

What went well?

There is a benefit to keeping a story tight and this one was definitely to the point. At 668 words you are immediately placed into the setting, given a paragraph of background, and then you're off into the reason for the fight.

There was an attempt, following Professor Zentru'la's pre-GJW post, to show more than tell. There were plenty of "gotcha" moments where something unexpected happened and propelled the action along.

For me, it was a nice change of pace to include a Gand as the villain. Given Gand's unique environmental requirements it gave more to play around with versus just a "there's a humanoid, go beat them up."

What could have gone better?

This was clearly a rushed piece for participation. As such, several areas were left unexplored. While the Gand was a nice inclusion, he's definitely a 'villain-of-the-story type character. We could have spent time exploring who he was. Did he know Komilia? Was he a member of Scholae Palatinae that was corrupted and transformed? Was he an invading trooper that was then transformed into this horrid crystalline monster?

This could have invested people more into the conflict, beyond simply saving a mother and child, and given an opportunity for more dialogue. Would Komilia plead with her former friend to fight the infection? Would she have cursed the soldier turned monster because he gave some motivation for being there?

Revised opening:

"Zostis, what's taking so long?" Komilia demanded, in a hushed tone. She flicked her targeting scope away from her visor as she looked back at the bumbling Gand. He was trying to load a rocket into their heavy ordnance but his gloves were making it difficult.

"I am trying, friend Komilia," Zostis said, resigning to the fact that she would have to help him again. Komilia scooted back under the makeshift cover within the destroyed building and effortlessly loaded the rocket. As she flicked the system into standby she thrust it back into Zostis's hands. He juggled it and, by luck, was able to wrap both arms around it to keep it from falling to the floor.

"You have to get better at this or we'll never make it out of this alive," Komilia tried to sound supportive.

Zostis flinched. "I'm sorry, but I was just visiting on holiday. I didn't expect to be drafted into a war."

"This isn't a war. This is a fight for life or death," Komilia said, crawling back into her position to watch for the approaching convoy. "Where are they," she muttered, flipping her targeting scope back down. As her vision zoomed in her HUD began lighting up with warnings.

“Kark, it’s that mist. Make sure your suit is sealed,” she said, completely forgetting that Gands already lived in hermetically sealed suits.

“What’s coming?” Zostis said, scrambling forward in the rumble to get a better view. In his haste one of his ammonia tubes snagged on the outcrop rebar from the rumble. With a hiss his suit started venting the precious gasses he needed to survive. “No, no, no,” he said, dropping the rocket launcher with a thud and trying to reconnect his tube.

“Damnit, you better not have - “, Komilia said, turning around. Seeing the sight she froze. “Dank Ferrik, get that attached right now.” She dove towards him trying to help him reconnect the tube. As they fumbled the red mist descended upon them.

“Help me, you’ve got to help me,” Zostis screamed. Komilia stood back as she saw the red mist sucked into the gaping hole within his suit. Zostis began to writhe in agony as his panic sucked more mist into his suit.

Komilia pulled her blaster and aimed it squarely at Zostis. “Stop breathing,” she said, her voice quivering. “Stop breathing now.” But it was too late.

Original Story:

Fire raged throughout Caelestis City. The Civil War had destroyed most of the infrastructure but the crystal asteroid that rocked across the city before impacting upon the lighthouse had been the killing stroke. Komilia stood upon the husk of a tower within the remains of the entertainment district. She couldn’t tell if it was the wail of the seasonal winds blowing in from the ports or death that she heard. She realized she probably didn’t care. Ever since she had come back to her father, the Emperor of Scholae Palataine, she had heard that same sound off in the distance.

She flipped her visor sensor pod and her HUD zoomed in to the street level. When she took note of a person she saw the contortions upon their face as they ran in horror. She made a minor adjustment on her vambrace and the image zoomed out. “There you are,” she muttered as a hulking crystalline monstrosity appeared, lumbering after the terrified civilians. It must have been a Gand before the crystals had gotten to it. The bulbous red crystals jutted out from the pressure suit Gand’s wore to breathe within normal oxygen rich atmospheres.

Komilia could see the ammonia leaking out around the crystals. *It’ll suffocate before it gets much further*, she thought. Then she spotted them. A mother and child trying to hide in the wreckage. *Sithspawn. He’ll smell them out.* With a click she drew her blaster from its holster and she jumped from the building. The empty shells of floors flew by as she steadied her aim. As the ground started to get closer she unleashed hell. The beast jumped out of the way as potholes exploded into the concrete street.

Komilia’s jetpack activated as she leaned into a dive. As she shot past she dropped her thermal detonators. She pulled out of her dive and hovered several meters above the ground as they detonated. Despite her Mandalorian helmet she turned away from the blast reflectively. If she hadn’t, she’d have noticed the Gand had dove behind a vehicle and avoided most of the shrapnel.

Komilia scanned for her prey through the smoke to no avail. Suddenly, a lightwhip’s yellow energy trail sprang forth and wrapped around her ankle. If not for the beskar plated boots she’d have lost her foot. Komilia didn’t have time to be thankful for the armor as the beast

yanked her from the air. She hit hard upon the ground. Her jetpack ripped itself free from its mounts and spiraled off into the distance.

"You're fracking kidding me," Komilia screamed at the beast. Enraged, she let loose again with her blaster. The lightwhip was recoiled and in a dazzling display of skill danced through the air deflecting her blasts. The mother and child stood frozen nearby. Komilia barely noticed them anymore as her rage seethed at the monster who dared to pull her out of the air.

She broke into a run, her barrage of blaster bolts continuing to be stopped by the lightwhip. With her free hand she pulled out her vibroknife and flung it at the Gand. It impaled itself deep into his shoulder. As the beast screamed a soulless, bestial, howl, she connected a kick squarely into its chest. "You. Scummy. No good. Poison breathing. Motherkarker," Komilia howled as she stomped upon the Gand's chest. "That jetpack was a gift." Komilia landed squarely on the Gand's belly with the last dual footed stomp and she felt what passed for air escape from his body.

Komilia backflipped off the prone body. Landing she threw out her arms as her dual vambraces spewed flame upon the Gand. The crystals glowed an unnatural blood red as the fabric of his suit began to burn. "No, don't!" the mother screamed in horror. Komilia looked over at her as the suit ruptured and the ammonia within ignited. Komilia was flung across the street, saved by the beskar but knocked unconscious while the rest of the area was engulfed in the flames.