

This whole operation had been insane. While it had all begun rather simply, by Sadowan standards, it seemed like complication after complication arose. At First, it looked like a simple blue milk run for Clan Naga Sadow.

At first, the Twi'lek had been plotting how she would go about liberating some of the artifacts from under the nose of the Clan. She was sure the Shroud Syndicate or the Shadow Academy would take great interest in whatever could be pulled up. The arrival of Clan Plageuis had thrown a spanner into the works.

Doubtless, there had been some terse chats about cooperation and mutual benefits, but she did not trust the other Clan any more than she did the Sadowans as a whole. She had seen the gleam in her former Master's eyes. Though, to be fair, few lacked that hardness of gaze in the Brotherhood. Even those like Malik were not without an edge to their character. Only the Umbaran had done anything to earn her faith to any degree. And even that which Syntari had earned was just enough to prevent Lav'anre from stabbing the Umbaran Arcanist in the back.

The Plageuian forces had been focused on gathering together resources. As the first droids had popped up, they had offered support in pushing back the mechanical pests. She had found herself standing shoulder to shoulder with Force Users, Mercenaries and Loyalists alike. It was nothing pleasant, but it was also nothing too difficult. By focusing their weapons fire and utilizing the gifts provided by the Force, the droids were dispatched.

The pirates had caught her unit by surprise. The Loyalists had been setting up a staging point to defend the droid facility when the first explosion rocked the structure. Since that time, Lav'anre had been running throughout the ruins of the droid facilities. Eventually, those ruins had given way to mountains. Those mountains had given way to forests. The steps of her pursuers had faded to quiet. She did not risk slowing down. She had lost track of time. Her sense of direction was off. The Force was oddly silent. Her senses felt muddled. Each step wracked her body with pain and fatigue.

You need to stop, girl. Lav'anre shook her head as she leaned against a tree. *How much farther will you have to run? When will you face your fears? When will you stop hiding?*

Despair clawed at the edge of her mind. Adrenaline was starting to wear off. The emotional drain would be hard. The Marauder drew a deep breath, before striding forward with weary purpose. The trees were thinning out, but she did not see the blue skies or the white clouds. Instead, the stony expanse of a sprawling structure stretched out before her.

The walls surrounding the familiar form were no more than chest high. The edifice's lines were quite familiar. She was reminded of the ancient Sith temples that were detailed in the Shadow Academy's archives. Though, she felt she might be misremembering. She knew of some temples on Yavin, or Endor, or some other base occupied by the Rebellion during the Galactic Civil War.

It was of little consequence at the moment, however. Movement in the trees brought a cold well of fear from within, and with it delivered a fresh burst of adrenaline. The dangers she knew of were greater than those unknown. Vaulting over one of the short walls brought her closer to the grand stone door nearest the Twi'lek. She felt the snow slipping beneath her shoes as a deep, male voice called out from behind her, Despite the burning in her chest, despite the soreness of her muscles, Lav'anre pressed forward.

“Come back here before I **make** you regret running!”

The Marauder did not twist back to throw a sharp word. She lunged forward, twisting her fingers around the large ring hung from the door. Drawing on the Force, the Twi'lek focused. She felt muscles tense and quiver as she pulled the door open. The door scraped along the tile flooring beneath Lav'anre's feet. It took a great deal of effort, but finally the doorway was open wide enough to allow the girl to slip into the darker depths of the stone structure. Reaching back, she pulled the door closed behind her. The sound of a discharging blaster could be heard behind the great stone door.

Glowing stones were inlaid into the walls, revealing the presence of several hieroglyphs of some sort. The air was cool, and slightly damp despite the dust which coated every available surface. Her footsteps slowed, and Lav'anre could feel the ache in her muscles starting to set in. Rather than dwell on the pain, she tried to push forward. The Force would sustain her. The Force would preserve her. If she was going to die, it was going to be with both feet on the ground. The sound of footsteps caused her to straighten up. If she could not return to the fleet, she would fight them to her last breath.

“Who do you think you are?” A voice demanded, echoing around her in the large hallway.

“I am who I am.” baring her sharp teeth, the Marauder let out an audible growl. “I am Lav'anre, of my own kin and of my own house!”

The words were met with a rumble of jeering laughter. Even though she cast her eyes left and right between both ends of the hallway, the speaker was nowhere to be seen.

“This place is a tomb for the weak.” The deep voice chortled. “Do you feel that my treasures are to be plundered by any fool who happens upon my domain?” The voice increased in volume. “I **ruled** this world eons ago! You will bow before me!”

Lav'anre shook her head. “You are all talk. I will find your secrets. I will return to my Clan. Neither you nor pirates will stop me! Clan Naga Sadow will draw strength from your secrets!”