



TR-8R

Appius Wight (15685)

Aylin Sajark (14505)

Zentru'la (5951)

Consul's Comfort

"I'm sorry I can't be home more often, Ankira. Being Consul is important. I have a lot of people depending on me to do good."

Appius and Ankira were having the same conversation for what felt like the sixth time in a matter of days. Whenever Appius finally got some time off, they'd be interrupted by something, no matter how inconsequential, that would take him away from his family. The last time it had happened, Ankira had nearly shot the poor messenger. Word had spread, and no-one dared knock on the door themselves lest they get a head full of blaster bolts courtesy of the Consul's wife herself. They now resorted to droids, which was worse given Ankira's distaste for them.

The last one they sent was mangled by her so badly not even Aylin and Dasha could figure out what happened. There were wires in places there should not have been wires.

"I know," Ankira said. She stared at Appius as he dropped onto the couch. She followed him, sitting upright at the end. "I was hoping to have some time together."

Appius let out a heavy sigh. "Me too. I swear this war has aged me about ten years."

"You look fine," Ankira said.

Appius shrugged. "I don't feel like it. This doesn't feel right somehow."

Ankira's head tilted to the side. "What do you mean?"

"There are people out there fighting our battles, fighting our war, and here I am, sitting on the end of the sofa, feet up like there's not a care in the world," Appius sat up. "I should be out there. What kind of Consul am I if I sit behind the front lines like some sort of coward."

"One that is spending time with the one he loves most!" Ankira rose from her seat. "I rarely get to see you anymore, and when I do. You are taken away from me!"

Appius rubbed the bridge of his nose and took a deep breath. "I need to check the news."

He reached for the controls to their holographic display, but was stopped when Ankira grabbed hold of his wrist.

“No, you don’t. You need to take a step back and relax for once.”

Appius sighed. “I’m sorry, I must look like a mess right now.”

“It’s OK,” Ankira sat next to him, and placed a single hand on his shoulder. “The important thing is you are here with me, alone, with no chance of anyone interrupting.”

“Interrupting, eh?” Appius gave Ankira a sly grin, though she blankly looked back at him. Maybe she wasn’t in the mood? Or maybe she really did just want to spend time with him. He couldn’t remember the last time the two of them had spent a good amount of time together. “Well, I’d better clean up the house like you asked me too. We don’t want Shi’Kar or Rausu getting their hands on something they shouldn’t. It’s time for bed for them anyways, so we’ll do our usual.”

“Our... usual?” Ankira asked.

“Yeah, our usual. You know what that is.”

Ankira stared back at him, blinking.

“I’ll get Shi’Kar ready upstairs while you change and feed Rausu down here?”

“Oh, yes. Of course,” Ankira said. “Then we can spend some time alone.”

“Are you feeling OK, Ankira? Do you need to lay down for a bit?” Appius asked, genuine concern laced in his words.

Ankira smiled at him. “No, I’m fine. I’m just looking forward to spending the rest of the day with you.”

Death From Above

“Hey Gen’ral, you seen the news?”

Zentru’la put down his datapad and marched to the cockpit of the Harbinger, towards the vague stench of a strong drink. “This better be important, Rohla.”

A hologram of a smartly dressed woman in a studio appeared above the dashboard. “This is an emergency broadcast from the Kasiya Kronicle,” she said in a

rushed voice as if in a hurry to get the words out in time.

The footage cut to a stampede of civilians charging through the streets. There was screaming and panic as blaster fire rained from above onto the busy street. "There's been a mass shooting in the Arroyo district!" The camera panned to the assailant, a woman floating above the pandemonium, in Mandalorian armour, firing dual blaster pistols.

"Is that?"

"Many are saying the shooter is the Consul's wife, defected to the Children of Mortis. There has been no word from the Consul at this time. Port Kasiya will surely be wondering why the Consul has allowed his wife to engage in such heinous acts. The death toll is unknown, but as the loss of life is made clear, there will surely be increased pressure on the Consul to act. We cut live to Sarah Divine with the latest from Arroyo."

"It's madness here!" The hologram of the woman shook with every syllable. "She's still shooting! People are dying! I think she's moved on now! There's a child crying over her mum's body, there are families broken, and OH GOD SHE'S BACK." There was another barrage of fire and the feed went dead, then cut back to the anchor.

Rohla took big swig of drink. "Reckon it's really her?"

"I've fought with Ankira before." Zentru'la rolled back the feed, watching Ankira fire on the civilians. "It certainly looks like her. But you see the way she cocks her elbow to absorb the recoil?"

"Not really."

"I don't remember Ankira doing that. I wonder why Appius hasn't said anything."

"If I was him I'd be halfway through my second bottle of rum."

"And if I was him I'd be on guard. If Ankira has defected, he is in great danger right now, from a foe that we know. And if that's an imposter... he's in even greater danger from a foe we don't."

Practice

Ankira changed Rausu and gave him a bottle of milk. Rausu was squirming and trying to push her away when she tried to feed him, but she did manage to give him the whole bottle as he was hungry. After that she went upstairs and put him to bed as well. The little one again squirmed when she tried to put him into bed and tried to get away from her. When Appius came to check what was going on he raised a brow.

“Everything alright here?”

“Yes, I think he is feeling a bit off,” Ankira said with a bit of shrug.

“Strange, he seemed to be fine a moment ago...” he said as he walked back out of the room with Ankira in tow.

“Perhaps he had missed you.”

Appius chuckled and nodded, “That must be it.”

She smiled at him and giggled softly, poking him in his side before rushing down the stairs. Appius blinked before laughing and going after her down the stairs, but when he got to the bottom he stared down the barrel of one of her Westars to a face with a big grin.

“Ankira?”

“We never get to practice anymore.”

He frowned at her. She shrugged at him with a playful smile. Then he started to grin as well and moved his hand, making the Westar fly from her hand.

“Good,” was all the blue-skinned Mandalorian said as she moved into action and went for his jaw with her fist.

Anticipating this move, Appius moved his head out of the way and grabbed her arm, swinging her around him and tossing her into the living room. Ankira flew into the couch and it flipped over with her. Grabbing the pillows, she quickly tossed them towards him before running at him. As Appius was busy swatting them away he got tackled by her.

“Missed me that much, huh?” Appius said with a grin on his face as he used the Force to kick her off him and send her flying again into a little side table.

“You have no idea,” she said with a tone that surprised Appius a bit as she pulled herself from the pieces. Holding one of the legs to use as a battering stick.

They went at each other again, trading blows left and right. More of the furniture had to suffer in the living room. For a moment Appius was happy that the rooms of the kids were protected and that they would probably sleep through all of this. But that little sidetrack was all Ankira needed and she pulled her second Westar on Appius, opening a volley of shots at him. If the Force hadn't screamed at him he would have a few holes where they shouldn't be.

“Are you trying to kill me?!” Appius exclaimed as he dived out of the way.

“No, it's called practice.”

“Practice?!”

“Yes, practice,” she replied, almost emotionless and continued to shoot at him.

Appius dived out of the way again and Force pushed her against the wall, making her drop her blaster. It didn't deter her, instead, she jumped right at him again.

The Sword in the Darkness

His black silhouette obscured against the night sky, Masakado vaulted the wall to the Consul's residence, a detached mansion on the outskirts of Port Kasiya. In this time of war, security had never been tighter - armed guards stood on every corner. The distant percussive blasts of artillery fire against Port Kasiya obscured the sound of his footsteps. He could feel the Sith Sword at his hip. One guard had his back turned. He could easily take him out, silently.

Masakado moved on. The most well-honed blade needs cut only once. There was a window open on the third floor. He looked both ways and threw a grappling hook up onto the ledge. In a flash of movement which would be seen by nobody below, he ascended up the wall and clambered into the building.

The room was brightly decorated with bold, solid colours. Action figures of Mandalorian warriors and Jedi Knights battled on a bedside table. Shi'Kar stirred,

but did not wake. The war still raged in the distance, but something else could be heard in the house. The blaster fire was a melodic accompaniment to the artillery shells.

Masakado crept past Shi'Kar, following his ears to the commotion. The sounds grew louder, there was scuffling, blunt impact, blaster shots and the sound of man and woman shouting. Had Masakado really been called out all this way to save the Consul from his wife?

Sword in one hand, he gently pushed the door open with the other to find Ankira straddling Appius, blaster in her hand. He took two purposeful steps toward her. Appius had seen him. Ankira, her attention on Appius, had not.

"Masakado, don't..."

His downwards slash cleaved Ankira across the torso. Her body buzzed with an electronic crackle. There were sparks, but there was no blood. Appius threw the mechanical Ankira off him. "Thought she felt heavier than usual."

"I'd suggest you check the news."

Aftermath

Ankira was on her way back to her home when there was all kinds of chatter coming over the comm. She paid little attention to it as she was very tired from the mission she had done and finished minutes ago. Taking her helmet off when she opened the door she was surprised by smelling burned plaster. Shrugging slightly she walked further and entered the destroyed living room.

Most of the furniture laid in pieces, the window was broken and the lights were mostly destroyed. There was also some kind of droid sparking on the floor and Appius not far away from it looking at a datapad in horror.

“What the heck Appius, you were supposed to clean the house not destroy it.”

Appius jumped to his feet when he heard her and tackle hugged her.

“You’re safe!”

Glancing curiously at him she wrapped her arms around him, “Of course, why shouldn’t I be?”

“Long story...”