

Footsteps hit pavement in rapid succession as the human sprinted down an alleyway, his hand unsheathing his electrostaff as he ran. Sariel asked no one in particular to help him make a difference, to protect him from harm and ensure he saw another sunrise. It was a small ritual he performed before a battle or struggle of any kind. This time, however, was different. This time he asked not for himself, but for others. His meditations were interrupted, the very thing instrumental at keeping Sariel the man he was. Without them, something more akin to a beast than a man would inhabit the human's flesh. He reached into his pocket with his free hand and clicked on his comm.

"I'm on my way." said the human, "Is there no chance for a peaceful solu--"

Sariel was interrupted by screams and blaster fire singing through the comm, the sound making him double his speed. His mind, usually tranquil and filled with positivity, tasted something it had not felt in sometime. Anger. His friends in danger, Sariel reached out with the Force and could feel they were nearby. Their own minds were firing off emotions that the Odanite felt as though they were his own. Tears formed as he felt the medley of feelings, his teeth gnashing as he felt flare ups of pain ripple when they did.

His body spewed forth from one alleyway into a street, turning left and heading down another alley. He lurched forward and vaulted a dumpster, tucking into a roll as he landed and positioning himself in a crouching stance. He had found what he was looking for.

But sadly, it was too late. His friends lay wounded and dying, and his mind once more felt something foreign to it for far too long. Grief. As his eyes scanned the scene before him, people slumped against brick walls as they moaned in pain, he didn't even notice when his thumb turned his staff from stun to lethal. His eyes brimmed with more tears, and sobs began to trickle from his mouth. He did his best to pull himself together, hearing the sounds of battle nearby.

He followed the noise, and his eyes were met with a scene the human hoped to never see. Collective forces, countless numbers, swarming the members of Odan-Urr responding to a distress signal and giving them no mercy. Sariel reminded himself of his views, that not completing his meditation was no excuse for allowing darkness to guide his actions. But the more he reminded himself, the more he realized the words seemed hollow. The more he said them, the more he realized his hated the meditations and himself when he did them. Anger, grief, self loathing swirled together. Every failure, every speck of shame inside him, bubbled to the surface and the evil inside the man that had been repressed for so long had found its chance to play.

Sariel leaped into the air, swirling like a corkscrew as he flurried his enemy with a series of strikes. Cybernetics sparked as his electrostaff hit them, and the Odanite cherished every feeling of vengeance he could. The Collective soldier responded with his own barrage of attacks, blaster fire and melee attacks from a third mechanical arm danced around Sariel. He dodged the blaster fire, swatting away the mechanical arm with his staff as he did so. When he landed, he pivoted his foot and crouched low as he swung his leg around. It caught the leg of another Collective soldier, dropping him on his back where Sariel would end his life.

And in that moment, when the soldier's eyes bulged and his last breath kissed his lips, Sariel could see again. The dark pall had lifted, the emotions banished by the sobering feeling of one truly betraying everything they care for. The evil had made him do the unspeakable.

Sariel had taken a life. When he looked up, he saw Tisto Kingang killing the other Collective soldier that Sariel had attacked. When the Kiffar saw what the human had done, he smiled.

“That’s the price of freedom, Sariel.” said Tisto before he continued his assault against their attackers.

“My soul?” Sariel whispered to himself as he stared at his hands, trembling.