



Favours

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1700 hours

**Aedile Alara Deathbane's Suite
on Tipoca II, Amongst Space**

It had been a while since Alara was asked to babysit her two nephews Artorias and Deus. She thought it was mostly due to the fact that their father had been back after being kidnapped, but Alara couldn't help to think it was most likely something more. Perhaps in Brandon's attempt to be there for Artorias, Deus, and Shadow, he was really attempting to throw Alara out of the family as well? These thoughts stung in Alara's heart like a burn still waiting to heal. She couldn't lose them again. She knew that she had already been blessed by the Force for her sister to grant her forgiveness once. The Aedile couldn't help but believe if she lost them once again, she'd lose them forever.

On that fateful night on Judecca, only months ago before the system was completely destroyed by Pravus, Alara made a debt-promise to her sister Shadow. She vowed to always protect and aid her sister as well as her children who were yet to be born. It was her way of making up for killing their parents. Shadow, Artorias, and Deus were all the family she had left. To lose them to that idiot-of-a-merc Brandon would be her true fall. She was already so close to snapping into insanity before. She had murdered so many to try and fill the emptiness that was in her heart. Jorm, her Kiffar of a boyfriend, and her sister Shadow saved her from further journey towards that fate. But if she lost Shadow, she knew she probably wouldn't be able to recover.

Shadow was all the family she had. Shadow and the boys.

She felt love towards her wonderful Jester too, but they had only just begun seeing each other. Only Alara, Shadow, and the kids shared a true family bond.

Perhaps I should just contact them? Shoot Shadow a text via datapad? I bet that Brandon and she could use a break from the kids for a date or something.

Before the half-Sephi could reconsider, she was already clicking away at the screen on her left wrist: **Hey sis, you and Brandon want a night off from the kids?**

She awaited a reply, but impatience began to fluster along with the fears inside of her heart. She hopped up from her chair in her bedroom chamber and raced towards her sister's room. She was on the same floor of Tipoca II, not too far from Alara's. Before the door of the bedroom chamber could slide shut behind the Savant, Artemis the tusked cat followed behind her owner in the hallway.

"Ah, I see! You want to see your brothers too, don't you?" Alara grinned at the larger feline next to her. She was referring to Shadow's pet anooba Loki and pet loth wolf Tsume. Artemis had grown to be quite friendly with these canines despite their specie differences. She was essentially of 'teenager' size for a tusked cat now, which meant she was approaching rideable

size. Artorias and Deus had the pleasure of doing so quite often. Soon enough though, it would be Alara's turn.

The tusked cat seemed to nod at her owner in response and led the way to their family's suite. She even began to tap the door gently with her claws to announce their arrival. After a few taps, a quite disheveled-looking Shadow Nighthunter opened the door. Her long auburn hair, usually flowing gracefully past her shoulders, was matted and shooting in multiple directions. Her robe had multiple tissues sticking out from the pockets. Her amber-colored eyes appeared to be dimmer than usual, and hung rather heavily on her usually chiseled cheeks. Alara's sephi ears betrayed that the twins were screaming from the other room.

"I'm sick..." Shadow sniffed as she spoke. Artemis blinked a few times at her, and then proceeded to enter the suite, grazing her owner's sister as she went by.

Alara blinked as well. "Yep. You look it. Where's Brandon?" Alara questioned, trying to peer over her sister's shoulder.

"Had to work. Merc job. Did you get my message?" Shadow spoke softly and rubbed her eyes with her robe's crimson sleeve.

Alara looked down at her datapad, and sure enough, a message had appeared.

Shadow: No, but I'm sick and alone with the kids. Please help if you can.

With a smile, Alara lifted her eyes from her screen and proceeded to push Shadow back to bed. "Don't worry. I'm here for you guys. Let's get you to bed."

"But... the kids... they need to be fed." Shadow was far too weak to hesitate with anything other than her voice.

"Artemis! Get the bottles!" Alara called. Artemis, who was already halfway to the kitchen, meowed a response and headed to the refrigerator. She fetched the already prepared bottles for each of the babes in her teeth and scampered off to the children's room.

Alara continued to lead her sister back to her bed and tucked her in for rest. She grabbed a nearby cloth and began to pat her sister's forehead. "Seems as though you do have quite the fever. Pregnant again?" Alara joked.

"Oh boy. So soon. Don't know if I could handle that." Shadow laughed quietly, then ended up coughing from exertion. Alara shushed her sister and tucked her tightly in the blankets.

"Don't worry my sister. I owe you a great favor. Don't ever hesitate to call if you need my aid." Alara kissed her sister's forehead as the youngest of the pair began to fall into a deep slumber.