

Link: <https://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/competitions/15152>

Date: 224 BBY

Location: Celius (Capital City), Celea (Planet), Celea System, Unknown Regions

“Traitor!”

It was one of many cursed titles hurled in anger towards the once proud Lord Commander. Xuner Holst, his body caked in dirt and covered by rags, roared in defiance as he was dragged through a crowd of onlookers. Many of them had made their displeasure of him known with both hurled objects and hurled insults. One from the spurned crowd hurled a rock the size of a child’s ball.

The stone bounced off the Commander’s forehead, causing a gash to open below his right eye. Blood streamed down, giving him the appearance of fallen tears. Now at the head of the mob but still dragged, his knees bumped into every step up the platform. The future Sith was placed before a small alter, his neck placed inside a dip in the alter's center.

An 'honour guard' stood watch as they faced the crowd, with two flanking the Lord Commander. A single man, King Cenobi Emreis, 27th King of the Celean Empire, approached from off the side. As he stood in front of Xuner, the man raised his hand up high. A silence soon fell over the mob. With a booming voice, the man spoke.

Moments later, Lucius now faced the man. He noticed the man's features. His pristine face, almost angelic in nature, was the exact opposite to the future Sith's gnarled and disheveled face. He scanned his appearance, having noticed a slight fullness in his stomach. Holst could tell he had recently eaten while he, himself, had been forcibly deprived. The man's freshly cut hair and clean shaven face mocked the soldier's grizzled beard and wild, unkempt hair.

“Lucius Sevra, you have served the Celean Empire honourably, fighting with unparalleled bravery against her enemies! You have waged war across our system, reclaiming what was once lost. Now, you seek to turn the wrath of your blade towards the Republic!”

He stopped here as jeers roared from the mob.

“You wish to turn us against our own allies! For this, you have corrupted many to your cause. This, my dear honourable citizens, IS UNACCEPTABLE!”

The crowd cheered at this point, the man smiled with both arms up as he paced around the raised platform. He looked back towards Lucius, smiling with arrogance and sinful pride. Sevra jerked as he was brought up to stand before the Human.

"Even now! The traitor still fights!" The crowd booed as King Emreis smiled. In response, he approached the restrained veteran, with his right arm brought back, he shot a punch straight into Sevra's stomach. In his weakened state, he easily fell to his knees. The crowd erupted again at this sight. He neared the kneeling soldier and leaned in close.

"Be a good soldier and die already," he whispered into his ear.

It was as if everything had been carefully planned out. To fool the crowd into thinking he was their savior and Lucius a rabid beast that needed to be put down.

THREE YEARS PRIOR

"Everything is going along nicely, my King. The Republic stands ready to accept us into their fold," the harsh tone of the High Marshall Nicea rumbled as he spoke to a seated King Emreis.

"Good. Thank you, Lord Marshall. Is everything to your liking now, Senator?" King Cenobi spoke calmly as he looked towards the holoprojector of an unknown Human Male flickered for a brief moment.

"Of course. My only concern is of your Lord Commander. Has he been convinced yet?"

"He is still opposed to your idea, Senator. He believes us to be above the corruption of the Republic. He doesn't want us to be involved with the Jedi as well. Nonetheless, he will be deposed of shortly."

He chuckled. "Foolish are those that would ignore the resources the Republic would give to the Empire," commented the Senator.

"In exchange for our soldiers," finished the High Marshall.

"Yes, High Marshall, for our soldiers. We could amass wealth beyond limits with our men. We could even take the Republic for ourselves," the King interjected.

The three smiled in agreement, unaware of the rogue cloaked in shadows that held a device that recorded both their images and voices.

CURRENT TIME

"For the charge of treason, sedition, and corruption I, Cenobi Emreis, 27th sovereign King of the Empire, hereby sentence you ... "

He paused for an extra sense of dramatic effect. The crowd fell prey to this plot and stood with a palpable tension choking the air. Lucius zoned out, looking at everything that has transpired.

Just one year prior, the Empire had ended its two year civil war against the Lord Commander. Many from the armies sided with him and given the holo-recording that was taken shortly before the start of the war was broadcasted to the citizens, a good number of the citizens sided with the Lord Commander as well. But King Cenobi was a talented man with a silver tongue. It was easy for him to explain away his actions and turn those of simpler minds back to the Empire's side.

The Empire's culture saw its soldiers as part of the lower castes and so were kept isolated from the rest. It was a reinforced idea considering many in the Empire had regarded them as simple laborers and hardy soldiers. Their status never gave these people much in terms of rights and liberties. It was very well accepted to state that they were akin to slaves.

Now, with the last of the rebels' territories taken, it was only a matter of time before Xuner, at the time going by his original name of Lucius Sevra, would have been captured, tried, and summarily executed for his crimes.

Lucius knew that he had friends inside the Empire that would aid him when the time came. For now, however, he would have to face his fate alone.

An audible gasp took the crowd as his sentence was announced. Lucius was to be banished. They booed at the King, ready to storm the stage to exact their own punishment. King Cenobi quickly raised his arms up to silence the displeased mobs.

"My people, hear my words. Death is a kindness; a gesture of good will. I have no such intentions to this *traitorous ... thing*. If he believes the Republic to be against our best interests, then would it not be fitting to sentence him to live his days away from our Empire? To live and die amongst enemies and not friends? Such is a fitting end for *traitors*."

The crowd was swayed by his words, cheering in agreement as the King ended his little speech. Drawing from the crowd's energy, Cenobi turned one last time to Sevra.

"THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN, COMMANDER! And I am a man of the people, AM I NOT!? Lucius Sevra, by my power; by my right; by my authority as the 27th King, and by the will of the people, I hereby exile you from our lands. Never again will you call this place home. Never again will you corrupt us with your presence. This I swear under pain of death!"

The crowd erupted madly as his sentence was finally read. The pair of guards that stood by Sevra's side picked by the defeated Commander.

"Take him away."

With this order, Lucius was dragged towards the King's palace.

As he met with the King one last time, Lucius spoke out as the Emreis walked away.

"The Republic will know of this!"

The King turned. "No they won't. My friend in the Senate will see to that."

Hours later, Lucius was thrown into a ship. This large freighter was stored with supplies to last him a year. accompanying him were what remained of those that sided with him during the war. Soldiers and citizens, nobles and commoners all, were given a similar fate as the former Commander. The hateful gaze of his people was met with equal intensity by the shunned exiles.

As the ship ventured into space, the exiles entered the large hangar. It had been repurposed to house row upon row of Carbon stasis pods. Many were frozen to extend the life of their supplies. Some of the work for this task was aided by the use of droids. Lucius was one of many people that went into stasis.

Finally, the ship departed from Celea's space, never to return.