

Treachery was one thing that Bentre Sadow could not stand. It was a funny thing, coming from a Sith, he realized. Who would believe it of him? He had been a backstabber of a literal kind. He had stabbed his own Quaestor in the back as a mere Aedile. He had worked towards his own ends. He had sworn fealty of a sort to the Iron Throne. He had pledged his Clan to the service of the Brotherhood in exchange for assistance. Yet, that is not what drove him.

Evant was a traitor. Yes, such treachery was typical when it came to mentoring their sort. He had done one worse, though. Evant had dragged his Clan into what should have really amounted to a fight between master and former student. Naga Sadow had become a victim to the infighting of Sith Lords. Even putting aside the Collective to be purged from the surface, it was a disgrace. This would not stand.

The Shadow Academy, a place of learning, was being defaced by the very presence of the Collective in her halls. The Sith was an amateur alchemist, a scholar, and a former professor. Much like Clan Naga Sadow, the Shadow Academy held a special place in his heart.

[“General Cargas,”](#) Bentre keyed his commlink, “are you prepared to move?”

“Overlord,” the Warhost commander’s voice came over small and tinny-sounding, “we are prepared to move at your orders.”

“I am sure you understand the Collective cannot be allowed to continue. I am sure you understand the shame brought about by the Deputy Grand Master. We cannot allow what happened upon Orian to occur on Arx. We know the consequences better than anyone.” There was a pause on the other end of the channel. Then, the sound of a clearing throat was heard. “Is there something concerning you?”

“Bad memories, sir. Painful recollections.”

“Don’t worry,” the Sadow injected some warmth he did not feel, “we can talk about it over a couple of beers when this is all over.”

There was quiet again, then a small voice. “It will take more than a few beers, sir.”

“Understood.” Bentre Sadow stowed the commlink, taking a deep breath to gird himself. He pushed upon the large pair of doors. Weapons were raised in preparation. The entry hall was empty, considerably more empty than normal.

Despite his time at the former Shadow Academy on the staff, the Corellian could not remember such silence even in this place of learning. It caused the hairs on the back of his neck to stand up. Lifting his datapad, the Sadowan Shadow skimmed the dossier he had compiled on the Shadow Academy. There were few areas that would interest the Collective, besides perhaps the scores of artifacts and tomes the fanatics could destroy.

In any other circumstance, he might have considered that. The Deputy Grand Master surely aimed for grander objectives. The tunnels below the Shadow Academy were extensive, but cramped. They did provide a beeline for the Dark Ascent. He only hoped that he could somehow convince the Deputy Grand Master to slow, or else could catch up with the traitorous Elder.

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Blaster bolts filled the air. Blood pounded in Bentre Sadow's ears. This was not the way he had visualized this encounter. This is not the way it was supposed to happen. The Collective had been waiting. The Warhost must have been seen on their descent. This was not the way it was supposed to be. The Sith was not going to allow a Collective collaborator to strike a blow to the Brotherhood as they had done to his Clan at Orian.

"I am not going to let you get away!" Bentre snarled. He ran out, throwing himself sideways to catch the traitorous Deputy Grand Master around the middle. Instead, he found himself tumbling painfully. The Elder had proved fast, beyond what the Corellian Sith normally encountered.

"What were you thinking?" Evant snarled the words. He did not immediately strike, however. Instead, he raised his lightsaber in challenge. "You cannot beat me. You must realize that."

"Well," Bentre jeered, "nothing will stop me from typing. You turned to the Collective cause, stabbed the Brotherhood in the back, and I don't know about anybody else, but I plan to bag myself a Sith Lord." Lightsabers ignited. The pair locked eyes. Two came in, but only one would come out of those tunnels.