

**Main Launch Bay**  
**The Village, Kias**  
**34ABY**

“Ok, what does that do again?” It was a valid question, with an honest answer, from an eager learner. But it had been asked thrice before.

“Seriously?” The deck sergeant looked at Xolarin and his shoulders lowered as his enthusiasm for the morning’s session noticeably waned in that instant.

The Jedi nodded, attempting to recover. “Wait, it’s the power coupling for the port atmospheric repulsor pad, right?”

The pilot who was training Xolarin nodded in return, but said nothing. Finally, that detail had sunk in. And it was about time, for over the past few weeks, Xolarin had been in an intensive pilot and mechanical engineering training course. Sure he could fly a shuttle or a small star fighter, although he had lost his chops on cargo vessels since he had joined the Jedi. But working on craft? That was an entirely new ballgame.

A few months prior, mid-mission to the Takodana system, Xolarin’s master Turel had mentioned that the pupil should probably learn a bit about starfighter and shuttle repair. He would not necessarily be trained in mechanics or anything of that ilk, but he would learn some basics. So once Battleteam Zirael was moved in to The Village on Kias, Ranger Corvus had Xolarin assigned some deck duty with the other pilots. Xolarin always had an affinity for the A-Wings and that would be his target.

Fast forward to the present and the Jedi was just a day away from an exam of sorts - a true test of what he had learned thus far. And although he had a few stumbling blocks including memorizing certain things - despite his higher intellect - Xolarin was fairly sure he would do well.

The sergeant had told Xolarin to go back and get some rest for the practical. The Jedi did so, stopping by a meditation room for a little while, and grabbing a meal. He turned in early and was ready to go, with a fresh mind and fresh hands in the morning.

“Ok,” started the sergeant. He and a few other pilots were standing there, along with Master Turel and a couple other Jedi. A medic was also on hand, which Xolarin thought odd. The deck officer continued. “You are going to approach this A-Wing Starfighter, assess the damages, and fix the problems to the best of your ability. Easy peasy. Are you ready?”

“Indeed, Sergeant,” replied Xolarin. He stepped forward, dressed in his normal tunic with no robe or anything. He still had his lightsaber clipped on like normal, but he also had a few tools clipped onto his belt that were not there on any other day. Xolarin the mechanic was more than ready.

Xolarin got to work, assessing the damages as instructed. There were a few power connections that needed replacing and some lubricant that needed refilling in one of the main landing gear control boxes. A lot of the work needed to be done in the cockpit once those fixes were in place.

The Jedi was already getting quite dirty half-way in, getting the couplings and tubes hooked up, refilling oil canisters, and double-checking power connections across the board. He was done in about 30 minutes, although he looked as if he had been there all day.

“Alright, let’s fire this thing up,” he said as he hopped up into the cockpit. The window was still open so he could hear and see easily from his cohorts in the area. Xolarin flipped a couple toggles and heard the whirl of electric motors turn on. And then a few more toggles and the turbines began to spun, repulsors warming up as well. All seemed well...

But it was far from well. Soon after the second set of switches engaged the engines, a pop could be heard like a ballistic rifle and something flew out from the starfighter. Smoke or steam, or both, spewed out the top. Xolarin quickly reacted and looked on the console for the culprit, shutting down a couple subsystems. The smoke and steam stopped, thankfully, and all was well again.

But it was far from well. Right after the subsystems were shut down, a gasket popped and one of the new power couplings he had just repaired yesterday snapped off, shutting down one of the engines of the A-Wing. Xolarin sighed but kept his wits about him, flipping another toggle which shut power from that side and balanced power out from the other engine. The ship was running at half-capacity, but it was still flyable, and all was well yet again.

But it was far from well. As soon as the engines balanced out, several alerts sounded in the cockpit and the oddest noise could be heard from inside and outside the ship. The engines whirled and whined as the system overloaded. The fact that several kinds of the wrong lubricants had been used, in addition to the incorrect tube fittings in one engine, gave way to a massive power surge that was not captured by the balanced power setup that was put in place ad-hoc.

And before anyone could react, a small explosion banged and startled everyone in the launch bay. The A-Wing shook, although it stayed put, and Xolarin remained seated. Smoke bellowed out the top, with the flames only lasting a few seconds, following by that steamy-smokey stream that now slowly and constantly floated out of the ship. The folks standing around instinctively ducked and covered their heads. But as the engines shut down, the whining noise of a solid-running ship coming to a halt, everyone present relaxed just a bit, realizing they were not all going to die in a fiery explosion.

Yes, things were definitely not well.

Xolarin got up and hopped out of the ship, walking over to the sergeant and the others. He did not even bother looking at the mess he created. He had the tools he was using still in his hand and he slapped them in the sergeant's hands. "These are yours," he said in a somber tone.

The deck sergeant said nothing, but had a slight curl to his lips with a hint of a smile. Xolarin was filthy - he looked more Sith than Jedi as far as clothes, covered in smoke and ash and oil and gunk. As much as a buzz cut could be frazzled, Xolarin's hair was a mess. And as calm as a talented sage like Xolarin could be, he was anxious on the inside, which showed a bit in his eyes.

Vanguard Turel noticed that look in his eyes and gave him a pat on the shoulders. "You'll get it, Xol."

There was a reason the dirty, disheveled, and disheartened Xolarin was a sage and not an ace. But boy did he have an appreciation for the pilots and mechanics that he hadn't before. And maybe that's just what he needed to learn.