

Fighting With Yourself

Vez Hiruno and Teikhos Ta'var, 14287



"Catch."

Teikhos tossed the deactivated training saber through the air and Vez managed to catch it with a minimal amount of fumbling.

"I still don't get why I have to use this stupid antique," she muttered.

"You lack discipline," the Zeltron answered in a mock serious tone, imitating a cheesy holovid master. "You lack the will of the warrior."

"Whatever."

"Ok, you want the real answer?" Teikhos asked. "You do it because it's part of the package. But if it makes you feel better, lightsabers *are* practical."

Vez rolled her eyes. "Mmhmm. Practical like capes."

"You want proof? Shoot me."

"What?"

"Take your little vambraces and try to take me down."

"I mean, if you really—" the Mirialan feigned reservation before she started unloading on the Jedi with both barrels.

As she raised her arms, Teikhos' training saber snapped to life and became a blue blur as he swatted the incoming bolts out of the air, driving them all into the ground with fluid precision. Once he found his cadence, the Zeltron took one step forward, then another, steadily cutting through the few meters between him and Vez.

The air was thick with burnt ozone and the vambraces grew hot against Vez's sleeve, but she kept laying down fire as fast as the weapons could handle. The Jedi was close now, almost within striking distance. She switched modes and he left gauntlet belched forth a cone of flame. Teikhos disappeared in the screen of light and smoke.

"Oh, frak! I'm sor—AH!" Almost before she disengaged the flamethrower, the Jedi's blade lunged in and bit at her arm, right where the vambrace's control panel was.

"Lesson one," the Jedi said, not even singed. "*Cho mai*. The lightsaber gives you the chance to destroy your opponent's weapon. Ideally it's not strapped to their arm at the time, but a new arm is a lot easier to find than a new head." The Zeltron tried not to look too smug as his opponent unstrapped the vambrace and started rubbing her forearm. "Lesson two: training sabers still hurt."

"Yeah, I get your point. Fine. Teach me."

"Ok, first drop all your gear. It's just extra weight."

"I didn't know the stupid laser swords could block fire," Vez muttered and she started shedding weapons.

"Nah, that was the Force."

"What? You cheated!"

The Jedi grinned. "Sorry, I value my eyebrows more than my honor."

"Whatever."

"Ok, you want to work on a disarm like that?"

Vez nodded.

"Great. Hold your hilt in both hands, square your shoulders, and get in a comfortable stance. Then turn it on."

The Mirialan settled in and thumbed the switch on her training saber. The weapon burst to life and the viridian blade wobbled a bit as her hands got used to the weight of it.

"It's heavier than I was expecting."

"People always say that," Teikhos nodded. "The freaky thing is that yours won't be that way."

"What do you mean?"

"Something about the kyber crystals. When you build your own, you're bonded to the crystal and the saber will lean into your movements somehow. I don't understand it, but it's the way things work."

The Mirialan looked skeptical, but didn't question him. "So what do I do?"

"Block this," the Jedi answered. He swung his saber down and across his body, measured if not exactly slow. Vez swung hers horizontally and batted the strike away.

Teikhos nodded. "Not bad, but try to reign it in a little. You don't want to waste energy with big, wild swings. Again." The pair practiced the sequence twice more.

Teikhos walked his new student through a few more strikes until they had covered attacks from the four main angles, two high and two low. "Ok, we're going to go through these four strikes faster and faster."

"What happened to *cho mai*?" Vez asked.

Teikhos abruptly lunged forward, thrusting his saber into the air beneath Vez's hands. "You shoot in like this and just pop the tip of your blade up. It's not graceful but it'll get the job done." He gave the Mirialan a few chances to practice.

"I think I've got the hang of it," she said at last.

"Good. No we're going to go through that attack/parry sequence, and we're going to keep getting faster. You stick to those four strikes in order *but* if you think you can pull it off without getting hit, *cho mai* me. Got it?"

"Got it."

The Zeltron grinned as he brought his saber up in front of his nose in the classic Makashi salute. "We'll see about that."