

Turi had finally drifted off to sleep. The small apartment was quiet. The only sound was the faint metronome of the rotating servos and faint plastic clinks of the mobile hanger that hovered over the infant's crib. He loved looking up at the small toys that moved for him like his own private carousel. One was a crudely carved Mandalorian helmet. The next was a plastic avian of some kind, followed by a rainbow, a star, and lastly a small x-wing. Beneath it, swaddled in a waffle-weave blanket, Turi snuggled with his favorite plushie mudhorn.

Wyn smiled, but it slowly faded as he turned his head away from the crib to look up at the ceiling instead. His emerald eyes remained bright, if perhaps a bit distant in thought. He laid flat on his back in the queen sized bed, alone, atop the neatly made sheets. He was still clothed, with only the top two buttons of his dark green shirt undone and his pants still tied about his waistline. He had removed his boots, holsters, blasters, and jacket, securing them safely in the closet.

He enjoyed the quiet. Many assumed that Wyn thrived from a life of perpetual—and often self orchestrated—chaos. And while that may have been mostly true, Wyn knew

Raising a child had surprisingly been great for that. Even when he was not needed by Arcona, the Envoy Corps, the Marshal's, or to babysit his niece and nephew, he always had Turi to come back to or bring with him.

He looked over at his datapad. There was only one missed message. A voicemail.

He knew who it was from, without having to look. He had been keeping himself busy and doing everything else he could possibly imagine instead of looking at it. Because once he looked, and listened, the bitter truth of reality would come crashing down over him like a wave. But this wasn't just about him anymore. He couldn't run, couldn't make excuses. Turi needed him.

Wyn had never had a healthy relationship with his own father, and often worried if he was bound for the same fate. He looked around for something, anything, that he could possibly work on to prolong the inevitable.

On the desk over towards the side, he saw his collection of bright yellow, rubber ducks. He had initially set out to *make* his own toys for Turi, since the ones they bought him always seemed to go missing, only to turn up in the place you'd least expect them. While Wyn agreed that game should recognize games, he figured that perhaps doing something creative with his hands was a good way to invest his free time.

It hadn't worked particularly well. Even with guidance and remote assistance from Zig. She had trained the next generation of mechanics and tradesmen aboard the *Voidbreaker II* but Wyn's natural skills ~~for everything else did~~ not seem to translate towards toy craft.

He sat up and moved carefully towards the desk. Well, at least one of them had come out *remotely* looking like a duck. He held it up towards the room's lone overhead light, trying to give it a little divine halo.

Behold, the fruits of my labor!

He exhaled slowly, shouldered slumping, and then returned the rubber duck to the pile of other ducks he'd tried to assemble and create.

Stick to what you're good at.

Wyn tapped his finger against his leg. Well, he was good at people, and talking, and words. Usually, at least. Why was this so difficult? He'd handled tough relationships in the past, but something about this was different—more harrowing.

Finally, he reached for the datapad. He popped his earpiece in and gave it a listen.

"Hey. Let me know when you can talk."

Her voice was not angry. It was neutral, composed, but serious. There was only one thing left to be done.

Wyn swallowed down a lump in his throat, exhaled slowly, and then dialed Socorra.

It rang. It rang again. There was a pause, as if it was about to be answered. His heart skipped a beat. Then, an attendant of some kind answered mechanically.

Please leave a message for the Consul...

Wyn didn't speak at first. But then, slowly, his eyes drifting towards Turi's crib, he began to speak his heart's truth and left the message.

"Hey Socks. I know we need to talk. And I will make the time for it, when you're available. I will come to you if need be, or do whatever works. That is...at the core of all this, what I hope you trust and believe me about.

I never imagined myself being happy. I also never imagined myself to have a family. Honestly, sometimes, I feel like it was all an illusion I had crafted for myself. I found my brother. I found friends. I found a place to...be. I found you. And now we have Turi.

Getting to know you and spend time with you was one of the happier arcs of my life. I am grateful for all the time we had together. I could quote various plays or scriptures or songs about the challenges of the heart and the turmoil of the galaxy. But, it just doesn't seem right. So I will just speak it plainly, I guess.

We can't keep going on like this. We both did not want to speak the words aloud, but for both of our sakes, and for Turi, we need to be true to our paths and walk separately for now. You have your goals, and career, and I support them fully. But I can't go and be with you where you are. I

need to be near my brother, my niece, my nephew, and my friends. I want to help make sure the Marshal's that you worked so hard to create thrive. You've always wanted to lead, and what better place to flex your Mandalorian heritage. I've tried my best to go along with the culture because it's important to you, but it's just never going to...fit me.

And I know I can't do both—have what I want, while also giving you what you want. I can't have my cake and eat it too. So, whatever you want to do, however you want this to work, I will make it work, but I know we both agree that Turi will never be alone or not have access to his mother, or father.

But you deserve better, and I know that there is no beskar or Sith Steel in the galaxy that is more powerful than your will and ability to not just survive, but thrive. I'm proud of you, will always be your friend, and will always be the father of your son.

Thank you."