

Hatred. It is volatile and dangerous. Powerful. Unleashed by a single spark, it can lay waste to entire worlds.

“Come on bantha breath, fight me!”

His lip trembled. The boy rarely spoke, he didn't now. They wouldn't listen anyway. They'd lured him to the back of Rosseau Hall, the boys' dormitory. He was too far away from the head boy or faculty to find salvation in calling out for help. He was cornered.

Derc was smaller than all of the boys. They made a habit of mocking him for it. They called him names. Namana grub and Butter newt were common insults. Their mockery had turned physical several weeks ago. The last black eye they delivered had just healed. His sharp green eyes narrowed, marking each of them. His small hands tightened into fists.

The largest among the gang stepped forward. The leader of the pack rolled the sleeves of his sky-blue uniform tunic up over his forearms. He shoved the smaller boy against the stone wall.

“Fight me, coward!”

The ringleader shoved again. The mousy boy lost his footing. Derc's head bounced off the hewn granite block of dormitory wall. The world blurred and spun for a moment. His head rang. The force of the gut punch took him clean off his feet. Derc collapsed into the mud. It was cold and stunk of the putrefying arboreal matter that had fallen from the colorful autumn trees. He gasped for breath, spitting flecks of muddy earth away from his lips. A stream of wet warmth ran down Derc's neck. He could taste the iron in his mouth.

He knew his best chances of surviving the encounter was to cover his vitals. He pressed his head into the mud, covering his head with a free arm. The kicks came instantly. Each of his attackers took their turn. Boots to his ribs drove the breath further from his lungs. After several minutes of ferocity, the attackers got bored. Tears rolled down his cheeks.

“Ha! Look at him! The little retard is crying!”

“What a little pussy!”

“Stay down...Imperial trash!”

Their laughter stabbed like knives. His mind grew dark. Whispers, like a wordless voice, filled his head. It spoke in secrets and told him of the immense power within him. The voice had saved him before; in the mountains years before. The whispers consumed him. He gave himself to the rage. It was like a match into a stockpile of Rhydonium. He sprung to his feet. The afternoon sky was darkening with a growing seasonal storm. Large droplets of rain fell from the sky.

“Oh look, the stupid little butter newt wants more!”

“Yeah! Let's get him!”

“We're kill you, butter newt. Just like the Alliance killed your old man!”

The ringleader pulled back, casting a thick mouthful of spit onto the mousey boy's face. Derc's eyes closed. Deep within his mind, he could feel time crawl to a slow. Anger had given way to something far

more dangerous. All of his hatred for the New Republic, the Rebellion, the taunting, the assaults coalesced within him. The greens, browns, golds and ambers of the Bakuran autumn turned to blacks and reds. His fingernails dug into his palms. The sky ripped open with a flash of lightning and roll of thunder. The light rain had become a downpour.

The bullies' self-appointed chieftain reeled his fist back to deliver a strong punch. He swung. His hit never landed. Derc's hand lurched forward, tangling the assailant in unseen webs of pure evil. The boy's weight was cast aside like a ragdoll, dashing him against the stone wall. His path was carved through the falling rain. He collapsed into a heap.

"What the hell was that!?"

"RUN!"

They tried to flee. It was too late. Thunderous waves of concussive force scattered them like leaves in the wind. The dull crunch of broken bone was punctuated with their cries of terror and pain. He fed on their dread as he turned his attention back to the leader. One word filled his mind: Destroy.

His hand flicked back and forth. The flailing body of the principal bully dashed repeatedly against the damping granite wall. The unseen hand of the Force dominated the boy, hurtling back and forth from ground to wall. He collapsed into a pile in a growing puddle. The other boys scuttled away, fleeing and screaming for help. Disbelief and abject terror settled amongst them.

Lightning flashed again. He snapped to his attacker's side. His fists pummeled the boy's head. There, the quiet little boy, became a ferocious cratsch. Just like the territorial Bakuran predator, he showed no mercy. He didn't stop even as the boy went limp. The screams of other injured boys and the sudden intensity of the storm had drawn the attention of the year eleven prefects and the head boy. Nearly grown men, they struggled to pull the year six boy off the wilted body of the gang's leader.

"GET THE HEADMASTER!"

The head boy narrowly avoided being bitten by the thrashing boy. It took four of them to restrain him. Derc was dripping with blood. They could not tell what was his and what belonged to the other, motionless, year six boy.

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"Missus Kast. Surely you understand that we must discipline him. Derc has nearly killed another student. Had we arrived even moments later, we might be having an entirely different conversation. The parents of the assaulted student are prepared to press charges. Ertagette Academy holds students to the highest level of conduct. Derc has routinely proven himself to be behaviorally incompatible with those standards."

"Oof cycourse, I underrstyant. You myust dyo vhat ees you myust"

Her accent was thick, the headmaster was having a hard time understanding her. He couldn't quite triangulate where the strange vocal pattern originated. It was not local to Bakura. Of course, one look at Aylanna Kast, and a stranger could tell that her origins were not in the outer-rim. She held herself with the rigid posture reserved for nobility.

"Plyees, alyow Dycerc to exblaine one more tyime."

She turned her cold eyes to her son. He could feel her thoughts as if they were his own. There was not displeasure that he had unleashed such violence against his attackers, but there was intense annoyance that he had been caught. The boy cowered in her presence. He feared her.

“Spyeak, Dycrc. Nyow. Tyell zhis myan vhat hyas hyappen.”

“Yes, mother.”

His eyes turned downward.

“Well, young man, out with it. Explain why it is that we should not expel you immediately.”

His sharp green eyes snapped up to meet the headmaster directly. He could feel his mother’s will pressing against him. She had long had suspicions of the boy’s abilities, but had never seen it in action. Now, in her oppressive presence, she wanted to witness it.

“You will not expel me.”

The wordless voice welled up within the boy’s mind once again. The fear of what his mother might do if he were to leave the academy. In his gut the darkness transmuted the fear into anger. This man wanted to hurt him too. The anger built, mutating again into hatred for his weak will. The headmaster would do whatever any parent asked of him. The idle threat of tarnishing his or the school’s reputation was enough for this worm of a man to bend.

“I will not expel you.”

“I was only protecting myself.”

“You were only protecting yourself.”

The boy’s eyes widened slightly. He had done nothing to explain what had happened, yet he was swaying the mind of the headmaster.

“The others should not have attacked me.”

“The others should not have attacked you.”

“I should be compensated for my troubles.”

“You should be given compensation.”

“No Mathematics class, for one month.”

“You need not attend Mathematics for thirty days.”

Derc could feel his mother’s cold gaze through the side of his skull. He stopped pressing.

“We still must discipline you, to appease the other parents...Fifteen demerits.”

“What?!”

“Zhis ees ackzeptable. Thyank you, Hyeadmister, for your tyime. Vee zhall go nyow.”

Aylanna Kast stood. She was a tall woman and from Derc's position she looked ten meters tall. She placed a firm hand on the boy's shoulder and ushered him out of the office. Her sharp nails dug into his shoulder. He winced at the pain.

The door to the headmaster's office zipped shut with a magnetic whoosh. She turned to the boy.

"You leesten tyo me, boy. You are problem. You brink me hyere agyain, to kaleen ups from you...I vill keel you, meyesyelf. Dyo not get cyatched agyain."

"Yes, mother."

His vibrant emerald eyes snapped open. These memories stung him deep to his core. The first taste of that power was intoxicating. He could still taste the mud. He could still smell the stale smell of old leather and tabac smoke in the office. He felt his mother's talons digging into his shoulder.

The richness of hatred he had been readily available for him to pull from for years. He'd trained himself, sharpened his skills, tailored his mind to use it.

The lasts pieces of his lightsaber seated together. It came to rest in his hand and his hand tightened around the leather wrap.

What had once been used to defend himself had become his greatest offense weapons. He could move mountains with his words and he could bring armies to ruin with just a thought. In the comfort of the Darkness, a cowering little boy found true and unadulterated power. The wordless shadowy voice that had been at his side in youth freely gave itself to his will.

He'd become a channel for the Dark Side. A true display of vulgar power. A single spark, that could lay the Galaxy to waste.