

Her mother was gone, every potential lead having grown cold. Her half-sister was dead. The Clan was distrustful- of her and itself. In every aspect, the Seeker was utterly alone. She acknowledged the fact without feeling intimidated. The “Seltron” had been in many a situation where she had been isolated from every ally while being surrounded by enemies. But the Seeker also knew that she had prevailed each time. This would be no different. Arcona was in need of every friend they could muster and, with the loss of their favored Twi’lek, Maenaki was their willing volunteer.

The Battlemaster stood in the Summit Chamber with the others and the Consul, inwardly unmoved by the Miraluka’s smile and the Galeres Quaestor’s disapproving scowl. Terran requested she “tag along” to “learn somethin’”, but the menial tasks being discussed were redundant. Yet the Seeker smiled and thanked where appropriate, although their demeanor was starting to grate her nerves.

“Certain you got all of that?” Ernordeth said, smirking at Larrik who was standing to his left with his own grin.

Maenaki gave them a venomous smile. “Perhaps you should simply ask our Lady if I do, since all of that was already covered in my report. Of course, I could simply forward my next one to you. I’ll be certain to include sufficiently colored images to capture your attention.”

Atyiru let out a quiet chuckle, replacing it quickly with a matronly frown.

“Everyone, be nice. Mae has not once done anything to threaten us or the Clan and has proven herself... in our eyes.”

Silence filled the room for the longest heartbeats.

Suddenly Maenaki burst into a fit of giggles. Terran placed his palm over his face and heaved an exaggerated sigh. When she opened her eyes, the men’s exasperated faces and the Consul’s smirk brought about a horrific occurrence. She laughed so hard and with such force that - as she inhaled - she snorted. It was a small thing, but loud enough to cause all heads to turn to her. Her professional visage crumbled. The offensive sound echoed through the room and Atyiru’s face flushed as she restrained her own laughter.

“No one heard that,” the Seltron said seriously despite her grin.

As the meeting fell apart the Shadow Lady requested that Maenaki remain behind. The Seeker steeled herself as the Undesirable placed her copper hands on her arm.

The expected disgust did not hit her. Instead, she felt relieved and grateful for the contact.

“How can I help you, my Lady?” The Battlemaster asked, watching Atyiru’s face.

“I know you’ve struggled with the trust of the Qel-Dromans, Shadow Gate especially. With the death of Zakath, K’tana’s disappearance and...” The Consul stopped herself, forcing out a smile that Maenaki saw through.

“And Marick?” the Seeker said respectfully. The way the Miraluka’s smile softened with sadness spoke worlds. Maenaki immediately bowed her head.

“I’m sorry, my Consul. It was not my intention to upset. Certainly not after all you have done.” She cleared her throat and watched Atyiru smother the heartbreak with another gentle grin. “I know the feelings of those who, if you don’t mind my saying, K’tana abandoned. I am alone with nothing. Nothing but time. I can wait for them to come around. However...”

The Augur quirked her brow in an unspoken prompt.

“... there is one I would like to meet. I believe his expertise and loyalty to Arcona may help me integrate.”

“You don’t mean-” Atyiru stood stunned, brows raising further as she leaned back.

“Is this a bad time?”

“This will either be the best or worst time. He avoids thoughts of her so you might be a...welcome distraction.”

“So, you’ll help me?” Maenaki said, beaming excitedly.

“Well, if he doesn’t try to kill you it could end up being the perfect ship!”

“I’m not sure what you said, but thank you. I wish to learn from the best in order to serve the Clan.” She lay her hand over the Miraluka’s arm and was pulled into an embrace.

“Don’t thank me just yet.” The Augur gently pushed Maenaki away with a smile. “Get t’the shuttle. I’ll have a transport deliver you there and inform Terran where you’ve gone. Best of luck Mae.”

When the Seltron left the room she let her face resume its haughty natural position. Her cheeks burned from the strain of each smile, but she truly felt elated. If anyone could discover anything about her mother, it was the Director of the Dajorra Intelligence Agency.