

Vahrosa waited until nightfall to move. He had packed a small bundle of his belongings, hidden under his pillow when his fathers' men did a routine check of his bedroom before everything quieted down for the night. That evening, his father had crossed the line. The man himself, a Chiss named Vross'emela'blero, had decided for Vahrosa that he was to marry one of his fathers' business friends. The business in question was shrouded in a feeling that made Vahrosas hair stand up on end. *You have wasted your potential and so I am giving you to someone who can train you properly*, he had said. *Be lucky he agreed, looking the way that you do*. The words stung despite the lies in them, biting into his skin as he had run into his room and locked the door. He had no other choice anymore. Staying was going to be a death sentence. It was the middle of the night when he made his room, gathering his things. He turned to the doorway and froze, clutching a letter to his mother in his hand to see her standing there in a pale blue nightgown, wringing her hands. He tried to speak, but no words came out. He could feel his bones vibrating, his heart trying to escape his ribcage. She looked as if she was about to cry.

"You're going to leave me here?"

The question rooted him to the ground and made him feel something akin to vertigo. "I-" He tried to get the words to come out. That he had to, he couldn't take the path that they had decided for his life, that this was the best thing for all of them. Tears were coming down her face now. "How could you?" she whimpered, gulping. His first reaction was to apologize, but as the words stumbled out, anger pricked behind his eyes.

"I'm a *child*," he croaked. "I'm *your* child, Ama, and you still won't look past yourself to realize how fucked this situation is? How you've been letting him do this to both of us? You can leave him, you know." She responded in kind with a tensing of her

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body. "It's more complicated than that, Vava."

"Is it?!" he demanded, and the crackle of energy that he felt during spikes of emotion returned. The papers and clothing littered on the floor of his room all pushed back from where he was standing about five or six inches. This made his mother gasp.

"Vahrosa you can't do tha-"

"Can't do what? Can't feel things? Can't experience pain? Can't say no to your husband trading me off to one of his old rich friends for a favor like I'm a trophy? You know exactly what he's doing and you just don't care." The glass in the window looking out over the garden rattled, and his mother rushed into the room and held him by his shoulders. Before she could speak to him again, he shoved her hands off and away, storming out of the room with his bag slung over his shoulder. If she was calling out to him now, he couldn't hear her over the roaring in his ears and the tears stinging in his eyes. He loved her, more than anything. For most of their lives, they were all each other had. And she still betrayed him like this? He didn't look back- if he did, he would have surely run back into her arms, plead forgiveness. He didn't mean to be like this, he didn't ask to be born with gifts that scared at best, ostracized at worst. *Don't look back*, he scolded himself. *Never look back*.