

Writers:

Purple is Sagitta (10070 words)

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Sagitta sleepily groaned as she rubbed her face.

*Smack.*

She heard the sound but she didn't feel the hand hitting her face. With a frown she opened her eyelids and could see the fingers before her eyes. "What.." She whispered as she rolled out of her hammock safely. Her hands were touching each other. She was squeezing her thumb. Her fingers. She felt nothing. Not even pain.

Panic rose in her. She couldn't feel anything. Sagitta couldn't breathe. "No no.." She muttered, her hands frantically touching her soft blanket. The firmness of the pillow. Anything. She pulled on her t-shirt and underwear. She could hear the snap of the underwear's brim against her hip. Not even a sting.

"Please..." She rubbed her arms, but still nothing. No more hugs? No more touch? Touch was so important to her. It made her feel alive and that she was loved.

She's not loved anymore. She's not alive anymore.

"Stop it. I am loved." Sagitta snarled to herself.

Was she really? Maybe people just put up with her. She's just another number to Clan Arcona. No. Buir had shown that he loved and cared for her as his own. Asani. Arden. Erin. Her sisters. And her now other Buir too and those two had loved each other so quickly they would burn the planets to get to each other. She's loved.

She's loved dammit.

Yet, how could she feel the love anymore if she couldn't feel anything? Memories came flooding back when Sagitta started to experience touch deprivation. Unloved. Trash. Slime.

*"Momma, can I have a hug? I had a bad dream..."*

*"I told you Sofila, to never ask for anything again. Do not call me momma. It's Lady Sunarro to you. No one wants to hug you or even hear your voice. Get out of my sight, stay away from my children. Be grateful you are even alive." The woman hissed, holding her new babe close to her chest. Her voice sounded like she was disgusted to even talk to Sofila. The grown Mirialan didn't even give her the decency to look at first daughter.*

*The young Mirialan looked at her feet. Tears swelled up in her eyes. "Yes, mom- Lady Sunarro." She said as she went back to her new room in the kitchens.*

Worthless. Disgusting.

“No...” Sagitta hastily made her way out of the door. Despite not being able to feel the cold floor beneath her feet, her muscles had memory to still work despite not feeling anything. Sagitta sure as hell wasn't walking a straight line. She had to hurry to the medical center. At the elevator, she raised her hand to push the button. It dinged but she stopped when there was a smear of blood on the button.

“W-what?” She murmured, looking at her hands and gasped when she saw her wrist. Sagitta had a habit of scratching her forearm when she was terrified or extremely stressed. She scratched the hell out of her forearm, blood everywhere. “No... I-I'm not worthless. I'm not *nothing*.” Sagitta hissed out the last word. She panicked as she ran to the closest room that she could remember. The door opened as she stumbled in. A desk. Study room? She ran and hid underneath it, trying to control her breathing. Calm down. The enclosed space should help her. She couldn't even feel the closeness it provided.

Her presence didn't go unnoticed. A sharp gaze followed the sound of Sagitta's voice and just caught the moment that the door closed behind her.

Cole frowned, hesitant to follow. There was no one else around but...

Sagitta could hear sickening tearing sounds. She was scratching her forearm again. “Kark.” She brought her arms close to her chest and tried to calm herself down enough to go to the medical center. The door slid open and she froze. She didn't want anyone to see her like this. Not even her own family. She remained quiet. Maybe they will go away since the room looked empty with the light off. The door slid closed. Sagitta let out a sigh of relief. They had stepped out.

Yet a moment later, a few footsteps came from across the room, “Sagitta?” Cole's voice sounded concerned already, the Human starting to walk now he'd spoken. There were about two places she could hide, so it wouldn't take long to find her if she did continue to conceal herself, but he stayed away from those places for the moment in case she spoke. Freaking her out more would be bad. Probably.

Sagitta jumped and heard a thud. Did... she hit herself on something? That voice. It was Cole. No. She wasn't going to be weak in front of him most of all. She had to be strong for him. Happy. Not like this. “Hey! How are you?” her voice was upbeat but cracking. “Just... ran a lot today..” Which wasn't a lie. She was hoping her breathing would make Cole think that she just wore herself out. Wait. She was under a desk. That wasn't going to work.

Cole wasn't a goddamn fool, and he sure as hell wasn't born yesterday.

The Human sighed, a deep exhale followed by footsteps that led him beside her hiding place. He didn't look for the moment, but her breathing was panicked enough that he knew she was

under there. He stared down at the top of the desk, waiting for her to say something else, like an admission that that was all actually she-akk scat. It didn't come.

If there were lights, Sagitta had a feeling that the glare he would be giving her would kill. He squatted down and grabbed her wrist. Sagitta couldn't feel it as she let out a single soft sob. She could see him grabbing her. Why couldn't she frackin' feel it?! She had been hoping that his touch would work. Like frackin' magic.

Cole almost let go when she sobbed but the wet sensation against his hand made him hold on, pulling her arm so he could see and turn it. She had kriffing scratched it bloody?! She hadn't done that during the storm, had something been on it or-

"What the *kriff* is going on, Sagitta?"

His voice left little room for anything other than a true answer. Her previous attempt was unacknowledged entirely. It was a sharp tone, not belaying the worry he felt. Whatever this was, she couldn't just hide from it. She needed a medic dammit.

"I-I don't know," She started trembling. She could hear her body tremble against the desk. Why couldn't she frackin' feel it!? "I can't feel anything. Nothing. Not your touch, not-" She choked at seeing her wrist and then at her fingernails which were bloody from doing it to herself. "Oh, kark. Not even the p-pain." This was a nightmare. She had to be in a bad dream. No one just randomly wakes up unable to feel anything.

She attempted to pull her arm back from him but she couldn't tell if she was going to be successful or not. She had to use her sight. "I'm fine. This i-is a nightmare. That's all." She whispered, obviously terrified out of her mind.

So he didn't let her go. Instead, Cole did quite the opposite of that and gently pulled on her arm to force enough of her out that he could get her from under the damned desk.

Not feeling anything. It wasn't a nightmare, or at least he hoped not otherwise, the Force had decided to pay attention to him for once in a *very* strange way. Providing that that wasn't happening, Cole wrapped an arm around her waist to try and guide Sagitta to her feet.

"You need the medic then. For this-" He raised her arm, which he still had a grasp on, to try and keep it away from the other one. Cole wasn't quite sure yet what he'd do if she started scratching the same one again, but the solution would likely lead to an awkward walk either way. "-as well as not feeling anything. I've never heard of that happening, so you need to be there *now*."

Sagitta had gasped and lost her balance forward, but Cole was strong enough. He was still holding her. She can see it. She didn't feel the tug. All she knew was that she got closer to him.

Her eyelids closed as she didn't want to see it anymore. Not with him touching her and not feeling a frackin' thing.

*Waste of space.*

Sagitta nodded and opened her eyelids, "Medic. Okay." She inhaled softly before nodding as she got up. It felt so weird when she just happened to nod. She can see the movements of it but not the touch. What the kriffin frackin rancor's breath was going on? Her hand would want to go to the arm again, but with Cole's grip on it, it was keeping the muscle memory of her not scratching herself raw again.

She didn't fight him, not there, nor the rest of the painfully quiet journey to the med bay. Sagitta didn't say a word, which for anyone else, Cole would be rejoicing. He was a quiet person and usually didn't speak without some form of intent behind it. Sagitta was the total opposite. However, it hadn't taken long for the mercenary to learn that, so the silence around was just as loud as she could be, but instead of some story or antic, it was just there. A sharp aura of something being wrong.

It seemed she wasn't alone, at least.

Once they were on the same floor as the med bay, there were others also on their way. A few were being led like Sagitta was, though it was hard to tell what was wrong with them. Even those who were being led, however, still seemed worried, stressed, and confused. Afraid. Fear was something Cole knew intimately, and the air was laced with it like a powder keg about to explode.

Inside wasn't any better, the medics seemed off themselves, and a few were sitting in the corner on foldable chairs with monitors on them, just like all the others being brought in. Cole presumed they'd have been on beds, but the beds had a few occupants already, never mind all of those passing through to sit for a short time before leaving again.

That at least set Cole to be more relaxed. If people were leaving, then whatever was going on wasn't deadly. Hopefully, it'd be temporary as well if the eased expressions of some of those leaving were to be trusted. Not that he particularly trusted anybody here, but there was no reason to conceal one's face in this situation outside of very specific circumstances.

Eventually, they were called over to a bed and Cole sat Sagitta down, still keeping a gentle grip on her arm as the medic addressed them.

"Hey, sorry, got to make this quick. Which, if not both, of you are affected, how long for and in which sense was it? Oh-" The medic seemed to notice the blood finally, her eyes widening, "Sorry- Are you just in for some Bacta?"

She strained, if still compassionate, expression was informative that they quite hoped that that was the case.

The Mirialan was still quiet. She was fighting to keep her sanity and not to tell Cole off and that she would be fine. She had a feeling from his sharp voice earlier, he wasn't going anywhere until she saw the medic. Noises. Voices. Panic. Sagitta grimaced. "Kark." She finally spoke a word on the entire journey. People were confused. Medics were running around. Sadly some of the other medics weren't doing well either, as she subconsciously squeezed her hands. They had found an available bed as a Medic was quick to bring up about which sense they both had lost. Her brows furrowed out of muscle memory.

"No. I mean, yes." Sagitta corrected herself; of course, she was in for some Bacta. "I can't feel anything," hissed Sagitta. The medic sighed, slightly disappointed, but nodded.

"There's a new virus going around and attacking senses." The way she worded it, it sounded routine, as if she had to say it over a hundred times just today. She kept talking while tending to Sagitta's wounds, cleaning her arms as well as her nails. "Our statistics show that it's attacking only one sense. It seems like yours is touch. You didn't even react to me handling your wounds. Do not worry. It seems to go away in a day or two."

Sagitta let out a sigh of relief. *'I am not a waste of space.'*

"I can manage a day or two..." She mumbled softly, slightly doubting herself. "Please wrap my other arm," requested Sagitta. The medic nodded and wrapped her other arm. Sagitta tested it by scratching the bandage and she could hear it.

"That should help me from doing further harm.." Sagitta turned and gave Cole a reassuring smile. "You should probably keep away from me." She would hate herself if he became infected from the exposure. Though... his entering the clinic may have put him more at harm's risk, despite it being the same ship.

The medic's eyes went over to Cole, "I didn't hear what sense you had lost. No matter. You both can go. If you do happen to get the virus later, just remember, it will pass." She quickly made her way over to the next patient.

*'Damn it, can't I do anything right? Good job. Putting Cole at risk. He's not even infected.'*

"We should go. Someone may need this bed." She hopped off and almost stumbled. Sagitta could hear her grind her teeth as she quickly tried to loosen her jaw muscles.

"I haven't yet," Cole had responded shortly to the medic as they left. He glanced around, a grimace crossing his face, but soon enough, sighing softly as he started leading Sagitta back out of the med bay. "At least if I get it from you, it should be the same one, right? I could handle not being able to feel that I'm touching anything for a day or so."

Once clear of the med bay and away from the majority of people who were still on the way in, he changed direction and took her into a side corridor, out of the way, stopping there.

“Are you going to be okay?”

She was going to get better, but the fact Sagitta had resorted to ripping her arms open because of this had the Human worried about more than her physical wellbeing.

Sagitta heard him and paused as she glanced at some people. Some of them were talking louder. Others were being led by another and their eyes weren't... focused or directional. She believed he could handle not being able to feel anything for a day or so.

*'I'm weak.'* Unknowingly, her jaws clenched tightly and she bit her cheek. It wasn't until the faint taste of iron in her mouth that she realized what she had done and relaxed her jaw once more. Sagitta frowned as she was being led off the path. “Cole, I could be wrong, but are we going the wrong-”

He brought up a question. How odd. He could have just asked that while they were walking back to her room. She gave Cole a warm and reassuring, confident smile. “Of course! I'll be alright. Just take me back to my room, I'll just stay there. I won't take any missions. I could use this time to catch up on my books! No big deal. A day or two!” Her smile softened. Yet her heart was screaming in sheer panic. Her hands and arms betrayed her by trembling slightly.

Still, Cole was still holding one of her arms. Feeling the tremble against his hands. His gaze didn't move away from her eyes, but neither did he say anything. She was lying.

He simply raised an eyebrow.

Sagitta watched him back. Her eyes darted down to her arm for a moment. before looking back up. “What is it? I did mention I'll be okay! Got my books. Maybe even call my family to make sure they are okay! I haven't called them in a while. Oh, kark. It's been since I got promoted and moved to the VBII too! Kriff. I forgot to call them every night to read to them. But it's alright. They have recordings of me reading to them. They don't need it.” She stopped. Why was she saying all this? She could hear her breath quickening.

Her eyelids closed as she exhaled softly. “I'll be fine. Cole, please.” She could feel herself break as she moved her shoulder back in an attempt for him to let her go. But he did not have it. “Fine.” She exhaled sharply, “I'll have to learn to be okay, regardless. I am not an anchor and I am not going to be a waste of space. Now can we go to my room,” pleaded Sagitta.

“I just wanted you to stop lying to my face.”

He spoke softly, though there was something of an edge to his tone. He let go of her arm, though he stayed close even as he began leading the way again back toward her room. Cole wasn't sure why it bothered him so much, but it had. Even if the truth was something he already knew and he knew *why* she was hiding it, her pretending to be okay when blatantly not was irritating. There wasn't anything he could *do* if she wasn't honest.

Whatever.

The Human still walked with her, though he wasn't opening much of a dialogue himself.

Her breath was taken away. It felt like she had just been slapped. "C-Cole, I'm-" She stopped when he started to walk but paused as if waiting for her. Why did that hurt so bad? This frackin' virus. She's so kriffin' weak. That's why.

They made their way to her room and she stopped halfway. "I'm sorry." She whispered and realized it was too low for him to hear it. The Mirialan cleared her throat before turning to look at Cole. Pink hues met with his icy blues. Frack. What was going on?

"I'm sorry." She repeated. Her arms crossed without her thinking or knowing it. She noticed her eyes were getting blurry. Kriff. Was she really going to cry? Make her weak in front of him. She turned her head away from him. "I-" She paused, having trouble gathering her thoughts through the fogginess of her panic, fear, and guilt. "I can't," hissed Sagitta. She wanted to tell him. Where should she start? Begin? "It's weak." She muttered softly.

"No strings?" She smiled weakly at Cole, the blurriness getting worse. Yet she still wouldn't look him in the eye. "I'm terrified of being alone. I always want to be around someone. I-I-" She could hear her throat closing up on her as she cleared her throat. "Being touched makes me feel alive. Like I'm worth it. As if I'm loved. Just the warmth." She smiled softly, remembering every hug she did every morning and sometimes throughout the day with her family. It was never enough. "Moving here was hard but I had you and others to help me. I felt alive, Cole."

"Last time I couldn't feel anything my moth-" She stopped, hissing at herself, "Lady Sunarro." Her voice sounded monotone. As if she was forced to say that many times. She could hear her nails hitting the bandages. She stopped herself, laughing bitterly. "I started scratching myself. As a way to feel something. It kept me alive even though I'm meant to be alone. Kark. I haven't scratched in *years*."

"Never should've been born." She stumbled back onto the wall, her knees giving out as she slid down, her hands flying back for balance so she wouldn't get hurt. "I can't be alone. Not again..." She couldn't even call her family to be consoled. She wouldn't feel their touch.

Cole watched for several moments. She was breaking down, bit by bit in front of him, but then he'd known she wasn't okay. What should he do?! It wasn't like this was.. people didn't break

down in front of him. He assumed you'd hug them but that wouldn't even help. He wasn't good at words or... anything. *This was always Zuza's thing.* Kriff. Kark.

Kark!

Why was Sagitta's family so karked up? The old one. He killed his mother coming into the world and he hadn't been treated so poorly. And that schutta had made a child feel so alone they scratched themselves apart. Nor had they cared. It raised a storm in his mind, though one he couldn't do much about.

Cole realized he'd been standing too long, silent and staring. Frozen. Not good. Do something. Pick up? Pick up.

Cole crouched down beside her, carefully getting one arm around her back with the other under her legs before standing. He didn't really give her time to protest, but the Human doubted she particularly wanted anyone else to see this. She probably didn't want him to see it. Guilt spiked, he probably shouldn't have called her out so bluntly. Probably.

Sagitta saw movement out of the corner of her eyes and gasped softly when Cole was actually reaching to pick her up. He didn't yell at her. Or just opened the door and push her in. There was none of that. Sagitta was careful to put her arm around his shoulder and the back of his neck to help him be able to carry her. Her throat tightened some more while listening to the Human's words.

He started walking down the corridors towards her room, and murmured, "Just look at me. Don't need to be able to touch me to see I'm here. Same for your family. Even if you can't touch them, you can hear them. See them. *You aren't alone.*"

It felt strange saying that. His chest hurt for a moment, but he swept it away and stayed focused on her.

It was then finally, that a tear had betrayed her. She leaned her head onto his shoulder, wishing she could feel him. The stubble of his beard. The warmth and the roughness of his hands. She exhaled slowly. Her mind repeated what he said into her brain. Over and over. "Thank you..." She whispered to him. *'He's right. I'm not alone.'*

Then she frowned, realising something. "No. You're wrong." She raised her head so she could look into his eyes if he wished. "We're not alone, Cole. You have people that care about you, more than you realize."

He glanced down to meet her gaze. It was brief as when she started to finish, he looked ahead again. He shook his head. Cole wasn't going to argue the matter. He didn't need pity, that fact was a fact. And.. either way, it was irrelevant. He wasn't the one scratching through his skin in loneliness.



The Human still felt he had to respond somehow though, so hummed in agreement whether he meant it or not.

It wasn't long before they arrived back at L'ara and Sagitta's room, with Cole finally placing Sagitta back on the ground so the Mirilan could unlock it.

Sagitta was keeping her breathing in check. She was busy trying to keep herself calm. She inhaled deeply and a soft frown on her face. She had heard of stories of other senses getting stronger when you lose one but does it really work that fast? Nah. Can't be.

Or could it be? Her brain might have been trying to distract her. Metals. Gunpowder. Generic soap. The scent was stronger somehow. Kriff. When they reached her room she murmured an embarrassed thanks to Cole as she pushed the keypad to open. She might've pushed a bit hard but it worked. Stepping in, she stopped for a moment. Her eyes glanced over at her comm call station set up and she suddenly didn't want to call her family. She just wanted to lay down and go to sleep because surely, the more she sleeps the faster she would get her touch back.

Yet Cole had followed her into the room though lingered near the doorway. If she wanted him to go, he would. The ex-ganger was anxious about the idea of it all things considered. Then again she'd likely want to call her family and it would be less than ideal for him to be present for that.

She noticed Cole was still there. "Give me a few hours."

She smiled at him to reassure him she was going to be okay. In those few hours at least. She didn't want him to feel responsible to babysit her. Sagitta wanted to clean up a bit as well, especially with the blood smears on her t-shirt from her wrist. "We both need to clean up." She nodded toward him, his shirt as well as his hand. "I'll go to your room tonight... If that's okay. No more lies. I don't trust myself right now."

Cole nodded, though hesitant to actually leave her alone. His mind was racing with various ways she could easily hurt herself without even realizing it, especially considering how fragile Sagitta's mindset seemed to be and how... Well. Knowing she scratched herself bloody like that was discomfoting. It bothered him. Sagitta was an adult however, she wasn't his to be bothered over.

The Human realized he'd hesitated so spoke before turning away, "We do, I'll see you soon."

Cole deftly closed the door behind himself, taking a moment stood in the hallway to breathe. He wasn't actually sure he could help her beyond being a totem of someone being present. People were *not* his thing. Never had been. Not on a personal level. Business relations or a night shared together to never see each other again? Absolutely, but never any deeper.

Walking down the hallway from Sagitta's room was only a few doors up from his own so Cole was in moments back in the familiarity of his own room. It struck him to clean up but looking around the only thing left astray was his bed. The quilt was crumpled up, pillows awry. Other than that, the room was too empty to make a mess in without actually trying to do so, considering that the desk remained cleared whenever not in, usually very brief, use. Everything fitted in his backpack or into various holsters he could wear after all.

Making the bed took all of two minutes.

Showering took ten, including the time it took to set his shirt to soak and get dry. He'd already showered that morning so he'd only needed to clean blood off.

Cole sat at the desk. He didn't want to go anywhere, in case she came by early.

After about fifteen minutes of debate, the Human pulled out a datapad from his back and started reading up on the virus. At least he could still be productive.

Sagitta sighed softly as soon as he left. *'I can see. I can smell. I can still hear.'* She reminded herself. *'It's temporary, Sagitta. Temporary.'* Heading to the bathroom first, she took off her shirt and placed it into the hamper. Her hands went to the bandage to unwrap it but she stopped. What if she wrapped it too tight putting it back on? "Frack. Really?" She muttered and opted to get a rag instead. Sagitta was careful to try to get the perfect middle with the shower's controls to avoid burning herself. She soaked it and started to wipe down any blood that went through her shirt and onto her skin.

Good stars. She looked like a mess. Her hand went to her bangs as she tried to brush the hair down. For a moment, she considered growing out her bangs. She put it up into a looped ponytail, figuring that'll keep her hair out of the way for now. Her eyes went to the shower. She wanted to take one so badly but she did not want to burn her skin.

"This is stupid," No. Be happy. "I am happy that it didn't take all my senses." She worked on her optimism with a bit of pick-me-up talk. Throwing her underwear into the hamper she got some clean t-shirts and boy shorts to put on. Grabbing her datapad, she sent her family a message. While she waited for their responses, she gently lay on L'ara's bed. She continued with more happy talk. She didn't want to go to Cole's room all mopey and sad.

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A door knock was followed by some beeping sounds. "Delivery order number VB874."

Sagitta got up and opened the door and smiled at the droid.

"Thank you." She grabbed the few bags. "Have a lovely day." It zoomed off as she gave it a little wave. She headed back into her room and grabbed her pillow and datapad. Her hands were full

of a couple of bags, a pillow, and a datapad, and she headed toward Cole's room. Realizing her arms were full, she tried to knock on the door with a foot but it sounded more like a kick. Sagitta grimaced and looked down at her feet. Hopefully, that won't be sore...

A few moments later his door opened with Cole quickly stepping aside so she could actually come in despite how loaded up her arms were.

That was a lot of stuff for one night in his opinion. The mercenary almost wanted to question it but at the same time, she wasn't exactly very well right now. Best to just accept it and hope nothing got forgotten.

Well, not like it'd be hard to return it anyway.

"Hey."

Sagitta smiled, "Hiya!" She stepped in and placed the items on the empty spot on his desk.

"So I got us some fruits, jerkies, and candy. I'm actually not a big fan of candy but I wasn't sure what you liked so I got some of the few popular ones! And I also goooooot-" She stopped while searching the bags for something. "This!" She held out a box that would be holding cards in it named, Nu-no.

"My family and I usually play Nu-no when we're bored or traveling somewhere far. Figured we could play a little bit! If it's okay with you. If not there are also holodramas! I got several different kinds, wasn't sure which one was your taste. I know the Voidbreaker II Media has some but I couldn't get into it so this is mine! Please don't judge."

She took a deep inhale, "I got The Loth-Cat Returns, My Neighbor Tauntaun, 101 Vultpex, Nightmare on Endor Street, Close Encounters of Porg Kind, The Karate Chiss, Tattoine Berken and the Lost Kyber Crystal, Kushiban in Boots, Hoth White and the Seven Jawas, The Dutchess New Groove, The Little Nautolan, Wookie and the Beast, Porghog Day, The Joopas-" She inhaled deeply as she realized she was running out of breath. With a soft laugh, "You know, let's just... you can just take my datapad and pick one." Then she paused. Was she being too much? "Or I can read my book silently." She was just happy to be around someone during this moment.

"We.. can put a holofilm on." Cole said slowly, looking over at the datapad and taking it from her when she offered it. It was a lot of information, though seeing her in a better mode than before was a perk at least.

Yet while he had seen holomovies before, sure, but he hadn't seen most of these and a lot of them were... not very judgeable just from the title. Cole scrolled through for a minute, before handing it back and admitting, "I don't know which one though. I've not seen most of these."

Admittedly he didn't know what most of the candies she just plopped onto his desk were either. Cole felt very suddenly out of his depth.

Sagitta's smile remained on her face when he took the datapad as she made her way over to his bed and set the pillow on it. Kneeling on the mattress, she reached over and grabbed the sheathed knife that Cole had mentioned once before. Huh. He wasn't lying after all. Now she felt even more guilty for him feeling like she was lying to him. She wasn't. Maybe she was. And to herself. Shaking her head, Sagitta went back to the desk and nodded as he handed back the datapad. "That's okay! I'll pick something. Just help me out here. Fantasy? Adventure? Comedy? Horror? Musical?" Then she chuckled, "Don't tell me you are a romantic holomovie guy."

"Uh-" What was the holofilm he'd seen before? Horror? But by the *stars* and beyond those characters had been stupid. Sure normal people didn't have weapon training but how hard was it to just pick up a chair or a painting and smash the killer over the head with it?! And running up the stairs-

"Not horror." Cole said, cutting off his own train of thought, "Not romance, either, no. I.. don't think I've really seen a fantasy movie before? Not that I can remember. We could try one of those?"

Getting a fruit of the bag, she paused looking at the knife. Wait. Maybe it was a bad idea for her to even attempt to cut these fruits. She smiled softly as she handed the sheathed knife to Cole. "Mind cutting it for me?"

He had watched her retrieve the knife, confused until now though not concerned enough to question it. Cole stood when she asked, crossing the space and taking the knife from her "Sure, pick the movie while I do."

"Thank you." She moved out of the way as Cole went to take care of the fruits. She looked behind herself while backing up to the bed, making sure she sat down on it correctly. She didn't. She backed up far enough that the bed bent her knees for her, then fell back.

Cole had gone into a drawer at the bottom of his closet quickly, drawing out a plastic bowl that had come with the room before going back to the desk and chopping up the fruit into easily edible slices. Once chopped they were dropped into the bowl.

*'That works..'* Sagitta considered his request for no horror or romance. She scrolled a bit more through the options. Fantasy. She had a favorite when it came to fantasy and to be honest, one of the movies for that certain category might help her feel better. So whimsical and just pure.

"Okay! I got one. It's called Spirited Away." She placed the data pad off to the side and sat up. "It's about-" She paused for a moment. She worried that if she started she would end up telling him the entire movie and just ruin it.

“You’ll see!” Her grin spread from cheek to cheek as she waited for him. The smells of the fruits hit her nose as she took in a deep inhale and sighed. “I sent a message to my family. Asani is infected at the moment. She... I thought the medic said senses. I guess I assumed physical senses. Asani is completely cut off from the Force.” Sagitta grimaced. While Sagitta avoided the Force, Asani embraced it. “Buir, both of them, they’re trying to help her right now.” Then she chuckled, “To be honest, she’ll be okay. Toughest one out of all of us.”

“From the Force?” Cole frowned, “Must be a strong virus to be able to do something like that. Doesn’t sound natural, either way, though I suppose it’s better if it’s natural.” He wondered vaguely if she had actually told her family she had it too, but that was about as close to being his business as an Ewok was to being a Hutt.

He finished with the fruit, wiping the knife off with a cloth before sheathing it again and picking up the bowl. The bowl was passed to Sagitta and once the knife was back in its place under the mattress he sat down beside her.

She seemed confident the movie was good and Cole *really* hoped it actually was. In the few movies he had been taken to watch, they’d all been varying forms of kriff even while his friends had been praising it left right and center.

“Okay.”

“Yea. I don’t know what’s going on but you’re right. It’s temporary.” She thanked him again when the bowl was done and she took a bite as they started to get situated. Sagitta loved the movie so much, she didn’t even talk through it. She made sure to pass the bowl to Cole so he could have some as well.

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Sagitta, despite her best attempts, had fallen asleep beside Cole. The ordeal was mentally exhausting for her and it caught up when she was safe.

Cole was still awake, one arm around her from where she’d curled up against him, the other was supporting the bowl of fruit that was now almost empty. The last few pieces weren’t really appetizing anymore.

The movie had been... Something. At first, he’d found the main character annoying and had prepared himself for having to pretend to like the movie later, but then... Then the rest of the movie happened. Cole didn’t understand much of the Force use in it, it was a lot less sensible than what it was in reality but it was a *fantasy* movie. Even being critical, none of it was out of bounds of itself.

Cole was impressed by the end and invested. When the witch made the main character make a choice of identifying her parents, a cruel game, he found himself actually worried at the cattle looking so alike. Wanting her to succeed and return to her own world. Her solution actually caught him off guard, though it made absolute sense and Cole couldn't help but wonder how he hadn't seen it.

But then he'd been so focussed on what would happen if it went wrong for her, that he wasn't really considering solutions.

The credits rolled and Cole felt odd.

The Human didn't sit with the emotions though, shifting enough to place the bowl and the datapad on the nightstand before settling down himself. With his arm around Sagitta, as it was, he was unlikely to be able to do anything else anyway. So... sleep it was. He slipped his other arm around her. She may have been unable to feel anything, but maybe if she saw the contact come morning and the affliction hadn't ended, it'd help her. Or at least give him a warning to stop her from freaking out.

He got almost a full night's worth, the restlessness of nightmares plaguing his sleep but not enough to truly disturb him. Consciousness drew close, his internal clock knowing that it was time to get up despite Cole's resistance to it. He curled up slightly, keeping his eyes closed for a few moments yet.

The problem started when he opened his eyes.

There was nothing there.

At first, he dismissed it as the room being dark, but as the seconds passed and the darkness remained unchanged Cole felt his pulse quicken.

*I can't see. I can't **see**. If something's there-*

His body tensed and any reassuring thoughts of how impermanent the virus was were sorely missing in the shock as he got up from bed, judged the space wrong and crashed directly into the side of his desk. He stood there, frozen, hands gripping the metallic edges.

Sagitta had awoken, startled at the crashing noise as she shot up with Cole's knife in hand, her fingers ready to unbuckle it from its sheath. Her eyes fell on him as she sighed with relief. "Oh." She murmured softly before blinking down at the knife. Whoops. She placed it aside and frowned, looking at Cole. She was slightly impressed that her muscle memory didn't fail her when handling a knife.

“Cole? Are you okay?” Why was the man standing there and grasping at a desk? Scooting down the bed, she cautiously approached him. She wasn’t sure if he was having a night terror or not and her not feeling anything would be a very bad idea if they had to fight.

“Yeah.” His voice sounded rough, though his demeanor relaxed overall, “I- Yeah. I’m awake.”

He knew she’d gotten up and after the last time anything similar had happened he wouldn’t be surprised if-

*Did she have the knife?*

Too vulnerable. Back needed to be to a wall, or- not that it’d help. How would he even know?

Sagitta wouldn’t do that. *But what if.*

Cole moved away from the desk, keeping his hand on the edge of it and following it around with his hand to find the wall, turning towards Sagitta once he’d found some security in the space.

“I think I got infected.”

Sagitta got up from the bed, her face full of concern and worry. “Cole.” What in the galaxy’s name was this man doing? It was as if he was using the desk to help him lead around the room. It’s pretty dark in here but it’s not that dark, Sagitta could make out what’s in the room.

Her breath caught. “Kark.” She muttered but then frowned. “Wait, you can feel the desk and you just-” She stopped. *‘Don’t be stupid and make things worse.’*

“Okay. Cole, I’m going to approach you.” She said softly, feeling like if she kept talking, he would know where she is. “I’m going to reach out and touch your arm, let me know if I grip too tight, I’ll try to be careful.” She said softly as her hand reached out to touch Cole’s arm. *‘This is all my fault.’*

“I can feel the desk. Must’ve got it from someone else. Or- Well, maybe it doesn’t matter who you get it from.” His voice was still rough and his hands seemed unsteady. Not beyond a normal amount for most people, just a slight shake back and forth that would barely inconvenience someone in a day to day living. It did not suit a sharpshooter.

Cole could hear how close she was but he still flinched at her touch, the internal whispers certain it wouldn’t be a hand that was pressed forward. They were wrong. Usually it was easier to discern that, but without being able to see-

It was all the more difficult to separate what was known and what wasn’t. Kriff. **Kriff.**

Her grip was too tight, but it wouldn't damage him so he didn't comment on it, "Can you feel anything yet? At all?"

Sagitta reached over to flip the lights on to be able to see better. Her eyes gazed down at her hand and she could see that she was squeezing a bit. Letting it loose, she lowered her hand to his hand and held his hand. "No, I..." She frowned a bit. It felt weird. It was almost like a numbing shield over her skin. "You know how when blood gets cut off, there's this numbing sensation? I'm getting that. Better than yesterday at least."

"That's something at least." He'd responded, glad that it was an improvement at least. Proof things should return to normal. Should... No, stupid line of thought.

"But that doesn't matter right now-" Her eyes checked him over, up and down. She wasn't sure how long she was asleep when he woke up, not knowing it was him crashing into the desk that woke her in the beginning. Her lips curved into a frown when she could see his hands were shaking. "Let me guide you to the bed." Her voice was soft and calm, he helped her now she was going to try the same.

"No-" Instinctively he pulled back. The bed wasn't defensive-

*Kriff was this really what he was doing? What he was reduced to. Deciding whether an open wall with a desk on it was better than the bed if someone barged in on a friendly ship.*

Apparently yes.

Cole didn't move still, though tried to make himself more reasonable than he actually was. This wasn't fair on her, she'd been scared yesterday but she hadn't caused him problems. "I'd rather not." Instinctively his gaze flickered to the door. "Or- Well. I just woke up. I should... Get cleaned up."

Sagitta was startled. She glared at him. He wouldn't see that. Kark. "Cole." Her voice changed from soft to a bit more worried. She was so close to calling him unreasonable but kriff she's trying to help him. Just because he was being difficult in her mind, it didn't give her the right to patronize him. She lost her mind when she couldn't feel anymore.

Her eyes glanced at the door. What was it about the door that was making him nervous? Clean up? Sagitta nodded. "I- Of course. I understand. I'll help you clean up." Her voice went back to her usual softness. "Okay, then I'll guide you to the bathroom." Careful as she could be, she gently led Cole to the bathroom. "Another step here..." Her hand was holding his, another placed on the doorway of the bathroom before sliding it gently open and having Cole feel the doorway. "What do you want me to do? And do not tell me to wait. Or to go away. Or anything similar to what I said."



With the doorway identified, he tried to step ahead. He didn't want to ignore her guidance but at the same time, his own mind was battling against her even being there. Cole didn't think he'd win that fight against her if he did ask her to go. Nor was it fair. Why was he so concerned about being fair?

So he stumbled forward ignoring as Sagitta called out, "WAIT!-" right before slamming waist first into the sink basin.

Ow.

He grasped the sides of the sink, clenching his teeth and hissing through them.

Even Sagitta cringed. That bang sounded rough. With a soft sigh, she touched his shoulders gently and reached over to grab a rag. Huh. She could... sort of feel the texture of the rag. "I-" She stopped and placed the rag back. "Wait. Okay. Step by step. And for frack sake, you still have your ears, let's use them. Please." She added to the end, sounding increasingly anxious for him. How could she communicate with him if he wasn't going to listen to her anyway?

"What do you do first when you come in here?" She asked him, figuring she could help him put toothpaste on his toothbrush or even clean his face.

"Teeth, usually." He responded shortly, trying to contain the frustration building. "I can- Look I don't- I should be able to do this."

Containment breaching. He bit his tongue.

*Shouldn't need help. People shouldn't see this, too much to know. Danger. Danger-*

His knuckles were white with how tightly he was gripping the sink. Cole could feel the pressure, and let go forcibly, "If.. if you could just hand me them, please."

Sagitta had never been so tempted to use the Force in her entire life but resisted. What was going on with him? "It's temporary.." She tried to remind him but she remembered being in that panic herself. She wouldn't breach his privacy or his trust. "Of course."

She grabbed the toothbrush and blinked. She could feel the smoothness of the handle. 'About frackin' time'. She turned on the water, ran the bristles underneath it, and then added toothpaste. "Hand out, Cole." She said softly as she waited.

Cole held his hand out, grasping it once it was placed and running his other hand up the brush to find the bristles. He couldn't kripping brush his teeth without help what if something-

Once he had she realized something and it made her grimace. He could accidentally hurt himself here. Regardless, she had placed the toothbrush onto his hand and was prepared to grab his wrist if he was about to harm himself.

It didn't take long and he felt oddly self-conscious the entire time. It went without incident at least. It wasn't exactly the few minutes alone he'd been hoping for but Cole had no kriffing clue how to manage that without just telling Sagitta to kark off.

It bothered him that he felt like he couldn't just do that, but he *couldn't*. So it was what it was.

"That's.. Fine then. Done. I doubt I'm going anywhere so..."

He trailed off. So what? Cole didn't know.

"Cole?" Sagitta asked softly while her hand rested on his arm. "My touch is back." She wasn't going to make it a big deal and she didn't have time anyways, she wanted to help him. Remind him that it is temporary.

"It is? Good." That was a relief. It **was** temporary.

"Okay. Back to the bedroom. I can-" She stopped. What the frack can she do? The datapad. Blind people had to use it somehow. Maybe there was a feature- No. That could make things worse. Kark. "I can help you set up some kind of music or podcast or..." She trailed off, hoping Cole could suggest something.

He started to turn with her but did at least wait this time for Sagitta to start leading him instead of just going for it. It felt pathetic, but he was sick with some random virus that could stop the Force. *Doesn't matter. It never has. They mustn't know.*

He grimaced, "Does it have to be on the bed? It's not a good position and if anyone comes in I'm expos-" Cole cut himself off, rubbing his hand across his jaw. Those thoughts always sounded crazy out loud. She had shared something very personal yesterday though. He took a steadying breath, though the tremble in his hands wasn't improving. "If I can't see. I can't shoot. If something *happens*, I'd be reliant on facing the right direction and getting lucky or being able to get close enough to fight hand-to-hand. I'd rather the former."

Sagitta was startled when he just randomly asked if it 'had to be on the bed.'

"I-" She stopped when he continued. If anyone comes in. Exposed. Something she knew all too well. Had she gotten too comfortable and trustworthy on Voidbreaker II? Sure she can name you her weapons and where they are but they were in her room. She came to Cole's without her weapon and only knew of two weapons locations. If she had to take a leaf out of Buir's book, Cole would surely have done the same in hiding weapons and avoiding pathways that can do more harm than good. She had no idea how bad his paranoia was until now.

“Okay.” She started. She’d tackle this later but right now he was blind and vulnerable and told her something that was personal to him. “Alright. Well. I can shoot but we can discuss where you want to be set up and I’ll hand you the blaster. I’ll sit by you so you won’t shoot me. Nothing will come in but I’ll stay and wait with you.” She was hoping at least agreeing to setting him up and handing him the blaster would help. “Though, if someone does knock, please do not pull the trigger. We do have allies on this ship. At least wait for me to confirm if they’re a friend or enemy.”

*You do.*

“Corner, the one at the end of the bed is probably the best.” He didn’t quite know how to handle her actually taking him seriously. He supposed she did come from a family who taught her to fight, to not flinch at death. Even so, it felt like he’d missed a step on a set of stairs. There was no judgment in her voice. No reprimand for taking things too far.

“I.. yeah. Will do.” He wouldn’t have shot the door at it being *knocked* on. It was if it opened despite not getting a response, that was different. He didn’t feel the need to explain it though, already far too exposed by this for comfort. The more he said, the worse it’d likely be after all.

Sagitta gently led him to the corner of the room. “Stay here for a bit, let me get the chair.” She walked over to the desk and grabbed the chair for him, placing it behind him. Once he sat down, she reached under the mattress for the blaster hidden there

“Here.” When his hand was held out she gave him the blaster. “Okay. I’m grabbing my datapad.” She said as she went to the nightstand and grabbed the datapad, doing so in a way that Cole would hear the rustling of it.

Cole had instinctively checked over the blaster. It was slower than normal, but instinct and familiarity with the weapon paid off. He made sure the safety was off, sitting down and settling into a comfortable position, but one that would allow a quick and easy movement into action.

Sagitta’s eyes rested on the sheathed knife that she forgot to put away. She placed the datapad onto the bed and grabbed it making her way to the spot where the knife goes to place it back.

Sagitta was scared of him harming someone on this ship. But she didn’t run. All she could do was to hope that he wouldn’t shoot at anyone coming in. Sagitta made her way back and sat down on the floor between Cole and the bed. She browsed her datapad for a moment and found some books. Her eyes looked up at Cole, should she...? Well. If he wanted her to stop, he could tell her to.

“Chapter One.”

Despite all of what was occurring, Cole didn't stop her from reading.

She read from that morning all the way into the evening. He stayed there. Watching over the door and listening to everything that passed by. He didn't visibly tense at the sounds of people walking by, but his attention always focused on it, making sure they went away down the corridor. The only pause was when Sagitta got them lunch and he did his best to relax during that time before returning to sit sentry. Sagitta to her reading. Every set of footsteps was an enemy until it passed.

Evening came around, though Cole didn't move. He had no intent to move from there.

Sagitta's eyes were burning. She rubbed at them softly and checked the time on the datapad.

"Cole, we should go to sleep." She stood up and stretched, every joint of her body was screaming. By the galaxy. When he could see again, she was training hardcore. But for now, she was trying to keep the others on this ship alive and Cole's sanity together. No one should be alone during this.

"Hm?" Cole blinked, though it didn't exactly help anything bar the dryness in his eyes. "Oh. I'm okay. You can go ahead."

He stretched a little in place, but it wasn't the first time he'd sat sentry through a whole day and night before. Some jobs required it after all. He'd rather stay awake than go to sleep like this.

Sagitta paused while looking at him.

*'Put your foot down. Sagitta. Put your foot down. No. He's been through enough. PUT. YOUR. FRACKIN-'*

"No, Cole. You've been here for about a year if I remember right? You're okay here. And can you please, for tonight, try to trust me just enough? You know I am good at hand-to-hand." She leaned over to him a bit, her hand resting on his shoulder and running down his arm to hold his hand and squeezed it gently. "Put the blaster by your nightstand if it helps with the thought of being able to grab it quickly and aim at the door if you must. But Cole, this is a virus. You need rest to fight this quicker." She wasn't sure if that last part was true but hopefully the logic made sense.

He had had a year of avoiding all of them. Of stares. Of feeling exposed every time he turned his back on them. Waiting for the other shoe to drop. Maybe it would have been better in another time but coming across Zuza on arrival... Her freaking out. Kriff, Ruka wrote him off straight away. If the Proconsul wrote someone off then why would any else bother? And yes, he'd been avoiding them too but kriff, even in the training rooms people had never approached. He... He didn't think it was just in his head anymore.

She didn't know that. Not any of it. She didn't need to. He wasn't hers to worry about.

Cole let out a slow breath, leaning his face into his hand, elbow resting on his thigh.

"It's not about trusting you."

*'Negotiate.'* Who knew some of Buir's training would come in handy? Maybe. Sagitta gently tugged at his hand a bit, to remind him that she was there for him.

"Okay. Well, you need the rest since you're infected. I'll stay up all night while you sleep." Her voice was full of promise. She would do that for Cole. She had had to before on missions but she wasn't having Cole battle his demons any longer than he needed to. Sometimes sleep could put them on pause. Or escalate them.

"I didn't stay up when you slept," Cole mumbled into his hand, suddenly feeling like she was doing a lot more for him than he had for her. Logically, that was the case. Guilt was a strange feeling to add to the mix. But it was enough to move his resolve.

"Okay. I will sleep. But don't stay up. It'll have to be fine." He didn't sound confident, but he at least acquiesced. He stood, slowly, letting her guide him toward the bed.

That was a good point. He didn't. The Mirialan felt a bit hurt, wondering if he felt she was incapable. No matter. It wasn't important right now. Sagitta knew the battle wasn't won yet. She needed to be sure he did sleep. When they got to bed Cole placed the blaster on the nightstand, and laid on his side. Sagitta considered for a moment to protest but she did want him to be comfortable. So she didn't say anything. She slipped an arm underneath his ribs but kept a bit of distance to not tightly spoon him so he wouldn't feel constricted. She stayed awake until she could feel his muscles relax which would indicate that he should have fallen asleep.

It took time, a *lot* of time. Eventually though, Cole relaxed and slipped into sleep.

Sagitta let out a sigh of relief when his body felt relaxed. She waited a bit longer until the deep breathing had started. She scooted closer and held him a little tighter. "Kark..." whispered Sagitta as her forehead rested between Cole's shoulder blades.

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Sagitta's eyelids opened, waking up before Cole. He was still exactly in the same position that he was the night before. Her arm slowly withdrew from him as she realized she was sort of trapped. If she moved to get out, over him or by scooting down the bed, he would surely wake up. So instead she just shifted to rest her back against the wall and patiently waited for him to wake up.

It wasn't much later. It was a sudden wake-up, as he flinched and shifted, though didn't spring up as he had once before. Cole laid there for a few seconds, tense before relaxing once more. The Human assumed Sagitta was still asleep, so stayed still while considering how to get up without waking her up. He needed to get up. It had been too long to be out of it for, not that he could even check the kriffing room. Still.

Cole listened but other than Sagitta's breathing and the thrum of the *Voidbreakers* engines in the distance there was silence.

That didn't mean it was safe.

He started to sit up, moving slowly and hand reaching out for the wall.

When she felt movement Sagitta's eyes darted to him. He started to sit up and he seemed to be less frantic this time. "I'm awake." She wanted him to know as she gently sat up too. Crawling down to the end of the bed, Sagitta's feet touched the floor. She hasn't had time to rejoice about her touch coming back but damn. Every little thing felt so good to her. Sagitta smiled and then frowned, remembering he couldn't see her. Her hand reached out to his shoulder, "Bathroom?" She didn't want to ask if his sight was coming back quite yet.

He didn't jump at her touch this time, though... she didn't grasp too tight. Every other time the grip had been wrong. Her movements were calmer.

"Your touch is back, isn't it? Fully?"

Sagitta smiled, the curl of her lips audible in her tone, "Yeah."

His shoulders relaxed and despite himself, he smiled, "Good. I'm glad." He found her hand with his, the one not on the wall, and gave it a squeeze. It still trembled, though it was barely noticeable with the squeeze.

Sagitta froze. This... was not what she was expecting. The flip of the paranoia to him being relaxed and holding her hand. Even giving her hand a squeeze. She exhaled slowly, enjoying feeling the rough calluses of his hand against hers. She felt her cheeks getting warm. Her shoulders relaxed. Yet his hand still trembled. The urge to hold him close was strong. She contained herself from making any further movements, "And.. your sight? Is it better?" She asked softly.

His smile faded. He shook his head but murmured, "Yours wasn't back when you woke up though. So it'll be soon." Soon. Kriff he hoped so. He rarely felt safe as it was, losing one of the major things ensuring that he could keep himself safe even when in uncertain territory removed any remnants of safety.

But she was better. It was confirmation. Now it was just making it next through the next few hours to a day until it was fully back. Cole released her hand, starting to move once more for the bathroom.

Aware she was about to protest, he held up his hand, trying to pacify her before she started, "I'll wait on the rest until I can see, but uh, I can handle this one myself."

Sagitta frowned and was prepared to argue more but she stopped herself. He did leave her be for a few hours the day before yesterday. "Okay. But if I hear a bang, I'm going in," declared Sagitta with a bit of amusement in her voice. She wasn't going to go in, it seemed like he was doing a bit better. Hopefully.

"Wouldn't expect any less." He commented offhandedly, now with confirmation that she was going to let him go in heading once more into the bathroom.

He handled his business and then, once his hands were clean, sat down on the edge of the bathtub. Cole took the moment to press his face into his hands, fingers grasping into his hair. Clinging. Nails digging slightly into his scalp. The pressure gave some sense of grounding despite how awful he felt. A sensation of holding himself together. The morning held promise, yet the frustration wouldn't stop building. The fear. Sagitta had managed herself, but Cole didn't even know where to start with doing the same. Even after minutes of sitting, breathing, slowly in and slowly back out, his hands shook. Managing them had been a quiet battle of its own, doing as best as he could to suppress it. The tremble was there but there wasn't much to do that could entirely stop it. Reducing it had been enough, at least Cole assumed it had been enough considering that it wasn't mentioned. She'd have likely noticed. It- well Sagitta was perceptive enough to pick up on that. It wasn't bad enough that it had been mentioned. That was enough.

She'd probably pick up eventually that it had been quiet for too long in there as well, but as his eyes burned and he scrunched them shut to try and bottle *that* down, Cole decided that she could worry for a couple of minutes.

The weakness had to stop. Saying too much. The exposure. Even like this, he shouldn't need *help*. Kriff, what would they have said back home.

*Pathetic. Coward.* Those two would at least have been a certainty. Probably worse. They'd be right, even though they were dead now. The ghosts of what was clung at his back, pulling and dragging him into the dirt with them. But there was no dirt and when he waved an arm around there was nothing there. There was rarely anything there. Until there was.

Ten minutes or so after he entered the bathroom, Cole stepped back out with his hands trembling as little as he could make them and his usual passive expression back on. It was like holding an umbrella up against a storm but he'd hoped it'd be enough.

Until he almost walked into Sagitta who'd been *weirdly* close to the door. *Kriff.*

Sagitta had been increasingly worried but she didn't hear anything concerning. Instead, she had all this energy so she started to pace outside of his door. Finally, the door opened and she was startled, focused on the pacing. She hopped backwards. "A-ah, sorry... Are you okay?" She asked directly.

"Yeah?" Cole posed it as a question, confused by her even asking though he knew he'd been too long. It was a lie.

Sagitta's brow furrowed at him. He was fine? She nodded. "Okay. If you-" She stopped, gasping softly. "Kriff!" Her teeth gritted at the wave of emotions that hit her. Frack. She forgot to keep her Force in check but even then, sometimes, it comes without warning. No wonder why she hated the Force sometimes, when moments like this happened.

The fear made her heart pump wildly. Fight or Flight? Always fight. Fight what? The paranoia caused her eyes to dash to the door as if someone was to come in. Any moment. Could happen soon. Where were the weapons again? Blaster, on the nightstand, check. Knife by the bed, check. She put it there. She knows.

*Shame. All too familiar.*

Sagitta inhaled deeply and exhaled sharply. Sagitta growled, "I stopped lying to *you*, Cole. And you had the nerve to-" She stopped herself. This wasn't her talking. She was just startled by the wave of emotions. The hurt that Cole lied to her. She backed away from him. No. Don't. He's still blind. And he helped her. Another sharp exhale. She didn't step forward though.

All the while Cole stood there, unable to see the emotions flashing through her expression. Just hearing the sudden intakes of breath, the panic of it. Had something happened?! He went to step forward when she snapped at him, bringing him to a sharp stop before he ever completed the step. If it was anyone else he'd have snapped back but it was so strange. It echoed something that wasn't her.

"What just happened?"

*'Lie. Lie again. Lie to him. Don't tell him.'* But she said she wouldn't lie to him. Another step back. Even though she wanted to lie so badly. Her hands went up to her cheek as she wiped a tear away. Thank frack he couldn't see. "I don't have full control of the Force. I just felt what you feel."

Sagitta waited. Waited for him to be mad at the invasion of privacy she fought so hard to keep away. She didn't interfere for so long. All those opportunities she had to help him calm down by using the Force or get her answers, she didn't. She respected and trusted him enough and now just in a second, everything may have been shattered.



## Why was the Force so cruel to her?

The words registered slowly with Cole. He'd known she had the Force of course but this was different. He wanted to retract from this. To tell her to get out. To leave now. To stay away. *Away.* It was too much. Even what was his own, in his own mind, had been exposed. At least what she'd told him had been her choice to share.

Yet at the same time, it wasn't her fault. The umbrella was cast aside by a wind neither of them could control.

She had felt what he felt. He didn't know how different that was from what she felt normally but her voice. The way she'd snapped. It was familiar. It clearly wasn't **her** normal. It was his. He didn't know how unhealthy that meant he was, considering that it sounded so strange coming from another. After a moment of thought, he didn't want to either.

He reached out, assuming she was still standing directly in front of him but found nothing. If it wasn't for the lack of footsteps and door closing, he'd have expected her to already be gone. Still, the message was clear. As quickly as his hand had grasped out Cole withdrew it, letting it hang at his hip. Of course, she'd back away. He understood that.

*No one should know. Weakness. All of it was a weakness. You were fine alone, you karked that up and now she knows how fragile you are. How exposed. A loose string. An unknown. All it'd take was her mentioning it to the right people. Either those who wanted you dead already or those of Arcona who don't want you around either way. It'd be all too easy for them to have you disappear. Danger. This is dangerous. Situation hostile.*

He had reached out. Sagitta bit her lip. *'Reach back!'* Yet she was frozen. And his hands lowered. Her chest was tight. Her eyelids closed and more tears streamed down. *'Why did that hurt so much?'* She was so confused. She had been hurt before and she would take those a thousand times over than hurting him.

*'Is it because I'm failing my promise to Zuza?'* No. Can't be. Sagitta swallowed a bitter truth. She was developing feelings for him. Beyond friendship? Sagitta struggled for a moment. No. It was just friendship. They were two beings underneath the same House. Train together. That's all.

*'Wrong.'* The realization had hit her hard. She would take away his pain if she could. Would make sure he smiled no matter what it took. To ensure that Cole was happy. She'd happily take a bullet meant for him. Even though she would do that for everyone, the need to do it for him was much stronger. As if she would do it without thinking. Instinct. Frack, if she was able, she would take away that pain and burden it all. Sagitta found herself unable to breathe. *'No strings. No strings.'*

Cole bit his tongue again, grasping for any anger. It was there but there was too much else. It'd be so much easier to make her leave. Yet, the words stuck in his throat even as his expression

carefully turned into a harsh visage, glaring into the nothingness his vision provided. There weren't any words, none that felt right, but the silence was too much to bear. Yet all the Human could come up with, as his icy gaze aimlessly turned away from the direction he thought she was in, was a muttered, "You shouldn't have done that."

It brought the Mirialan back to reality. With a slow exhale, she lifted her hands and wiped the tears away. Kark. At least he can't see. She wiped her hands on her t-shirt. "It wasn't intentional." her voice strained, "If I wanted to do that I would've done it thousand times over earlier." Wait. Why was this flipped over to her? The harsh expression on his face. It made her delay. Was he spiraling worse? Kriff. Even when she called him out earlier, it was as if the Human had somehow gotten better at hiding his emotions. Using the Force was tempting.

This had to stop. He was hurting himself. All those feelings, he was them bottling up. Time to be on the offense. She approached him to try and grab his hand, "No more hiding, Cole. Please, talk to me."

"About what?" Cole didn't move away, not because he was glad she was approaching now but because he wasn't sure what he'd do even if he did. What could he do? She took his hand in her own and everything was screaming. To lash out. To move away. Step forward and *kriffing stop for once-*

The shake of his hands worsened.

"I know you didn't do it on purpose. Just.." Her words from before bore through what he was about to say. 'And do not tell me to wait. Or to go away.' Why did it matter what she said? It shouldn't. He should be able to tell her to leave or force her to.

Cole didn't *want* to do that.

Yet, if he started talking, he wasn't sure when he'd stop. The Human ended up just shaking his head, unsure where his gaze was facing but maintaining some composure in his expression even as his hands betrayed him.

Sagitta gritted her teeth softly when he replied with 'About what?' She took his other hand as she grasped them both tightly, trying to remind him that she was there. When she was a pre-teen and became irrational about missions, Buir would simply grasp her arm and take her to a safe place. He would check to make sure she was okay, give her a tight hug, and leave to finish the mission himself.

"About what's really bothering you." Carefully, one hand removed from his as she touched his torso, sliding it down to his side. Almost as if preparing for a hug.

Yet he didn't return it, tensing, and after a moment moving in a sudden burst, hands tearing from hers and slamming against her chest. Forcing her back. Away. Away.

He couldn't do this.

Cole stepped away, back hitting a wall. Or a door? He couldn't tell, trying to find the handle to go back into the bathroom, some space that was away but couldn't. Kriff. Where- He found the corner of the room and pressed his back into it. It wasn't enough. If she attacked he'd be- Would she?

She wouldn't. From the storm, to them sparring, to.. Each conversation. Any time anything had come up, anything others would have considered him weak for, she'd not hesitated nor had turned him away. Cole didn't understand why entirely, but she didn't. It reminded him vaguely of Zusa. Maybe it was just how normal people treated each other. He didn't know.

Back still to the wall, he let himself slowly sink down, pressing his face into his hands, knees up to his chest and staying there.

Sagitta felt the tension build up in him and she stepped back at the first sign of movement. Yet she wasn't quick enough. It hurt. Physically? No. But seeing him like this was killing her. She couldn't help him. Why the kark could she not help him? He had stumbled back, hitting the wall. His hands were frantically looking for something.

A way out? It was excruciating for her to watch. Her throat closed up. She was doing this to him. Maybe she should leave. He was acting like this because she's in the room, or was it more? Cole started to move to the corner. She reached out but pulled her hand back. She waited a bit longer. He was explosive right now and if she tried to touch him, it could trigger a fight. Maybe a physical release such as a spar was all they needed. But she knew he wouldn't when he couldn't see.

Sagitta knelt down in front of him. She thought about placing her arm on his shoulders and pulling him into a hug. One thing bothered her, the worry that anything around the neck may cause a violent reaction from him. He's good at close combat too.

Instead, she slid to his side, forcing her arm between the wall and his back and attempted to quickly bring him into a hug so she could also hold him down somewhat and avoid more injuries for the both of them.

"You shouldn't-" He started but something was catching in his throat, he let out a shuddering breath and let himself sink into her. "I can't talk. I can't. It-" The shaking was only getting worse. Kriff this shouldn't be happening.

It felt like he was cracking at the edges, or fraying. Grasping at the threads and trying to hold them together even as they scarred his hands in their attempts to split away. But Cole held on. He didn't know what would happen if he let go.

“Cole, okay. Okay.” She repeated to him, trying to calm him down. “You don’t have to. It’s okay. I’m here. It’s alright.” She pulled him closer, her hands gently running through his hair. Her teeth bit down at her cheek. Who the hell hurt him this bad? She had never wanted to go for a kill this bad before. Sure, she wanted her biological family dead but she wasn’t in a hurry. Besides, it was all dead ends at the moment.

Yet, she found an itch to find the one or the group that harmed Cole like this, instead of asking more questions and demanding answers. Sagitta was quiet, keeping him close to her.

They stayed like that for some time. Cole certainly had no idea as he fought with himself, though the fighting faded over time. Just.. the fact she still was there. Holding him. It was confusing but as the realization sank in that there wasn’t a knife coming, nor anything else akin to it, it was easier to calm.

Tears burned at his eyes again so he closed them tightly, trying to contain himself even now. Less tightly, as if Sagitta’s arm itself was holding him together, but he couldn’t let go.

Eventually though it had to come to an end. It was a better one than he thought at least. It made sense, that while blurry and dim, his vision was somewhat back. Only vague shapes and colors yet, but the relief was immense. Enough to drag him out of his head.

Sagitta let out a relieved sigh. He wasn’t fighting against her anymore. She shifted a bit and made sure they were both comfortable. Somehow. Sagitta never wavered as she held him.

He mumbled as he stared less aimlessly around the room, though remaining sat still yet, “It’s coming back...”

“I’m glad,” she responded with a soft smile. This was odd. Anyone else, she would be badgering them like crazy. Especially her family. But Cole? She would give him all the time he needed in the world.

The Mirialan remained still while her heart skipped a beat.

*‘Frack..’*

“I’m sorry.” He said, still in a quiet murmur. It felt like if he spoke too loudly it’d break whatever was going on even more. “I’m usually more in control than that. You shouldn’t have had to...”

Cole sighed, shifting slightly to bring his legs down from the fetal position he’d slumped into. A pressure shifted from his back and he realized that that had not been the best way to hunker down. None of it had. He felt shame flush his cheeks, only slightly but the warmth was hard to ignore.

Realizing he hadn’t really finished, he ended the sentence with a short, “Thank you.”

At least Cole was starting to relax some. Was she like this too? Tense for a while before starting to let go? Sagitta shook her head before realizing he still didn't have all of his vision back.

"No need to thank me. You were there for me. I'm trying to do the same." She sighed softly as she also extended her legs. Her arm that had been between the wall and Cole slid out, having started to ache. Without thinking and acting on instinct, her hand reached and just simply held his.

He hesitated before grasping it in his own.

"I don't think you were this difficult to be there for." He chuckled, "So I do need to thank you. I.. shouldn't have..." He trailed off, shaking his head. There were no words that felt right. So he just squeezed her hand and shifted to take her into his arms and hug her properly. Tightly. She had her touch back, it felt right to actually hold her in a way that would hopefully comfort her. Cole wasn't sure if she actually needed it, but after everything it felt right. A real apology.

Not that Cole was exactly sure *why* it felt right but he wasn't going to consider this one too much, not when it was some form of pay back for dealing with him.

Sagitta shook her head, her hand squeezing his. "No need to dwell on it." Her voice was almost back to her cheery self. "You're not ready and there's nothing wrong with that."

Sagitta was surprised when he pulled her into a tight hug. The Mirialan found herself relaxing immediately. A touch that she didn't have to fight or beg for. He just gave it willingly. Sagitta found herself really resting on him, her hand gently removed from his. Fingertips trailing along his arm. Maybe some touch, while not his preference, would help distract Cole from his mind.

He could feel her relax. That was good. Better, at least. He rested his head on hers, looking out over the room.

It wasn't much but vague colors were enough to tell if anything changed. It was enough.

The longer they remained, the more conflicted Sagitta became. She gently pulled away. "We haven't eaten..." She glanced over at the desk. It was empty. They had eaten everything yesterday. "I can order or go to the mess hall." She turned her head to look at him. Her hand reached up as she brushed his hair back a bit. "That's better." She slightly teased, hoping to lift the mood a little bit. "And kriff, I need a shower." Sagitta chuckled softly.

"Well, I could order food while you do that?" He offered.

Sagitta thought about it for a moment and nodded. Giving him some independence could help his mood and stability a bit more. "That sounds good!" She broke free and was met with coldness. Frack. She was already craving his touch. This was different. Not like warm hugs from

her family and friends. Or even one night stands. This was... odd. She shook her head, frowning as she started to look around for something.

As she got up, Cole did the same. The shapes were enough to pick out the bed so he was carefully crossing the room toward it. One of the perks of keeping his room practically empty was that there was nothing to trip over.

"Where's my datapad..." She muttered. "Ah-ha!" Then she stopped. Holding it close to her chest, she turned to face Cole, guiding him the rest of the way to the bed.

"So I have this routine I do in the shower, and I do ask you not to judge."

He sat down, "Well, I'm not going to be watching you so you don't need to worry about it."

Sagitta sucked air between her teeth. "Yea. It's not tha-" Wait. What did he think she was talking about?! Maybe it was best if she said nothing. Her cheeks became muddy red as she cleared her throat. "Right. Okay.." She wanted to make sure he was comfortable and able to order before she showered. She took a step towards his shower and paused. Maybe she should do this in her room? His vision was coming back and he seemed to be a lot better now than he was. Yet, not wanting to leave him alone, she went into his bathroom and closed the door behind her.

The water turned on. Not too long after, singing could be heard from his bathroom. Not very good at singing, but Sagitta was 100% singing her heart out.

The edge of the bath held a few products, a shower gel, shampoo, conditioner. They were all generic brandings, non-specific but good enough. A couple of towels were in a cupboard under the sink.

Cole was a little surprised she used his bathroom but didn't think much of it.

It took him longer than he liked to order the food, using the text to voice function to actually know what the various foods were on the lists. But it was ordered before she got out of the shower. The singing was... bad. But oh well. Wasn't first time he'd heard someone sing in the shower. She was enjoying herself. He took the time to familiarize himself with where his vision was at, though it was slowly improving over time, which was an increasing relief.

Sagitta had the habit of turning on the water before she actually showered. While the music was playing and she was singing, Sagitta was using the mirror. She freed her hair from the white bandages. Throwing them aside, she blinked before looking at the bandages on her arm. Huh. She forgot about them. She removed the bandage from her uninjured arm first. Then the next one and cringed. It made her stop singing for a moment. Well. She was healed now.

Resuming singing, she hopped into the shower.

Several minutes later, Sagitta back hopped out and dried herself. Making sure to put the towel onto the drying rack and not leave any messes, Sagitta exited without clothes on. "Going to steal your clothes," she made a beeline to his drawers. Underwear and a black tank top. Perfect. Putting them on, she smiled softly as she glanced over at Cole. She was extremely happy and relieved to not see him sitting on the chair and staring down the door with the blaster in hand.

Well. She was naked. He couldn't really enjoy the view, though it was somewhat disconcerting until she explained. The blaster was still on the nightstand so within easy arm's reach of where he'd sat.

"Ah." Was all he managed in response to the thievery.

"So what did you get us?" She plopped onto the bed next to him.

Cole handed her the datapad which was still on the order, watching its progress as even though he couldn't actually *read* it, it felt weird to not have that screen up. "It's on there. Not too different from what we got yesterday."

Sagitta rolled to lay on her back while looking at the datapad, smiling softly. So he enjoyed these too? That was good. She tried to cheat a little bit to see if there were any extra things he ordered which would mean he liked them. Then she gave up. She didn't even remember how much she ordered in the first place.

"Sounds good to me." She handed the datapad back, making sure it was slightly touching his arm so he would know. She almost suggested a holomovie and stopped herself. Wow. The one time she remembered something. Was she becoming more focused? "I can read some more to you or we can just..." She looked around at the room a bit before glancing up at the ceiling. "Lay here. But I do want to ask, can we please, for all the galaxies and stars, do some training? When you are better, of course." It was so weird for her to go for a day without training, let alone two. Maybe three? How long had it been? Just laying around and not really moving messed up Sagitta's conception of time.

Though yesterday and today had really got her heart running and her mind racing. Did that count?

Cole didn't notice her handing it back until it touched him, at which point he placed back onto his lap.

"I would like that." He commented, "You were better before we went to bed I think.. weren't you? So maybe we could this evening. So long as I can make out actual shapes and get depth perception back, it probably wouldn't be a bad idea. We haven't done much the last couple days."

Tired didn't begin to explain it, but Cole was hoping that training or a spar at least would clear his head. Regain control. It had slipped too far earlier and while he was lucky that Sagitta was good about it, it was still unacceptable.

"Spar? Or just general training?"

Sagitta nodded. Then she almost smacked herself. He still couldn't see. "A little bit. Not fully." Sagitta listened and smiled softly. She wanted to bring up the idea of him learning how to deal with close combat in darkness. Never know when you would need it, but with him not having the option to pick to see or not- she wasn't going to test the waters now.

"Not picky." She smiled softly as she sat up and nudged his shoulder with hers. "Your choice."

As if on cue, the door knocked and a droid made beeping sounds. "Delivery order for number VN7593." Sagitta was already heading to the door when it knocked as she opened it. "Thank you. Have a lovely day." It beeped as it left while Sagitta closed the door behind her.

"There we go." She smiled softly while placing the food onto the desk again. She walked over to the bed and reached to get the knife again. "I'll cut the fruits this time." She grabbed the bowl on the way, using the bathroom sink to do her best to wash it clean after it was empty.

A few moments passed as she sat down on the bed with the fruits, Cole able to hear the crinkling sounds of a bag. That would be the jerkies. Placing it between them, she gently took his datapad and put it on the nightstand by the blaster. "I'll hold the bowl." She scooted back a bit so when she sat criss-cross applesauce and the gap was perfect for the bowl.

Cole had moved to stand initially, but sat back down when Sagitta moved. It would *not* have been the best idea realistically, though having some of his sight back was easing a lot of the spiraling and the walking into things. He wanted to do stuff, though for now held back. It was a one person job really, a one person job that would be a lot better done by her.

Instead he shifted to sit more comfortably on the bed, the door in view and the blaster still in arms reach, but sat on the bed. It wasn't his favorite spot in the room but it would do. At least now he could check things for himself. He'd have a better chance at shooting and had less need of a more defensive position.

Once they'd eaten, the pair spent a few hours relaxing. Sagitta pulled her book out again and began reading aloud. Cole actually listened this time, though was still far from inactive himself as he started doing checks on his equipment once smaller scale details became perceivable. It was all still blurry and chunky, but it was enough to take the blaster apart and do basic maintenance. The weapon being so familiar was quite helpful in that matter. As he cleaned them, Sagitta continued her reading. It was the story book she mentioned she was named after. An adventure story.



Sagitta had paused for a moment when he grabbed his blaster but had resumed reading as he was cleaning it. It seemed to give him some peace so it wasn't her place to tell him what not to do. Cole's confidence seemed to be slowly building up and his hands were trembling less. In fact, they were almost perfectly steady while he was cleaning. She continued on reading the *Adventures of Sagitta*.

It was reasonably aimless from what he could tell, there was a definite plot and challenges to overcome, but she always *did*. If Cole had to guess it was a children's story book though there were some dark elements that almost made him ask her to stop so he could question if it actually was. Weren't children's books supposed to be all dumb and... cheery? All the way through? Cole wouldn't exactly *know*, they'd never had them growing up, but it felt odd that something so dark would have made it into common reading material for little ones.

He resisted the temptation to ask and just did his best to not think too deeply into the narrative Sagitta was reading.

Eventually he'd finished cleaning his blasters and had them reassembled. His vision was... good enough. Things were blurry, but he could probably start telling people apart fairly easily and navigation wouldn't be an issue. It was enough.

"You want to head to the shooting range?"

He'd rather that than spar he'd realized over the last few hours.

Sagitta stopped mid-sentence, her eyebrow rising as she looked at Cole. She wanted to say it wasn't a good idea but they had the safety of the shooting range and he's kriffin' good with the blasters. "Okay, we can do that." She said as she sat up. "We need to stop by my room so I can grab mine as well."

Cole nodded, "I'll meet you at the elevator then? I need to get dressed.. Properly anyway."

He glanced at her before standing up, not commenting but wondering if she would actually show up at the shooting range in his tank top and boxers. It's not like *he'd* mind but it wasn't typical. Or particularly professional.

Sagitta gave him a blank stare for a moment. Then it clicked. She glanced down at herself. He had a good point. "I'll change as well." She laughed sheepishly while scratching her cheek a bit and clearing her throat. "See you at the elevators." Now at least, she won't get lost heading to the elevators.

Stepping out of Cole's room, she made her way to hers. First things first, she went to her hammock, as on the side was a little bulky thing visible to the trained eye. Flipping the fabric open, there was a click sound as she removed her blaster from the fabric made sheath on her hammock. Setting it on the desk, she opened her closet and grabbed her sniper rifle. Her heart

was beating and she was smiling more.

Fun time! Sagitta grabbed her blaster from the desk and was about to head out. Wait. She was forgetting something. She frowned, looking around. Sniper. Check. Blaster. Check. Her eyes glanced down at herself as she remembered. Melodic laughter echoed in her room while she put on more proper clothes. Jeans and t-shirt. That'd do. Rifle's strap slung around her, she grabbed her blaster again and made her way to the elevators.

To say that she was slightly surprised to see Cole armored up was an understatement of the year. "I thought we were going to the shooting range?" She questioned, slightly amused and confused at the same time as she leaned in and pushed the button for them.

He frowned slightly, confused, "Yes? We are." Once the elevator arrived he stepped on with her.

"I'm... I-" She wanted to say something. Should she? Yes. "I'm just trying to figure out why you are wearing your armor to the shooting range."

"I don't *always*. But... normally yes." He realized he'd never paid attention to others at the range here when they'd been there enough to recall if they had. So he worked off of his previous knowledge from home.

"Most people do."

Sagitta raised an eyebrow. The elevator door opened as she stepped in and waited for Cole. When he had, she pushed the right button subconsciously. "I mean, I wear my armor when it comes to close combat and sometimes when I go climbing or running... but never the shooting range... so I guess I never thought of it."

Now she was hoping that he wouldn't be down for sparring after the shooting range. Training with armor and having none herself could hurt. But that idea actually sounded good. After all, you never know what's going to happen when you're casually scrolling down the street. For some unknown stars-forsaken reason, Sagitta had a dirty thought as she started coughing out of the blue from the sudden flush of her cheeks, "I'm okay!" She yelped to reassure Cole that she was fine.

*'Frackin hell.'*

Cole looked *mildly* concerned, seeing the flush but not having context for it. It was a really random reaction to something when he couldn't.. See anything amiss.

He found himself looking around, squinting at the fuzzy corners before shifting uncomfortably, "Are.. you sure?"

“Yes. I choke on my spit. A lot.” That wasn’t a lie. When she had that random ass thought, it took an inhale while trying to function like a frackin’ adult being. She failed when the saliva went down the wrong pipe as she continued to cough a bit longer but it was easing up till she could clear her throat for the tickle of her throat to go away.

“Oh.”

Well. That was odd but sure. Ok.

He was quiet the rest of the elevator ride and through the short walk from there to the shooting range. The targets were only just visible, the numbers on them not at all. But it wasn’t like it wasn’t at least *mostly* clear where the center of the targets were. So Cole wasn’t put off, striding toward one of the benches and laying the blasters down.

Close call. Maybe she could mention it, but she wanted to see how he did first. With a smile, she took a deep inhale when they entered the shooting range. There was almost a skip to her step now, she set her sniper down with her datapad as well.

Holding her favorite blaster, a gift from Buir, she checked over it. Making sure it was good. Clean. Ready. The safety was still on for a reason. Right up against the starting line, she made sure she was focused. Her eyes don’t leave the target. “Clear?” She asked Cole. A habit she had learned from her family.

The one time she did not pay attention when she was a pre-teen had scared her so bad. With the help of her family, she started to do protocols and it helped regain the confidence that Sagitta needed after that scare. Sagitta can focus at the shooting range. For a certain amount of time at least.

“Clear.” Cole confirmed, nodding. He was surprised she felt the need to ask, but it wasn’t the first time he’d led an exercise and wasn’t one to hesitate from protocol.

With that said, he lifted the sniper rifle blaster and started shooting. Sagitta followed suit and a minute or two later they had run through the clips. Cole couldn’t tell how he’d done until it was clear to walk up.

The shots weren’t bad, nowhere near as good as his usual spacing but to say the target was a fuzzy mass Cole wasn’t upset at the result.

He looked over toward Sagitta, walking there after a moment to see how she did.

Sagitta frowned. One, two... She counted up to nine. Where was the tenth one?

Cole walked up and she smiled, “Hey! How did you- oh wow.” She murmured, slightly impressed and honestly, a bit fearful. Huh. He really knew what he was doing when it came to shooting. He

had proven that with the mission they had long ago and it wasn't a fluke. "I can't find the tenth one. None of the holes look like they overlapped." She looked more to the empty target on her left and saw a hole on the other target's white paper. "Oh."

She cleared her throat before laughing, "Yea, I'm throwing that away too before people see it." She grabbed the other paper and bundled it up into a ball.

"How long have you been shooting for?" The question held no judgment, just plain curiosity.

"Hmm." She had to think about it. "It was after Asani and I got attacked by this bounty hunter. She got injured but she was fine. So I asked Buir to train me some more because he was teaching us self-defense and combat but didn't want to do any more than that. I think it was when we got attacked and we both expressed interest to be able to handle ourselves, he finally agreed. Uhhhhh- kriff. How old were we." She frowned while thinking back.

Asani had screamed at her to run as the man gave chase to Sagitta, so Asani turned around and attacked hi- Sagitta shook her head. "I was twelve," Pink irises met with his icy hues, he seemed to be more focused and not gazing off to the side. "What about you?"

Twelve. He didn't know how old she was exactly but it couldn't be far below or above his own age. So at least ten years. It was admittedly a bit long to still be missing the target, not that Cole was going to actually say that. She'd been through a lot in life and seemed more confident in close quarters combat anyway.

"I could teach you, if you want to improve a little." He offered though, before thinking about it.

Sagitta grinned with a nod. "I would love that, if you don't mind! Buir recently married Lillian and she's a sniper. She gave me some pointers but I guess..." She trailed off as she looked at the balled up paper in her hands. "I'm forgetting something."

Cole took a few moments, considering her question before speaking again, "I think I was five." His eyes narrowed, "Maybe four. It was before... Well. Hm." Cole shrugged, hoping she'd not question that. It had hit the mercenary as he started to speak that she probably wouldn't find that story as normal as it was to people before he came here. Well, the people he interacted with in those times. Not many found a six year old being shown death for the first time normal.

Five?! Then he corrected himself. FOUR WAS EVEN WORSE. She stared at him for a while, her brain processing through this. And she thought Buir teaching her how to use an inch knife and stab at the right places in the leg if another bounty hunter came through to find her was wild. "Hmm." Kark. She wanted to ask more but assumed he wasn't ready. So far, she figured he had a rough upbringing but who would teach a kid at four years old? The thought made her nervous, children don't usually focus well at that young of an age. Did Cole even have a childhood?

“Well, are you down for another round?”

“Sure.” Cole nodded, frowning slightly but letting pass. Clearly that response.. Wasn't an expected one. Not that that was all too surprising really that Sagitta would be surprised by that. Some people went their whole lives never touching a blaster, a very sheltered life but it did happen. Still, how long it took her to speak again was mildly concerning.

He didn't bother to ask further, setting up a clean target for himself and heading back to the benches. Switching to the mid-range blaster, he started shooting once the line was clear.

Sagitta set up a clean target as well, on the left side too for anyone else who walked in. She didn't want to leave messes around. Throwing them to the trash can, she went back to the line and used her sniper rifle this time. Once it was clear, they fired the rounds.

When it was quiet they set their weapons down, Sagitta smiled softly on seeing the target. So. Lillian's teaching did help but she still sucked at blasters. Figures. She glanced over to Cole's. What the kriff. How was this man still getting the target even though not having full vision back. She chuckled softly, “I would hate to see how much different it would be when you are better. I also have morbid curiosity and would love to see it.”

“I missed two.” He pointed out, with a slight note of annoyance to his voice. “But yes, I do specialize in sharpshooting.”

After a moment, he chuckled, “We'll see tomorrow then, or.. Some point after tomorrow. Whenever we do this again.” Her touch had been fully returned this morning, so it wasn't difficult to assume that it'd be the same case for him considering it was the same virus.

Sagitta was going to say something positive and upbeat when Cole seemed to be disappointed about missing two. He changed the topic quickly though so it might be best to let go of it. Sagitta beamed, “Yea, tom-” She stopped when her datapad pinged. She got a message. “Ah. Hold on!” She zoomed to her datapad and checked the message.

She didn't know this number. Encrypted. It also had an image. *'We found him.'* It was a familiar picture as a chill went down her spine. No. Sagitta. Focused. You aren't alone in this room. She quickly replied, 'Yes.' It didn't take long for another message, *'Will send information later.'*

Sagitta removed the message as she turned the datapad over. With a deep inhale and slow exhale, “Okay! How are you feeling?” She looked back at Cole while walking back. The Mirialan was wondering if there was anything else he would like to do. Despite his frustration earlier, it seemed he was doing better than this morning or yesterday all day when he was in his chair and on watch.

Cole blinked at the sudden shift but just led the way back to the benches as she read whatever message she'd received.

He felt tired. Really karking tired. The range had calmed his nerves, but that left an *exhausted* feeling behind it rather than the energy adrenaline wrought on his system. He glanced at his own data pad, peering at the time. It was quite late. It was an excuse enough that wouldn't worry her.

"Alright, but we should probably rest, it's late and well... The last three days haven't been ideal."

"Sounds good to me." She gathered up her weapons and the datapad. Both of them headed out of the shooting range and towards the elevators, "Do you want me to stay with you?" She asked, wondering if he would be really okay. "I don't mind staying another night!" They both hopped into the elevators.

"I'll be alright." He hoped she didn't feel like she had to. His display earlier had... Kriff he hoped she didn't think he wouldn't be okay alone because of that.

If he asked, and she hadn't thought that though, it'd be more awkward. This is why he let Graham handle people on the personability side. Too many kriffing possibilities. Angles to take, exceptions to account for. Way too complicated.

"That's good! I'm glad. Well," She stepped out of the elevators and onto the residential floors. "You know where my room is if you need me. I'm always down for another holomovie night." Sagitta took a step forward towards Cole and then remembered as she stopped.

"May I have a hug?" She grinned, showing that it wouldn't hurt her feelings if he declined.

The step forward had been a bit odd, though quickly explained. She... asked. There was a moment of genuine surprise in his expression before as usual it was switched back to his normal guise.

A part of him wondered if it was a trick as he responded, "No, but... thank you for asking?"

Sagitta grin remained as she nodded. "That's okay! I figured to ask! I was informed I needed to work on my personal boundaries. Can't hug every single thing I meet." She laughed softly while reminiscing about a certain mission when she attempted to hug a bloody angry aggressive Jotaz.

"Good night, Cole." She turned to her room. Slightly hurt. Why was she developing feelings for him in the first place? At least with the looks of things, she might be able to go on a solo mission soon. Once she entered her room, she closed the door and sighed as she slid to sit down on the floor. She purposely tapped her head against the door, one time, "Stupid!"

"Goodnight." He had watched her go, turning to face his door with a small smile crossing his face. At every turn she seemed to just... not do the things he'd expect of most people. There

was a small buzz in his head, one he didn't really understand but it wasn't anything he recognised as a bad sign. It was reminiscent of something he'd felt before once, some years back.

Cole shook his head, deciding to not muse on it too much, opening his door and stepping inside. It was just nice to be actually respected on something like that. He closed the door behind him, glad that despite the highs of the past three days, that they were finally over.

A few moments had passed, Sagitta was doodling on paper while wearing her Mandaolrian armor. Her datapad pinged as she glanced over to read the message. The Mirialan got up from the desk, grabbing her bag that looked like she packed for a few days trip. She was also holding a pair of clothing. Stopping by Cole's room, she placed the clothing in front of his door with the little note on top. The bright sun would be noticeable. Stood up straight, she stared at the door for a bit. Then a sad smile.

With a shake of her head, she headed out.