

Zakath waited, his rancor-tooth lightsaber unignited but in hand, hidden within his cloak. The chatter on the headset he wore told him everything he needed to know; the trap for the Jedi infiltrator was working. The spy was being herded to his only hope of escape, one of the more remote docking bays within Giletta Spaceport.

But the Jedi would not leave Selen alive.

The headset crackled suddenly as a DIA agent spoke over the channel to the waiting Barabel. *“Sir, he has entered the corridor toward your location.”*

“Excellent,” Zakath replied as he kept his eyes steady on the entrance to the hangar. “Then today I take on a Jeedai Knight.”

The door whisked open and a male Mon Calamari clad in a dark pilot jumpsuit rushed in. Whirling instantly around, he slapped the door release, sealing the door and sheltering him from his pursuers. Turning to run toward the ship, he froze as his large golden eyes took in the sight of the black cloaked Barabel.

“It was a trap,” The Mon Calamari said as he withdrew his pearl-handled lightsaber.

“Yez,” Zakath acknowledged as he thumbed the ignition switch on his lightsaber, the crimson blade springing into existence. “And you walked right into it. The Jeedai will not learn of our exiztence.”

“We will eventually discover the truth,” the Jedi said, his own lightsaber igniting into a sapphire blade as he lifted it to a loose guard position. “The Dark Side’s lust for power will be your own undoing.”

“We do not all luzt for power, Jeedai,” Zakath hissed as he strode forward, his burning blade pointed low. “Your Jeedai friends would do well to remember that.”

“I sense the Dark Side in you,” the Mon Calamari countered as he began to circle around the approaching Barabel. “What else do you Sith seek other than power?”

“We protect,” Zakath growled before flicking his blade in an uppercut sweep that was easily blocked by the Jedi. “We allow everyone to fully exprezz themzlevez, inztead of being indoctrinated into hating their darker sidez.”

“The Dark Side only leads to destruction!” the Jedi replied, his sapphire blade flicking forward in an overhead sweep that was solidly blocked by Zakath. “Your kind only leave death and suffering in their wake!”

“And the Jeedai are different?” Zakath snarled as he slashed back at the Mon Calamari. “Every time you Jeedai detect uz, you always try to kill uz all, even if we do not move againzt you!”

“We only move against those who would harm the galaxy!” the Jedi shouted as he backpedaled from the strong blows now raining down on him.

“And uz?” Zakath’s voice rose to a roar as his strong attacks intensified. “We hold dominion here!”

The Dark Jedi’s scarlet lightsaber was a recoiling blur now as the attacks picked up pace.

“But we do not conquer!”

Sparks were flying as the Mon Calamari desperately tried to keep pace with the Barabel’s furious assault.

“We do not opprezz!”

Zakath finally prevailed, his bloody blade suddenly slicing through the Mon Calamari’s flipped hand and sending the Jedi’s lightsaber flying away, its sapphire blade vanishing. The Barabel stood triumphant, his eyes glowing like hot coals as he loomed over his defeated opponent.

The Jedi was gasping now, breathing in huge gulps of air as he stared up at his victorious enemy.

“There is no death, there is the Force,” the Mon Calamari recited as he stared up at Zakath. “What are you waiting for? Finish it.”

Zakath stared down at him, his eyes glowing brighter as he considered the Jedi’s words.

“Do you know what true power iz, Jeedai?” Zakath asked finally before continuing on, not expecting a reply. “It iz when one can kill, and choozez not to, conzidering other optionz firzt. That iz the lezzon I learned.”

“What are you saying?” the Jedi asked, wincing as he clutched at the stump where his hand used to be.

“You will be taken to my miztrezz,” Zakath finished, his crimson blade vanishing as he thumbed it off. “Death may be in store for you, Jeedai, but it iz not today.”

“...why not?”

“...because there iz no point in killing you,” Zakath replied before tapping his headset to talk to the DIA handler on the other end.

Had Atyiru been there, she would’ve smiled at Zakath’s words.

*Damn that woman’s influence, Zakath thought with a snort. Before her, I would’ve killed the Jedi without a thought.*

*But that isn’t true power, is it?*