

Retribution in Blood

A Dark Times Saga Fiction

By Shadow Palpatine Nighthunter

Prologue

Darrowdin's Coliseum

Ulr Uvi, Ulress

A crimson veil hung over the Nagai's sight as the scent and taste of blood satiated the Sith's heart. More necks did he wish to sink his fangs into. More pain did he wish to inflict on those who dared to stand against him. The call for more bloodshed was sending his mind and heart into a frenzy. Especially, the scent of blood from a familiar presence.

And yet, something was holding him back. A soft, weak, but pleading voice called his name. A pair of arms wrapped around him as tightly as they could, while cool and wet tears trailed down his chest. A pair of dim, golden eyes met his. Fear was gazing back at him. Yet, it wasn't a fear of him. It was a fear for him.

"Sanguis. It's okay. It's alright. Come back to me. Please, come back to me. It's okay. I'm safe. Just let go. Focus on me. Focus on us."

The look of fear turned into one of compassion and gentleness. The Maurader clenched his teeth together, fighting back the temptation to lick his lips clean of the blood of his victims. The thirst demanded more blood, but the beautiful soul clinging to him wasn't going to allow it. Even if she wounded from Lanis' and his crony's afflictions, she was ready to fight him. No. To fight for him.

"It's alright, Sanguis. It's over. Don't let your bloodlust control you. Remember who you are. For me. For our sons."

The ancient Sith closed his eyes, focusing on the voice as it echoed in his mind. He felt the woman's cold hand caress his cheek, and he found himself with his wife once again back in Naboo at the gazebo. She was gazing up at him, this time with a smile before she took his hand in hers, the half-Sephe leading him down to the cool waters of the lake. He wasn't alone. He was in loved, and was loved. He was...at peace.

"Sanguis?"

The Nagai slowly opened his eyes. Though the scent of blood lingered, it seemed more distant. The red curtain had fading as his rage and thirst began to dissipate. Yet, his vision still remained blurred as tears of his own swelled and slid down his cheeks.

“Oh, Shadow,” the Warlord finally spoke as he rested his head against hers, bathing her tangled hair with sorrowful rain. “I’m so sorry.”

“Shhh. Don’t be. It’s okay,” his wife assured him tenderly. “It’s over now. I’m okay now. We’re both okay. That’s what matters.”

The Nagai answered with a kiss on her head and an embrace of his own; one of protection and comfort for both himself and his beloved. “Come on. Let’s get you out of here.”

A few days later

Sunny Cinder Hotel Basement

Ulr Uvi, Ulress

Dim light filtered between the mostly-bare supply shelves that adorned the hotel basement. The source emanated from the basement office where the former Empress rested on an old mattress with her watchful husband by her side. Much to Sanguis’ relief, Shadow’s wounds were mostly manageable save for a long slash across her back where infection had already taken hold. Both Sanguis and Fëanor had done what they could to heal her injuries, and after some effort, they had both been able to fight off the infection.

Now, the half-Sephe slept peacefully as her husband gently rubbed her head. Though Dek and Shadow were both now safe in the basement, Sanguis was very eager to have them both off world. Yet, even that troubled the Warlord.

What will Kamjin do now that others know Shadow is alive? Will he go back on his word? Will this have been all for nothing?

“Sanguis? We’re back.”

The Nagai perked up at the mentioning of his name as both Reiden and Fëanor arrived at the office door. Instinctively, he got up and placed himself between them and his wife. Though Reiden had assured him that no harm would come to the former Empress, Sanguis wasn’t going to let his guard down.

“Any new activity?”

“Not around here, no,” Reiden answered, the human taking note of his compatriot’s protective gesture. “But there may be an explanation why thanks to a new decree from the Emperor.”

“Oh? And what would that be?”

“The Emperor has ordered for the Empire’s enemies to be eliminated. The entire system must fall under imperial control.”

“He delivered a *fantastic* speech for it too,” Fëanor remarked sarcastically. “Something, something, execute order something something.”

Despite the feud between the two, Sanguis couldn’t help but silently applaud the Sorcerer’s comments. If there was one thing they shared, it was that they both had a strong dislike for the Emperor. Especially, since Fëanor had also been led to believe that Shadow was dead after her altercation with the new Emperor.

“Anyways,” Reiden continued, the human ignoring the half-Sephi’s blatant disrespect. “Our enemies have scattered, some of them probably fleeing here to their base of operations we discovered thanks to the data Fëanor discovered back at the coliseum. Lilitana’s people will surely be returning to Excidium’s grounds to plan out further action against the Empire. That, or they may attempt to escape elsewhere.”

“Meaning that we need to strike now, then,” Sanguis added. “We’re already here and we know where they have been hiding.”

“Exactly. I’m thinking a team of three should do the trick,” the human commented.

“Perhaps. However, we can’t just leave Shadow and Dek alone here,” Fëanor pointed out as he looked towards the supply closet where the Sullustan rested. “It’s too risky, and we should have gotten them offworld already.”

“That’s not a problem,” Reiden quickly assured him. “I received word on the way back that a shuttle is on the way to return them to Ragnath.”

“And how do I know that someone isn’t going to kill Shadow now?” Sanguis inquired as his hand hovered over the saber hilt at his side. “After the stunt Kamjin pulled, what’s to say he won’t kill her?”

“I’ve been assured that she will be well taken care of and kept safe,” the Augur answered. “Trust me, Sanguis, I understand your concern. I really do. At the same time, I need you to trust me that she will be alright. Now that everyone knows she’s alive, Kamjin would be a fool to act rashly. That, and I’m sure Rayne will be keeping tabs on her apprentice as well. Maybe even Rasilvenaira if she’s still around somewhere.”

“And I’ll go with her,” Fëanor quickly added. “I won’t be going with the two of you on this little raid. It seems someone else will be taking my place. A rather brutish ally of Shadow’s, actually.”

“Who ye callin’ bru’ish?” called out a familiar voice as blond-haired, blue-eyed human reached the bottom of the basement stairs. “Ye be’er watch yerself, lad. I c’mere tae help, an’ ‘is how ye be about it.”

A grin crossed the Nagai’s face, the Sephi recognizing the accent of one of the very few people he trusted. “Well, well. It is good to see you again, Horus.”

Horus Blackheart appeared at the office doorway and offered a curt nod to the Nagai. “Th’pleasures man, Sanguis. I see Sha’ow’s saf; an’ soun’.”

“Yes, thankfully.” The Nagai returned his attention to Reiden. “Maybe I could go with Shadow and the three of you can go.”

“O’ ye be’er no’ lev’ me wi’ ‘is lot,” Horus quickly retorted. “Tho’ I un’erstan’ if ye wish tae be wi’er.”

“I...think you should go, Sanguis.”

Shadow’s voice drew everyone’s attention to her as the woman slowly sat up. Her dimmed, golden gaze rested on her husband. “You taking part in this would make for a good show for Kamjin. Doesn’t hurt to try and keep his favor. I don’t know what the future holds for us, but it doesn’t hurt to play our cards right.”

“But Ro-”

“Sanguis. I know you’re not fond of him, and I know you could care less for the Empire at this point. But think of the boys.”

The Nagai sighed and nodded. “I know. You’re right. Just...”

“I’ll be alright,” she quickly assured him, the half-Sephi offering him a soft smile. “I’ll be with Fëanor, and I can manage. You just worry about not getting yourself killed.”

“And try not to turn on your comrades,” Fëanor remarked, the Sorcerer barely hiding the snarky tone of his voice.

“I don’t plan to,” the Marauder countered calmly, offering a wink to the half-Sephi male alongside a grin.

Despite the temptation, Fëanor held back from reacting and just turned away. Shadow sighed, having hoped the feud between the two had been assuaged by now. “Anyways, how’s Dek holding up, Reiden?”

“He’s not too good,” the human responded as he gazed over his shoulder towards the resting Sullustan. “We’ve done all we can for him, but not enough. The sooner we get him home, the better.”

Shadow nodded. “Let’s hope that shuttle gets here soon, then. In the meantime…”

She looked at the trio about to embark on their mission. “I wish you the best of luck. Before you go, Horus, I’d like to talk to you in private for a moment.”

The mustached-marvel gave a curt nod. Fëanor and Reiden just exchanged glances with each other before they left the office. Sanguis looked at his wife in curiosity, but only got a reassuring smile in response. “It’s alright. Just for a few minutes.”

Reluctantly, Sanguis relented. He leaned down and kissed her, his hand softly caressing her porcelaine-pale cheek. “Alright. I’ll get ready to leave. You just be safe. I just got you back, after all.”

The assassin returned the kiss. “I will. I promise.”

The tall Nagai nodded as he straightened up and took his leave. With a gesture from Shadow, Horus closed the door before focusing on the former Empress. “Weel, whit can th’ Big Man dae fur ye?”

Whilte the two spoke privately, and Fëanor prepped Dek for the return home, Reiden and Sanguis looked over the data the Sorcerer had pulled up back at the coliseum. A Calcarno T’chisko was running operations in Sinagra Villa, making use of the former Excidium base to

hold supplies and gather his fellow compatriots in Liliana's name. They were still hoping that Palatinaean intelligence could dig up more on the human, so for now they would focus on getting into the villa. That, and making sure that every soul that was in the Empire's way was snuffed out.

"Aight' lads. Whit hev'ye got fur me?" questioned Horus as he finally joined them.

"Not much on the target yet, but we do know the layout of the villa," Reiden answered as he showed a 3-D layout of the place on his datapad. "Belonged to Excidium once, then was set aside as a watch house for the Clan after the House was dissolved. Also became a sort of escape for former Excidium members. However, it was taken over by a Calcarno T'chisko. Probably recently when all this mess began. We're waiting for any reports that the crew there might've send to the clan indicating T'chisko's eventual take over."

"Well, we can't be standing around here waiting. We need to take advantage now, and catch them with their pants down if possible," Sanguis commented. "We have the layout to start with."

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