**Restoration: Ascendant** **Fiction I**

Prompt III

**The Anchorage**

39 ABY

Nothing distinguished this one frail body from the others—standing in the chill of the Anchorage’s knotted hallways and crumbling superstructure, there were dozens of figures, all stripped of their strength and identity and penned up like sick animals.

His pale, nearly translucent skin pulled too tight to his emaciated frame. A medley of electrical burns and scars clung to the right of Eiko’s face, tightening the skin and puckering its surface in sickening waves. Nothing hid him from the world, from the ache of loss and the prickling chill. But this was better, he decided, than suffering in the emptiness outside the Anchorage, or a prison cell back on any number of worlds where he probably deserved to spend his life languishing for all the sins that had made him. Here, there was the faint hope of warmth, the pinprick light of redemption…

*Redemption*, Eiko thought bitterly.

The past two years blurred uncomfortably in his mind, his hopes and fears mixing with the reality to create a hazy mess. He’d nearly forgotten whether he’d chosen his exile, or if it had been chosen for him; if he believed that the chaos of running from everything and everyone for the past years was a product of a moment of enlightened thought or of being shoved into the plans of the Plagueians. It stung.

Beyond the line of soldiers guarding these prisoners stood a pack of officers, all bearing the marks of being Drax’s lackeys. Eiko had hardly seen their leader since his capture, with his age and dignity and determination. What he had seen from Drax’s men was loyalty, and a willingness to step over one another to garner just a little more attention. Eiko shifted on his feet slightly to ease the pain in his heels. Every one of the penned prisoners wanted the same thing: to disappear. Eiko didn’t count himself as an exception. He ducked his head and avoided the soldiers’ and officers’ glances, keeping his tenuous hold on the Force devoted entirely to shifting attention away from him.

Just like the blur of history that needed sorting out, Eiko felt the tug of a dozen desires in his body. To disappear by escape. To surrender now. To end the suffering with a brilliant flash of courage, followed by pain, then death. To keep the same patience that had rewarded him so far, waiting for the first chance to break from the prisoners and grab a weapon—any weapon—and leave the Anchorage again.

That patience had failed him before, by driving him back out of his exile into the arms of familiar darkness. Nothing outside the Brotherhood could fulfill him now. He’d smuggled, fought, fled, and drank his way back into the arms of Plagueis, and it had bought him chains and guards when Xander Drax’s forces caught his ship’s hailing before more friendly forces could come through.

Everything hinged on seeing the right opening. Eiko exhaled slowly to calm himself.

Further down the way, the flashing bolts of blaster fire illuminated the dark tunnel. The officers muttered nervously between themselves, and the guards around Eiko tightened their grips on their weapons.

*Focus*, Eiko reminded himself. He swallowed, inhaled, and steadied himself.

The familiar forms of the Faceless rounded the corner, kept in line by one figure bearing a crimson saber. Officers ducked as each shot drew closer. Eiko didn’t concern himself with much as he saw the wavering step of one guard break the rigid line around the prisoners, and he grimaced as he dove deeper into the Force than he’d dared venture for years. His concentration on disappearing broke as he threw his will into drawing a vibroknife from a guard’s belt. With a rough shove, he cleared a path to the soldier’s back, throwing at least one prisoner to the ground in the effort. The knife sought his hands, and even with his wrists shackled, Eiko felt almost comfortable again. He had moved first. Everything else would respond to his motion, stuck responding to the Equite. One deep stab at the soldier’s neck relieved him of his life.

As Eiko drew the knife back, he felt the surge of chaos open up around him. Prisoners gritted their teeth and bellowed, charging their captors. Shackles were pulled against throats, circles of prisoners formed around downed guards as they stomped and kicked their way toward hope—hope that would die as officers drew pistols.

The heat of revenge and vindication showed in the face of every captive. Eiko squelched it as best he could. He felt his anger stoked, the desire to rush toward the officers and through their ranks until he could stand among allies again, but it would kill him to follow that path. Instead, he turned and ran further into the Anchorage’s labyrinth, away from Plagueis and away from Drax, away from the constant wars and the intoxicating scent of power and freedom.

There would be time enough to return to Plagueis after this skirmish.

He had been dead for two years already. A few extra days wouldn’t hurt.