

Bentre re-read the communique once again. The whole thing sounds preposterous. In all of his time studying the histories and holocrons contained with Clan Naga Sadow's own holocrons and histories. It wasn't impossible, if he considered it. He had seen the results of the attempted awakening of Orian's "sun" to destroy the system through an ancient ritual. He had seen the arts of Sith Alchemy both at his hands and those of Macron Goura. There were more things in both space and terra than he had observed. He wondered if he should keep a more open mind.

He was familiar with one element, although only in passing, from his orders. The True Brotherhood and Anaxela had sought the secret to Urias Orian's immortality. His actions had reportedly caused unexplainable phenomena around Seng Karesh. This planted a seed of doubt in the former Obelisk's mind as to the claims. He had been working around the area during his time in House Shar Dakhan and had never observed anything odd. Though, he argued with himself, perhaps that was just because he wasn't looking for such things.

Sanguinius had informed his Proconsul about the speculative nature of what Bentre could best describe as forbidden knowledge. Now, the man stood before the doorway to the chamber deep in the bowels of the Lion's Tooth. He could feel a powerful disturbance in the fabric of the Force. Stahoes glanced at the security panel besides the doorway, staring for several moments before haltingly punching in the access code provided by his Consul and immediate superior.

As the door slid open, a blue purple shape, what the Sadowan Proconsul could best describe as a ragged tear hung in the air about two inches above the ground. The opening loomed an additional three feet over his head at its highest point. Beyond the rim of this opening, Bentre could clearly observe the pure chaos beyond what he now came to think of as a doorway.

The familiar whispers increased in volume. Their crawling presence became more distinct as they came into the foreground. One voice spoke with the lilting bravado of a monarch, another akin to the clipped tones of a military commander, yet another spoke in low tones like that of an old man. Those were just the ones that he could pick out easily. Sometimes they talked together, and at other times they seemed to argue with Bentre's own internal voice, each others and themselves. His mind was chaos. There was one certainty, however.

Did Sang realize what this really was? The message had been brief and much of the information was vague and conflicting in nature. The possibilities that could be had here were all too interesting to the cracked Sith Shadow.

This point was like a nexus in the Force. The man seemed drawn to it, like the Force itself was hungry. As he considered the phenomenon, Bentre's features slowly twisted into an amused smile. The Consul wanted him to close the opening. The Gray Jedi feared what lay beyond. He foretold of a great destruction that could be brought about while it yet remained.

That was all that Bentre needed to know. Sanguinius had grown too cautious after Pravus had begun his crusade. With a laugh, the man charged toward the aperture, through its membrane with an audible splash, slipping into sight unseen.

The world was chaos. There was a sound, so great a sound that Bentre thought he would go mad. It drowned out the voices in his mind. That was when he saw the creatures. A number of large, arachnid-looking creatures scuttled toward him. The largest stood up upon four of its eight appendages, carrying what appeared as a large, wicked-looking spear in one hand. The weapon was poised, its tip pointed to attack.

“It comes through the opening. It trespasses!” The creature loomed over Stahoes. Bentre opened his mouth, but could utter no words. Before a syllable could be uttered, the creature plunged the large spear through his chest. The impact left a trail of blood splatter behind the Proconsul. The weapon had punched through and his life was quickly fading away to the cheers of the creatures.

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The threat of Otherspace and the creatures would be taken care of in one way or another. Sang had made sure of that. If Bentre failed to complete his task, the ritual would close the doorway. Either way, the Orian system would be safe. He had every confidence in his Proconsul but it never hurt to be careful. Should Stahoes fall, his blood would act as the final reagent for the ritual. A sacrifice, willingly given would serve to sever the Otherspace from Orian space.

If one thing proved true, it seemed that Bentre was always willing. This had allowed Sang to accrue his power in quiet. He would wait a few hours, perhaps a day or two. If the Proconsul did not return, he would make up some story of heroics. The exactly poison he fed his members always varied. With some, he appealed to their egos, to others their loyalties, to others greed. If that failed, there were always vices.

It wouldn't be considered the Jedi way by some. He knew that some would be horrified if they knew. If people knew how easily he had thrown his subordinate into life-threatening danger, he might have lost their confidence. He might have shaken his own foundation. However, Sanguinius Tsucyra Entar acted for the good of his Clan. He had chosen the life of one for the life of many. He had exchanged one life for dozens more, if he didn't count the civilians. He had prevented wanton death at the hands of the creatures beyond the gateway. He had given others life and choice they would not otherwise. To save them from their unseen doom, was that not the ultimate good?