**SHATTERED TIES**

**Gone in 60 Seconds**

Phase 2 Fiction

**Forever Rogue**

*by Darth Vexatus*

Legend Darth Vexatus (Mercenary) / Clan Naga Sadow (#188)

**Kasador**

**Mygeeto**

Beside Xanos, an old BB droid rattled past down the cramped, narrow street. The usual white dome that covered the units had been removed, probably to sell, and this one’s robotic innards were on show. The ageing unit whistled sharply when it banged into a streetlamp a bit further down the corridor behind the Falleen- clearly its photoreceptors needed replacing as well.

The Prophet’s eyes drifted across the street up front.

After his narrow escape back at the Red Fury camp, he had made his way down into the hidden undercity that had built up beneath the snowy ruins aboveground. The holocron he had recovered now sat safely inside the pouch at his waist, but his fight with the Palatinae proconsul had not been without its costs-- the Force still refused to answer his summons, fighting against him, and so it had been a difficult task to recover the Eos Holocron. While he studied a pair of Twi’leks further down the street, who were chatting to each other. They were both clad in what looked like a mixture of Mandalorian and Imperial armour. That suggested only one thing.

More city authorities.

“The gov’ says there was a sighting at the west gate,” one of the Twi’leks was saying.

Xanos reached up to stroke the cheek that had been burned by the sorcerous energy that Oscura had invoked. His face tightened as he touched the worst of the burns the lightning had left when he pulled his heavy cowl up over his head to mask his face. Fortunately, the police forces there in the undercity were not that alert-- and if they did stop him, there were always credits.

Like his Master had once told him, there was no weapon more powerful than people’s greed.

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**Governor’s Office**

**Kasador**

“Do not underestimate him,” the one-eyed hologram growled.

The Muun listening to the Dark Jedi snorted, looking insulted. “I will not be intimidated by some wannabe Sith Lord,” said the governor of Kasador. “I think you forget I built this city back when Darth Vader still bullied people like me.”

The holocron narrowed its eyes before it held up a hand and pinched. The governor spluttered as his throat was gripped by an invisible hand. “N... no...,” he coughed, “I...”

“You will do as instructed,” the hologram replied, firmly, before he released his telekinetic hold.

The governor gasped. He had known what to expect when the darksiders first landed. Even if they tried to hide it, the Muun had been around since the Clone Wars, and had lived through the religious strife between the Jedi and the Sith for decades. This Black Hand, whatever his real name was, could threaten him, but even if everyone else in the city had no idea what was going on, the governor knew enough about the Force to know the value of the artifacts the Red Fury had brought to Mygeeto-- and the desperation in this Dark Jedi’s actions was plainly apparent.

“As... I was saying,” the governor continued, though his throat was still a little strained, “my people will identify the suspect-- and we will inform your agents when they have located him.”

The Muun wasn’t stupid. He had no plans to throw good security away at a space wizard. It made much more economic sense just to let the squabbling Dark Jedi kill each other off first.

“See that you do,” the Black Hand growled, before the hologram disappeared.

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**Shuttleport**

**Kasador**

Somehow, the Dark Prophet had made his way past the authorities policing Kasador’s cramped corridors. Despite the close confines, the streets of the underground city had proven surprisingly civilised-- presumably because the riffraff either played by the rules and behaved or were forced to live out their days aboveground in the cold, icy wilderness of the derelict ruins on the surface.

A few of the authorities had given Xanos a close look, but none had caused any trouble.

And that had left him concerned.

It should not have been this easy to slip past the authorities when the city was under siege. In the distance, he had heard gunfire, and seen explosions where there had been fighting. To the east, or at least the direction he was treating as east, because he had no real concept of direction since he had gone underground, but somewhere in that direction there had even been a small speeder drop out of the cavern and collide with one of the buildings. The resulting detonation had shook the walls of the cavern and even now he could still hear the faint echo ringing in his ears.

It would all be so much easier if the Force would answer him...

He reached out with a hand to study the small shuttleport where he had arrived at. There were only a handful of small transports, but a handful was better than the crashed wreckage that was all there was to be found back on the surface. He kept his other hand over his satchel, making sure nobody snatched the holocron away from him, while he tried to peer into the great tapestry that bound everything together to divine where- and specifically to which ship- he should head.

The Elder shut his eyes... but still there was nothing but darkness.

He grew increasingly frustrated at this. The Force was playing games with him. Like his battle with Oscura, he would have to do this the old fashioned way. The Prophet opened his eyes again and studied the small shuttleport. None of the ships were recent models, with a couple of old Imperial era shuttles, as well as some less common models from the tail end of the Clone Wars. The highlight was a more exclusive VCX-100 freighter, but judging by the paintwork and the additional security walking around nearby, it likely belonged to one of the Red Fury captains-- and so was not worth the effort in procuring. But it was not the VCX that Xanos was looking at.

His eyes had fixed on a slightly larger, *Consular*-class freighter. It looked old, very old, and probably dated back to before the Separatist Crisis that had happened sixty years earlier. Despite being the larger ship in the shuttleport, it only had a pair of patrol droids keeping watch.

It probably was just a courier ship. Kasador had to get food and other basic supplies imported.

A lone Dug could be seen heading across the shuttleport to the freighter. They were either the ship’s captain or its first mate. The Prophet nodded to himself. He would head down there and secure a spot on the transport-- even if he had to pay. Discretion was sometimes the better part of valour, and with the Sadowans and Palatinaeans currently fighting each other, it made far more sense to get off the planet aboard one of the civilian transports. He had cut his ties with Clan Naga Sadow and the Dark Brotherhood anyway, so it would serve no purpose teaming up and securing passage aboard one of their shuttles-- he intended to keep the Eos Holocron for himself.

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**Overlooking the shuttleport**

**Kasador**

The Quarren stood atop one of the underground structures overlooking the micro-spaceport. The Sith Lord was down on the landing strip, heading toward the old Republic cruiser parked at the far end, next to a pair of equally dated Imperial shuttles, one an *Eta*-class, the other a *Nu*-class.

“Quaestor,” said one of the stormtroopers behind Qor, “the Muun’s authorities have been informed.” There was a notable sense of unease in the stormtrooper’s voice, even when it was heavily modulated through his helmet’s inbuilt vocoder.

“I don’t trust any of these people,” the Quaestor said, “*especially* that corrupt governor.” The tentacles that ran along Lexiconus’s tightened like a fist. “But we can deal with them after the holocron is secure.”

“Yes, Quaestor,” the stormtrooper replied, although Lexiconus’s attention remained on the figure down in the spaceport, who was handing over a bag of something-- a bribe most likely, though it confused the Question why a Sith Lord of Darth Vexatus’s abilities would not just use the Force to secure passage offworld. More, he did not sense the Sith Lord’s presence either, leading Qor to suspect the figure down in the shuttleport was little more than another of Vexatus’s illusions. Something smelt off, and it was not just the stench of the blood that had been left splattered on his robes when the Quarren had performed emergency ‘surgery’ on one of the vagabonds.

“We also have our own team in position, should they be required,” added the stormtrooper, and drawing Lexiconus’s thoughts back from the deal being struck between the Falleen and the Dug that presumably was one of the Consular cruiser’s crew. With the way they stood on their hands, and did everything using their feet, Dug’s always were a strange species to behold.

If he got chance, he would enjoy seeing just how their muscle structure worked to achieve that.

“Not yet,” the Quaestor replied, dragging his eyes off the Dug. “We should wait and see what the local authorities can manage...” The Quarren watched as the Sith Lord down on the landing strip went aboard the Consular cruiser. “The Proconsul will not get here in time, so we must deal with this without the support of the Black Hand.”

“With all due respect, Quaestor, it is just one Falleen.”

“No...” Qor said carefully. “A year ago, I saw what Darth Vexatus was capable of back in Naga Sadow. His sorceries nearly tore apart a star.” The Quaestor turned from the shuttleport to the stormtrooper. “We must exercise caution and only engage the sorcerer when the time is right.”

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**Aboard the cruiser**

**Kasador shuttleport**

Things had not gone exactly the way the Prophet had wished.

Marlob, the Dug captain, was standing at the doorway into the cruiser’s lounge. He was flanked by two of the security forces that Xanos had passed back on his way through the undercity. He recognised them. They were the pair of Twi’leks he had snuck past just outside the shuttleport. The three of them were currently discussing something in Huttese, which, even if Xanos could not understand the words, their body language and the looks they gave him were plain as day.

Clearly, the authorities down in Kasador had been more alert than he had given them credit.

The Falleen yet again cursed the Force. He should have sensed their thoughts back there...

“I trust there is no problem,” Xanos said, even though it was clear that there *was* a problem.

The Dug and the two Twi’leks said some last words in Huttese before Marlob turned to his would-be passenger. Xanos had handed over a lot of credits for the Dug’s silence, but evidently the city’s governor was not someone Marlob was prepared to double cross, even for money.

“The police say you stole... *something*,” the Dug said slowly, pausing several times to recall the words in Galactic Basic. The Dug was gesturing with his feet, trying to recall the right word.

One of the Twi’leks behind him sighed. “A *device*,” the security office said impatiently.

“Ah, yes, yes, a *device*!” The Dug bobbed his head in agreement. “They say it belongs to them.”

Well, that was a lie, unless the city governor took the view that everything inside Kasador was his property, even the artifacts the Red Fury pirates had brought in. Which, considering that a moment more, Xanos suspected was probably the case. There was never honour among thieves.

“I recovered only what belongs to me,” the Prophet said, standing his ground.

His hand had already shifted to the lightsaber hilt hanging on his belt. There was no chance he was going to let these petty thugs make off with the Eos Holocron. The lightsaber was so heavily bandaged to keep it from freezing in the icy temperatures back on the surface that hopefully they would not realise what it was until it was too late. He unclipped it and raised it as he approached.

“Stand back,” the second of the two Twi’lek’s barked.

The Prophet ignored the threat and continued walking toward them.

“I said stand back!” the Twi’lek repeated, this time raising a blaster in Xanos’s direction.

Xanos’s resolve did not waver, and he carried on moving around the central dining table in the lounge. He knew they were more used to dealing with petty criminals, whom would already have turned and fled through the door in the other direction. Besides, there were ways to...

“I said back!” the Twi’lek shouted, firing a warning bolt past the side of Xanos’s face. It passed so close that Xanos could physically feel the heat of the laser bolt as it shot into a glass cabinet behind him. The display case shattered loudly, and on the top level, the bolt hit a large, ornate vase, which split in half, the pieces crashing atop several other ornaments on the lower shelves.

The Dug snarled

“Watch it!” The ship’s captain glared at the Twi’lek. “I’ll see that the governor pays for--”

Before the Dug could finish shouting, the second of the two Twi’leks had smacked him off his hands, causing the ship’s captain to fall to his arms on the floor. To any other species, a person standing on their hands and falling over would have sounded painful, and, even to the Dug, who was used to using his limbs the opposite way to most humanoids, it still looked uncomfortable. The distraction had given Xanos the time he needed, though, and he took the opportunity to chuck the lightsaber hilt at the Twi’lek who had the blaster pointed in the Falleen’s direction.

“Here!” Xanos called, as the lightsaber spun through the air. “Take it!”

The act had caught the two Twi’leks so off guard that both’s eyes darted to what they believed to be the priceless artifact wanted by their boss, and both immediately leapt in front of the wrapped up hilt hoping to catch it before it could hit the ground or be damaged. With how scared the Dug was of the governor, it was clear the Twi’leks were just as afraid of going back empty handed.

“Be careful!” Xanos called as one of the Twi’leks managed to grasp the hilt out of the air.

Unfortunately for the Twi’lek, however, they discovered that grabbing the hilt tightly to catch it had been a mistake. The next moment, a sharp *snap-hiss* filled the room, and the weapon’s blood red blade burst into life-- straight through the chest of the second Twi’lek, who had been standing right in front of the other, both having jumped in the path of the spinning lightsaber hilt.

“Teryk!” cried the one holding the blade, but far from helping, when he tried to pull the blade away, the weightless beam of plasma sliced straight through their comrade, cutting the second of the two officers right in half. It was an unfortunate, but completely understandable, mistake by someone who had never held a real lightsaber in their own hand before. They were left staring down at the dismembered body of their friend in disbelief. The Dug was already hastily crawling away out of the room, his eyes never leaving the weapon the Twi’lek was still holding aloft.

“*Dopa meekie peedunky!*” snarled the Twi’lek before he angrily hurled the blade back in Xanos’s direction. However, as Xanos, but not the Twi'lek, had known, the blade automatically shut off when the hilt left the officer’s hands, allowing the Falleen to catch it harmlessly out of the air. Yet again, the deception had caught the officer by surprise, and Xanos again took advantage of their momentarily pause, activating the lightsaber again, and immediately hurling it back toward the Twi’lek-- but not before keying the activator switch to remain on. The Falleen may not have had the Force to ensure the blade twirled through the air in any elegant fashion, but elegance was not exactly necessary when a deadly blade of superheated plasma came flying out of the air.

The Twi’lek tried to back away, but it was already too late for him.

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**Just outside the cruiser**

**Kasador shuttleport**

As much as he had not wanted to, the Palatinaean Quaestor and his men had been forced to take action the moment they heard the lightsaber ignition inside the old Republic ship. Lexiconus was standing at the foot of the ramp up into the cruiser when the Dug he had overlooked earlier came running-- or maybe it was more accurate to say the Dug came *clambering--* out in a hurry.

That was until the Dug saw the three figures waiting in anticipation at the bottom of the ramp.

“*Noah, noah!*” the Dug shouted in heavily accented Huttese. “*Pumba! Pumba!*”

Lexiconus didn’t have a clue what the Dug was shouting, but the Quarren didn’t much care either. A lightsaber had been used, and that was all the Quaestor needed to know. Darth Vexatus may not have cared about the Dark Brotherhood’s integrity or its need to remain hidden, but Inquisitorius had gone to a lot of effort to keep the Brotherhood off the grid, especially now that the First Order was going on the rampage, tracking down every rumour of Jedi and Force-users in order to put an end to any threats to Supreme Leader Snoke’s future ambitions.

With that in mind, Qor nodded at the stormtrooper to his left-- who promptly shot the Dug.

There could be no witnesses to what had happened here.

And at least he could take a look at the Dug’s skeletal structure later like he had wanted earlier.

“Watch out for tricks,” Lexiconus said as he waved the stormtroopers up the ramp. “Remember, do not believe *anything* that you see.” His own eyes were already scanning every shadow and alcove as he made his own way up into the lower deck of the old *Consular*-class ship. It had been many years since he had seen one of these, and the layout probably had been altered anyway, but that did not mean his mind couldn't at least stay alert for anything that looked out of place, such as shadows that shouldn’t be there, or windows and viewports that gave no reflection.

Darth Vexatus was a master illusionist, and the Quarren knew *nothing* was to be trusted.

“Lord Vexatus, I don’t know how you survived the purge of Undesirables,” called Lexiconus, “but there is no need to fight.” That was a lie, but there was a chance the Dark Prophet might be reasoned with-- even if the Grand Master’s orders were clear that there could be no exceptions when it came to putting an end to any Undesirables that had gone rogue and managed to survive.

“Clear!” called one of the stormtroopers in front of the Quaestor.

The Scholae fireteams, who had been waiting in position in the shuttleport all along, were systematically moving through each room, one by one, checking for anything out of the ordinary. The Quaestor moved behind, his own eyes scanning the rooms to double check anything the footsoldiers might have missed. Even though Lexiconus had sided with Vexatus the previous year when the Prophet returned from exile spouting prophecies of doom, that did not make up for the Sith Lord working against the Dark Council. But then, that was where Scholae Palatinae had seen the light, for lack of a better expression, whereas like so many of the Sadowans themselves, Vexatus clearly still pursued his own goals, even if he had turned his back on his brothers.

“Clear!” the stormtrooper barked again.

“You can’t stay hidden forever!” Lexiconus called, even though, deep down, he knew that there was in fact a very good chance that the Sith Lord’s illusions could keep them going in circles for hours, though the longer they held the Falleen there, the sooner the Proconsul might get there...

But just as the Quaestor was having that thought, he felt the ship start to shake.

It was... taking off?

“*Curse it!*” Lexiconus shouted. “Get to the cockpit, he’s taking off!”

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**Aboard the cruiser**

**Kasador shuttleport**

<< WARNING WARNING >>

The Dark Prophet had done exactly what the Palatinaeans had expected.

Or at least, it had appeared that way. Xanos had exploited their expectations that he would twist the fabric of reality and torment them with horrors and illusions. As he himself had accepted, that was presently impossible all the while the Force refused to act on his command, but *they* did not know that-- and fear was a powerful ally.

The Elder had now put the ship into a security lockdown, shutting the blast doors throughout the cruiser. He may not have been an expert when it came to larger ships, but the droid co-pilot had been cooperative, doing most of the work, and his years back in the TIE Corps when he had been conscripted into the Imperial Navy still gave him enough awareness of basic ship controls.

<< WARNING WARNING >>

The automated alarm repeated itself as the Falleen made his way down the corridor toward the front salon. He knew they would be heading toward the cockpit. He, however, had another plan.

Outside a nearby viewport, he could see the ageing ship’s old ion engines firing up-- and the Kasador security forces who had been rushing toward the ship all quickly stopped and retreated. The heat from an ion drive was hot at the best of times, but the Consular ship’s neglected engines hissed and spluttered, spitting wisps of superheated air as the droid prepared it for launch.

The droid had probably carried out this same procedure a hundred times over on every trip the Dug and his crew had visited Mygeeto, but with the ship’s security in lockdown, it seemed the droid had grasped the sense of urgency, and was rapidly manoeuvring the ship, the starboard wing narrowly missing a direct collision with the *Nu*-class shuttle that was parked next to it.

Down on the shuttleport, a willowy-looking Pa'lowick standing underneath the *Nu* scowled up in Xanos’s direction and snarled something-- not that the Elder could hear through the viewport.

<< WARNING WARNING >>

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<< WARNING WARNING >>

The Quaestor cursed as his lightsaber burned through the next blast door. Darth Vexatus had tricked them. They should have expected this! The Falleen’s *modus operandi* had long been built on lies and deceits, so why hadn’t Lexiconus sensed the deception sooner?!

The ship had just left the passageway leading down to the underworld of Kasador, and the Quarren could see the frozen landscape of Mygeeto’s surface again. The speed with which the cruiser was making its getaway was well outside any recommended safety limits, Qor reckoned.

If anything, how quickly it was shooting away bordered on a dangerous, if not *ludicrous speed*.

The stormtroopers with him were already burning a hole through the next doorway with their own blowtorches. The Quaestor reached out to feel what was ahead, but... something was wrong. He felt no fire in the Force, no great furnace that would mark a powerful Sith Lord.

“Wait,” Lexiconus called to the stormtroopers. “Wait, something is not right...”

<< WARNING WARNING >>

As the warning sirens blared again in his ears, the Quarren tried to narrow down what he was feeling. Besides himself and the stormtroopers, there was nothing else he could feel aboard the ship aside from a single, faint glimmer, but it burned even duller than that of the stormtroopers.

The Quaestor’s suction-cupped digits pulled even tighter on the lightsaber hilt in his hand.

“You can’t hide from me...” Lexiconus growled, not amused at the Sith Lord’s failure to shut himself down in the Force completely to escape the Quaestor’s notice. The Quarren turned his head away from the door to the cockpit and pointed with his raised saber down the corridor.

“There!” Lexiconus ordered. “He’s down there!”

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Xanos had made his way to the forward salon, which was located just beneath the cockpit. Things may not have worked out quite as fluidly as he had hoped back when he had paid the Dug a sizeable amount of money to secure safe passage off Mygeeto, but he still had one trick left.

There was a loud bang on the door, but the Elder ignored it and continued typing away into a datapad built into the back of the door that was linked up to the main flight computer up in the cockpit. With any luck, the Palatinaeans would not be expecting what he had in mind.

“Vexatus, I know you’re in there!” called a distantly familiar voice. “I *feel* you!”

Even though it was an unfortunate development, the Falleen was unsure whether his being felt through the Force actually brought him a measure of comfort. Back in the city, when he had run into several of the Sadowans scouring the city’s wreckage, not even his old apprentice Macron had sensed him firmly through the Force-- something that had troubled the Falleen. It was one thing for the Force to refuse to respond to his command, but another for others to be failing to sense him through the Force-- when he had more time, he would need to investigate this further.

A memory clicked in his mind about the voice outside the door.

“I expected better from you, Doctor Qor,” the Falleen said coolly, using the microphone built into the datapad to project his voice throughout the ship rather than needing to shout.

The Quarren on the other side had presumably not expected a direct reply.

It took a moment before there was a reply, during which time Xanos calmly continued to prepare the salon pod he was in for its independent departure. That was the thing about *Centurion*-class cruisers, they had been built with so many emergency failsafes in mind for diplomatic missions, and back in the TIE Corps, he had escorted more than his fair share of Imperial officers.

Unlike the good doctor on the other side of the door, the former Imperial pilot knew his starships.

“We won’t been fooled again!” called the Quarren outside. “At first, I thought you were nothing more than a projection as your presence in the Force was so weak, but clearly I underestimated your mastery of Quey’tek meditation.” It brought the Falleen a mild sense of amusement that his limited presence in the Force had been misconstrued in such a way, though he did not reply.

The Quaestor hammered on the door again. “The Grand Master is not the barbarian you and the Sadowans paint him, Lord Vexatus,” the Quarren called. “He has allowed Chiss and Sephi back into the Dark Brotherhood! Even a Falleen like yourself now sits on his Dark Council as his Master-at-Arms!”

Sephi? That brought a measure of irritation to Xanos. Back on Mygeeto, he had seen what had been done to the Sephi that had been travelling with Macron, and the year before, he had shed blood on the sands of Antei with his other apprentice to save the life of one of her own people.

And he himself had been hunted by Inquisitors, so hell bent on eradicating any species that did not fit their perfect image. Did the Palatinaean think that could all be forgiven?

“All that means,” the Falleen answered finally, his voice as cold as the frozen surface of Mygeeto itself, “is that your dread lord’s rule is already crumbling away.”

Outside, he heard the Quaestor spit a curse.

“No wonder they marked you Undesirable,” Lexiconus snarled. “I gave you a chance.”

The Dark Prophet heard a lightsaber *snap* to life on the other side of the door.

“As I once did you,” Xanos replied, “but like the rest of Naga Sadow back then, you too have ended up just as blind.” Qor may have been one of the few who sided with the Prophet’s visions the year before, but the Palatinaean had now confirmed why Xanos had no choice but to leave.

None of them were willing to face the truths the Prophet had foreseen.

The centre of the door was already starting to glow red hot where the Quaestor must have plunged his lightsaber to burn through-- but it was too late. The Prophet keyed the last sequence he had needed into the datapad on his side of the door, and hit the activation button.

<< WARNING LAUNCH INITIATED >>

“What?!” Lexiconus barked on the other side. The hydraulics surrounding the door vented steam as the inner blast door began sealing shut, cutting off the rest of the Quaestor’s response.

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***Firefox*-class carrier *Final Way***

**Mygeeto System**

“Report,” said the Fleet Admiral to one of the many sensor techs stationed on the bridge.

The greying figure of Araic Simonetti, the longest-serving flag officer in the Sadowan fleet, was standing on the bridge of the carrier ship that the Orian Warhost had deployed to the edge of the Mygeeto system, and from which their assault teams had shuttled down to the planet surface.

He had been studying an old *Consular*-class cruiser that had recently launched.

The ship had made an exceedingly fast exit from the atmosphere-- too fast an exit, the admiral had thought. But they had already scanned it, and detected nothing of interest. That was until the emergency salon pod had broken away. That was usually a clear sign of something wrong.

“Sensor reports negative, Admiral,” came back the sensor tech the admiral had asked.

Simonetti frowned and continued to study the holographic map dominating the bridge walkway.

“There are still life signs on the cruiser itself, though,” added the technician. “No indication of any of them being our own men.”

The cruiser itself had already reversed course and was heading back to the planet’s surface again. However, the admiral continued to narrow his eyes at the escape pod that had broken away. There was something not right, but he could not afford to give away the *Final Way*’s position judge on the hunch that there might be more to the pod than met the eye.

“Admiral,” the technician called up from the data terminals, “do you want us to pursue it?”

Simonetti studied the pod in silence for another few moments before he made his mind up.

“No,” the admiral said finally, “let it go. We have more pressing matters require our attention.”

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**Aboard the emergency salon pod**

**Mygeeto System**

The Falleen finished keying in the coordinates for the pod’s hyperdrive before he took his seat.

His eyes fell to the holocron he had now positioned safely on the small table that filled the middle of the escape pod. Despite everything he had been through on Mygeeto, the run in with Cyris Oscura back at the pirate base, the trip through Kasador with Macron and Muz, right up to the escape he had made aboard the Consular vessel, the Eos Holocron was still intact.

He had originally half expected whichever flagships the Sadowan and Palatinaean strike forces had infiltrated the star system with would blow the salon pod out of the sky, but... it seemed that his absence in the Force was proving as much a boon as it had a bane. Like with the Palatinaean Quaestor mistaking the Prophet for an illusion, and expecting the real Xanos to strike from out of the shadows, the same was proving the case in the dark void of space.

He still, however, needed to discover what had truly transpired back during the purge on Antei, and why the Force still continued to refuse to respond to his call. He looked at the holocron as the escape pod began to accelerate toward hyperspace, the viewports filling with the familiar blue and white tapestry that hid behind the shadows that made up the world people lived in.

He had spent months studying the holocron’s secrets all those years ago back when the Brotherhood had been torn in two after Grand Master Jac Cotelin had been cloned. Back then, the device’s gatekeepers had provided the answers he sought to what was needed to fix things.

He hoped they would do so again.

“Lord Sadow,” the rogue Son of Sadow began, “I call upon you.”

And like that, the ancient Dark Lord of the Sith flickered into life above the holocron.

THE END