

## GJW XIV Homefront

### The Front Lines

#### Option 2: Stop the Deputy Grand Master

By SBM Shimura Keibatsu

Subterranean Tunnels  
Shadow Academy Facility  
Arx

Deputy Grand Master Evant Taelyan had betrayed the Brotherhood on behalf of the Collective and he had to be stopped. Inquisitorius Director Ness'arin Ohnaka had put out a broadband relay across all Inquisitorious wavelengths ordering all members to hunt down and capture the betrayer. It took enough time, but thanks to the dire needs, the Sith was finally able to get classified information on a maintenance tunnel that converged on the tunnel between the Shadow Academy facility connecting to the Dark Ascent. The same tunnel it was believed that Evant was going to use to storm the Throne of the Brotherhood. Shimura and his twin retinue made no attempt at stealth, their heavy footfalls echoing down the corridor as they moved as swiftly as they possibly could.

It was unlike Shimura to put his safety on the line for the Dark Council. For a Keibatsu? Unquestionably. Clan Naga Sadow. Without a doubt. But the Council? The Brotherhood as a whole? He wasn't a fan. He didn't much like their pompous attitudes as they sat on their ivory thrones and dictated their mandate, using the rest of them like pawns. But this...this enemy was different. They sought to completely destroy his way of life, his livelihood and his friends. That's where he drew the line. He knew there wouldn't be a stone in the galaxy the Collective or the next group wouldn't turn over to rid the Brotherhood of their presence in the galaxy.

The Zabrak trio rounded the corner and brought them to the main tunnel leading to the Dark Ascent. Auxiliary lights overhead produced just enough light to see that the tunnel was just wide enough for two small gravlifts to move side by side freely. The tunnel had very little decadence to it, opposed to the Shadow Academy Facility and what he had heard of the Dark Ascent. It had looked like it had been hastily built for convenience and forgotten about after it ceased to be useful.

"Shimura Keibatsu." The syllables were drawn out from the voice down the hallway. The voice was unmistakable.

"Deputy Grand Master."

"I must say, it's rather interesting to find you here, defending the Brotherhood after abandoning it for more than a decade." The barb hit Shimura deep, Evant smirked when he achieved its desired effect.

"You don't know anything about me."

"Well, you are back...from whatever part of space you were galavanting around, doing who knows what, except gaining more power." Another jab, this one hitting closer to his core than the last. A full blown smile crossed Evant's face. "My marines aren't far behind. You know you can't defeat me, let alone me and them."

Guilt rushed over Shimura. He was right. There was no way he'd be able to confront the Deputy toe to toe and walk away whole enough to talk about it.

"You love the Brotherhood. As do I. Which is why it has to change, which is why I need to remove Mav. With the Collective, I can do that."

The Keibatsu scowled. "The Collective is too righteous to be so simply cast aside. You can't be that naive."

"Once Mav is removed, I become Grand Master and I rally the clans, we can cut the head off the Collective snake once and for all."

Puzzlement washed over Shimura. "So, you're not trying to destroy the Brotherhood?"

Evant chuckled. "Destroy it?" A second, deeper laugh was heard. Evant was stepping closer as he got more comfortable with where the conversation was going. "No. Not destroy it. I orchestrated my capture. I helped orchestrate the Hive Mind Marines and the tech they possess. What nobody knows is that once I've gained the Dark Throne, the self-destruct will be initiated on every Collective implant, killing its host. I've played both sides against each other from the very start, all in order to achieve what Mav couldn't." He paused before putting emphasis on his next statement. "The systematic destruction of the Collective, once and for all."

"I...I hadn't realized. But...all of this death?"

"You know as well as I do that change cannot be brought about without a catalyst." Evant was now standing nearly chest to chest with Shimura. He paused, thinking carefully about his choice of words. "It is regrettable, but necessary. It IS the way of the Sith. Join me, Battlemaster, and I'll show you the things in the Force that you've missed out on."

The Deputy Grand Master reached out to the Keibatsu. There was nothing more in the present moment that the Zabrak wanted than the death of the Collective. The thoughts rolled through his mind. The power he could attain with the help of the Deputy Grand Master, soon to

be Grand Master. Shimura smiled. Evant smiled back. The Sith leapt forward, nearly tackling Evant as he wrapped his arms around the smaller Human in a bear hug. Shimura drew on the force, causing his muscles to tighten and increase his strength, lifting the smaller Human off of his feet and keeping him in place.

“Now!” Shimura roared.

“NOOOOO!” Evant cried out as he realized that his overconfidence and righteousness had blinded him to the future.

Beka tossed a set of stun cuffs to his sister as Shimura spun in place to face the twins. With the momentary surprise gone, Evant was able to move his hand to his lightsaber but was unable to remove it from the belt. He pressed the activator button and the lightsaber blade came to life, erupting out of the back of the Battlemasters thigh. Howling in pain, Shimura fed off the injury and doubled down his grapple with Evant, the pressure causing a sickening symphony of popping bone and cartilage. The click Shimura had been waiting for finally happened as he went back to focusing on the sound of Evant’s struggle, wheezing to draw breath into his lungs. Beka had locked the shock collar into place. A second click signaled that Kaxase had locked the stun cuffs in place around the Human’s ankles. Shimura relaxed his hold slightly and used the force to deactivate the saber before slamming the Deputy Grand Master to the ground, knocking out whatever breath he had left in his lungs. Stunned from the slam, Evant choked as his body struggled to suck in more precious air. Beka firmly placed the last set of stun cuffs around the Betrayer’s wrists.

Shimura glanced down at the still smoking hole in his leg and pushed the pain out of his mind with the force. He looked down at Evant, the anger burning in his eyes. “In the name of the Brotherhood and its leader, Grand Master Telaris Cantor,” he paused before adding contempt to his voice, “you’re under arrest. Blow the tunnels and let’s get out of here.”