

The Telenovella of Darth Plagueis the Wise

Dramatis Personae

Khryso Mallus: Chiss, Imperial Youth

Luthus Tadrin: Human, Former Imperial Moff, Khryso's Mentor

Lena Tadrin: Human, Luthus' Youngest Daughter

Leedree Tadrin: Human, Luthus' Third Wife and Lena's Mother

Lira Tadrin: Human, Luthus' Second Wife

Geod Caelman: Human, First Order Governor

Imperial Entanglements

Minashee, 26 ABY

Khryso sat in the library, just as he did on most days. The contents of the room had been dealt a serious blow when the First Order took control of the planet over a year ago. They had raided this estate and nearly burned it to the ground in order to force Moff Tadrin to surrender. Thankfully, however, it wasn't entirely barren. The 16-year-old Chiss still had plenty to choose from when he took the time to stop in for a read.

On this particular cloudy afternoon, he was reading a volume that told of a scientist's time studying a primitive tribe on a distant planet. Interesting, but not all that important of information to absorb. Nonetheless, Khryso was quite invested in discovering the rituals and customs of these alien peoples.

His reading was interrupted, however, when the door creaked open. Khryso placed a finger on the page to mark his spot as he looked up. A human girl, about a year younger than he, with platinum blonde hair pulled into a ponytail and cute, narrow features had slipped into the room. Her dress was modest but colorful, fluttering around her as she scurried across the room.

Khryso smiled slightly, rising to his feet and setting down his book to accept the girl's embrace. As he hugged her lithe form against his much sturdier body, the two pressed their lips together, enjoying the youthful energy their hormones brought them. "You seem quite eager, today," Khryso said, locking eyes with her once their lips had parted.

"Just happy to be away from the bustle," the girl responded, her grin lighting up her face. "The governor is on his way for a visit, so father is a bit anxious."

Khryso's smile faltered a bit. "Is that so? What does the governor want?"

The girl giggled. "I don't know, I left to avoid having to hear about it." She suddenly paused, as if she was just realizing Khryso's apprehension. "I'm sure it's just some kind of inspection. You

know how the First Order can be. They just want to let you know who is in charge now and then.”

Khryso wasn't quite sure that was all the governor had in mind. “I should go make sure your father doesn't need any help.”

The girl tightened her embrace of Khryso, pulling him closer. “He's fine. We should use this opportunity to get out of the house. With father occupied, he won't miss us.”

The Chiss couldn't help but smile slightly at the girl's pleading. He placed his hands on her shoulders. “Lena, I owe your father a great debt. He helped my family out when we arrived on the planet and even took me in when I was orphaned. If there's anything I can do to make sure this goes smoothly, I'd like to do it.”

Lena frowned. “Fine. He's not in the best mood, though, so watch your step.”

Khryso nodded. “I've had to weather storms before, don't worry.” He pulled Lena in for a quick kiss before releasing her from his embrace. With a purposeful stride, he made his way out of the library and into the hallway.

He'd been around this estate for the better part of his life, so navigating its halls, even in their growing state of disrepair, was no difficult feat. It didn't take him much longer than a quarter hour to locate the former Moff, pacing nervously in the vestibule of the mansion. Two of his wives, Leedree and Liara, stood over by the wall, anxiously discussing something in whispers. Khryso approached Luthus and waited patiently and silently for the man to notice his presence.

It took several moments for Luthus to finally take note of his ward, causing him to pause in a startle. Khryso nodded in greeting. “I heard from Lena that the governor is coming. I wanted to know if there was anything you needed me to do to prepare.”

Luthus fixed him with an uncertain stare. “Frankly, Khryso, I don't think you being here would be of much help at all. I'm sure the last thing Caelman wants to see when he walks through that door is a kriffing alien. You're probably best off making yourself scarce.” The Moff reached up and smoothed down his stringy gray hair, waving Khryso away dismissively.

Khryso nodded, used to the man's brusqueness, and retreated back towards the hallway. As he reached to open the door, however, Leedree rushed over to him. “Khryso, dear, can I ask a favor of you?”

The Chiss paused and waited for the middle-aged woman to catch up to him. She placed a careful hand lightly on his elbow and leaned in to whisper. “You said you spoke with Lena? I know Luthus just told you to avoid the governor, but could you fetch Lena for me and bring her here? She really shouldn't be running off like that when an important guest is on their way.”

Khryso nodded in response, turning back to the door. He didn't miss the suspicious glare from Liara as Leedree turned to Luthus, but chose to pretend he had. Making his way back to the library, Khryso knew he likely wouldn't find Lena there, but it was a good place to start. She was a bit too energetic to stay in one place for too long, especially by herself. He moved through the estate for nearly half an hour, calling her name, before he finally tracked her down, sitting on the ballroom balcony's railing.

"Your mother would like for you to greet the governor with the rest of the family," Khryso said, stepping up behind her.

"Of course she would," Lena said, letting herself fall backwards into Khryso's chest. "I told *you*, though that I wasn't interested in being around for all that." She turned and looked into Khryso's eyes, slipping back onto her feet. "Who do you like more, me or my mother?"

Khryso raised an eyebrow, not willing to engage in her manipulation. "I'm sorry, but, some things in life you just have to deal with. I'm willing to bet I'm even less fond of the First Order than you are."

Lena hesitated before rising up to her tip-toes to plant a gentle kiss on Khryso's lips. "Don't play the orphan card, please. It's not fair."

"You started it," Khryso said, grabbing her hand and leading her back towards the hallway. Lena begrudgingly trailed along behind him. As they made their way back towards the vestibule, however, the pair ran right into the governor, his retinue, and Lena's parents.

Geod Caelman was a tall, thin man. His dress suit was elaborately decorated and its jet-black color closely matched his comb-over and handlebar mustache. "There you are!" he cried out, his eyes immediately snapping to Lena, "we've been looking for you, my dear."

"My dear?" Lena echoed, very clearly confused.

"Servant boy, you should probably release the lady," Geod said, his eyes suddenly tracking in on the two's intertwined hands. "I think you're overstepping your bounds a bit."

Khryso did as he was told, pulling his hand away, but Lena didn't let him, tightening her grip. "He's not a servant, he's-

"Lena!" Leedree, her mother, quickly interrupted her, stepping forward. "Don't be so rude to our gracious guest. Governor Caelman has come all this way to see you." Lena, surprised by her mother's sudden interjection, released Khryso's hand. Leedree began to fuss with Lena's hair, trying to make it a bit neater.

Geod, however, was eyeing Khryso. “Luthus, you should make sure your servant’s know their place.” He glanced back at the much smaller but older man. “I would never let a servant lay a hand on my future daughters, let alone an alien.”

Luthus was looking at Khryso intently with a mixture of curiosity and frustration. “I thought I told you to stay out of sight, boy.”

Khryso mumbled an apology, backing further away from the group. Geod, apparently satisfied for the moment, turned back to Lena and Leedree. The latter was just stepping away, pushing her daughter forward to within arms-reach of Geod.

“A truly lovely girl,” Geod muttered, smiling toothily. “She’ll make a lovely bride.”

Lena glanced at her mother, her face reddening as her jaw clenched. “That’s the plan,” Lena muttered, turning back to Geod. “Nice to see you again, sir.”

“Don’t be so cordial,” Geod said, “we’re engaged now after all.”

“What?!” Lena shouted, balling her hands into fists. Her mother rushed forward to place a calming hand on her daughter’s shoulder, clearly prepared for this reaction. Whirling on her mother, Lena threw her hands up in the air. “Porque?!”

Geod raised an eyebrow as he gave Luthus a side-eyed glance. “How have you raised this girl, Luthus? I thought you were a man of etiquette?”

Luthus huffed, stepping forward to join the angry whispering that was passing between Lena and Leedree. “My dear,” he said, clearly trying to remain calm despite the red in his face, “this is for the best...” The older man’s strained voice made it clear he wasn’t happy with the decision either. He’d long ago bent the knee to the First Order, though, and so didn’t see a way out.

Khryso stepped forward. “Governor,” he said, drawing a surprised glare from Geod, “unfortunately, Lena can’t be engaged to you. She’s already engaged to me.”

The room fell deathly silent all of a sudden as both Geod’s and Luthus’ jaws hit the floor. Leedree bit her lip and quickly retreated from the incoming hurricane. Lena paused, clearly needing a moment to register Khryso’s gamble. Things kicked back into motion, however, as she smiled up at Geod and leapt into Khryso’s arms, planting a huge kiss on his lips.

Geod began stuttering in confusion, his face turning red. Luthus, beginning to put the puzzle pieces together, gave his wife an angry glance before turning to Geod. “I am ashamed to admit it’s true, Governor. I hid it from you because I could not bare the embarrassment, but now, I have no choice but to shed my dignity.”

Geod needed nearly half a minute to gather himself, his face contorting into several different expressions and passing through various shades of red and purple. "I really gave you way too much credit, Luthus. I thought you were just a misguided fool. It turns out, however, that you are closer to a wild animal." With a huff, the governor and his retinue retreated down the hall.

As soon as they were out of earshot, Luthus turned on Khryso and Lena. Khryso quickly released the girl, stepping away and clearing his throat nervously. "Don't worry, daddy," Lena said, rushing over to her father, "we aren't actually engaged. I wouldn't do something like that without telling you." Khryso wasn't sure how true that statement was, but doing whatever it took to calm down Luthus was probably for the best. His face was already beet-red and covered in sweat.

"But you have been playing around behind my back." He pointed an accusatory finger at Khryso. "You weren't even man enough to tell me."

Khryso nodded. "You're already under a lot of stress, I didn't think it was something you should have to worry about."

Luthus clenched his fists and turned to storm down the hall. "This conversation isn't over, Khryso. I just need to keep from poppin' a valve."

Leedree gave her husband a worried glance. "I'll do my best to calm him down," she said, offering a sympathetic smile to her daughter.

"Thanks, mom!" Lena gave her mother a hug before the older woman bustled off. She then turned to Khryso. "I definitely need to get out of the house after all that. You coming this time?"

Khryso sighed in defeat. "It would probably be a good idea to give your father some space. What did you have in mind?" Lena smiled and grabbed his hand, pulling him off down the hallway.

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