

It all started with the new uniform.

The mandate came from Lucine herself. Sera could just imagine the Shadow Lady passing that order down. Things had been getting... well, odd, back on Selen. Things were so different there, all shadowy plotlines, steamy trysts, personal manipulation, and a whole lot of overblown screaming and yelling. Normally, that last bit made up the vast majority of their time. It disturbed Sera, honestly. Like the planet was in a totally different, darker, edgier universe, with a TV-MA rating to go with. Not that she knew what a TV-MA rating was.

Anyway, it wasn't like House Qel-Droma wasn't unique in its own sense. It was just different. Where Selen was all super-serious and kark, her House had sort of... devolved. No, that wasn't the best term; "perfected" was much better.

As stated before, it all started with the uniform. Dark, perfectly fitted suits for the men, with matching ties and blazers that were as sharp as a sith's ridiculously ornate dagger. Stylish, functional, and not half bad. The women, however, got something *totally* different... and not nearly as functional.

If Lucine had ever been caught running around in a skirt as short as these were... well, suffice it to say, Sera would pay for pictures. Handsomely, at that.

That's where our story begins; with tastefully immodest skirts, overbearingly tight clothing, and a plotline that's just a little bit too suspicious for family viewing; all par for the course onboard the newly re-christened Voidbreaker Academy Starship!

Chapter 1: It's that kind of show.

"So... you're really sure we aren't allowed to bring actual armor on this one, Karran?" Zig questioned skeptically, her furred brown furrowing deeply. The uniforms were bad enough -tight in all the right places for a brothel, and all the wrong places for a warship- but she couldn't exactly complain. Compared to the last Consul's proclivities, this couldn't be anything, right?

But wearing these flimsy, filmy, flight little things into a fight was simply ludicrous, the posturing of either the stingiest quartermaster in the Clan or a simple pander. It didn't help that the damn things were like tissue paper; always ripping and tearing, and virtually transparent when wet. Whoever designed them deserved simple capital punishment. Or, maybe a medal. All according to personal tastes.

"Uhhh... yeah. That's the order," Karran stated sheepishly. Sighing, the Zabrak scrolled down farther on his datapad, making a disgusted noise in the back of his throat. "She sent along a tactical suggestion, too. Quote 'All men are to stay back and guard the ship for approximately

two to three hours. Female crew members should approach the beach and swamp in evenly spaced clumps... just outside of earshot... no ranged weapons..."

The Zabrak's expression grew darker with each word. "This... doesn't seem like a wise idea."

"Well, they're Lucine's orders. What could ever, in all the galaxy, possibly be wrong with them?" Sera questioned sweetly, blue eyes shining bright. Everyone else just looked at her, blankly. "I mean... it's not like she would ever ask us to do something questionable, even without all these weird add-ons, right? She's an icon of virtue and morality!"

Again, there was silence. At the back, Alaisy coughed into her sleeve. Oddly enough, *her* outfit hadn't changed at all, as if whoever was calling the shots was perfectly satisfied with it.

Go figure.

Fed up with all the silence, Sera finally turned back to Karran, giving him a questioning glance. "What's even our objective here, Captain? Collective? Dawn Conclave? Insurgents?"

Karran looked back at his datapad, brow quirking up. "Uhhh... there's some kind of... amphibious creature. There's a picture here..."

Scrolling in, the zabrak forwarded the image to the bridge's holo-display for all to see. The monster was more or less an amorphous blob of... very oddly shaped tentacles; how anything like that was supposed to move, or even function, was beyond her.

"Well... it doesn't look all that dangerous. What could go wrong, right?"

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From the shadows of the ship's ventilation system, a chorus of glowing yellow eyes watched. The drones had been recording the vessel's descent into depravity since the phoney orders had been routed in, all for the benefit of their master.

Back on Selen, Kordath just laughed. They'd never taken his credentials for communication away, you see... it was so easy to spoof a few well-meaning messages from the Shadow lady.

It looked like he was going to be in for a good day.