

The Second Resolution  
If You Stand For Nothing  
Alaisy Tir'eivra (15526)

## The Second Resolution

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Goll Estate  
Zygerria  
42 ABY

An Ithorian rose. The azure-to-violet hue was so vibrant it even shimmered its vivid color onto her gray skin. Large emerald eyes with flecks of canary yellow gazed at it. She was filled with excitement and anxiety in equal measures. A Zygerrian man named Sc rass Goll had sent her a beautiful flower, its label with his name still attached to the flimsiplast packaging. Zaagnika Umangi wiggled her pink-tipped nose as she applied a peach blush to her cheeks.

*I can't believe I'm doing this.*

A brush went through her raven hair. Then she ran a lick of nutritious oil over the strands to make it look perfectly straight and shiny. With a few clicks she clipped golden jewelry onto the ends of her hair, leaving only the bangs uncovered. Even with her low self-esteem she could convince herself that she appeared like royalty now. Seeing herself in the mirror flushed her pointy ears into cerise.

The Togruti servant who had escorted her over to the black marble-walled ladies room insisted Zag take all the time she needed. A shiver ran over her back as she realized the servant might have been a slave. This is why she never set foot on her homeworld, it was full of morally ambiguous figures who seemed to excel at extorting others. Normally the Force would've given her a hint, a bad vibe, or at least a sign that things were not okay. Not this time.

Either way, she was going to see this through. She had made it her new year's resolution. To be more resolute, to see things through, to not waver from her course. Of course she had told everyone about it. No pressure. And then the prospect of a Valentine kicked her in the behind. At least she had reinforcements waiting for her at the docks. The Shiny Sith had pushed Zag out of her comfort zone, promising that if anything bad happened she would be safe. A mild comfort. If she had to use that card it would come with a bloodbath and a lifetime worth of trauma.

Zag twisted her wrist as she left the room, rearranging her various armbands. She ran a long nailed finger along her neck, trying to create some space as her thick metal necklace choked her. It weighed a ton on her shoulders too. She panted and eventually forced herself to just deal

with it. At least the silken, black dress was light and airy. The sandals she wore tapped quietly on the sandstone tiles as she made her way to the terrace.

Apparently the owner of this estate pulled some serious strings just to find Zaagnika. Maybe they had confused her with *actual* royalty. She wasn't exactly pristine anymore either. The scar running down her right eye had been unfortunate, but it always made a great story.

Her hands reached for pockets, finding none. The tropical trees and crimson sunlight made her look up again. It smelled like fruits and freshly cut grass outside. A scattering of servants and droids going back and forth made her slightly uncomfortable. Her heart pounded in her chest and breathing became difficult. She caught herself on the railing, catching her breath as she admired the flowers decorating it. It *definitely* felt wrong here.

She stared away at the beautiful landscape. Magnificent mesas and dense forests atop the ridges and platforms. This was either a dream or a nightmare. It was a mixed bag, being home. Nostalgic feelings kept rising up, clogging up her throat and bringing the Zygerrian woman to the brink of tears until she pushed them down again.

A chill ran up her spine. Every hair on her body stood up. She made something of a squeak as a hand ran over her back.

Intense crimson-brown eyes stared into hers as she turned her head.

"A pleasure, miss Zaagnika," the voice was aristocratic and smooth.

Emerald eyes peered back, bulging in slight panic. Her striped eyeliner had made them look even larger than normal. Her hands had retreated up to her chest as if there was no way out of this situation, claws extending protectively. The Force buzzed in her ears like a hive of Nabooan bees.

"Apologies, I did not mean to frighten you. I am merely ecstatic to finally meet you. My name is Goll, Sc rass Goll." He made a formal bow before her. His slender body flowed ever so elegantly. Not a single speck of dust on his black suit. A cleaner droid snuck by and scrubbed his shoes before hurrying along again.

She peered at his hand as he held it up. Zag paused, blinking rapidly as goosebumps rolled all over her body. She forced one hand to relax at her side as she lowered her other onto his. Her hand was larger than his, with much longer fingers, despite their almost equal height.

"Follow me, please. I have a surprise waiting for you." Sc rass pulled her along gently as he rose up.

Zaagnika gulped, but followed. She fought her own instinct with all of her will. It made her ears ring. Even the Force was telling her to *run*. His commanding aura reigned her in, beckoning her

to the terrace. She hadn't even spoken a word, yet so much was in motion already, the world spun around them. Her greedy nature sparked a curiosity in her that pushed her through. Her own walk became more elegant and prideful as she followed his lead. Servants looked on in awe at the two. Part of it felt spiteful.

*What is happening? Why am I here? Stop looking!*

Their gazes made her nervous. She hated slavery and servitude. It was sickening and rampant here. She showed the subservient Twi'leks, droids and Torguti the back of her head as much as she could, trying to ignore them.

As if he could hear her thinking, Scrass steered her away and pointed his gloved finger at the large piano on the terrace ahead of them. The raw opulence distracted Zag. The sun reflected its light on the lid of the piano. Distant hills funneled the beam of soft garnet over the terrace like a red carpet. Her free hand ran over her Usekh collar as she gasped. Birds in the distance made the light flicker as if the star blinked at them.

"I-it's beautiful," her silvery voice finally broke the silence.

Her hair waved brilliantly as she turned towards the man. Her eyebrows pulled together as her gaze was met with a smile so black it made her heart sink.

"Stay with me, Zaagnika." The pitch of his voice was lower this time, demanding.

It felt as if the cliffs in the distance closed in on them. A pattern began to form. Pillars, no, bars of a cell. A prison. The piano began playing slow, sad notes. Drawing on emotions and sadness. The servants behind them scurried away. Light ebbed down the horizon.

Zag shook her head at Goll, her body refusing to move forward as he tugged at her hand. "Scrass, I am not royalty. I am not fit for this life."

"But you are perfect, even your scar is etched on your face like a painting. The chip missing from your ear makes you all the more stunning." His voice was tinged with desperation.

"What could I possibly have that you need Scrass?" Zag's feeling of low self-worth provided a comfortable fallback this time.

They looked at each other, tension swirling, one with a wicked grin and the other ashamed and embarrassed.

"That is very sweet of you miss Umangi." The grip on her hand tightened. "But I do not accept *no* for an answer." His aura turned dark. Pitch black. The Force screamed at Zag. She peered down at his free hand. She wrenched her hand loose. Metal armbands cut into his palm as he

reached for a stun gun with his other. Zaagnika sidestepped, almost getting caught in her silk dress. A muffled blast was barely audible as a stun bolt missed her by a hair.

Zag's arm stretched out towards Sc rass. Her mind opened to the Force around her and the Force answered, embodying her. Anxiety, trauma and sadness coalesced into a powerful Telekinetic strike that flung the Zygerrian man onto his back. His gun fell several paces behind him.

"I should have known better!" Tears stained the woman's eyes in black smudges of liner and mascara. She ripped the lower part of her dress with her clawed hands and ran towards the gold embroidered door.

*Oh no!*

Loud thumps and *click clacking* of heels spelled doom for this decaying paradise. The door opened before Zag reached it. A towering figure in black stood in front of her. Blood stained the shining suit. A domed mask hissed as air pressed out. Umangi peered behind the Sith. The hallway was filled with death. Missing heads, impaled bodies, crackling electronics. Nothing was left alive.

"You did good, Zag, you faced your fear. I am proud of you." The modulated, smoky voice of Alaisy Tir'eivra sounded motherly somehow. "You know what I have to do now, do you not?"

Zaagnika shivered, but inclined her head. Tears flowed down on the sandstone, melding with the dripping blood from the Sith's claws. The Zygerrian woman dropped down onto her knees, placing her face into the palms of her large hands. Crying.

*Crack-hum*

Metal tapped on the hard floor. Then, Sc rass' screaming. The sound of stun bolts zipping and dissipating into plasma. Then a thud. Silence.

Not even a glass of whiskey would calm Zaagnika's nerves tonight.