

Sliding into its recess in the wall, the pristine durasteel door opened to allow Tali Sroka to enter her home. The familiar voice of her husband, still awake despite the late hour, called out from the kitchen. "How many today, love?"

"Seven. Slim pickings, or maybe there's just not that many left anymore." The Twi'lek replied as she hung up her jacket and took off her boots, preferring to walk barefoot towards the kitchen where Koliss Welcott awaited, two glasses of wine in hand.

"Welcome home, Tali." He smiled, the purple-hued Twi'lek blushing ever so slightly as she accepted the glass and kissed him with a soft murr.

"Oh you handsome devil. You readt my mindt..." She sighed softly as she drank deep of the cool wine, letting it refresh her after a hard day hunting slavers.

"Hmnh, and I'm not even the telepath." He smirked as he savored the drink, a particular favorite of his grown by a lovely couple not too far from their residence. "Things really have changed, haven't they? After Atyiru rose to power, we've had a far more stable life and abolishing slavery, for good, really did a number on the damned traders. Who would have guessed this would ever become a real point of policy with actual resources behind it?" He continued, glancing out the window at the cool night, the twin moons casting their pale glow upon the garden that surrounded their house.

"Indeedt..." She sighed, emptying her glass and pouring some more. "It has been a long time coming, but I think... I think I can feel content."

He turned to look at her with a surprised expression, the Twi'lek deep in thought as she continued. "I've been thinking. About vhat you have saidt. About me and the children. They needt their mother, more than the others. I have been cruel to neglect them for so long. I swore I wouldt not follow in my mother's footsteps and although I'm not a superficial cunt like her, it hardly matters if I'm not a part of our childrens' lives..."

Koliss nodded slowly, knowing full well how hard it must have been to admit to herself that she had to let go of her lifelong goal of eradicating slavery. Yet, he knew there were others doing that work now and she, after twenty years of war, could finally lay down her arms and maybe focus on her, on *their* life together.

"You'll never be like your mother, Tali. Never. Your children... our children will not grow up without a mother or a father. They will live in a happy home and they will be loved and cared for. Our little lek-heads will have everything and you will be a part of it. I promise." He stated adamantly, his hand reaching out to touch hers.

She shifted her golden yellow eyes to glance at him and smiled, her fingers wrapping around his and giving them an appreciative squeeze. Just like old times. "Thank you, Koliss. Vithout you... I don't know vhat I wouldt have done all these years." She sighed, offering a smile that beamed nothing but love and gratitude.

"Yes, well... You know me, always looking for a charity case and you're still the biggest one around..." He coughed, feeling a tad uncomfortable with the level of praise and affection, though none the less grateful for it.

She giggled softly, pecking a kiss on his cheek. "Speaking of charity, how's the clinic?"

"Oh? Not that busy, though I did hear some troubling news from the front. Seems like our forces aren't faring quite as well as Atty had hoped they would." He sighed, shaking his head. He'd always advocated for a more harsher military, expanded spending on defence and more equipment and stockpiles in case someone tried to invade their territory.

Back in the day, after they'd sued peace with the other Clans in the wake of Pravus' death, it had been a very unpopular policy. One that had almost driven him and Tali to divorce. But now, with new enemies eyeing their territory, it seemed a call for more weapons was cried out once more. A shame if it came too late...

"Damn..." Tali muttered. Having fought in fierce combat before, both personal and grand assaults, she knew the dangers their troops were facing and though it pained her to admit, perhaps Koliss' warnings could have been heeded earlier. It had just felt so nice to believe in Atty and her policy of peace and prosperity. "Vell, I hope things vill not get vorse. As long as the fighting is isolatedt to the border vorlds, ve shouldt be safe." She stated, casting a wary glance at the pair of doors down the hallway where their son and daughter slept calm.

"Of course, honey. They won't touch us here. And besides, we have plenty of ships in our defence. They wouldn't dare attack us here. The losses would be too great." He assured her, almost believing the lie himself. In truth, he had been elbow-deep in the dead and the dying, trying to save as many of their soldiers as he could, but these new weapons made a mockery of even the finest medical skill and antibiotics he could get his hands on. No-one spoke of it, but the faint acrid smell people had reported around the capital, it was corpses burning in the incinerators. Corpses of their dead warriors, people he had failed to save on the operating table.

She contemplated his words for a moment and nodded, looking up at him with a soft smile upon her weary features. "You're right, as always. I'm just vorrying too much." She smiled, still perplexed how after all these years Koliss still thought he could somehow keep a secret from her. Lying to as powerful an empath as her was nigh-on impossible, but even so she appreciated the gesture.

"Come, my boredt surgeon. You've hadt a long day andt I feel like playing doctor..." She smirked with a sultry tone, tugging on his hand as she stepped past him, downing the wine in her glass and placing it on a counter she passed by on her way to the bedroom.

Koliss had no heart, or desire, to resist as he followed her like struck by a spell. The coming war would be the greatest challenge yet in their lives and to try and secure a future for their children would make it only worse. With the losses as bad as they were, they both knew they'd soon be drafted to join the war and what happened then... no-one could know. So best make do with the time they still had and show each other just how much they meant.