Corvus Corax, Zirael

Siding with Satele Shan (for this fiction).

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For as long as he could remember, Corvus was always in awe of the feats of engineering that were possible. Perhaps it was his exposure to many different cultures and technological prowesses through his travelling, or simply the attitude of modern science. Perhaps it was a latent feeling that had been awakened when living among the phenomenal skyhooks and floating cities. But the crowning jewel, at least in this system, was the Space Elevator. Even though it was theoretically simple: just an Anchor station, a Tether, Ascending Module and Orbiting station. But nothing compared to the real thing. It was simply breath-taking. He’d gone up to the top a few hours before to meet with Mako and Alethia, and he’d really quite enjoyed the trip up. The speed of it was immense, going through the entire atmosphere in a matter of seconds, and then watching the planet below distort itself into a sphere, then shrinking away. Astonishing.

He was seated outside a budget cafe just by the Anchor station, sipping a new blend of tea. He was watching the skies, observing the purple and blue flashes of light coming from the electrical storms high up above. It was odd. He’d lived these past few months looking down at the swirling mass of clouds on Kiast, and now they were high up above him, raging somewhat angrily. The meeting with the Shan Summit had gone well, and had mostly been filled with pleasantries and generic political introductions. Next time, it would be more informal - and it would be more instrumental in establishing a working relationship with them. As he’d left, he’d been subtly reminded by Archenksova to ‘stay around the area for a while, experience the wonders Daleem has to offer’. The Aedile wasn’t one to emphasise tourism, so she wanted him to wait around, he figured. He had no qualms about it - he had no prior engagements, and the quality of tea here reminded him of the chai he’d had hourly whilst pretending to be Drark the mechanic’s apprentice.

He idly flipped a coin up and caught it, before repeating himself. His coin bag had been full ever since the Trepus attack a few days ago. There were still House tensions - even though it was just a training exercise, some minor damage had been done to the surrounding area and the facility itself. Nobody expected any retaliation though - there’d been no word of it, and there wasn’t much overt army presence around. Still, there’s only so few explanations as to why you’d be asked to ‘stick around’. Perhaps the Summits had agreed to only react to attacks, rather than plan and prepare a defense in advance.

Either way, Corvus had a pleasing drink with very nice views. He was set for a few hours.

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The light was fading. The binary suns had disappeared behind the storms in the upper atmosphere, which were getting particularly dark. Corvus had had enough of the tea - there was a bitter aftertaste which persisted after too much of it. He was getting restless. It was time to move, to do something.

And so he went to buy a ticket. Not only for the fantastic views the elevator gave him, but so he could inquire as to what the Aedile had meant. He handed over his credits to the clerk, as he had done that morning, but he was refused.

“Elevator’s suspended to the public at the moment. Restricted to authorised personel until further notice. I’m sorry, sir.”

*Hmm…*

Sometimes this was known to happen due to the storms, but if those who were authorised were allowed, then it was still operational. Whatever was happening, it was about to start. Corvus figured he needed to be where the action was - which was usually wherever the Quaestor and his sister were. He decided to press the clerk. He gestured towards the lightsaber at his belt.

“Apologies, miss, but if you’ll look here, I am authorised. I have to see Mako and Alethia now, otherwise my intel will be lost. Oh, and I must see them in person, otherwise the enemy will intercept any communication I send.”

She tapped at her terminal, then turned back to the Aleena. “And what if you *were* the enemy, my good friend? I’m sorry, the elevator is really quite busy with Shan dealings. You have to come back later.”

*Sneaking on board it is, then,* he thought.

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As was only proper, as the elevator doors started to close and seal shut, the first few shots went off. It was only due to Corvus’ petite stature and close proximity to the door that he was able to escape the lift through the small gap left between the doors. It did ruffle his tie, though, disrupting the tie pin.

The sounds of a blaster battle began outside.

“Sparking hells,” Corvus muttered. “There’s only so many ways to walk blindly into a warzone. You’d think I’d been pretending to be a Miralukan!”

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Hoth had the elevator surrounded. The battle was happening a good distance away, but it was on all sides. They’d planned well - the electrical storms helped mask their approach. Shan had a focussed and powerful defence, though. It seems that the Summit had been somewhat prepared - the mass of their forces were defending the elevator.

Around the plaza, outdoor tables and chairs had been knocked over, forming convenient barricades to fall back to once the outer defences were overrun. Corvus ran across to the cafe he’d sat at earlier. It was about 5 metres back from one of the fronts, with some of the back-end support running around, re-supplying and keeping everything running smoothly. They worked as a unit, using the familiar hand-gestures Corvus had learned during his time in Shan. These were his people. It was time to fight. And so he went inside the cafe.

Following an air duct he’d seen earlier, he moved along the building, parallel with the fighting. Eventually he found a grate and dropped out of it into the building directly next to the Hoth forces. Corvus scrambled up the stairs to get an aerial view of this, localised battle. When the next blaster shot went off, he smashed the window. Leaning out, he propped himself up on the ledge and reached out with the Force. He draped his surroundings around himself, willing himself to disappear. Then, he opened his coin pouch.

Most coinshots used many small projectiles, throwing them away in a way similar to a shotgun. Corvus had honed his practice to using only one, but performing proportionally intricate and slight movements with them. He picked one up, then dropped it down into the back ranks of Hoth soldiers. They moved with a similar precision as Shan, working as a well-oiled machine to drive Shan back. They were doing well, as well. At the moment, only blasters were involved in this skirmish, which was good. A lightsaber may be slightly too much for the current Shan defences.

One particular Hoth soldier was skilled with a blaster, marking each target and usually hitting their mark. With a soldier like that, Shan wouldn’t last long. The Aleena flew his coin to the underside of the man’s gun, and jerked it upward whenever he shot. One problem solved. Corvus dropped a handful more coins down to the ground, ready for quick use against soldiers. When some of the soldiers stepped forward onto one, the coin would jerk upward, tripping them. Corvus could make one pin people to the ground, or slam into shoulders. Generally, in the heat of battle, the coins would go unnoticed. Of course, they could be made lethal if he used the thin-edge instead of the flat-side, but that was unnecessary here. Corvus kept on being a nuisance to the Hothians. It delayed them, for sure, but didn’t quite do enough to keep them from advancing.

Obviously, though, this group of Hothians had been dropping behind. The hum of an engine betrayed the commander who was coming to check up on them. As it neared, the distinctive rattle of a swoop bike stuttered just over the noise of the battle below. *Tistito Kingang.*

The support-soldiers left a gap for him to pull up into. Dismounting, he conversed quietly with some of the soldiers, then he made his way to the front, his red saber igniting. Not willing to face him just yet, Corvus used on two of his coins and pressed them to either side of Tisto’s hilt, using them to jerk the saber aside when he tried to deflect. Despite his meddling, Tisto usually managed to find some way to deflect - he was skilled like that. It didn’t last long, though. After a couple of jerks, Tisto found the coins and held a hand up, yelling “Halt!”

One of the Shan soldiers took a pot-shot, but the Kiffar turned toward him as he shot, waving the bolt away with his bare held-up hand. No one else shot after that.

“Show yourself, Satelite. Don’t play with me. Fight me,” he demanded. The soldiers had backed away from their Jedi, leaving a sizeable sparring ring. There were no Shan jedi nearby. Corvus had to take this one. Corvus pushed himself off the ledge, landing to the back and right of Tisto.

“I hate to disappoint you, Kingang, but I am no Satelite. Not any more.”

Tisto turned, raising an eyebrow, “Corax? Taking sides?”

“I was actually enjoying a perfectly good cup of tea over there-” he gestured to the cafe. “-when everything was upturned and I was forced to avenge the pot of brew.”

“Indeed?” Tisto bent down, adjusting a robe at his feet.

“You said ‘Fight me.’ Shall we begin?”

“Indeed.”

Tisto pointed his saber down and to the right, standing in a stance not of the traditional forms. Corvus lit his golden blade, and adopted his fencing pose. Tisto leapt forward, not moving his saber but his clenched other hand, releasing a handful of dirt in Corvus’ direction. The Aleena rapidly spun, gathered Force energy and slammed it onto the ground, pushing the dirt away. It also repelled Tisto’s next attack, which looked like an untrained blow, but likely had considerable power and thought put into it. Whilst he hadn’t fought Tisto before, he’d heard of both his skill and unpredictability. Corvus was able to parry his next attack, darting closer to the Kiffar. The Kiffar acted fast, sweeping his leg around, but the Aleena was fast too, leaping over the leg.

This would be a hard, potentially long fight. Was it worth it?

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Apparently Tisto had had no qualms about their spar, as he had fought and fought, with immense strength and speed. Corvus, in the end, had leapt backward, picking up two of his dropped coins from behind Tisto and pulling them into the backs of his ankles, toppling Tisto. Corvus then darted into the Shan forces, disappearing from view. He was sure that the Battle-team Leader of the Knights had more important things to do.

Corvus had nothing more important to do than find a good bottle of whiskey for the evening. He imagined that settling down at one of the cafes and watching the battle unfold could be quite entertaining.

Turns out, it was *very* entertaining.