



Phase I: Fiction - Combat Writing

Entry by V'yr Vorsä (6463)

High-Value Target: Group of four (4) [Hive Mind Marines](#)

Nesolat station

Arx system

Sparks rained from the exposed wiring and damaged panels lining the long, gray hallway curving along the length of one of the wings of Nesolat station. Damaged by sustained enemy fire and repeated boarding actions, the once-orderly station lay in tatters, no section was spared from the fighting. The corridor, itself severely damaged, branched into dozens of T-junctions along its length, leading to other sections of the station, mainly libraries, training yards, dojos, crew quarters, and administrative offices.

A squad of Odanite Tanduran commandos had just passed one such T-junction, leading into yet another devastated library empty of all its usual workers, and rushed on tired feet towards the all-important administrative section, checking every so often for targets as they were trained to do on so many missions before. In their center, protected by their bodies and blasters, General V'yr Vorsa issued orders on the fly as the situation developed. They had already evacuated much of the previous sections, but the administrative wing in front of them was the focus of the Collective assault, mainly due to housing the Headmistress' office as well as archives and offices vital to the daily operating of the Shadow Academy.

"General, hallway clear as far as we can see, ma'am," the sergeant in command of the squad — Idiian Brolen, Vorsa had remembered — said in a level tone, as he aimed his blaster down the corridor.

"Good work, sergeant. Proceed to the—" Her order was silenced by a blaster shot fired from behind them. It seared through one of the soldier's chest, vaporizing his light armor on impact. He fell with a gasp as his comrades turned to shoot at their attackers: four armor-clad figures advanced on their position, weapons firing. They had seemingly come out of nowhere, though Vorsa suspected they had found a way through one of the earlier sections.

The way the four Collective soldiers moved in unnatural unison, even avoiding blaster bolts as they came at them, made Vorsa feel uneasy and cautious. She stepped in front of the squad, lightsaber activating with a brilliant flash of sapphire. Two shots, aimed low at the kneeling sergeant's head, she easily deflected back with her blade. One hit an enemy in the

shoulder, scorching the plastoid plate, while the other went wide, deflecting harmlessly into a wall. The shots were far too precise, even for special forces and her feeling of unease grew. As the enemy drew closer she understood why the feeling was so intense. Their movements and their armor reminded her of a time when she was hunted by the Emperor's death squads: Purge troopers. And even though those were long dead, these new foes seemed no less dangerous.

"Sergeant, retreat into the administrative section," she barked the order while deflecting another shot wide, away from her men. "These foes are beyond you." She ran forward like a blur before Brolen could even react. But he was a military man, and orders were orders. Reluctantly he commanded his squad back, leaving his General alone with an unknown enemy.

Vorsa's speed brought her into focused enemy fire far quicker than she might have liked, but the squad behind her, at least, would remain safe. A blaster bolt whistled past her head just as she shifted her weight to evade it, and singed her armorweave cloak. Another deflected once more off of her blue blade, this time straight into the helmet of one of the enemy soldiers. It reflected off of it at an angle and staggered the man, forcing the rest to block him from Vorsa's sight. The other three continued to blast away as their brother recovered, one of their shots catching Vorsa's blade low on her hip while another one, deliberately aimed, rushed for her head. Mere moments before it would have struck, it dissipated against a shimmering barrier of Force energy.

The Neti charged the first trooper just after her barrier harmlessly evaporated another bolt. He shifted his weight and dodged to the side, barely avoiding the searing blade. It caught the edge of his pauldron and bounced off of the surface. The dark cloud of realization clouded Vorsa's expression as she twirled her blade to keep the troopers at bay. The Neti bobbed and weaved in between them, her blade herding them where she wanted, forcing them to check fire or shoot themselves. She would not defeat them with speed, she realized, but cunning.

As if opposing her own judgement, she positioned herself in front of her target so as to block the lines of fire of the two troopers behind him, and charged again. The swift movement of her saber flying from her hand towards the fourth soldier left the man staggered and dodging a lightsaber with a mind of its own. Hands now free, Vorsa's fingers reached out with Force-gifted power and engulfed her target. The man found his legs were sluggish to move, his blaster was

slow to level with the Jedi, and his muscles strained against an invisible power which slowed him to a near-halt. With her full weight, will, and might behind the strike, Vorsal charged fists-first into the trooper's chest. The plastoid plate buckled and shattered under the impact of four hundred pounds of Force-graced power smashing into him like a rail train. She could feel the blow shattering more than armor as the crushgaunts connected mercilessly with bodysuit, flesh, and bone. Flung back like a ragdoll, the trooper smashed into a wall only slight meters away and collapsed on the floor.

He is dead, she was sure. Unfortunate, but necessary.

The other three paused and looked at their fallen brother in unison, ignoring Vorsal completely as she recalled her blade and backed away to keep her distance. She noticed their robotic movements even more acutely now that she had a closer and clearer view. A chill ran over her when she saw they were retreating, with no small amount of haste, away from their fallen comrade, and her. She turned to look to her downed opponent a mere moment before she sensed imminent danger.

The soldier's body erupted into a brilliant flash of light, heat, and pressure. The explosion was so intense that it cooked off the thermal detonator on his belt which only added to its destructive power. Vorsal's hastily raised barrier, now engulfed in flame, shattered like a pane of glass as the pressure wave sent her flying into the library she had passed only a minute ago with her troops. She rolled backwards, catching herself on all-fours to arrest her momentum, and shook her head violently. Her ears were buzzing and her vision blurred for a moment before she regained much-needed control. Smoke and flame billowed in the hallway where the trooper had once been, filling the library and obscuring her view. Her blue-bladed lightsaber lay on the floor to her left, shattered by the explosion, its electronic guts sparking with the last vestiges of battery life.

The blaster fire nearly caught her unaware and flat-footed. One shot, absorbed by the shield she carried on her belt, dissipated in front of her face, precisely aimed to end her there and then. She jumped into action, drawing on the Force to summon the second saber hilt into her free hand while the other gripped at a wooden table with ethereal fingers and flung it at her attackers. They dodged deftly, but gave her time to ignite the saber and steady herself. Another

volley of blaster shots whizzed past as she bobbed and weaved under them. Vorsa deflected one back to its origin with a flick of her wrist, scorching the blaster right out of the soldier's hands. He immediately drew his pistol and continued shooting while another drew a grenade and tossed it at Vorsa's feet. She flung herself back, unable to properly defend herself against an onslaught of three sustained volleys. The Neti pirouetted through the air just as the ghastly grenade released its adhesive on the very spot she had been occupying.

Landing on one of the tables occupying the middle of the long room, the Jedi braced as if to charge again and reached out with her open palm. One of the troopers, lifted off of the floor by an unseen force, flew directly at her with incredible speed just as Vorsa jumped towards him at full speed. Quite unphased, the man lifted his blaster and fired, breaking what was left of the Jedi's personal shield and blasting away her shoulder plate and bits of cloak. Vorsa's Force-blessed powers were the only thing that kept her alive as she lashed out with her blade. With the searing heat of a miniature sun, the lightsaber slashed the man across the torso, splitting him diagonally in twain. The strike slashed through whatever was in place of his heart and the lifeless body tumbled across the floor behind the Jedi.

Not waiting to see whether her second victim would explode or not, Vorsa charged the next man who, in defiance of her attack, ignited his jetpack and lifted himself out of reach. The second soldier did the same and circled the Jedi high enough above her to be a nuisance to reach. In the large and open library filled with shelves top-to-bottom, their range and maneuverability were limited but effective. With little option but to find cover, Vorsa pulled back, keeping the two in front of her as much as possible.

An audible click and loud whirring emanated from behind the Jedi. Instinctively she ducked and rolled as the incendiary mine, dropped there by one of the troopers moments earlier, propelled its deadly contents at her. The expelling mix of superheated gas and fuel burned against her cloak, rapidly catching the armored fabric alight and scorching the backplate of her armor. Swiftly and with little time to think, Vorsa ripped the garment off of her neck and tossed it aside where it disintegrated like a bonfire. She rolled into cover behind one of the shelves as blaster fire rained down from above.

The shelf gave her a few precious moments to think while she sensed the approaching enemy. Just as one of them rounded the end of the shelf, in line with his target, a bright, white flash seared right through his armor like a thunderbolt. The lightsaber, thrown and pushed at incredible speed, went straight through the man, his armor and jetpack without losing momentum. The jetpack ignited with a rumble of malfunctioning motors and burning fuel. Jets of flame rushed out of its engines as it spun the man around the room like an out-of-control rocket and smashed him into the ceiling lights above. The combined explosions of his jetpack, his grenades, and whatever destructive mechanism he was implanted with disintegrated part of the ceiling along with his body and reverberated through the room, smashing bulbs, screens and rattling shelves and tables alike.

As the explosion settled, leaving tables and chairs alight or blown apart to unrecognition, the last living trooper, sent flying deeper into the library by the blast wave, barely composed and controlled himself for a safe landing. He barely had time to think as he saw the Jedi rushing towards him, lightsaber flying into her hand with practiced efficiency. He tried to ignite his jetpack once more which whimpered with barely a puff of smoke. With little choice, the man pointed his arm at his attacker and flipped the ignition switch. A miniature rocket flew out of the wrist weapon, striking an already damaged and leaning shelf in front of Vorsa, obliterating its base. It tumbled towards the Jedi, its contents raining down on her moments before smashing atop of her.

If the trooper could breathe a sigh of relief he would have. He checked his gear and raised his blaster pointing it at the cloud of dust now rising above the crumpled shelf. He stopped only moments later when he saw it move. The crumbled and twisted pieces of metal lifted inches off the ground and flew directly towards him like an out-of-control speeder. He dodged to the side tumbling and rolling as the massive shelf flew past him and smashed into another, and another, breaking or felling at least a dozen more in a domino-effect.

As swiftly as he dodged, he was back on his feet and pointing his blaster at the Neti, now standing amidst it all. Her armor was burnt and damaged by the rubble, covered in dust and liquid that seeped from a gashing wound on her forehead. Sensing his victory was near, he fired his blaster at the Neti's head with not a moment's pause. She deflected just as expertly as

before, returning the bolt back to him. He was dodging even before she did so, changing position to evade his own returned fire.

With a blur of motion, Vorsal charged the man over tables, chairs and crumpled metal. He shot high, anticipating where she would have been, but it was already too late. The shot stopped in mid-air in front of him, suspended like a holopic, twitching and buzzing with unknowable energy. He too found himself barely able to move, his blaster visibly trembling in his arms as he applied all his might in an attempt to pull the trigger again. The force subsided only a moment too late for him to react to the lightsaber relieving his head from the rest of his body. The blaster bolt slammed into the far-off wall as the energy that held it disappeared. With one last telekinetic shove, Vorsal pushed her opponent's body away from her and down the long library. No explosion came to her relief.

As the dust settled and the Neti's body relaxed, she lost her footing and fell on one knee. Checking to see her wounds, she noticed a deep burn on her thigh where one of the bolts grazed her already-ancient armor and seared her skin. The gash on her forehead seeped life-bearing liquid which entered her eye and obscured her vision. She wiped it off and, regaining control of herself, stood back up. With a determination purer than ever she resorted to follow her men into the administrative section. After all, there could be more of these *things* further into the station, and her men were ill prepared for such a fight. She rushed out of a library now engulfed in flames and debris.