

Kol Tigrin, or Callus as he was now calling himself, was covered in sweat, mud, and blood; mostly his own. He didn't know why he was here only that he'd been picked up by slavers and brought to this hell hole some gladiatorial combat pit where he and all the other huddled masses were supposed to be content to die. To die for the amusement of some, well he didn't know who he was fighting for only that he and 10 others had been armed with vibroblades of suspect quality and thrown into an arena with a fully armored opponent wielding a force pike and a neuronic whip. Not really a fair fight. They hadn't been there for more than 3 minutes and there were only two of them left standing minus their opponent.

Callus pushed himself to his feet and glanced at the other survivor, they were the only two it seemed who had any sort of combat training and it seemed in a simple glance that they were of one accord. Callus rushed headlong at the enemy who lashed at him with the pike. The weapon howled toward him but Callus was able to step to his left and the blow nearly gouged and angry stripe along his ribcage. His compatriot then grabbed the pike as Callus fell away and reached for the arm controlling the whip however just as he got his hands around the wrist of his would be executioner a heavy armored knee struck him in the stomach and sent him falling and coughing up blood. Whoever they were fighting was incredibly fast and impossibly strong. Callus rolled away and doubled over and watched as the armored monster shook the other slave from his pike. He was toying with them inciting the crowd to a thunderous roar. Callus found himself near one of the corpses and picked up the fallen vibroblade, he wielded one in his left hand pointing backwards and the other in his right oriented traditionally.

Callus clambered to his feet and watched as the armored figure turned toward him and snapped the whip encouraging him to attack. Callus obliged. He slowly and deliberately padded toward his opponent through the mud and the blood of the arena circling slowly to his left as he closed the distance. When he reached a distance of about 2 yards and making a quarter circle to the left he attacked. The whip was a blur of crackling electricity but somehow Callus saw it coming and raised his left dagger and the whip wrapped itself around the blade with a *crack* and Callus held on, not letting the blade be wrenched from his grasp. The power cell of the blade absorbed the discharge of the whip and the tendrils shorted out as Callus lashed out with his other weapon and sliced through the cords as best he could and freed his ensnared blade. He continued his attack as the lance raced toward him it was like he knew where it was going before it even moved. Callus gracefully stepped out of the way and was now within striking distance. He buried the dagger in his left hand in the joint under the shoulder and his right dagger aimed to thrust between helmet and shoulder but it was blocked when the enemy put his ear to his shoulder and closed the gap the knife was pinned and his quarry had dropped the force pike and reached for a knife at his belt. Callus would have to drop his weapons or be stabbed himself. Just as he was about to fall away a dagger sunk into the exposed side of the armored attacker's neck. A terrible coughing sound and a

gurgle of blood echoed through the now silent arena as the assailant fell to his knees clutching his neck.

Callus saw the other slave standing there behind their now fallen foe an exhausted grin on his face. He reached out and grabbed Callus' wrist and held it in the air. The arena erupted into cheers for the unexpected victors, the elation was palpable but Callus knew that they wouldn't both be allowed to leave alive. His former compatriot was unarmed and Callus still carried the blade in his right hand. He instantaneously flipped the blade in his right hand and in a blink he'd turned and violently shoved the vibroknife into the heart of his savior. A look of pure shock and betrayal was frozen in the man's face as he looked at Callus in the utmost confusion. As the man fell so did the applause of the crowd they were stunned to see him turn on the one with whom he'd felled the beast. For a moment all you could hear was the blood spilling onto the sand then, like a thunderstorm in the distance a dull rumble began and crescendoed to even greater heights than before as the people cheered for Callus' ruthlessness. He fell to his knees in the mud, and blood, and sand as a doorway opened in the wall and three guards rushed in and drug Callus away. He assumed he was going to die and honestly he didn't care.

He was uncerimoniously dumped into a cell and chained to the wall by his wrists. He slumped against the cold duracrete, how long were they going to make him wait for death? Would they make him fight another, more powerful foe? Perhaps he should have let the armored assassin kill him, it would have been quicker. His eyes caught a glimpse of something moving in the shadows and a faint sound of rustling fabrics. He called out to the darkness. "Who's there?" silence was his only answer, "If you've come to kill me just be done with it I'm tired of waiting." A soft, but menacing voice came from the shadows. "Peace is a lie, there is only passion." The voice came from behind him. "Through passion, you gain strength." The voice had moved instantly to another corner of the cell. "Through strength, you gain power." A shadow seemed to shimmer before him. "Through power, you gain victory." The shadows began to coalesce. "Through victory, your chains are broken." The binders on his wrists shattered and his arms fell freely to his side. "The Force shall free you." The shadow had resolved into the figure of a woman, rather beautiful with silken blonde hair and a severe face wrapped in a black cloak. "That is the way of the Sith, welcome to the first day of the rest of your life Callus. You have much to learn. The woman turned to leave and Callus struggled to his feet and followed her, if only he'd known where she would lead him.

Present Day
Anchorage Station
Plagueis Space

Callus woke from the memory and felt the jagged scar where the lance had struck him those decades ago. The memory had been so real, the smell the feeling all of it. Some days it was hard to believe that he'd started there, that he'd survived that day and the years following. He reflected on it for a moment and sighed contentedly. He pulled the blankets up under his chin

and rolled over against the beautiful young Dathomiri woman he'd encountered and pressed his body against the smoothness of her skin and drifted off back to sleep.