

Alpha Level, Phantom Complex,  
Port Ol'val

Klaxons rang out through the Phantom Complex as Maenaki raced through the halls. She wore an intricate black lace dress and an excited smile, crimson hair cascading between her bare shoulder blades as long-heeled shoes clacked across the hard floor. She had been waiting so long for this confrontation and — now that it was upon her — she was struggling to decide on her first cruel line. It had been an entertaining week if a little stressful. In fact, to most? Hell had come to the Arconans and to Port Ol'val.

The Aedile had known for some time that the sense of impending violence she had was edging ever forward, but she continued to hold out the hope that it would be to her benefit. Luck seemed to hold her in its favor as though the death and destruction were the best opportunity to make a show of her skill and intent.

The Seltron came to a sudden stop as she rounded a corner and saw several civilians lying dead on the ground outside of the meeting room. Her heart raced as she concealed her malicious grin and stepped over the corpses. A few of them wore faces of frozen shock, others screamed in silent pain. The Battlelord ran her tongue over her teeth as she moved into the room.

“K'tana, is your willpower so lacking that you cannot see the pain you are causing with your violence?” Maenaki kept her tone steady and calm. Her sea-green gaze was hard, but not without a vestige of compassion. The Twi'lek had arrived abruptly, wreaking havoc as she fought her way through the Phantom Complex. The Seltron was certain of her ability to soothe the situation through talking with the broken child, but she had not anticipated the former Aedile's rage.

“Kark off, ya loose frang. Shadow Gate was mine. This Clan was mine. HE was mine! Everything I ever considered home, everyone I considered family, you stole from me. When you showed your chuddy face and spread your legs, you made it so nothin' in my life mattered, none of it! Everything I've been through was a waste, you stole my karkin existence from me!”

The Twi'lek's hysterical shrieking pierced through the dimly lit room. The words echoed down the hallway as she brandished the long red lightsaber in her amethyst fingers like a toy — instead of the deadly weapon it was. Maenaki caught sight of a few more bodies scattered around the room and long charred stains on the wall. The burned scars smoked, long gray wisps curling up towards the ceiling.

“Darling girl, everything you had was a gift from others. You threw it away. When you abandoned your so-called family and home, you abandoned your right to claim them. You did nothing but spit in their faces. And Timeros was never yours. He doesn’t even belong to himself. That shell of a man is the property of Arcona and it is his duty alone that keeps the vessel moving. You should know this more than anyone.” The Seeker scoffed, shaking her head at the stupidity of the Shadow’s insane words.

“No! He was mine! And I—” K’tana’s flaming eyes snapped towards the door, her lightsaber dropping from her grasp and clattering to the floor.

“Do I get no say in this?” The man’s voice came from over Maenaki’s shoulder. She had no need to see his face to know Timeros had entered the room. Part of her hoped he had heard everything that had been said.

“Timeros...” Maenaki’s tone was icy as she acknowledged his presence.

“Master!” K’tana wailed, tears streaming down her face as she lunged towards him. Without blinking, the Adept was across the room and out of the Twi’lek’s grasp.

“K’tana,” Timeros stated blankly, holding up a hand, his finger extended as though gesturing her into silence.

“Tell her to give it back! Make that shutta give me back my life! Nothin’ I did was so bad ya can’t take me back home! I promise I can fix it!” K’tana screamed, thrusting her hand in Maenaki’s direction.

“Selling vital information to the enemies of Arcona is not something you could fix.”

“Whats she been tellin ya? I swear! I didn’t sell anything! They tortured me, Tim... You know what I can deal with. They’re worse. They—”

“Interrogation is not something you were ever skilled at.”

“Timeros, you should report to Terran. Please let me handle her,” Maenaki whispered, stepping away from the frenzied woman.

“HANDLE ME?! YA THINK YOU CAN HANDLE ME?” K’tana let out a hysteric laugh as she screamed, her emerald eyes suddenly flaring with a burnt orange glow.

“K’tana. Stop,” Timeros hissed, his voice breathy and barely audible to either woman as K’tana’s fingers sparked with power and she soared through the space between herself and Maenaki.

“Please, don’t!” The Seltron covered her face, having watched everything spiral out of control in slow motion. Fear clutched at her heart, tearing the air from her lungs as her body acted instinctively.

The shrieking fire of a blaster rang out through the room, freezing time for all but the three people who seemed to be trapped in a universe of their own.

“Aaaugh!” K’tana cried out as the two bolts tore through her chest. She collapsed to the ground, gasping for breath as her nails scraped over the violet flesh around the oozing wounds. She choked, spitting blood as she coughed, and fell to her side.

“Timeros...” Maenaki whispered in awe as the Adept moved slowly towards the fallen Sith.

“Wh-why? I lu..loved you. I j-just...I wanted—” K’tana sputtered, tears falling freely as her hands grasped for him. He remained out of reach, as he always had.

“Too much. Too often.” He cocked the Westar, pointing it at the sobbing woman.

“I’m sor—” K’tana was cut off by the sound of the gun firing again.

“...”

“Why?” Maenaki whispered, turning her head to look up at the Arconae as he walked past her. He stopped but did not look back.

“She was a danger to Arcona and her life was forfeit when she moved. You must act without hesitation, Aedile. She could have been your death and Arcona needs your service.”

“Yes, my lord. However, your brashness will give us the information \*I\* need. That repulsive Hutt may have sent her here. She could have accessed important files, or known something behind this attack. Qel-Droma could be in more danger now that you murdered the girl.”

“She is of no consequence. As it has been since her absence. Maenaki...”

The Seltron stood in silence, her aquamarine gaze piercing the back of the Elder's head.

"She was no girl. Pray you heed this lesson." As the Entar walked out, Maenaki called out one last thing after him.

"May you live forever, Arconae." She heard his scoff and he spoke right before he shut the door.

"There are worse things than death," he intoned as the door shut behind him.

"...and one of them is you," the Seltron said with a smile, moving over to the Twi'lek's unmoving body. Maenaki placed her fingers on the young woman's neck, closed her eyes and grinned.

Several moments passed and the Aedile managed to drag the body down the hall and into her quarters. As she walked in the door, she was met by a chilling, but alluring sight. The Lady Sildrin Lyonsbane stood in her office, staring at Maenaki with her empty white gaze. There were no defined pupils and although the woman was blind, her eyes seemed to pierce into the Seltron's soul. Yet, no judgment crossed the Shadow's face. She simply held her ground.

"Greetings, Lady Sildrin. I've no doubt that you have an idea of what I am doing and I have no point in hiding it." Maenaki smiled, dropping the Twi'lek's body to the floor. "I wish to keep the rest of Qel-Droma from panicking in this time of already significant duress. If you could keep this to yourself, for the time being, I would be very much in your debt."

Sildrin twirled a strand of hair around a finger. Her lips curled into a little smile as her lilting voice trickled into Maenaki's mind. The Shadow's mouth did not move beyond the soft smile, but the Seltron heard it nonetheless.

*"I might have an idea where to get rid of the body without any trace. And about the debt — I might get back at you sooner or later."*

The Aedile bowed her head slightly, looking down at the other woman's hem. "I appreciate the offer, my Lady." She paused for a moment. "However, I have plans for the body. I simply wish to earn your silence on this matter."

*"I will consider it. For now, things have taken a turn for the worse. It seems a plague has spread across the surface of Selen. The Consul is begging for medics."*

*Perhaps attend to this first.*” For a moment, Sildrin’s blind gaze turned back to the corpse. Her face remained placid as she exhaled a small sigh. *“What a pity.”*

Before Maenaki could do more than bow her head, Sildrin sauntered out of the room, gently closing the door behind her. The Seeker quickly adjusted the security protocols, protecting her wards from the threat unknown to them and the body of a purple woman who was once their leader and to some... a friend.

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As Terran Koul and Zujenia quietly made their way down the hall a large and oppressing form suddenly appeared behind them. The Gate Warden, trailing slightly behind, noticed first and let out a small startled gasp.

“Sithspit!” she hissed, glancing up at the cold blue eyes of the Arconae who stood still behind her.

“What the kriff are you doing here?” Terran whispered, spinning around but keeping his weapon leveled at the ground.

“K’tana had been tracked here. We believe she colluded with enemies of Arcona. The D.I.A. had eyes on her when she returned from an unknown mission to Felucia. There was a reason to believe she had not returned to give aid. She was followed to determine the level of her betrayal.”

“Betray- Frak.” Terran heaved a sigh and waved a dismissive hand. “We don’t have time for this. Maenaki has barricaded the floor. Zujenia and I require a level of stealth, so if ya don’t mind? Go and tell the Consul we are getting fracked.”

Without another word, the Elder shifted a single brow, a brief look of condescension passing over his face, as he turned and walked back down the hall.

“What do you think she—” the Gate Warden started, only to be cut off by Terran.

“Not the time Zuj,” he snapped, looking forward and slowly edging along the wall.

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When Maenaki returned to the group, she immediately began assessing the damage and addressing any wounds in her power to clean or wrap up. She gave Xenna a

particularly disquieted look, her pointed ears flicking with consternation as she held her palms - face up - before her.

“Forgive my violence, Lady Xenna. It was not my intention to cause you harm, but I could not allow you to—”

In that moment, the Captain locked her amber eyes on the Seltron. There was a blur of movement as her fist came up to strike the standing woman, the Human letting out a primal growl as her arm sped through the air. With a strange flick of her ears Maenaki darted out of the Huma’s reach. The Aedile’s hands came up and she took another slow step back.

“We don’t have time for your anger, child. Once we survive the night I will allow you to take whatever vengeance you wish.”

With the last breath of her words, a series of shots rang out and both the Nighthawk Captain and Aedile snapped their heads in the direction of the sound.

“Xenna, please... lend your strength to protect Arcona for the time,” Maenaki spoke softly, turning her attention back to the other woman.

“Kark! Fine. I will deal with **you** later,” the Human spat, as she stalked over to the rest of her crew.

Maenaki nodded and turned to face the large beast, Kelviin, and slowly reached her hand towards his datapad. As the large Wookiee bent down, holding his arm over to the Aedile, she quickly went to work typing on his datapad.

“Darling, first I must say that your hair is very lovely and soft,” the Seltron purred, smiling up at Kelviin as he gave a somewhat frightening large-toothed grin. “Second, we need those giant muscles of yours. Do you think you could use parts of the wreckage to barricade the doors? There is a bit more time before we must go find the Quaestor and Gate Warden, are you up for it big guy?”

“GRRAAHHUUWRRR!” The Wookiee bellowed with an enthusiastic growl as Mae tried to shush him with a small chuckle.

“Shshshsh! Quietly, now love,” the Seltron said, smiling up at Kelviin as he lumbered away towards the wrecked pod. Next, her eyes caught Koliss, being closely shadowed by the Twi’lek, Tali. She caught their attention and quickly beckoned them over.

“Koliss. Tali.” she whispered gently, leading them away from the other Qel-Dromans, “I am afraid I will require the services of one of you while the other leaves to bring news to Selen.”

“Vat? Are you trying to steal him for yourself?” The violet Twi’lek asked with a modicum of sarcasm.

“Tali... I’m sorry, Aedile. I-” Koliss started.

“No need. Koliss, it is obvious your medical knowledge should be at the forefront of Selen’s clinic.” Maenaki lowered her hands, spreading her fingers, as she turned towards the woman. “Tali, I will require your assistance here.”

“Oh! You want to steal Tali instead?” she winked and shifted her shoulders slightly, her grin staying on Koliss as she spoke.

Maenaki flashed the couple a coy smile. “Perhaps once this plague ordeal is over and our people are no longer dying by the hundreds overnight, we can then talk about it.”

“No,” Koliss said, his face having gone pale at the Seltron’s offhanded remark. “It cannot be that bad.”

Although he intended the words to be a statement, they came out more akin to a plea and Maenaki took them as such.

“I am sad to say that by the time you arrive, it may be worse. Which is why I request you find Livana and ask Xenna to send any skilled in your kind of medicine. If Atyiru is asking for medics and not Force skilled Healers, there is obviously a reason for it.”

She turned to Tali once again, her palms outstretched and pleading.

“I will need you to leave with Xenna. Find Zujenia and help her find Kordath. I am unsure what will await you, but we shall hold out here until your return.”

The young Gatekeeper momentarily narrowed her golden eyes before she gave a nod and turned to find the Nighthawk Commander. Without taking her aqua gaze from the Twi’lek, Maenaki pressed the button on her comm.

“Zujenia, I have assistance to find Kordath on the way. Alert Terran that there is a situation on Selen. Tell him the Consul requests his aid as soon as possible. I will look after things here.”

Silence filled the space between her heartbeats and finally the crackle of the device broke through.

“Acknowledged.” The Gate Warden spoke hardly above a whisper and Maenaki did not bother with a response, taking into consideration that Zujenia could be in enemy territory. Then Xenna looked up, catching the Aedile’s attention, and gave her a nod.

That was when the first explosion rang down the halls. A massive burst of heat hit the remaining group and screams echoed down the corridor.

“Xenna! Koliss! Tali!” Maenaki calmly pointed them towards an exit. “Get out now. The rest of you, follow me. The Complex has been compromised. Grab any staff you see and bring them.” The Seltron, with her lace gown trailing behind her, briskly walked toward the Aedile’s office. As they passed one of the empty rooms, Maenaki caught a glimpse of a woman sitting at a table with a large mug. Juliane Kelrune looked up at her and lifted her drink.

“We need to leave. Come with us.” The Seeker said, pointing towards the rest of the Arconans who ran past. The Echani gave her a dark glare and brought the liquid to her lips.

*“Leave it. And go with them.”*

Juliane immediately dropped her mug and followed the group as if in a trance, the Seltron’s voice echoing inside her head as she made her way down the halls. Maenaki caught up, pushing through the people and opened her office. The entrance opened and the Seeker froze. As the members of Qel-Droma reached her they all stood in mutual horror as Timeros stepped out, pushing past the Seltron and into the corridor. Laying limp in his arms was the former Aedile, blood slowly trickling between his fingers from where he held her head and leaking over his other forearm. Her violet skin had faded to a sickly shade of lavender, her lekku hanging from her head as though they had never known to move. She looked like a small doll in the large man’s grasp.

“K'tana?!” Juliane yelled, stepping forward while reaching for her weapon. The Arconae did not even look at her as he made a subtle motion with his chin, throwing the young Echani off balance and colliding into the wall behind her. Without making eye contact with any of his Clanmates, the Adept moved through the Arconans. As he went a simultaneous shiver ran through the group, forcing them to stare anywhere but at the terrifying gaunt man.



“Leave it. This way!” The Aedile said, regaining control of her shaking legs and pushing her charges through the open door and toward the turbolift. She waited, hearing more explosives being set off through the headquarters.

“Mae, what the frak is going on?” Her comm buzzed, Terran’s voice ringing out in frustration.

“The Phantom Complex is compromised. Xenna and Tali are on their way to you and Zujenia.”

“I’m not with her... And what the hell do you mean ‘compromised’?”

Maenaki kept her thumb on the button as another explosion went off, somehow the detonations were getting closer and only half of the members had made their way down the turbolift.

“As in we are evacuating,” she hesitated for a moment before taking a quick look over her shoulder. “And K’tana is dead. Timeros has retrieved her body. Things are looking... FUBAR.”

“Well, frak! Get everyone out. I’m headed to Selen, so send Tali and Xenna to Zuj.”

“Yes, M’lor— Terran.” The Aedile flicked off the comm and pushed a frustrated Adem into the lift.

“What about you?” the Umbaran asked, holding out his hand. The Seeker smiled and gently pushed his hand down.

“I’ll be fine. I must gather any remaining survivors. I’ll be right behind you. Keep them safe until I get there.”

“No, I think I should—”

“*Keep them safe.*” She hissed, waving her slender fingers before him and shoving him further into the enclosed space. As the last Arconan made their way down the lift Maenaki smiled, casting a glance over her shoulder, into the empty hall. With the smugness of a nexu with prey in its jaws, the Seltron made her way to the Quaestor’s office.