**“Rinse and Repeat”**

By Braecen Kaeth (4520)

*Strands of Fate: There Is No Emotion*

**The Citadel**

**Selen, Dajorra System**

“No,” Atyiru said sternly. It had been the *third* time that her Quaestor had asked for the immediate dismissal of her Proconsul. His arguments had gone from poetic to outright hostile. And while his argument proved valid, she had no interest in dismissing any of her loyal confederates: Uji Tameike, Kordath Bleu, or Terran Koul.

“Your funeral, then,” the surly Elder barked. His appointment to her staff had been demanded by the Arconae, but he had proven himself a masterful administrator. Sometimes too clever for his own good, though. This was another case where he wanted to user in a future of his own making.

The Shadow Lady knew that the present was rushing into a new future. Yet, she was unwilling to discard her familiar and comfortable surroundings. It was the age old argument of *what is proven* versus *what is possible*. The Adept had shared a glimpse of a future of a continued Golden Age, but he had little other insight as to *how* they were going to get there. Thus, she continued to thwart *his* reorganization of *her* Clan.

Angrily, the Elder stormed away from the Serpentine Throne and through the doors of the Throne Room. His steps were forced, his boots striking the granite floor in a staccato tempo that belied his own emotion. *They never see the larger picture, the fools,* he thought. His mind was already sorting through other matters of importance within the Dajorra Defense Force, but his thoughts kept revolving back to the matter he had addressed with the Consul.

He attempted to push the matter from his mind while reviewing readiness reports from his flagship *Darkest Night*. He found solemn in the reports; committing the personnel files and statistics to memory. Even this, though, could not calm his heart as it outraced his mind. Fury. Anger. It boiled under the surface and drove him closer to madness. He tossed the datapad onto his desk as he entered his office. He walked past the piles of paperwork and entered a connected room to his office – a room with simple furnishing and a refresher station.

As he discarded his formals robes, he stripped down until he was in his pants alone. He wriggled his toes and laughed at himself. It seemed like yesterday that he had been a young upstart Journeyman, now he was a grizzled veteran of the Brotherhood. He sat down atop his bed and crossed his legs, lowered his forearms until they rested on his legs, and opened his mind – removing the self-imposed barrier between himself and the Force.

It sang to him a melancholy tune. Like a virgin maiden scorned, it was cold to his sudden interest. He poured his remorse through their connection and it brightened. He smiled in his own mind’s eye before redoubling his efforts. Finally, it opened to his touch like a flower to the sun. Its warmth pulsed through his veins and flowed to his extremities. Unlimited power teemed in his cells and he dreamed of how he would use such power to enact his will on the world. The Force coalesced into an image in his mind – *a vision* – that he could act upon.

He saw the future. A Clan that ruled with such authority that it shaped the Brotherhood. The Iron Legion’s banners replaced by the true symbol of authority that would oversee their emergence from the shadows into the galaxy. A Grand Master equal parts cruel *and* beautiful. She was flanked by countless Adepts and Masters loyal to her call as she marched up the steps toward the Iron Throne – *her throne.* Her bright robes discarded for the formal black robes trimmed in gold of her newly taken office. Atyiru stood atop the dais and paused a moment for dramatic effect. She lingered a moment before taking her seat as the rightful power of the Dark Brotherhood.

***Chirp-chirp-chirp.*** The comlink disrupted his momentary reverie and drug him back to his actual reality. Braecen sighed as he reached for the device. He would discard these minor setbacks to fulfill his vision of a Brotherhood that ruled the galaxy. But *his* Grand Master had to become unshackled from her own idealistic nature. And to do that, Braecen had to remove her closest compatriots. Starting with the Proconsul.