

## Duel of the Fates

### Khryso Mallus vs. Raziel

The chorus of whispers came to a head as the wind rushed through the forest canopy, driving leaves into a frenzy. Khryso Mallus, just emerging from the Siji Sing Temple, welcomed the fresh, clean air billowing over him. Within his cape, the Desired One was safely tucked away, prepared for delivery to the Dread Lord. However, before Khryso moved further, he realized he wasn't alone.

A Miralukan, Khryso knew the man as Raziel. The briefings on Clan Odan Urr's personnel had made note of him as the Aedile of House Sunrider and a powerful warrior. Raziel stood casually, his lightsaber in hand but asleep. "One chance," the Jensaarai said clearly, "hand it over."

Khryso hesitated, another gust of wind causing Raziel's cloak to billow quietly. Of course, the Chiss had no intention to hand over his hard-won prize, but he wasn't sure he could take the Seer. The Odanite's presence in the Force was as concerning as his reputation and Khryso wasn't exactly well rested. "I won't," Khryso responded, his mind trying to come up with a plan to perhaps talk his way out. "Unfortunately for you, Plag-

Raziel raised his free hand, interrupting Khryso. "That's all I wanted to hear." The Seer's blue saber sprang to life as he launched himself forward, unleashing a flurry of wide but focused strikes towards the Chiss. Khryso barely had time to bring his own lightsaber up, the violet blade moving quickly to deflect the powerful attack.

Khryso was driven backwards, quickly retreating back into the Temple. The Chiss Warrior managed to put several meters between them, bringing both combatants to a temporary pause. The sound of the wind was now dull and distant as the hum of lightsabers echoed in the enclosed Temple antechamber. The poor illumination cast shades of blue and purple across the Aediles, their swords now the main source of light.

Each heartbeat gave Khryso a chance to collect himself further, but the stillness only lasted a few. The sound of footsteps echoed through the room like raindrops as Raziel launched another flurry of strikes. Although the Miralukan's rhythm and tactics were largely the same, his slashes came from different angles and directions. Once again, Khryso found himself being driven back. Within this enclosed space, however, there was much less room to maneuver.

First, one of Raziel's blows singed the edge of his cape, then another forced the Chiss's saber off balance. In a panic, Khryso fell into the Force, finding the energy for his body to quickly vault off the wall behind him, launching himself across the room and giving him a moment to regain his balance.

The Seer turned, adjusting the grip on his saber slightly. As Khryso stared down the Odanite, the two began to circle each other. They were like predators, watching their rival's every move to spot the moment of weakness that would give them an opening. If they were to clash again, Khryso wasn't entirely sure he would be able to escape. His mind began to race, searching desperately for some strategy that could get him away from his physically superior opponent.

That was the moment Raziel struck. Whether the Miralukan sensed the slightest waver in his opponent's concentration or he just saw a fragility in the last step Khryso took was unknown to the Chiss. It didn't matter, however. This drive was Raziel's most powerful yet, the Miralukan channeling the Force to its full effect in an effort to bring the battle to an end. It was all Khryso could do to fend off the attack; the Warrior couldn't spare any concentration on planning.

This time, Khryso kept his back from being put against the wall, wheeling around in his retreat to make sure he didn't corner himself. Raziel didn't give him any opening for a counter attack, however, wearing down Khryso's stamina faster than the Seer seemed to expend his own. The violent clash came to an end when Khryso caught a boot to his gut, sliding backwards and nearly falling to his knees.

The Chiss held up his lightsaber defensively, hoping to ward off the follow up attack as he clutched his abdomen. However, his opponent held back, dropping back into a neutral guard stance, with his knees bent and his saber pointed towards the ceiling. Khryso forced himself back into a full standing position, calling on the Force to bolster him back into fighting shape. Catching his breath, he pressed his lips tightly together.

The two stared at each other for a moment. Khryso could feel the Miralukan's presence in the Force filling the room alongside the musty air. The Seer's "eyes" were trained on his opponent, unwavering and determined. The Sith shifted his grip on his saber, steadying himself and raising the hilt to eye level, angling the sword down towards the ground.

Silence overcame them, even the wind falling quiet to allow the gentle hum of two lightsabers full attention. Khryso could feel the sweat forming at his hairline, and he knew this would be their final exchange.

Raziel surged forward, like a shark surging through the surf. His blue blade dragged itself through the darkness, an azure bolt of lightning seeking ground in the Sith Warrior. The Force moved with the Seer, surging like a storm. Khryso's defense was not enough.

With a peal of thunder, the Sith's violet blade was thrown aside and pain surged through him. A smoking gash carved itself into his side, a streak of blue light piercing his body and leaving the Chiss frozen with shock. For a few breaths, they stood unmoving. One might be mistaken for thinking time had preserved this moment. A strike that brought the Desired One from the hands of one Clan into the hands of another.

Then, Raziel's lightsaber fell silent. As the azure blade disappeared, Khryso collapsed, as if the strings holding him up had been severed. Plunged into gray darkness once again, the Seer reached out with the Force, grasping hold of the heavy weight the Sith carried. The Desired One, appearing not dissimilar to a well-cared-for stone paperweight, emerged from Khryso's cape, floating lightly into Raziel's outstretched hand.

The Seer did not intend to waste any time. In another moment, he was out the Temple door. The wind was at his back as he rushed back to the Odan-Urr camp.