

This is kriffing unbelievable. Frack me sideways like a Selonian who-

The thought was interrupted as the former Corellian Consul pitched himself sideways a moment before the space his head had previously occupied was filled with a hailstorm of blaster fire.

"Give it up, Stahoes. Your ship was found right where you left it! Your prints were all over the thing!"

*Well, no hells.* Bentre thought to himself. *It is my ship after all.*

"E chuta!" He yelled back over his shoulder before darting in the direction furthest away from where he thought he heard the voice coming from. Stahoes tried to hug along the partition which served to separate landing pads on the *Perdition*. An Imperial Star Destroyer was quite large, but he was going to have to move fast. The Inquisitorius did not screw around, and for all he knew even his Black Guard now believed their Consul had betrayed the Brotherhood.

"Bentre," the commlink at his side buzzed. The voice was distorted by a cascade of static. "I believe."

These words brought the man to an involuntary stop. He fumbled for the commlink, and open the transmission line. "No poodoo about it! Why would I take a strike at the Council? That is a short path to a quick de-"

"We do not have time to talk this over. Keep making your way towards the escape pods. We need to give enough time to set things straight. Just trust me."

Bentre Stahoes could not recognize the voice on the other side. That struck him as odd. Was he talking to a loyal member of the Warhost who knew the heart of the Consul-Commander? Was he speaking with a member of the Sadowan cult who realized that their Clan leader would not set out to create a split between the Grand Master and his own?

A blaster bolt sizzled past his head, reminding the Corellian where he was. It did not matter who was on the other side of the commlink. If he stayed on the *Perdition*, he was likely going to end up dead. He had never tested the full patience of one like Muz Ashen but knew well enough from the tales held in the repositories of the Holocron Centre and Shadow Academy that he did not want to experience the man's wrath.

"By the authority of the Sadowan Empire, you are ordered to stand down." The barking voice of a male trooper echoed slightly about the hanger. "If you fail to comply, we will be authorized to use lethal force in order to bring you in."

"Right," Bentre called over his shoulder, "as though you have just been firing warning shots up to this point!"

"Well, we have been missing." The short, honest reply made an odd kind of sense. This realization almost brought Bentre to a standing position. *Surely, Ashia would understand his position. Muz had been a Grand Master. Surely he would see that a man who turns himself over could not be an assassin.*

A few more blaster bolts lanced over his head, shattering any thoughts of surrender with the barking sizzle that accompanied such weapons fire. Stahoes took a moment to focus, closing his eyes so he could focus. He needed to focus on the things that his ears could pick up from the chaos around him. He needed to block out the chaos around him to allow the Force to whisper to him. Where both eyes and ears could fail, the Force was unwavering, telling truth without regard to the machinations of sentients the galaxy over.

As he focused, the Battelord could feel the hissing whispers of a hundred minds across the ship. It was a cacophony for a man who was so used to only coping with the voices that hissed and clawed within the confines of his own mind. He felt for a moment as though he were floating in a sea of consciousness. It was not until he took a breath that he found his center. The soldier was slowly approaching around his left side. There were no thoughts of betrayal or anger in the man's mind, but only of duty to be fulfilled. There was a certain measure of- no, not fear, but rather- of apprehension. No trace of where he stood, as the soldier was focused solely on the task at hand.

As the man drew closer, Bentre tensed. He played through his next moves in his head twice before he was satisfied. The sound of Warhost standard-issue boots told him what his senses confirmed, the trooper was but four steps away.

The Sith stood, turning to face the soldier. A hand rose. A blaster rose to meet it. A moment's concentration and the clench of a hand in retaliation. The hand was cast aside. The weapon kicked, shoved upward by the Force. The Corellian closed the gap. One step, two steps and an arm was thrown out. The Corellian drove his elbow into his opponent's face. Pain blossomed from the point of contact. The soldier dropped, kicking a leg out to catch the Consul unaware.

His feet cut out from under him, Bentre tried to roll to his feet. No such luck, as the soldier was faster than the Sith. Limbs flailed and strikes were exchanged, but the training of the Warhost was far superior to that of a member of the Sadow cult. Though the struggle continued, Bentre could feel his shoulder being pulled back and the pinching pain of stun-cuffs clasp around his wrists.

"By the authority granted to me by the Sadowan Empire, I hereby declare you under arrest. I strongly suggest that you do not struggle."

“What, you aren’t going to read me my last rites?” Bentre chuckled bitterly.

“Your judgement is not my business, sir. The Summit wants you brought in alive. Given that I have not seen you kill anyone, I just have to bring you in. If you continue to resist, I will use whatever force necessary to bring you down. While not lethal, I do understand that point-blank stun bolts are quite painful.”

Stahoes snorted. “You have no idea, fellow.”

Taking a measure of himself, the Corellian realized that a wait-and-see approach might be better. Perhaps if either of the Keibatsu heard his story, they would be willing to help him. His name had been darkened before the Clan and the Brotherhood. He needed to find out if it all was true. Had Mav really been killed? Why had he been chosen as a scapegoat for such an attack? It was going to prove a foolish decision. He was going to do whatever he could in his power to avenge his shame and to repay the slaying of a Grand Master. So long as he had breath, they would have cause to fear.