

It was a good thing, Uji reflected, that he was not only used to his Aedile's habit of commandeering his quarters, but also attuned enough to her Force-presence that she no longer set his instincts on edge the second he realized someone was in his rooms. The door had been locked and the lights off when he entered the small space, but that wasn't particularly much of an indicator – not when one's girlfriend not only had no need of lights, but was also an Aedile, and essentially had a free pass anywhere in her House's headquarters.

It wasn't very fair...not that he minded in the slightest.

The Templar turned on the standard-issue overhead lights and flicked his gaze briefly around his modestly cramped quarters, noting that nothing was out of place; aside from the Miraluka sprawled lazily on the bed and the broken-into bottle of Menkoro whiskey on the nightstand, at least. Her frame hung half-off the bed, shoulders and head tilted toward the ground, her loose hair splayed all over the floor. Her Cythraul pup, little Ivoshar, had commandeered the foot of the cot, burrowing into the blankets until only his pale gold eyes peered out, watching and generally looking like an incredibly nonthreatening ball of fur, as if he didn't have damned sharp little fangs.

Uji liked to think that he and the young space-wolf had an understanding with each other, considering their shared desire to look out for the Miraluka, but his sometimes-gnawed on toes begged to differ. At the very least, there was the mutual respect of knowing neither of them liked to share...and...yes, he was definitely thinking about that too much.

Uji turned his gaze back to Atyiru. She gave a drowsy, impish little wave, not bothering to get up or greet him, just sort of lounging like she belonged there.

He didn't really mind that, either.

The Obelisk neatly took off his boots and padded over, quirking a brow. "Hiding from work again, love?" He asked, a smirk creeping up his lips.

Her nose wrinkled in his general direction, and she lazily flicked her fingers in a rude gesture. "I do not hide from work. I hide from grumpy people. The two just tend to be synonymous because I work with Cethgus."

"So you're avoiding brother-dearest?" Uji taunted, shrugging off his outer-robcs and sitting down next to her in the little available space. She obligingly left him no room whatsoever, sitting up enough to use him for a pillow instead. He chuckled, and focused on her presence briefly, trying to discern her mood, but she seemed calm; she'd probably had just enough to drink to take the edge off.

Atyiru touched her neck idly at the mention of her sibling, as if, for a second, pained. "Not quite. I suppose I'm just avoiding the generally pessimistic masses. Something-something-dark side, and all that. Everyone's been rather melancholy lately. The fiasco with Marick and his family seems to have opened up all the old wounds."

"Ahh..." Uji hummed. It made sense now. The Miraluka was the sort who would listen to anyone's problems, but also got drained by the negativity eventually. He wondered what she did before she would come to him, perhaps trading worries for broken bones during training with her Iridonian friend, perhaps worrying to herself in her own room, always in the dark. He didn't like either idea.

The Human sat them both up, careful not to disturb Ivoshar much, sliding back until he could lean against the headboard and pull her closer, her back pressing into his chest. Some of the tension he hadn't noticed before left her frame, and she relaxed into him, picking up a few strands of hair to idly braid.

"What about you, love? No regrets?" He prompted, kissing the top of her head. For all that she made her world up of people, she didn't talk to them, not about herself. She gave information freely, and was honest, but she rarely showed her own difficulties. Once, he might have thought it was because doing otherwise would make her seem weak; but knowing her, he knew it was because she had so much trouble giving up even little pieces of the burdens she carried. It was probably part of why she was so bound and determined to reach out to their Consul; they were alike.

"No, my bright heart, no regrets." The Krath replied, smiling quickly up at him.

"Oh?"

"I'm not being evasive, I promise. I don't regret anything."

"You've been through a lot of pain, Atyiru, and lost a lot of people. I ought to know."

She stopped her plaiting long enough to squeeze his hand where it rested on her hip. "Yes, but..." She sighed. "Yes, it hurts. Badly. But I...that doesn't mean I regret it. I can't. I won't let myself."

Atyiru went back to playing with her hair and kept speaking. Generally, if he did get her to talk, the conversations lasted awhile. He was distantly glad he'd gotten comfortable as he listened.

"I start to wish things were different sometimes, y'know? I wish that the Order had been a happy place. I wish that Arraas hadn't been beaten near to death, that I hadn't karking shot her. I wish that the 'Ladies had lived. I wish that I hadn't killed any of

those people that hurt me. I wish that you hadn't been betrayed and that I hadn't abandoned you. I wish I hadn't practically left Nath, or given up on Kalon. I wish I'd saved S'nar. I wish that the entire damn Crusade hadn't happened. It's all so bad."

She got quieter, murmuring slowly. "It's all so bad and it hurts. It hurts. The pain's consuming and my mind goes to these awful places if I let it and then I just want to be a coward and run or wish it all away." She exhaled softly, breath spicy from the alcohol. "But then I take a moment to breathe and then I know...I can't do it. I can't leave everything behind. I can't regret it. Because if I do, I'm not just insulting the lives of everyone who has shaped mine; I'm also rejecting what's made me who I am...if I regret anything, I regret who I am and I...I can't do that. I have to be what all this sithspit has made me or be nothing at all."

Atyiru was, Uji thought, as he wrapped an arm around her, a philosophical drunk.

The woman snorted a short laugh. "So, it hurts! It always hurts. Always and always it hurts."

"And that's alright. It's okay. I'm okay, as I am." She sobered quickly, frowning hard enough to put a furrow between her silver brows. "I don't have any regrets because I don't wish things hadn't happened. Although...I do wish..."

Reaching over, she snagged a glass she must have been drinking out of, sipping more of the liquid and offering it to him. Uji took it from her but didn't drink.

Atyiru sighed. "If I could make a deal with the gods and beg them to swap our places...if I could be the one dead or hurt instead of Arraas or you or S'nar...I'd do that, if praying was ever worth anything. If I only could..."

She sat up suddenly, shaking her head, turning to smile at him. "But, I can't, so, it's pointless to make wishes, just like it's pointless to regret. I don't believe in it. And, I'm okay, so...it's okay. Don't worry."

Leaning close, the Miraluka nuzzled her cheek against his, kissing him for just a second before pulling back and slipping out of the bed. She only stumbled a little, her foot catching against the blanket. Ivoshar yawned and half-hopped, half-tumbled down after her.

"Atyiru..." Uji bid gently, starting to get up, only to have the woman jab a finger sharply into his chest, pushing him back.

"Denied, whatever it is. You've been clocked on-duty for over forty eight hours. You should rest."



He arched a brow at her. "And how long have you been active, hmm?"

She waved a flippant hand, tied off her braid, and propped herself against the wall as she pulled her boots back on. "Some amount of time."

"Woman."

"Man."

"Stop acting like a youngling and come get some sleep too."

One of her brows pulled down, as if she were winking at him, could she have. "Age before beauty, dear heart. Or we can pretend you'd actually listen to some Aedile-y authority and I could order you to retire for the night."

"I believe the keyword there is 'pretend.'"

She leaned over, cradling his chin, and kissed him again.

"Mmm...I'll give you points for tactic, but I can't be distracted that easily. Former Jedi, remember?"

"Details." The Miraluka shrugged with a sweet grin, hoisting her drowsy Cythraul into her arms. "I'll see you later, my dear Templar. I do, in fact, have work I shouldn't be avoiding."

"As you say, my Priestess." Uji conceded, if only to humor her. She smiled at him again, touching his shoulder, and then slipped quietly out the door.

The Obelisk sat for a few minutes, not quite thinking, but not quite doing anything else. He refilled the glass his Aedile had left and gulped down some of the red liquid, coughing at the raw burn it trailed in its wake.

Laying back, Uji closed his eyes, watching his own regrets play out under the thin veil of skin, and feeling the faint warmth of one of them fade out of the sheets.

He wouldn't prescribe to the same philosophies Atyiru did but...perhaps she was on to something. At the very least, regrets were changeable. She herself was proof of that. Still...not everything went away. Some lingered, cold stones and poison inside.

Uji blinked, exhaled softly, and rolled onto his side, falling into the light sleep that belonged only to the wicked who could never rest.