

Jorm vaults over the fallen speeder bike. Its rider lies piecemeal a short distance away, in his last twitches and already forgotten. The lightsaber in the Kiffar's hand sighs electrically and shuts off, lethal blade dormant for a moment to facilitate its wielder's sprint down the dark, narrow street.

The whisper in the back of his mind rises to a scream and he sees the phantom of a crimson blade bursting from the wall and through his neck. Without contemplation he throws himself forward. The real blade bursts through the bricks and passes over his head.

The yellow blade in his hand awakens and is thrust into the direction of the attack, meeting something with an energetic buzz before Jorm's roll takes him past and back onto his feet. He pushes himself sideways and into a circle.

The blood-red backswing clashes into his instant block with more brute force than Jorm cares for and binds there for a moment, allowing for a brief glance at his opponent in the stark light of locked blades. Gray dust clings to heavy, rune-inscribed armor with crystals jutting out of the joints less hidden and more accentuated by a hooded robe - *Purified Ascendant Trooper*, a calm sliver of Jorm's mind surmises. The sight alone triggers his lopsided fight-or-flight reflex and fills his crooked psyche with joy even before the adrenaline washes through his body.

He feels his grin grow wide and toothy as he puts a foot against the wall and launches himself over and behind the Child of Mortis, glancing his lightsaber against a pauldron. Another electric buzz sputtering out goes with the brief flash and collapse of a personal shield, but the trooper turns and stabs at Jorm faster than the Taldryanite manages to exploit the hit.

Another violent ruby slice almost crashes through a citrine parry, followed by a swing that Jorm can't even try to block, but is forced to lean away from. He feels the heat against his neck as he turns the lean into a somersault over the same speeder bike he passed just a few seconds ago, buying space, buying a precious second.

A short bark of muffled laughter emanates from the massive helmet. With a snap of his armored fingers, the Child of Mortis shapes the Force into an angry giant's fist and smashes the bike aside. The vehicle impacts the next wall and comes apart in a halo of broken machinery laced with a cloud of fuel and lubricants.

Jorm stretches his finely tuned mental grasp for the cloud and forces the droplets under his will. With a twirl of his own bare digits, he collapses the mist onto his assailant. As the vaporized fluids touch the crimson blade, they combust in a plume of orange brightness and black smoke.

It is not enough. The mutated trooper stumbles from the wall of flame and ashes that engulfs him, grabbing for his burning robe. The Kiffar focuses on the weave of the Force and tears it away from his enemy, prompting a choking gasp.

*Now or never*, Jorm thinks and rushes his enemy. Through the blinding smoke and flames and

the numbing emptiness forced into the trooper's mind, the Marauder jumps over the ruby lightsaber and thrusts his own into a helmet lens, then angles it downward to burn not only through the brain, but the neck, spine and torso.

It takes a few seconds.

It is enough.

The lightsaber in the Kiffar's hand sighs electrically and shuts off, lethal blade dormant for a moment to facilitate its wielder's renewed sprint down the dark, narrow street. Its last victim lies behind, in his last twitches and already forgotten.