Through the Force, she felt it. A growing sense of the energies that brought her here, long before the Collective’s advance on the Nesolat Platform. Feeling the burnished steel of her Jedi’s lightsaber, A’lora Kituri awaited the presence of the one she had been tracking since her visions had guided the Togruta to this destination—this same person.

As the growing shadow of her mark stretched across the duracrete, she gritted her teeth in anticipation of what came next. With a flick of her wrist and the snap-hiss of a lightsaber blade being ignited, the cerulean glow of its edge bore down on the shape’s source with an arc of light. Matched with the sound of a mechanical crack, its blade stopped short of its mark, instead locking against the blood-red beam of a bled lightsaber crystal.

“After all this time, I’ve finally met my tail,” the modulated voice boomed through a vocoder, “I don’t believe I have had the chance to be properly introduced.” Raising a hand to the side of an otherwise opaque visor, a series of faint clicks could be heard as the helmet’s wearer came into view behind a now-transparent mask. Arched and narrow, the Sith’s brows creased in mild interest as their smoke-colored orbs stared expectantly at the shorter Togruta that had decided to raise the challenge.

From high-heeled boots to a rather straight-backed demeanour, the woman was a rather imposing figure, and about as stark of a contrast as one could get to Odan-Urr’s former High Councillor. “I am known as A’lora Kituri,” the Togruta’s thick accent announced, “the Jedi who will end the last vestiges of the Inquisition before it can fall under another’s new Sith Order.”

“Kituri, then?” the statuesque woman’s black-stained lips curled into a smile, “a rather \_elegant\_ name, I must concur. Alaisy Tir’eivra, Sith.” The woman’s flat introduction accompanied a mock curtsey, as best as one could manage while engaged in what seemed to be the beginning of a duel. “So then, shall we skip the pleasantries? I am curious to see what someone of such high regard to Atyiru is capable of… we’ll call it a duel?”

“It will be called whatever you like,” the lavender-skinned alien retorted, “so long as this farce ends.” With a two-handed grab, the Jedi’s double-bladed lightsaber fell back towards her shoulder, its second blade carrying on its momentum to seek a swift end to this encounter. The emerald glow of the blade opposite to the first sailed under the Sith’s defenses, seeking one of the masked opponent’s black-clad legs in a bid to end this duel before it could begin.

Alaisy Tir’eivra saw this move coming, as one of a handful of attacks the Jedi might make. Instead of igniting the other end of her own lightsaber, however, the Togruta was shocked to feel the long handle of her hilt caught on something that \_wasn’t\_ a lightsaber. Stuck between the heel and sole of a boot, A’lora Kituri used her strength to wrench her weapon free before the blood-red blades whisked through the air in slashes meant to incapacitate, rather than decapitate.

\_But for what reason\_, the Togruta pondered, as she missed the arcing blade with mere centimeters of distance. Could it be an act of hesitation? Or just a sadistic means to interrogate the former High Councillor for all she knows on the Ordu Aspectu artifact?

“Curious,” her native Togruti accent bemused, “You didn’t go in for the kill. A Sith, with a heart of gold?”

“Call me \_soft\_.” the latex-clad assassin gave with a slight emphasis to the last word, indicating her sarcasm. “After all, it just wouldn’t give me the satisfaction to end time with my playthings so abruptly. Especially those so… delectable.”

Most people would get a slap against the side of the head for comments to her exotic looks. A’lora, however, wasn’t looking to be baiting into doing so against someone so obviously dangerous—particularly so in the middle of Arx, evacuated or not. “It isn’t in my interest to make enemies of Arconans, either. Yet, here we are.”

Alaisy’s eyes widened at the comment, before narrowing back to their usual size, “Oh, are my affiliations so obvious?”

“Just a guess,” A’lora answered, “Not too far off the mark, yes?” It was only a half-truth, she supposed. The Sentinel Network had taken some of the details of her visions, and produced some assumptions based on what she had seen in the disjointed fragments of information.

“An offer, then. To ensure proper relations, for the sake of our clans,” Alaisy’s offered, while adjusting the fall of her ponytail, “A mutual ceasefire, as I know of something that would be of interest to you… something \_desirable\_.”

“Dealing with a Sith?” the Togruta scoffed, “I’ll admit, it’s an unusual request—what could a Sith gain from charity?”

“Clemency, my dear,” the vocoder-modulated voice laughed at the Togruta’s skepticism, “But more importantly, what I wanted is what you have already \_gave\_. Your presence on Arx has given me the distraction I needed to get what I want. Whatever else I have to give is of no interest to me—but I do hope it keeps you distracted from \_me\_. At least until I call in the favour”

Holding her posture for a moment, the Councillor relaxed when her senses informed her that danger was not imminent. Whatever it was this person was willing it offer, it was sincere—or at the least, not a trap to lower her guard.

Raising a hand as a reflex while she cleared her throat, Alaisy raised an index to the tower behind them, “In this building, lies a shell of a man that has outlived his usefulness to the Brotherhood’s interrogators. Move fast, Jedi. He’ll expire soon.”

A’lora’s teeth ground as she listened to the tale she was told—whether true or a lie, she had an inkling through the Force, a nudge. “Go,” she muttered, raising the point of her blade in a warning, “but if I find that you had anything to do with this, I’ll be the first there, when you fall.”

“I would have it no other way, my \_plaything.\_ With a sashay in her hips, the black-clad figure turned on a heel and walked through the gathering smoke of a fire blown on the wind, “Time, is counting down.”

\_When you see the horrors I have bequeathed on that poor man, I’m sure we will see each other again, my darling Jedi.\_