**38 ABY**

**Arx System**

**Nesolat Platform**

The Nesolat’s lights went from the neutral white light to the flashing red mere seconds after the first impact that shook it away from its orbit.

Aru Law was in his brand-new office when it happened. He had just been introduced to his duties by the new Headmistress Ciara Tarentae and was getting used to his enormous computer.

“Frack!” He claimed. “What in a Gundark’s name was that?”

Soon after, a protocol droid entered his office and casually warned the Magistrate of the impending danger.

“I can see that! What’s happening?”

“It appears the Nesolat Platform is under attack by a Collective fleet. The platform has sustained heavy damage after the initial impact, its stabilizers have been compromised and its most likely going to be destroyed.”

The Human was dumbfounded. “Is this a joke? I just got this job and the whole damn thing is going to explode?”

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“Amis, do you read me?” The Gray Jedi was trying to contact his partner who was waiting for him by his ship. “Do you read me?”

“I read you,” the blue Twi’lek said amidst pants and static on the commlink, “what happened?”

“I’ll explain later. Get the ship ready!” The sound of blasters prevented Amis Jumah from answering. Concerned, Aru picked his two blasters and made haste towards the hangar.

While he was running along the circular platform, he noticed a group of newcomers panicking in their dorms. He stopped.

“What are you doing here? Make for the hangars!”

The four students looked at him, fear in their eyes. A Falleen girl was holding a young Sullustan in her arms. He was already dead, shot in the chest several times. Aru entered their room and kneeled by the girl.

“You knew him?” He asked, to which she nodded in tears. With a sigh, the Human slowly laid the Sullustan down and helped the girl up. “I’ll get you out of here.”

On their way out of the dorms, Aru spotted two soldiers, armed with blasters, firing inside another room. The screams coming from the same location indicated that anyone inside would now be dead. Then, the two men laid eyes on the group, the Jedi was trying to help escape.

“Go that way, Hangar 5-B!” Aru instructed as he lit up his saber. A green color shone amidst the smoke and red flashes of the corridor. The two men kept moving forward and pointed their blasters at the Human, whom had taken a defensive stance, his specialty.

As they fired several bolts at the Human, he deflected them with relative ease. The tight corridors made the bolts unpredictable when Aru deflected them. As the man fired again, Aru dodge to the left and immediately parried the last one back to his shooter, piercing his chest.

The man fell to the ground, giving Aru time to deal with the second one. The Human grabbed his blaster ‘Titania’ and peppered the second soldier from head down.

“That was fun.” He smirked and holstered his blaster.

He noticed the first man he had killed was missing. Looking around, he found no traces of him. Another explosion distracted him from his thinking, and he went back on his way.

**\* \* \***

The Hangar was close now. Most of the station was destroyed, or about to be. Even the hangar looked like a warzone. As Aru ran inside the massive room, he looked for his ship.

“Hopefully they made it.” He claimed to himself, pondering if leaving the students to their own devices had been better or not.

Behind a bigger shuttle, the Grey Jedi spotted his Star Commuter 2000. Ducked near it, the familiar figure of his Twi’lek companion, Amis Jumah. She was providing covering fire to the academy students who were running in her direction. Aru looked behind them and saw another of those soldiers he had just faced. He ran as fast as he could, hoping to intercept him before he could do any more damage, but he was too late. The soldier was carelessly firing against the group of students. In a matter of seconds, two of them were shot down.

Finally, the Human caught up and threw himself in front of the students. The Falleen girl he had helped was injured, but still alive. He signaled her to head for the ship, and picked his blaster pistols.

“Get ready for liftoff!” The Jedi yelled at Amis.

The Twi’lek doctor helped the two remaining students aboard and boarded as well. Now Aru only had to face the soldier. When he took a closer look, he noticed his enemy had his chest pierced by a blaster on the exact same spot he had inflicted earlier, indicating it was the same man.

“I killed you back there…” He claimed confused. “How is that possible?”

The soldier didn’t say a word. Instead, he grunted deeply and picked his blaster rifle and began shooting. Luckily, Aru had time to prepare a Force barrier and managed to absorb the impact, though it made him much less mobile. When the soldier stopped firing, Aru lifted his barrier and shot back with both his blasters.

The man fell on the floor, this time for good, Aru hoped. But there was no time to examine the body, since more of those strange soldiers were arriving and firing back at the Grey Jedi.

Aru ran towards his ship. Amis was at the boarding door, ready to help him. A blaster bolt passed very close to him, tearing his robe and scratching his right arm. Another blaster hit him directly on his left arm. A few meters away from his ship, Aru reached out to the Force and jumped the distance right inside it.

“Punch it!”

Tinker, his droid, who was piloting the ship, initiated liftoff, giving time for Amis to take control and get them out of there.

As they left the exploding hangar, they encountered a massive fleet outside, surrounding the Nesolat and firing relentlessly at it. It allowed the small ship to pass through the blockade easily.

“We’re going into hyperspace in 3, 2, 1…” Amis announced. And then the jump was made.

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**Aru’s Star Commuter 2000**

**Hyperlane to Port Ol’Val**

Everyone was silent aboard the ship. The two surviving students sat on opposite seats, both staring at the ground. Tinker kept watch for any potential pursuer and Amis was patching Aru.

“Where did they hit you?”

“A slight graze on my right arm and a direct hit on my left one. Lucky for me I don’t have a left arm.” The Human mocked.

“Not funny,” the Twi’lek said while she bandaged Aru’s right arm, “and what was that all about?”

“Honestly, I have no idea.” Aru said looking out of his cockpit. “They were Collective forces, but we weren’t expecting this attack at all. I need to have a word with Ciara.”

“You need to rest.” The blue doctor ordered, pulling his forehead back. “Sleep, I’ll wake you when we’re there.”