

Visions of the Past

Orian System

Inos 42

23 ABY

Locke Sonjje looked around at the bleak landscape before him. In his seventeen years he had been on a few worlds, but none that were so rocky and desolate as this one. Supposedly, there were some ancient ruins on this world, and supposedly, they contained some treasure, but he had his doubts. Still, that collector had paid him to come here and try to find it, whatever it was.

The ground rose and fell in low hills, pockmarked with craters. Here and there the crags of ancient mountains rose over the surface, although they did not look very tall. Locke closed his eyes and sighed. He looked at the four rocky spires rising around his shuttle, then muttered to himself. "North from where the towers rise..."

He headed north, carefully trudging along the rocky surface. The air on this world was thin; he didn't want to tire himself out necessarily. The young man climbed up one rocky hill and slid down the other side, a slew of small boulders tumbling down after him. He eventually found himself in a narrow canyon. It was dark, seemingly darker than a canyon should be, even on a moon like this.

Eventually, he could see nothing.

Then he stumbled and fell. Locke tried to catch himself, but he couldn't see anything. His feet slid on shrouded pebbles. His arms reached out into the dark and caught only air. He turned and tried to climb back to where he had been; back to safety, but fell further, slamming his head on something.

Everything went black.

He was here, and he was nowhere. Yet somehow, he saw things. He was outside the galaxy, he knew - somehow. Spread out before him was it's spiral, distant-yet nearby. In arm's length, yet beyond his grasp. He reached for it and felt nothing, but suddenly visions flashed through his mind.

Massive, living ships invaded the galaxy. Warriors with living weapons and armor conquered worlds, destroyed cultures, ruined cities and civilization. Locke saw himself in it. Somehow he

was down there and yet outside the galaxy, watching and experiencing. It took a single moment and yet years: he was a soldier, then he was a pilot, and sometimes a soldier again. Somehow he always survived. Somehow death never found him, even as his friends and allies died, again and again, until at last-

White noise suddenly filled Locke's ears. He opened his eyes and the pitch black canyon was illuminated by a tall, spectral figure. The figure had red skin and horns, and wore regal clothing. Somehow - Locke did not know how - he knew this to be Naga Sadow.

The figure's lips moved, but Locke's ears heard nothing. Instead, words blossomed in his mind:

YOU WERE BLIND, AND NOW YOU SEE. YOU WERE DEAF, AND NOW YOU HEAR. YOU FELT NOTHING, AND NOW YOU FEEL IT BECKONING. YOU HAVE THE STRENGTH. JOIN US.

Suddenly, the figure was gone, and in its place was a tall, but normal-looking humanoid with a glowlamp. He was human, or something close - his jaw was gone and replaced with some sort of metal. "You have the strength," he said in a quiet, calm voice. "Join us."

"What?" Locke gasped, blinking to adjust his eyes.

"I am Taigikori Aybara. You have the strength. You can feel the Force." It was not a question. "Join us." The figure reached out one gloved hand.

Locke took the hand of his new mentor and was pulled to safety.

39 ABY

Present Day

Freighter *Gemini Alpha*

He awoke in darkness and quiet, save for the hum of the ships' subsystems. "That dream again," Locke muttered. He had been through so much in the Brotherhood, he barely remembered the time before he joined. It was all so muddled, far more than it should be.

There's no way I somehow personally met Sadow, he thought. It was pure hubris. Why would a long dead Sith Lord appear to a teenager? Besides, that had been years ago. He had been in the Brotherhood for more than fifteen years, and there had been nothing further to explain that.

Assuming it even happened like that, he thought.

He paid it no more mind. There was much to be done. He went to the refresher' and prepared for the day, and only then noticed the grey, rocky dust that washed off his body and pooled around the drain at his feet. The grey took shape, forming words.

It is time.

Locke blinked, and the message - and dust, was gone. He shuddered and went on about his morning, thinking no more of it. In time, the experience was long forgotten, until the next dream...

End