

Fighting for House Shan
602 words.

Satele's Refuge
High Orbit, Solyiat
Kiast System
34 ABY

Turel fidgeted impatiently inside the cramped drop pod. He'd been through several days of orbital insertion training and nearly lost his lunch inside the simulator. All the training in world couldn't remove the nervous feel from getting launched at the ground in a durasteel can at terminal velocity. The Proconsul hated flying in normal conditions, but this felt like suicide in spite of the logical part of brain telling him he'd land safely.

Somehow Turel had gotten the bright idea to act as a "normal SenNet operative" for this exercise instead of observing/evaluating like a Proconsul probably should. Going out into the field sounded like a lot more fun than sitting around a command center...until the mission briefing. He couldn't stop his jaw from dropping when Mako told him he'd be inserted via dropship behind enemy lines.

The Sentinel's fidgeting inside the pod was interrupted but the unmistakable sound of Alethia's boots clicking across the launch bay. The white-haired woman stopped in front of Turel's pod to inspect it.

"Are sure I can't like, take a shuttle or something?"

"You'd lose the element of surprise," the Aedile replied matter of factly.

Before Turel could respond red lights started flashing in the launch bay to signal that the ship was in position directly over the landing zone. Alethia leaned over and pressed the button that closed the pod door with a slight smirk on her face. The door slowly closed, sealing with a snap-hiss. The Proconsul leaned forward, pulling against the pod's restraints and tapping the view window with his palm.

"Surprise is overrated anyway, I'll just take a shuttle."

Alethia smiled as the flashing lights in the launch bay turned from red to green, signalling the pods were aligned over the drop zone. "Good luck counselor."

Turel was pulled back into his seat as the pod shot out of the vessel like a bullet. For a few seconds the view was a somewhat peaceful as stars rushed by and the glowing blue horizon of Solyiat rushed up to greet him. The peace was shattered as the pod breached the lower atmosphere. The pod shook violently and the viewport glowed amber as the drop pod blazed

like a meteorite. Turel closed his eyes and recited the Jedi Code to himself over and over in a futile attempt to forget he was rocketing to ground in a durasteel can.

Next time, I'm taking the shuttle.

The impact was not nearly as hard as Turel had imagined. The drop pod had righted itself and fired the boosters that arrested its momentum. The Proconsul still felt bruises from where the restraints had held him in place. It took the better part of two minutes for Turel to get his bearings enough to blow the hatch, unbuckle himself, collect his gear and crawl out of the pod. The rush of fresh air was a rude awakening for his senses. The bright light of the sun stung his eyes as they adjusted.

Then, he felt it. A familiar presence in the Force growing closer and closer.

Oh, no.

A sudden panic rush over Turel. A squad of Hoth soldiers emerged from cover with weapons pointed at him. Vorsal walked calmly upon the pod and lowered the black hood of her cloak. She tossed a pair of stun cuffs at him.

Turel made no effort to catch them as they bounced off his chest and hit the ground.

"You can surrender or I can subdue do." Vorsal stated with a commanding voice.

"Do you have to ask?" Turel replied with a smirk as he charged the General.