

Arcturus knew exactly what it would feel like when he entered the throne room and this was not it.

A Dominion loyalist to either side of him and half a pace behind, the Sephi warlord waved his free hand and the massive doors to the Anasaye's chamber shuddered open. Despite his fantasies, he didn't actually expect Kaltani to be there, seated on the throne. Given the reports on how the conquest of the palace was progressing, he didn't expect to see anyone at all. But he expected to see the Zeltron casually lounging in the throne least of all.

His men opened fire; anything not Sephi wasn't supposed to be here and certainly wasn't worthy of the throne. With a flash of blue, the Zeltron's lightsaber sprung to life and Arcturus' guardsmen were down, screaming in pain after their own blaster bolts had been redirected into their limbs by the Jedi's blade.

That was when he felt it. Not anticipation, not even fear, but the bleak nothingness as the Jedi choked off his connection to the Force.

“So,” Teikhos began. “I guess you're what all the fuss is about.”

“Kaltani was a fool to allow you degenerates into the system,” Arcturus hissed. He ignited his own blade and held it high across his body, gripping the hilt so tight his knuckles turned a light pink.

“That probably impresses your Dominion friends,” the Zeltron said casually as he stood up and adjusted his cape. “But honestly, after the first few dozen Sith the red saber just seems cliché.”

“I don't have time for this nonsense, Jedi.”

The doors behind him shuddered. A pair of OEF commandos had been hidden just inside the room. One kept his blaster trained on Arcturus' wounded troops while the other secured the door, cutting off his escape. “Oh, I'm pretty sure you do.” The Jedi tapped a finger to his lips. “You don't seem like the type who will surrender without injury but I guess it's sporting to give you the chance.”

Arcturus answered with a roar as he charged forward. Even without the Force, he was a formidable specimen of a noble race and his extensive combat training—which had lasted more than this pathetic fop's lifetime, to be sure—would see him through. He lifted his weapon up above his head and brought it crashing down, only to find his opponent slip out of the way at the last second in a Force-enhanced sidestep.

The crimson blade bit through the empty throne but Arcturus didn't hesitate. He brought the blade up in a backswing. His opponent batted it to one side but took a step back. The Sephi charged forward with a thrust, only to find the Zeltron skittered just out of reach. Arcturus grunted with frustration as he deflected the Jedi's half-hearted riposte.

"I can do this all day, you know," Teikhos said, casually deflecting another slash. "Well, at least for an hour or two. I'm supposed to meet the missus for drinks after we've crushed your forces."

Arcturus struggled to stay calm. He knew *exactly* what the Jedi was playing at: *dun möch*. If he still had access to the Force, his rage would be useful—but cut off as he was his rage was only going to make him reckless. He breathed deeply and studied his opponent. The Zeltron was reluctant to press the attack, and Arcturus thought he could tell why. Keeping an opponent cut off from the Force was draining, and this fool couldn't keep it up for long. The Sephi reached out with one hand and called on all his hatred and frustration. He could feel the Dark Side responding. Too weak and distant to actually choke the Jedi, but there nonetheless.

Teikhos scowled, his lighthearted expression replaced by a furrowed brow.

Arcturus laughed and pressed the attack, hammering at the Zeltron furiously and trying to box him into a corner. He could almost smell the sweat and strain even as he pushed his own muscles to the breaking point.

At last, Teikhos grunted and Arcturus' moment of triumph was upon him. The Dark Side surged through every fiber in his being. He felt his white-hot rage, then became it. Everything else faded away until only his hate, his weapon, and his prey remained. The Sephi unleashed an unearthly howl and pushed forward with unnatural speed. He was almost on the Jedi when he noticed the smile.

Arcturus was in midair, his feet off the ground in a lunge turn leap. Teikhos was a blur, the Light enhancing his own movement as he dipped not half a meter to one side.

Arcturus was flying forward, his crimson blade lashing out at the Jedi. Teikhos was still, save for his arms and azure blade that pushed his opponent's weapon up and out of the way.

Only then did Arcturus see what was right in front of him. He didn't have time to swear before he struck the window, shattering the transparisteel on his way to the plaza below.

Teikhos nodded to one of the soldiers. "Do me a favor and pop him with a stun blast before you call for the medic. I'd like to keep everyone in one piece tonight." As the OEF scrambled to execute the order, the Zeltron reached for the com at his belt. "Alright, he's down. Now about those drinks..."