Rosh. His parents, the most loving persons he had ever met, taken away from him. Two innocent lives, the only anchor he had to his short existence, severed brutally for... for what?

He tried to stand up, but his legs failed him, managing only to kneel in the fresh grass. He raised his hands to the sky, as if he could grab his parents and take them away from the doomed facilities. A myriad of thoughts raced across his mind, trying to explain what was happening, trying to rationalize why so many innocents were being killed. Why his parents. Tears clouded his vision as he became more and more aware of his impotency against the macabre spectacle he was observing. He couldn't do anything, nothing would save his parents life. Jarik and Neesha Nyine had ceased to exist.

His life was in shambles, the horror he felt at that moment so great that he could only open his mouth and scream, scream as loud as he could as if by doing so he could pour some of that horror outside. Then, as explosions began to stop, he managed to hear the sounds from the city once again, the cries of other people, only that these ones were not of terror, but of joy.

Rosh passed out, hearing the cheers of the citizens, their joy from being *free* of the Empire's tyranny. The New Republic had come to save them. It had come as well to destroy his life.

#### The Empire Within – 15 ABY

"The dead of my parents at the hands of the New Republic would have been enough to turn me into the man I am now, but would be not understanding the whole picture. My parents had been killed, that's true, and I was taken as an *orphan of war* with other kids that had suffered loses in the unfortunate *collateral damages* of the liberation of my planet. But I could not hate the soldiers and pilots that had fought in the skies or in the surface.

What I hated, what really filled me with rage, was the hypocrisy of those who I had believed to be friends and neighbors. Those, those I couldn't understand. And so, I let my hate grow, but this was only a part of what fate had prepared for me. No, this was just a sort of trial, an experience to harden myself before it could hit me again with all its strength.

Still, I always had the choice of accept everything and be an upstanding citizen of the New Republic. I just didn't want to."

- From the archives of the Dark Brotherhood, initial interview with potential candidate Rosh Nyine.

Calador was a beautiful planet mostly filled with oceans and dotted with small isles surrounded by colorful coral reefs. It rained most of the time, though people in Calador used to dress lightly due to the elevated temperature of the water. It was a strange climate, but a pleasant one that had favored colonization thousands of years ago.

Mostly a resort for wealthy families, Rosh had been lucky enough to be adopted by the Cassbean family, Imperial sympathizers that had not forbidden him to keep his ideals, but had also encouraged them. The Cassbeans were a noble family well known by the New Republic, and their political influence thanks to their contacts with other noble houses after the fall of the Empire had allowed them to keep under the radar a profitable trade in Imperial memorabilia, which had made them even more rich than they were before.

Though Rosh, a sixteen years old teenager, had become a very reclusive person after the death of his parents, he liked the company of the Cassbeans. An old couple who had lost their only son during the Galactic Civil War, Rosh has been accepted in the family like if he was actually their lost son. Under the Cassbeans protection and after being named only heir to the fortune and titles, Rosh had been able to enjoy a freedom that had never experienced before.

The young teenager often dreamed with looking for the Empire Remnant and joining their ranks, to search for his lost sister and work together for a new Empire. He had not heard from his sister in years, before the death of their parents, and he still had hope that one day they'd be reunited. The current political situation though blocked any chance of trying to look for her on those days, and the Cassbeans have asked him to be patient and wait for what the future would bring. On those cryptic words, Rosh could just nod and desists on his dreams for the moment.

That didn't stop him from keep his hate towards the New Republic though, and he had started using as many credits as he needed to obtain a proper martial education. In old fashioned styles, he used to train often with vibroblades in long duels with different trainers hired from all parts of the Galaxy. He learned to fight like a noble, and to fight like a scoundrel. He also used many of the Imperial old manuals of survival and tactics to adapt the knowledge contained within to become as stealthier and lethal as possible. His great reflexes, strong determination and sharp intelligence seemed almost unnatural, and many a trainer had found themselves outmatched while trying to fight the young Rosh.

When he became good enough, his foster parents inscribed him in many competitions between noble families. Rosh earned himself a good reputation as an excellent duelist while increasing the greatness of the Cassbean family. He was unstoppable, as he always seemed to be one step ahead of his opponents. But deep inside him, playing fair was not his desire. He wanted to spill the blood of those who had killed his real parents. He wanted the blood of the Republic.

It was, as it uses to happen in these cases, a matter of time until Rosh's personality and his education would make him snap and do something stupid.

Nights in Calador used to be filled with rich tourists and their employees who used to spend large amounts of credits in night clubs, and, in the case of those without enough wealth, cantinas. Rosh used to visit the latter every night to overhear conversations from the pilots with the hope of hearing any rumor that could lead him to his sister.

One summer night, Rosh was drinking in a corner in his favorite cantina, listening casually to the conversation of a few veteran pilots. The drinks had loosen their tongues and they were arguing to each other about their successful campaigns with the New Republic. At the beginning, Rosh was interested about the new advances of the Republic and the situation of the Empire, but as they kept arguing between them they started speaking about old campaigns in an effort to show who was the best pilot, which were old news and nothing that could interest the young Rosh.

And then, it happened. One of the pilots spoke about a campaign, a few years ago, in an Imperial factory planet. As he detailed the bombings on the shipyard in orbit around the planet, Rosh started recalling more and more of the events transpired two years ago. His grip tightened around the glass of liquor he was drinking from as the pilot went on and on about his “outstanding achievement” and the defeat of the “Imperial scum” that had enslaved that planet. By the time he had finished his story, Rosh was already outside the cantina, hiding in a corner below the pouring rain that masked his tears of grief and anger.

He waited for a long time, enough to turn all his grief into rage. He had sworn to avenge his parents, and this would be his first step. The pilot would die.

The veteran pilot came out alone and completely inebriated. He barely could stand on his feet and stumbled from one side to another. He couldn’t imagine that Death was looking at him from the shadows, holding a small vibroknife and ready to strike.

The pilot took a pause to try to recover his footing and held himself against a wall, looking at the floor. He was alone, he was defenseless. Rosh felt almost if he was calling for his own demise, a stupid brainwashed puppet of the New Republic’s forces.

Rosh got out of the shadows at a speed he wasn’t aware he could use, and stabbed the back of the pilot so hard that his body hit the wall and stood there, coughing, while Rosh held him against it using just the strength of his blade. The pilot tried to move, but most of his body didn’t respond to him. The young attacker had aimed just at the spine. He just managed to turn his head and pronounce one word: “Why?”

Rosh was overtaken by the adrenaline of taking down his opponent, a feeling that made him feel powerful at the same time that washed the pain of his loss away. He didn’t feel any regret or guiltiness, only euphoria.

He smiled at the dying pilot and answered him, also with just one word: “Vengeance”

### Prime Target – 17 ABY

“Killing came as naturally as breathing for me. When I killed my first victim, I somehow knew that fate, what you call the Force I think, had a plan for me. I would be the weapon of revenge against the New Republic, who didn’t care about innocent people dying for what they called *freedom*.

My foster parents, of course, didn’t understand that I did it for them too, for the Empire. They had to call in favors to shake the law away from me, but our relationship became different, as if they realized for first time who I was. I think, though, that the Cassbean, in secret, approved what I did, as they sent me to Hosnian Prime to work for the Senator of Calador as intern. I

wonder if they knew that they were sending me exactly where I needed to be, an Imperial within the New Republic's Senate."

- From the archives of the Dark Brotherhood, initial interview with potential candidate Rosh Nyine

If the New Republic was a corrupt body for Rosh, Hosnian Prime was the brain of that body. Alien species came and go around the beautifully decorated corridors of the Senate like if they were as good as Humans. Just the idea of sharing the same halls with these creatures as his equals made Rosh feel sick, but he had to get used. He was working now for Senator Tharian of Calador as intern, a position that seemed like eternal boredom. Just more to add to the pile of garbage that the planet was for the young assassin to-be.

His first assignments were as annoying as it could get for the quick mind of Rosh, parsing through multitude of meetings, searching for certain speech patterns in the voices of the Senators and representatives from other groups. As much as he could tell, they were just trying to keep him busy and he was an unnecessary burden for the Senator.

Rosh had to admit, though, that the Imperial memorabilia collection of the Senator made the collection of the Cassbean pale in comparison. Where the Cassbean had a helmet of a Stormtrooper, Senator Tharian had a full armor set in his office. Where the Cassbean had schematics of TIE fighters, the Senator had actual pieces of old TIEs. It was obvious for Rosh that he was not the only sympathizer of the Empire on Hosnian Prime, and that, at least, comforted him a bit.

His chance to a more exciting life came soon though, when visiting Ryloth as part of the Senator retinue, the own Senator got attacked by a small terrorist group armed with vibroswords and blaster pistols. Rosh not only did manage to save the Senator, but also to excel in combat killing most of the terrorists with his own vibroknife. Tharian, impressed by the actions of the young intern, gave him a position as his personal bodyguard and started to trust in him.

That's when things started to change. In secret, the Senator spoke to Rosh about the discontent in the core of the Senate and how loyal were still many other Senators to the old Empire. Times were changing, he said, and they required a more unorthodox approach to end with endless discussions about senseless subjects being debated in the Senate.

Bodyguard by day, Rosh became an assassin by night under the orders of Tharian and other Imperial affiliates. Not major targets, but small ones that could send a message to those who were deemed "too Republican", were killed in a span of months. Rosh received an intensive training in skills that the Cassbean had not provided to him: how to hide, how to choose the best moment to strike, how to make an assassination look like an accident. All those lessons the young Nyine learned too well.

It became a good life. Vengeance was being served in the most important center of the New Republic and the Empire was still alive in the hearts of many people. But what of the real Empire? Rosh knew they were somewhere in the Unknown Regions, but where? The New Republic looked weak as they relaxed and disarmed most of their military, and the teenager couldn't imagine why the Empire was not striking and destroying them.

There was also his sister, Alesha. Was she still alive? Was she still an officer of the Empire?

Answers would come on Rosh nineteenth's birthday. Word had spread across the Senate like a huge explosion days before. The Empire Remnant was coming to make an announcement, and the rumors were that they wanted to join the New Republic. For the Imperial supporters hiding in the shadows, it was insanity. For the young assassin, it became the best news he had in many years, no matter what the news were. The representative that the Empire Remnant was sending was announced with the news, and her name was Alesha, Commander Alesha Nyine.

Rosh had not been so excited in his entire life. Officially, for all records, he was Rosh Cassbean, but once Senator Tharian heard his whole story, he quickly organized for the brothers to meet once the delegation arrived. It took a good deal of influence and effort to make the arrangements in time, but Tharian managed to obtain the files that proved the legitimacy of Rosh's claims and the delegation agreed for the meeting.

The day arrived, and Rosh was first in line to meet his sister. An old Imperial Lambda class shuttle appeared in the sky, escorted by two TIE Fighters. An Imperial Frigate was in orbit under the consent of the Senate, and so was a New Republic Navy in case that all was a trap.

It was a great moment for Rosh, one he had been waiting for years, and he couldn't hold his tears when he saw the majestic display of the old Imperial fighters and the shuttle to start descending to the landing platform. Hours before, he had received a holorecording from his sister, telling him that she was anxious for seeing him again and tell him all what had transpired in the past years since she had to leave. She looked more mature, more serious, more Imperial, and had become a beautiful woman. Rosh just couldn't believe his luck.

Then, horror struck again, for a second time in his life. As the shuttle was landing, a missile, launched from an unseen place, flew straight to the craft and hit it, engulfing it in flames. The shuttle started spiraling downwards, out of control, and people started running away, screaming in panic.

Rosh couldn't move, couldn't believe what was happening. He had sensed the presence of his sister in the shuttle, he could have told, but now, he sensed nothing. As the mess of charred metal that was the shuttle kept falling, he felt his life dying inside. His emotions, whatever they were, disappearing. All the good he had left on him faded away, leaving only a monster, a monster that was seeing the end of the only thing that had given him hope.

Someone pulled from him, moved him away before the crash. Senator Tharian saved his life, but Rosh didn't react, he couldn't. He didn't understand either the words that he spoke to him, not at that moment, when one of the fighters landed and a TIE pilot grabbed him and took him away, getting him into the cockpit.

Hosnian Prime suffered a terrible terrorist attack on the Empire Remnant's delegation that day, and people was devastated and hopeless. But Rosh never managed to see those faces, he didn't see the horror and desolation in all those he thought weak or not worthy of living.

As Hosnian Prime was left behind and the TIE docked with the Frigate, the only thing Rosh could see was red. The blood of the New Republic, that would flow like rivers to pay for what they had done to his family. That day Rosh stopped being a teenager, his last shred of innocence, of goodness, torn away from him.

He would have marveled at the sight of the frigate, at the travel in the TIE, at many things, but he felt like a worm, shielded by a chrysalis, transformed completely into something different. Something darker, much darker than anything he had ever felt before, had been growing

within him, and he let it advance, grow until it exuded from every pore of his skin and surrounded him to never leave him anymore. The shock induced in the young man a comma before they could even take him outside the cockpit of the fighter, and he would not wake up anymore until weeks later.

But the Force, the Dark Side, had come for Rosh, and he had embraced it.

### Epilogue

“I don’t want to remember those moments. I still cannot handle my emotions when I think about it. And yet, they haunt me every day. At nights, they come, the death of my parents and the one of my sister. I think they’ll haunt me forever. Now, every time I take a life, for some reason they stick to me, like if I cared about it. My family, I understand, but these nightmares, these senseless nightmares won’t let me alone. Regret? I doubt it.

They make me suffer in my dreams, my victims. They do unspeakable things to me. I think that, somehow, they fight in my mind like they couldn’t when they were alive. And in all these nightmares, my family is always present, watching me, smiling as if I deserved the suffering.

But no matter what, I kept moving forward. I always did, and this wouldn’t stop me. It was different, I felt different, but I wouldn’t learn until much later what that meant. Sometimes I wish things had been different, but they aren’t. I joined the Empire, that’s what happened. And now, in this day, I stand before you to join your Brotherhood.

Will you accept me?”

- From the archives of the Dark Brotherhood, initial interview with potential candidate Rosh Nyine