



“Hey Zu.”

Gwaine’s voice crackled through the communications device, distorted initially.

“Hey dad.”

“How’s it going?” A long enough pause followed that eventually, cautiously, “Zuza?”

“Yeah- I- It’s going.” Zuza closed her eyes, glad her ship didn’t have a holoprojector. She couldn’t ignore his call again but this hadn’t been a good time. “You?”

“Well I’m not a fan of being lied to.”

“I’m not! It’s- Everything is happening. And it’s going as it should be.”

“Zuza I know you don’t like telling me kark all but please for once could you just be honest?”

“I’m sorry.” Her inhale shook, “I just- It’s hard. It’s been really hard.”

It was quiet again. The whirring of navigational devices and readings from the controls were comfort but all they were was a reminder that eventually Zuza had to return to the Citadel.

“I don’t know if I can keep doing this.”

“Doing what?”

“I’m the Consul now. Of Arcona.”

“Oh kist-”

“Yeah! I- I’m not good enough for this!” Zuza shifted to her feet, pacing the minimal space there was. “They want me to keep an eye on everyone and I can do that by itself but we are fighting on so many fronts to stay safe. These damned ancient Sith that woke up- they’re about to come at us again. The Collective has already tried us last year and I failed to karking see it coming and so many of us got kidnapped. I got kidnapped. I was hung from a ceiling and *tortured* and I only escaped because they thought I was weaker. We beat the Children of Mortis people but they aren’t gone and they almost ripped the entire galaxy apart. While all of that’s happening there’s Hutts on our doorstep and other groups of cultists. I’ve got to be on top of all of it and making sure we’re safe. I just want everyone to be safe. And we’re not safe-”

Her nails pressed into her scalp.

“Zuza...”

They dug deeper, tiny spikes of pain to try and distract from what was within.



"I can't do it Dad. Everyone who dies now is now on me. I have to order the letters to be sent."

"Zuza. Listen to me."

"I'm good at fighting and flying and making friends, not tactics. Not war and politics."

"Then why did you say yes?"

"I don't know!" Her voice cracked, the tears spilling. Her words becoming muffled as she tried to wipe them aside. "I don't know."

"I think I do."

"How could you, you didn't even know about any of that a few minutes-"

"And I didn't know Em'rys was a jedi for six years. Still, I knew the same thing about him."

"What?"

"You just want to keep people safe. And you will."

"But-"

"No buts."

Zuza sniffed, lowering her hands from her face. "How do you know?"

"You're my little girl."

"Em'rys wasn't."

Gwaine chuckled, "He might as well be."

Zuza laughed, a single huff before croaking slightly, "I'll tell on you."

"You'll tell me what the kark you meant by getting tortured first."

Zuza grimaced again, but sat down with a sigh.

"There's a lot on that list after it."

"And I have all day."

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