***Dreshdae***

***Korriban***

***Horuset System***

‘I hate sand.’ Droveth sighed, leaned against a wall on the outskirts of the settlement. Wind tore the sand up into miniature tornados, dancing in between the buildings and through the streets. Ever since the young human had landed on Korriban, all he had seen was sand and death. It had invaded every orifice on his body, even his heart. But it had not made him weak; it made him sick. The Padawan’s mind drifted to the battle that unfolded days prior, at the ancient Sith Academy. So much death, and all for nothing. The Brotherhood had gotten what they were looking for.

Now he found himself in the center of hell, in the pit of no return. All around Droveth could feel the forces of darkness bidding ill will. In the hour or so he had stood there, countless Sith had entered the settlement. Something large was happening here, and somehow he had gotten lucky enough to get here first. After the battle had mostly ended, Droveth’s master, Raiju, had communed with him telepathically. He had not told him where he was, if he was okay, if he would survive. All that he told the Padawan was that ancient writings had been acquired and our enemies’ mission had succeeded. Before the connection was ripped from his brain, Droveth heard one word: Dreshdae.

His thoughts were interrupted by the sound of a large transport carrier approaching the settlement, and suddenly the force was a flurry with activity. Even with his lesser skills, the Jedi could sense at least one hundred or more Dark Jedi here. While they may be fighting each other, all of the Sith are enemies to the Light. The transport vessel slowed above the main landing pad and began its descent. Now was the time for action. Droveth probed out in the force one last time, looking for any possible allies. He found nothing. ‘If they are here, they are not revealing themselves.’

A robed figure passed in front of the Jedi as he began his trek towards the carrier. This one was odd; he could feel the familiar emotions of the Dark Jedi, rage and hatred, but he did not sense evil. Perhaps this was one of the Dark Brotherhood’s Sith. At their side he saw the glint of a lightsaber. This Jedi was headed the same direction he was, and appeared to have been waiting for the same thing. After waiting a good while to gain some distance, Droveth tailed the mysterious traveler. They bobbed and weaved through the settlement, winding between the buildings like a maze. After ten minutes or so, Droveth lost visual contact.

‘How in the hell..’ He inquired, but could barely finish his thought when a hand grabbed his throat and pulled him into a dark entryway. The robed figure lifted him from the ground and withdrew a lightsaber, igniting it in an arc of blue light. Droveth reached up and removed his hood, as a show of good faith. The attacker breathed out a sigh, released the Jedi, and returned the lightsaber to their waist.

“I believed that I was all alone here, Padawan.” Rhiaen Ust’essi growled as she removed her hood. The once beautiful Twi’lek was now a shadow of her former self. He face was bloodied and scarred, and one of her tentacles was missing. He could feel the anger still bubbling inside of her, struggling to reach the surface. Droveth bowed to her before he spoke.

“Where is your sister, Nalia?” Droveth’s words struck a nerve. Rhiaen lunged forward, pinning him to the wall with her arm. Her eyes burned with a rage not fit for a member of the Jedi order.

“Do not speak her name! You don’t have the right!” She roared, fury building. It was obvious at this point that Nalia must be dead. Rhiaen had fallen now, and she would not be able to return to her previous life. The light had left her, and now she was only anger. Droveth placed his hand on her shoulder and spoke calmly.

“Rhiaen, please, this war has not been lost. There is still time. Ancient writings have been delivered here. If we can destroy them we will end this.” Rhiaen’s expression changed, not to understanding and compassion, but to fear. Her eyes widened when Droveth mentioned destroying the writing. She set him down and turned around, deep in thought. “We can do this Rhiaen. We can avenge your sister and make this right.” Rhiaen flipped her hood up and whipped around towards him, hand on her waist.

The last thing Droveth saw before being knocked unconscious was a look of pure hatred, red eyes and a glint of silver as the lightsaber came down on his head.

When Droveth awoke the first thing he noticed was the taste of dirt; next was a blinding headache. He could hear a commotion around him, yelling and screaming, and much closer a whispered conversation. He stirred, forcing his eyes open. Darkness had fallen on the settlement of Dreshdae, but the sky was alight with laser shots and roaring fires. Above him stood a tall, dark, robed figure speaking quietly with another robed figure, this one much shorter. The Padawan tried to stand, fighting the pain in his head, and the tall figured turned to help him. Even in the low light, he could make out the indistinguishable face of his battleteam leader, Mar Sul.

“Droveth, glad to see that you’re awake. 5 more minutes and we would have had to leave you.” Mar Sul smiled, helping the young Jedi to his feet. The smile was clearly a façade, but nonetheless is was needed. Droveth stood and clasped hands with the duelist. “In case you haven’t noticed, there is a battle going on.”

“Rhiaen is here, she struck me when I wasn’t expecting it.” Droveth sighed, rubbing his bruised bald head. Slowly he was taking in the surrounding area; his byakugan revealed to him that, while the small alleyway that the group stood in was mostly deserted, the settlement had erupted into a full on battlefield. “She knows of the writings and wishes to aquire them for herself.”

“Rhiaen is not an ally, Dro.” Mar Sul looked almost saddened, a sharp contrast from his blank, unemotional appearance. “She is compromised. Her sister, Nalia-“

“She is gone, sir. Dead, I presume.”

“Yes, she is. That is why Rhiaen has turned away from the Light. I cannot tell you what her intentions are, but revenge is motivating it.” He turned and spoke to the shorter robed figure, who Droveth did not recognize. “Inform Raiju that we have found his pupil and he lives.” The Padawan grasped the Guardian’s arm.

“Raiju lives? I lost contact with him at the Sith Academy. He sent me here to destroy the writings.”

“He was injured in an explosion during the battle. You were lucky to receive that information from him ahead of time. Unfortunately you couldn’t have known that Rhiaen would turn on you.” He looked the young Jedi up and down quickly before turning towards the entrance of the alley. “If you feel as though you cannot fight, I will lead you to the remainder of the Disciples. If you can, however, I would appreciate the help. We must stop Rhiaen from her mission. I know not what she wishes to do with the writings, but it cannot be good.”

“Sir, I have to ask you something.” Droveth paused, reluctant to speak his mind. “In the event we do stop her, and we do acquire the writings, what will you do with them?” Mar Sul turned and placed his hand on the Padawan’s shoulder.

“There are multiple groups of Jedi here, Droveth. Everyone wants these writings. While my intentions may be different than yours, we both know that it will be better if the documents are in the hands of a Jedi.” Droveth’s eyes met his leaders, and they both nodded. ‘If I can get my hands on them before Mar Sul, I will destroy them.’

“We must move. I can sense that the battle is reaching its climax. We must get to the shuttle port.” With that the two Jedi tore off, out of the alleyway and into the battle. All around Droveth could see red lightsaber’s clashing, blaster shots being deflected, and a majority of the buildings had taken heavy damage. The streets were a mud of dust and blood, but Droveth had no time to stop and see if any were allies. It was hard enough to run through a battle after taking a serious head injury, but it was another all together to keep up the Mar Sul. He wove through the wreckage, vaulting and diving between the rubble of buildings. Droveth struggled behind him, sliding through the dirt between two Sith engaged in a duel. His hand never left his waist, holding onto his lightsaber; partially out of readiness, and partially out of fear he would lose it. Now would not be the time to drop his only weapon.

As they approached the port the Padawan could see a large brawl taking place around the only functioning shuttle left. A see if blaster fire and red sabers clashed, atleast 30 Jedi, all around the launch pad. Mar Sul jumped up onto the pad, turned and assisted Droveth up. Not a single one of the Sith even noticed them arriving.

“Once you ignite your saber, you are putting a target on your head. Any one of these Sith would love to take out a Jedi. So only use it when you absolutely have to. And find those writings!” The Duelist roared, charging into the fight. Droveth watched, half in awe, as his leader tore through the Sith and was lost into the fray.

‘This battle is focused around the shuttle, so that must be where the documents are.’ Droveth crept stealthily around the outskirts of the pad, secluded in the darkness of the night, towards the shuttle. He could feel a strong, dark force aboard. He had to find some sort of way onto the shuttle. As he crept up to the front, he could see through the cockpit window that Rhiaen was chained to the hull inside. Before her stood a robed figure holding a long handled lightsaber.

“Darth Necren?” the Padawan whispered to himself. He could see, in the seat across from Rhiaen, sat a large steel chest. It had to be the documents. “I must get that chest off this shuttle and destroy it.” Droveth climbed up, past the cockpit window, onto the roof. As he made his way towards the back of the craft, planning to drop in through the opening, he felt the shuttle shake beneath him. Suddenly the thrusters fired, and the shuttle began to lift off. He looked over the edge and saw the ground sinking away below, and could hear the bay door closing. He threw himself forward, catching the ledge with his left arm and falling into the shuttle, barely making it before the door closed.

Immediately the Jedi jumped to his feet and drew his saber, igniting it in a bright green flash. Darth Necren turned to him and removed her hood, smiling with razor sharp teeth. Rhiaen looked on in horror, knowing that this would be the Padawan’s end.

“You should have stayed unconscious you fool.” Rhiaen rasped over labored breath. She was clearly beaten and broken.

“Yes, you should listen to your wise Twi’lek friend. This was a very big mistake for you.” Darth Necren hissed, stepping towards the young Jedi. “You were brave to try and come here-“ Droveth didn’t let her finish, swinging wide with his saber. She met him instantly, laughing, and threw him backwards into the hull. His saber flew out of his hand towards Rhiaen and retreated back into its sheath.

“Tsk tsk tsk, won’t even let me finish my sentence. Oh well, you will die here regardless. No one will know of your bravery.” She lifted Droveth from the floor of the shuttle with her telekinesis and pressed him against the roof. The air slowly escaped from his lungs; and the world begin to fade into darkness. Suddenly a green light erupted in the cargo bay, and the shuttle depressurized. Droveth fell to the floor as Darth Necren’s attention turned to Rhiaen. She had used the Consular’s lightsaber to free herself from the chains and cut a hole in the wall.

“Damn you!” Darth Necren spat, grabbing the Twi’lek with the force and slamming her into the floor. Rhiaen rag dolled around the interior of the shuttle, dropping the lightsaber and resigning her fate. Droveth seized his opportunity, diving forward between the two Sith and grabbing the chest. He threw himself out of the break in the hull, clutching the chest, and began freefalling towards the ground. Below he could see that the battle atop the launch pad had ceased. As the ground slowly came up to meet him, he could make out shapes standing in circle at the center. His trajectory placed him directly in the middle, so he hoped that they were allies. Just before he collided with the ground, something ripped him to a stop. He dare not open his eyes for fear of what he may see.

“So how did the Padawan end up being the one to save the day?” Droveth heard a rugged voice that was all too familiar to him. Then he fell the remaining few feet and hit the ground. Hard.

“Did you have to drop me, master?” Droveth smiled, happy to see that Raiju was still alive. All around him stood the remaining members of Odan-Urr, those who made it to Dreshdae atleast. Mar Sul stood among them. The Padawan stood, still clutching the chest. “I hope that the writings are actually in here.” They gathered around as Raiju opened the lid and peered inside.

“Well now that we have them, what are we going to do?”