

Sounds of Solitude

40 ABY, an orbit of an uncharted planet deep into the Rishi Maze

Xantros looked at the chronometer and smiled, though it was a sad smile and it did not remove sadness constantly visible in his eyes. It was the Life Day as it was known to most of people, called a Sithmas by some others. He did not care about the naming conventions. Much more important thing was that it was an opportunity to celebrate another year – to cherish successes and victories, to remember the sacrifices of the last year and to make plans for upcoming day. Even the most introvert people like Xantros usually joined the festivities organized by the Clan they belonged to. But, he did not.

The Duros sighed loudly. He could do that, because he was alone. The crew was in a bar on the small station orbiting a small planet in the Rishi Maze. He allowed them to enjoy themselves and celebrate the Life Day, because he wanted to stay alone for few hours so that he could think undisturbed by anyone.

It was not a good year. He lost his faith and dedication to the Brotherhood as a result of actions of his direct superiors. They claimed he had done things that he had not done. Though they made sure that he received a proper reward for the actions they attributed to him, he could not stand their lies. He used to be a Krath, so manipulation, deception and lies were not unfamiliar tools to him. They could make a useful tool against enemies who would act upon false data and could be lured into a trap that way. However, he was not willing to let the leaders of Clan Scholae Palatinae use him as a cover of true state of the Clan. It seemed like if they were convinced that the Council would not see through their deception.

Xantros did not know what game the Clan Summit played, but he was not going to be its part as their puppet. It took him six months to complete his assignment in the Shadow Academy, but he left the Brotherhood as soon as it was only possible. The Imperial Clan and the Brotherhood had to thrive without him. Certainly, he was not a pillar of the organization and he was well aware of that, but well, he was not going to support it anymore. There were other groups that could use his help much more to a way more reasonable goal without abusing his work.

The Duros sighed again. It was a paradox that he could not solve himself. He missed his friends he had in the Brotherhood, even though these relationships were tense at best. It was quite a common scenario that friends turned into enemies due to different points of view during various conflicts that the Imperial Clan and whole Brotherhood took part in. Still, there were people he would love to meet and to work with again. On the other hand, he felt so strong aversion to the members of the Clan Summit of Clan Scholae Palatinae and to the staff of Master-At-Arms that even

a mere thought about them made him so angry that he felt an urge to hit something or someone each time he thought about them. There was no place for him as long as there were people who had lied about him considered to be respectful and important members of the organization. Since it was impossible to make them go to have him back, there was no way he might decide to come back to the Brotherhood. He had to find another path to walk through his life. Even if that meant that silence like the one he heard at that moment would constantly remind him about what he had lost due to the machinations of Kamjin Lap'lamiz and Raleien Sonavarret.

Xantros looked at the chronometer again. It was going to be a very quiet Life Day. The first of many quiet days ahead of him.