Now I am the Master

Competition Entry

Seer Raziel <https://wiki.darkjedibrotherhood.com/view/Raziel>

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Pin 11584

“Raz, this isn’t necessary,” Soona said, somewhere between pleading in her teenager voice and demanding in her big girl voice. The bizarre fusion of the two doing nothing to help her case. She entreated upon him as she walked backwards, standing before him, and doing her level best to stay him from his course.

“No, tzugera, it really is,” He replied softly, but he did stop his approach. “You’ve only ever been around Jedi. I’m the only Jensaarai you know, so our rituals aren’t exactly forefront on your mind.”

Soona paused to glance over her shoulder, where an elderly, but still quite spry Echani woman was checking the fit of her well-worn armor. “She’s gotta be what, in her seventies?”

Raz shook his head, and did his own armor checks. “Sixty two, and a mean sixty two at that. Mari Tanabel isn’t what you’d ever call frail.”

“But what if you get hurt?”

“Then I’ve stanged up, bad. Really Soona, everything will be fine, I promise. Now go over there with Tharsis and watch. This should be a treat, not a threat.”

Raziel shooed her away to join his surrogate father on the edges of the impromptu ring. Laid out with cable insulation and measuring several meters across in a circle, the two Jensaarai would have plenty of room to maneuver. “I see you set yourself up nicely,” Raz remarked, his baritone carrying across the soon to be battlefield.

“Shien rewards the mobile warrior, I’m happy to see you noticed,” Mari called back, her own voice sounding far stronger than her years might indicate. “I wouldn’t want you finding a choke point to hold onto.”

“Of course you wouldn’t,” Raz muttered before opening the clamshell of his helmet and plopping it onto his head. The shell closed and made the connection to the induction plates in his armor collar, bringing full power to the whole ordeal. The eyes of his helm lit up in an icy cyan to match his lightsaber blade, and the vocoder powered to life.

Across the way, Mari helmed herself up, bringing the whole Corellian Sand Panther aesthetic to completion. The knuckle claws on her gauntlets really brought the whole outfit together so far as Raz was concerned.

“You ready for this anchiu?” She asked, using the Echani term for endearment with pure sincerity.

“As I’ll ever be,” Raz answered. He ignited his lightsaber, the icy blade extending as he flourished a rotation, bringing his weapon up behind his head in Krayt’s Horn stance. In front of him, Mari let her rust orange blade come to life, though she took a reverse grip, common among the Jensaarai.

For a moment, neither of the combatants moved, each of them sizing and measuring up the other. This was as much a battle of wills as it was of skills, and both of them had willpower to spare.

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Away from them and sitting in folding camp chairs, Soona turned to look at the older Miraluka man that Raz had introduced as Tharsis. “Do you expect injuries?”

“Young lady, I expect injuries on a daily basis where my wife alone is concerned. Adding Raziel to the mix is a recipe for headache, I assume, for the both of us.” Tharsis said with a wry smirk.

Soona glanced back to the ring, where neither Jensaarai had yet to even twitch. “I worry about him. Daily really.”

“Then we’re alike that way. Oh, hey, look close, I think something’s about to happen,” Tharsis said, suddenly excited, but as far as Soona could tell, not a thing had changed.

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Both Jensaarai had fallen into their preferred cycle of breathing as they had faced off. Raziel’s slow and controlled intake versus Mari’s much quicker inhale. Designed to saturate oxygen in her bloodstream, she was the polar opposite of her apprentice that way.

As it might indicate, this was how Mari seized the initiative and darted preternaturally fast towards Raziel, her lightsaber behind her as she ran. Prepared for hostility from the outset, Raziel waited, not taking the bait.

When she’d closed tight enough, Mari brought her lightsaber up in a vertical uppercut shot, clearly meant to force drastic movement to parry. Instead, Raziel turned his whole body, brought his back foot around, and leaned into the block, his body weight adding to the stop.

Mari propped her right arm with her left and was rewarded for her forethought when Raziel completed the turn and brought his lightsaber up and then crashing down in a violent slash meant to obliterate her defense.

Brought almost to her knees from the impact, she had to dart backwards on her agile feet just to completely clear his assault. In a movement meant to capitalize, the moment he was off balance from his attack, she slipped back in with a horizontal cut towards his abdomen.

This, Raz blocked in a hanging guard, bringing his pommel up to form a quick vertical wall to meet the attack. He slipped backwards a step and brought his blade clockwise before snapping back down in a diagonal slash.

Again Mari had to prop her arm to meet the hit. For a weapon capable of precise cutting through most any material, Raz was using it as a pretty effective bludgeon. With his body weight and his armor behind it, she was hard pressed to do much of anything about it.

With a lightsaber anyways. As a Jensaarai, she was schooled in more than just swinging a laser sword, and took advantage of that with a hard left into his sternum. The armor plating would stop the hit of course, but ideally the impact would take some wind out of him. Given his movement were setting up into a perfect avalanche, she had to do *something*.

The gamble rewarded her when he exhaled hard in an ‘oof’ and he stepped backwards. Such an opening was what Mari needed, and she waded in, flipping her grip forwards and backwards, throwing a flurry of staccato shots meant to hit from several angles at once.

“Stang, stang, stang!” Raz spat, doing everything and anything he could to defend against such a fluid and violent string of blows. It was absolutely *not* where he wanted to be. The smart thing in that instance would have been to create some distance and try to set up his avalanche again. The smart thing would be to let her gas herself trying to get to him. Mari trained him to fight smart however.

Thus, the stupid thing was demanded in this instance. Instead of backing off, Raz let his clumsy defense drop and just turned away from her most recent shot. In that moment, he let his own burst of speed happen, fueled by the force, and simply shoulder checked his Master.

With mass comes momentum, and with momentum comes energy. Given the short but very intense burst of speed, that was a *lot* of energy transferred between his shoulder and her chest, and it sent her rolling across their makeshift ring. Not letting up on his force powered speed, Raziel followed her and grabbed her dropped lightsaber.

“I’m done proving myself Mari,” He said, the vocoder in his helmet giving his words a staticky buzz. “Anything else is just flexing for the sake of it.”

Mari removed her helmet and reached out a hand. When Raziel pulled her up to her feet, she wrapped him up in a hug that left their armors clanking. “I always knew you’d be better than me Raz. I’m just glad I lived long enough to see it.”

“Good thing too, I think you’re getting old,” Raz quipped.

“Raziel you take that back!” Mari snapped, but it was clear she wasn’t particularly angry about it. “I was only nine when you were born, so if I’m getting old, so are you!”

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Soona blinked, hard. “Is that? Is is that it?”

Tharsis nodded almost sagely. “Yes, that’s it. Something I learned from my wife long ago. Two masters of the blade can tell more about one another in a single opening cut than they can from an entire lifetime of battle. Given that she’s an Echani, what she wanted to see, she saw right then, and Raziel knew it too.”

“So, I was worried for nothing?” Soona asked, puzzled.

“Absolutely not, you had every good reason to be worried. Mari is going to be nursing a bruised torso for weeks, and when Raziel cools down enough, he’ll notice she actually cut him in the flurry. He’ll have ‘saber burns to see to. Or, I suppose, you will.”

“Stangin’ Hutt nuggets,” Soona swore, realizing in that instant just how much Raz was rubbing off on her. “I’ll go get the backta patches.”

“Please, young lady, don’t worry about it. I keep several handy back at our house. This is a near daily occurrence here.” Tharsis sighed, realizing he might, in fact, be getting too old for such things.

Next to him, Soona rose to her feet primly, before carefully folding her camp chair up. “I feel like we have so much in common Tharsis.”

“We do, Miss Soona, and there’ll be plenty of time to discuss it. I’m worried their next challenge will involve cactus ferment.”