Chains Reforged

By the amazing T&T (Tra’an and Tim)

*Stylistic note:*

*We chose to do the epic ballad in mixed verse. At the ballad’s start, the text takes place in iambic pentameter, which then descends into irregular verse even as the protagonists descend into the chaos of war. This lasts until the battle ends and, with order restored and the ‘traitors’ defeated, returns to iambic pentameter for the denouement.*

*Story note:*

*Everything in these stories has obviously been simplified. This thing is long enough without delving into convoluted Brotherhood politics. :P*

And so it came that strife began among

The Brethren who in threefold conference

Convened; in secrecy, the rebel Clans

Had gather’d bright and best amongst their kin,

Against the murd’rous Pravus there to plot.

Arcona, First and Shadowed Clan, had met

In Rising Citadel; and overlooked

The devastation wrought in recent days.

There Uji spoke, his words upon all minds:

“In ruination stand we now, our friends,

The Jedi, sunder’d, fallen, and a-run

Whilst here, Inquisitors assess and see

Our every move to render fruitful aid.

Shall we then live, in servitude, and beg

For murd’rous Pravus’ mercy? Never! We

Must strike, and strike amain! The tyrant’s doom.”

He scarce had spoke when deep voice filled the room

Wuntila! Dragon of Arcona’s past.

“Your foolish words surprise me not, aver’d

By youth and doubtful provenance, but I

Have seen first-hand the fate of those who speak

Against the Iron Throne upon who sits,

Who rules us all: the Lord of Darkness’ Sith

Would surely have us all in chains if but

A whisper of your traitor’s words he heard.”

Bemused, the Summit sat, until a voice

Resounded, Consul, ruler, Atyiru,

Majestic Light who leads the Darkest Clan.

“I seek not war for war’s own sake, but peace,

Seems far away indeed. As we confer,

Our brethren do alike! And so our friends,

Ascendant Plagueis, Deathly Tarentum,

By their design now plot against the Throne.

This shall suffice; our allied clans shall strike,

We offer them no aid, but neither shall,

Arcona’s hands array against their plot.

Away from battle shall we watch so that,

We may observe and from success or doom,

Learn what may bring that gruesome Lord to heel.”

Upon Yridia’s darkened shores met three,

Among their fellows greatest, bearing name

Of Frosty, heritor of Khyron’s seat,

Imposing, splendid Ranarr, Rollmaster,

And Iron-will’d Sith, venerable lord.

“My lord,” Ranarr began, “we must take arms,

Against the loathsome killer Pravus, who

Commanded Plagueis’ blood be shed and now,

His hungry eyes towards Tarentum turns.

Beseech I you, our Consul, to go to war,

For he who strikes the first blow strikes the best.”

“Your courage I commend,” spoke Frosty, “yet,

Your wisdom do I question. No so bad

It is to sit upon these deathly shores

And wait for ending, hastening our way.

Few choices are left, war would ruin us,

For none can match our Lord in Force or Arms.”

“Now cease!, commanded Sith, “lest ignorance

Consume you whole! Another stands by right

To take his place upon the Iron Throne.

It is he, Other-Hunting traitor’s scourge,

Who bright of blade stands to battle, with name

Of Havok! And Havok he shall bring them!”

Resolved, Tarentum girds itself for war.

Upon Aliso’s pillar stood Teylas,

With age’s wit, wise despite his thirst for blood.

Surveying falling wreckage of their way,

from this world made newly, righteously theirs

Selika of the Crafty Words and Tra'an

Whose judgment was of the blood-soaked scales, watched

As wreckage became like the firmament,

And spouted cataracts of flaming tears.

"Thus is the Tyrant's will made manifest,

In taking pillage from deserving grasp,

To wayward place our Clan confined as if

To taunt our worth to him,” tall Teylas spoke.

To which Selika did respond, "Retort

In violence will not sway the Master’s will.

Lest we be crushed, ‘tis patience we need most.”

Bemused, Teylas nodded but Tra’an then

Reminded him: "We do not fight alone.

Tarentum pledged to heed our call for aid.

We came when they were needful. It is time

That we recall the debt." With hisses, words,

A malice born of harm to Plagueis sons,

Took root in Teylas' mind. So close to his

own thoughts, they did spur him to act in haste.

"Let them then be Ascendant Wings to us.

And lift us up, so that together we

May take to Antei, there the Throne’s defeat

Inflict, and spite the one who spites us all."

Thus in Pillar's shadow stood they, demons

Their shackles loosened, Plagueians surging 'gainst

The reins to slake their bloodlust against those

Of Antei who’d disturb their shadowed rest

And strike from inky Heaven with disdain.

For, at command of Pravus’, fiery lance

Descended, struck with murderous intent,

And kept Ascendant host away from ships,

And with much wailing and gnashing of teeth,

Resounded then their doleful cries for help,

Then answered by Tarentum’s deathly wings.

From surface then Ascended they, on wings

Of Deathly splendor did they ride the lanes

Of space to baleful place, away to seek

The home of hate, called Antei, darkest world,

And threaten hideous fall upon he,

Who Brotherhood commands from Iron Throne.

By Shadow watched, enraged advanced the two

Ascending, Deathly, wrathful demons bound

United not in fear but hatred, wrong’d

By him who stood supreme above their station.

In heaven as on Antei flames did reign,

And rent Deaths’ chariots wing from wing apart,

As Plagueis hollow shells advanced anew,

With torment, fire and malice rent their foes,

Leaving a path of destruction behind,

A wake of souls and soulless, deathly still.

They marched upon the sacred Hall of Dark,

With flash of lightning and thund’rous crack,

Did Droid and Sith bewitch the Iron Throne,

Their passage breaking legions in their wake.

Into the mouth of hellish power did

Disgraceful death they willingly confront.

And there before the maw he stood and spoke,

"I am named Havok, and shall bring Pravus

What belongs to Pravus, and grant the death

That he deserves so justly." And with his

Words darkness grew and did descend,

And Deathly and Ascendant Clans made war,

To strike a blow against he who had grown,

too weighty for even the Iron Throne.

Down and Down and further unto darkness lest,

There be any doubt of courage amongst them.

Turn and turn round corner and hairpin to follow,

And then discover a hail of crimson and sapphire,

That sought to stop and rip them asunder like,

Prey before the great wolves of the ancient cycle.

Undeterred they advanced, deflecting and deterring,

The multihued destruction back upon its creators to,

Much destruction ensued as death from the Deathly,

And Ascendant reigned rampant upon those hapless

And unlucky in the pursuit of the one called Pravus.

Then from the Darkness a challenge rose forth,

"Who dares challenge the Grand Master's

Royal Guard?" With much hissing of weaponry,

The answer was given not in words but in combat,

With blades of light clash and slashing, whirling

Dervishes of death in motion arrested only,

By others. With but a moment of pause between,

Conflict and resolution borne not of passion but of duty.

With time, the Royal Guard fell to a man. Leaving,

Behind the way forward to the lair of the,

Resurrected, that he might again find purpose in,

This duty that he failed in the last life as it,

Was not yet complete and thus weighed heavy,

Upon him and all others for whom he had plans.

In this place of hallowed darkness he there stood,

Head bowed, arms raised, power emanating such,

As had not been felt since the Lion of Tarthos,

Failed in his attempt to cast the Great Rite.

Havok strode forth, lightsaber shining like the blades,

Of old champions for which they were known.

"You would seek to defile this place Other-Slayer?

To cast me from Power as you cast Him whose name,.

Is proscribed and cast to the wastes of time? In me,

You will find not so easy a target as He. Begin."

With a gesture and the word, the sabers of light that,

Belonged to the dead rose to join Pravus in combat.

With the flick of a wrist they engaged, not bound to,

Mortal constraints they skewered and sliced, deadlier

Than any disembodied blade had a right to.

Thus with a smile that grinned, did Pravus begin,

His assault upon the Deathly and Ascendant force,

Giving no quarter and suff'rin no prisoners,

Did Pravus bring Death to the Deathly, and

Ascendancy to the next plane to the Ascendant.

One by one they fell, until all that remained were,

Havok and Pravus locked in a duel of the ways.

Oldest of the Old against Newest of the New,

Power ebbed and flowed betwixt them as,

If they fought not just as titans but as nexi,

Determining from which source of Strength,

The Clans would draw in the face of Power.

Shining though he might, hero he was not,

And facing the power of Pravus, Havok did,

Fall to Jarkai and the Elder Storm of legend.

When the time came to strike the Final blow,

Pravus did not. "Get hence and back to your

Clans. Tell them and the Brotherhood that you

Now know your place in things. The Shadow,

Clan comes to rescue your pathetic leavings."

"Let this be the lesson of power that is taught,

To you and yours forever now and more,

The Brotherhood is not a Brotherhood to be,

Divided by the will of the few. Only driven by,

The will of the whole. I am that will, and your,

Defiance has failed in the face of it."

And thus that rebellion of those who had suffered,

Had come to the end that had been forseen from,

The very beginning and exposed the alliances,

That would stand against him, and those to stand,

For He who Is the Grand Master of Legend.

The Shadowed, Deathly, and Ascendant Clans

With empty hands and broken fingers flee,

To scattered worlds upon Galactic Disk,

And thereupon to nurse a multitude

Of wounds, and sup upon their bitter dreams

To taste the ashes of defeat and loss.

And yet arrayed round Antei’s flick’ring star

Stands Pravus, bloody-handed and supreme

Abreast of foes’ designs from start to end

And hastening their fall against his might.

Subdued and broken subjects chained anew,

And he, the architect of their despair.