

It was an unusually bright morning in Caelestis City. Normally at this time of the season it would be overcast with storms brewing and frigid temperatures biting at anyone walking outside. Yet, without any explanation, the avians were singing joyfully outside Adoniram Tower. Their joyful reprise gently lulled Kamjin out of his slumber. Stretching, he felt restored. As if the previous night's rest had rejuvenated him in a way no other had.

Hopping out of bed he smiled, a truly genuine smile, not his usual smirking half-hearted look of amusement. It was going to be a great day. He knew it in his bones. Stripping out of his pajamas he walked into his closet to get dressed for the day. His hand hovered over the hanger for his duty uniform. *No, perhaps something less formal today*, he thought as his hand flew over the assorted hangers. No matter what he looked at, nothing seemed to suit his mood. *Is all I ever wear black? I feel the need for something...different, something to match this dazzling day.* He began to rummage through his wardrobe as he grew increasingly dissatisfied, though not angry at all, with his clothing options.

After minutes of looking he found what he sought, though it surprised him. A beige and brown traditional Jedi robe. He had it for some undercover mission he had gone on several years ago and had completely forgotten that he had it. Through either luck or the fact that he had slowly been getting back into shape over the past year of adventures with the clan, it fit perfectly. As he situated the brown nerf hide belt into position over the robes he grabbed the brown, rough-hewn, cloak and pulled it on.

Exiting his walk-in he went to his nightstand where his two lightsabers rested on their stand. As he went to grab the first his hand felt like it had been zapped by an electrical short. He peered at the hand and, shrugging off the static discharge, went to grab it again. He recoiled again as a more violent shock went through him as his fingers touched the handle. Kamjin tried to think what could have happened to the saber since last night when he put it on its stand. Having learned his lesson he tried the second handle resting beneath the first. This time there was no shock. *Strange*, he thought. Clipping the handle of his icy blue blade to the holder on the belt he stared at the blood red blade saber. Usually he was quite possessive of his sabers, especially this one which contained the blooded crystal of a vanished Grand Master, yet...he felt nothing today. Shaking his head he decided he didn't need both blades today as he was just staying within the Tower.

Turning away he caught sight of the brilliant sun cresting fully over the horizon. It's glorious beams of radiant light cascading through the various towers of the city. He felt drawn to the warmth and involuntarily walked towards the balcony. Opening the sliding doors he stepped out into the crisp, yet pleasant, morning air. With his hands covered by the elongated sleeves of the Jedi robe he wrapped himself in the pleasant embrace of the cloak. Breathing deeply, he opened himself to the unseen power of the universe. Seeking to experience the wonder of this day on a whole new level.

Kamjin felt his gut constrict as if he had been punched. All he felt was anguish. Horrible, languishing torment overwhelmed his senses as he doubled over in pain. The city reeked through the Force of rot and corruption. It swirled slowly like swampy water clogging the path of a stream and the epicenter of it was Adoniram Tower. Kamjin wretched as he cut himself off from the onslaught. Spitting out the last remnants of bile he rushed towards the bathroom.

The lights illuminated automatically and he stared into the mirror. Using his fingers he pulled back his eyelids and attempted to call upon the power that had enabled him to elevate

from a lowly Apprentice to the Dark Adept he is today. He stared at his olive colored eye as his pupil dilated from the exposed bulbs. Like a child straining to lift a load for the first time he reached deep towards that cosmic energy and like a bantha lost in the Dune Sea he found nothing. His olive eye stared back at him, unchanged. *What is happening to me?*

His comlink buzzed. Reaching down with his other hand he activated it and the voice of his Viceroy rang out. "My Lord, will you be joining us as planned? The city representatives have gathered as you commanded," Raleien's crisp, military voice, inquired.

"Yes, I'll be right down," he replied, his gaze still fixed upon his own face. He had seen that face everyday of his life. He knew each line, dot, and scar. Yet, he didn't recognize himself today. It was as if someone new was looking back at him and couldn't understand what he was seeing.

"Very good, I'll tell them to expect you at your leisure," Raleien responded as the comlink went silent.

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As Kamjin strolled into the conference room to the sound of the various city representatives a flutter in conversations regarding their particular sectors' needs or demands. Raleien looked uncomfortable trying to politely navigate their various inquiries without coming across like a gruff, old, military man. He was having limited success and Kamjin could tell his ire was rising as the rather rotund female Gran continued to emphasize her point by moving closer to the Pantoran.

With the whooshing sound of doors breaking through the den all eyes turned towards him. Suddenly, there was silence as they took in their newest Emperor dressed so plainly. No one had seen him in such a state. More disjarring than the apparel was the beaming smile upon his face.

"My friends, thank you for gathering. Please, sit so we can conclude our business and get back to enjoying this beautiful day," Kamjin said.

As the group, having been broken out of their shock by the glee in his voice, slowly took their seats Raleien rushed to his side. Leaning over, he said, "My Lord, are you feeling well?" The look of concern on his face was earnest.

"Of course," Kamjin replied, pushing down the memory of the pain he had felt before leaving his room. "Especially given what we're here to discuss, I wouldn't want to be anywhere else." Turning back to the gathered representatives, he added, "I hope you all feel the same way."

Their faces tried, and failed, to hide their disbelief. Usually a call to see the Emperor was a reason to fear for their lives. Not one had ever felt emboldened enough upon seeing their Lord to actually want to stay in his presence for long. Especially as of late with his planning to, as he put it, revitalized the city to attract a more desirable population.

Despite their reservations years of platituding towards the throne had them quickly responding they were equally eager to be meeting. Kamjin, not recognizing the difference, motioned for his Viceroy to take his seat. "Excellent, then shall we commence with the agenda for the day?"

As the various representatives began to give their reports, Kamjin felt his stomach tighten and turn. Usually these meetings were a high point of progress to control the city and root out the opposition that had long troubled Scholae Platinae. He struggled to find the words to describe how he felt. It sickened him to hear about how the orphanage was being demolished and a new Imperial machinery plant built in its place. He had first presented the ideas as giving the orphans a role to plan in the growing might of the clan and skills to benefit them later in service to the clan's military. Now, he couldn't escape the image of those orphans finding happy families and getting to play happily without fear of retribution from the Imperial military or the various factions currently being oppressed across the system.

Raleien continued to assess Kamjin as his face grew paler. "My Lord, do you need a brief rest?"

"Yes, I believe I do," Kamjin replied. "However, before we break, please cancel the plans for the orphanage to be demolished and relocate the funds for the manufacturing plant to improve their facilities."

The room was aghast in shock. "My Lord," started the Gran. "Forgive this one's poor hearing."

"Of course, you are forgiven," Kamjin replied, and to his surprise he meant it. He repeated himself for her benefit and added, "Now, please excuse me for a brief moment. Raleien if I may speak with you."

As Kamjin walked out of the room the Viceroy rushed to his side. "What is it, Kam?" he asked his Emperor. "It's not like you to change your mind like this."

"Get me to the medical bay now. Something is seriously wrong with me. I feel...good."