

KARMA

By Aura Ta'var
36 ABY

Aura Ta'var, Proconsul of Odan-Urr, sat at her desk and slowly listened to the holofeed from Brotherhood space. A man's droning voice went on and on, each word carefully chosen. The Zeltron rolled her eyes at a particular bit about being a "first line of defense against enemies that threaten our existence", recalling their inaction during the Collective's initial assault against all Clans and their past hobby of targeting Clan homeworlds to help the Grandmaster wipe them out. That said, she couldn't help but scoff as the Voice of the Brotherhood called for a unified front.

Aura paced around her office and pondered how to best move forward with the new intel. She fought back a vindictive grin, the urge to relish in the Brotherhood's newfound troubles tantalizing. Regardless, the feeling swept through her as she thought of everything the Brotherhood had done to the former system inhabited by Scholae Palatinae and what they had not done as the Collective's killer robots went after everybody associated with the Brotherhood at one time or another.

"We call them cyborgs, Ta'var. Not robots," chimed in Alethia Archenksova.

"How did you-"

"Muttering to yourself again. You need to stop monologuing out loud when you're frustrated. It's a weakness our enemies will certainly exploit," berated her Consul with a frown.

Aura shut her mouth for a moment before replying, "How bad was it?"

"Few words here and there. Enough for me to piece together your thought process," Alethia faintly smirked. "Credit for your thoughts?"

"I thought you said you already knew what I was thinking," retorted the Zeltron coolly.

"It's much better when you prove me correct. I wanted your opinion anyways," Archenksova replied, gesturing to the holovid.

Aura took a step back and rewatched it, processing the words once more in what she hoped was a more unbiased analysis. Her Consul liked to play this game with her, thinly veiling her attempts to smooth over the passionate Proconsul's rougher edges. Winning was the only way to be set free from it and it required nothing less than a cool composure.

“Well, the fact they acknowledge their existence is threatened is certainly a shock. What happened to the proud sons and daughters of Arx?” remarked Ta’var.

“Go on.”

“They also mention propaganda. I assume their intelligence networks haven’t been able to keep up with the Collective tactics. When’s the last time they hacked our distribution system again?” asked Aura.

“Not long enough but SeNET assures me they have new encryption algorithms to prevent that particular exploit,” informed Alethia.

“Lastly, the Inquisitorious is offering aid to the Iron Forces via intel, intel we won’t get without working alongside them at the very least.”

“Good. What do you advise as a good course of action in response? What would you do in my shoes?” asked Archenksova, the elder woman carefully watching the Zeltron’s emotions.

Aura mentally thought *Frak them* but resisted saying the words out loud. Nevertheless, she could rarely hide anything from her Consul, especially when the High Councillor was focused on her specifically. The Zeltron looked away and composed herself, taking a moment to pace back and forth. Mental images of her family, both blood and clanmates, flooded her consciousness. She picked up her daughter’s toy off her desk and frowned. She wanted Odan-Urr, the safe harbor of what could be the galaxy’s last Jedi, to be safe. She wanted her family safe, nothing more and nothing less. She put down the toy, turned back to Alethia, and finally spoke.

“I would work with them for intel exchange on the Collective so that we ourselves could get more information but past that they should be left to whatever fate karma has for them. We aren’t one of their servants and its certainly not our job to save someone with an overwhelming tactical advantage, should they ever deign to use it,” advised Ta’var with a slight sneer, her position as War Councillor coloring her opinions.

“A rather cold sentence for a Jedi, don’t you think?”

“Jedi don’t fight in every war. We aren’t meant to always be warriors. It didn’t exactly work out for the Jedi Order, now did it?” said Aura bitterly.

Alethia shook her head and tutted. “You’re handing me weapons again. If I were a Dark Councillor, imagine what I could glean from that statement alone and what I could do with it. I thought you didn’t want to be manipulated again by them.”

“I don’t.”

“Then you’ll have to do better, Ta’var. But there is some improvement. Given what you know, your analysis of the situation was acceptable and you kept a few words to yourself for a change. If only Master Vorsa could see you now,” said Archenksova, smiling mysteriously to herself as she thought of the pair’s unlikely influence on each other. “Let’s head to the meeting with the Kiasst nobles. You are to sit there, meditate, and say nothing. Listen only.”

“I know, I know,” the Zeltron trailed off, giving one last look at the cherished pictures on her desk. “Let’s finish it early. I don’t want us missing dinner again.”