

(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: Ventress receives her next orders!

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After the exciting mission to Lotho Minor and the victory that she and Sev'rance had achieved there, going back to slaving under Count Dooku and serving him while begging for scraps was rather galling. The only thing that made it tolerable was that it was all a lie, of course. Including the begging.

Asajj didn't need to beg Dooku for power anymore. She didn't need to rely on the old man's pitiful, meaningless lessons in how to wield the Dark Side of the Force. Funny how once upon a time, she'd been so utterly afraid of Dooku. His power had seemed immense, immeasurable, and implacable.

Back then, Asajj had felt like it was all her fault that she wasn't growing stronger faster. After all, her Master was so powerful, and the leader of the entire Confederacy besides. Obviously any failure had to be on her part rather than his... right?

But no. She knew better now. She had another Master's teachings to compare Dooku to... and in every way, Count Dooku proved wanting. Which was even more humorous when one considered she'd only had the one face-to-face meeting with Lord Vader. He was managing to completely outclass Dooku purely through the holocron he'd gifted her.

That holocron was how Asajj had stayed sane in the weeks after her and Sev'rance's success on Lotho Minor. Returning to Dooku, fighting for him and the Confederacy... all of it felt so meaningless these days, but Asajj did not let it get to her, purely because she always had the holocron to look forward to.

With the holocron, both her and Sev'rance had grown in leaps and bounds. Her more than Sev'rance of course, but that was to be expected. Asajj's connection to the Force was stronger than her blue alien counterpart, that was undeniable.

However, what was equally undeniable was that this was not the insurmountable hurdle that Dooku and the Banite Sith would have them think it was.

Indeed, for all that Asajj's connection to the Force was stronger than Sev'rance's, she was equally sure that Dooku's connection to the Force had started out stronger than her own. And yet... Asajj had full faith that through her True Master's teachings, she would one day surpass the old, washed up Sith Apprentice. She would become stronger than him soon enough and be more than capable of overpowering him.

In the meantime though, all she could do was keep her head down, keep learning from the unlocked parts of the holocron, and wait for Lord Vader's next call.

... Which was why, when that next call came, Asajj couldn't help but be thrilled. Especially since this... this was apparently it. The big one. Rather than a conversation, it was a message... a set of orders. But Asajj didn't mind because at the end of the day, they were orders that she wanted to follow very, very much.

Darth Shar. It is time for you to slip out fully from under Dooku's shadow. You are to fake your own demise at the earliest convenience and then make your way to the planet Dathomir. An ancient Dark Side Sect of Force Users who call themselves 'Nightsisters' can be found there. These are your people, for you yourself were born on Dathomir.

Join them as my representative, extend an offer of alliance to them in my name. Once you have secured said alliance, the rest of the holocron you have in your possession will unlock and you will have control over all of its teachings... as well as who benefits from them.

However, do not mention the events of Lotho Minor or the being you put down there at any point. You will not engender yourself to them if they find out who you have killed for me.

Her people. Admittedly, Asajj had long known she was not Rattataki. She was taken from her family and home long before then, given up to a pirate criminal who had been surprisingly kind to her until he was killed in an uprising on Rattatak. From there, she'd been found by her first Master, Jedi Knight Ky Narec, and trained by him until his death. After that... the rest was history.

Still, apparently her Lord had always known where she hailed from, even if Asajj herself didn't exactly know. And now... now he was sending her home to treat with her people in his stead. The trust was gratifying, though the warning about Lotho Minor does have her shivering slightly in both curiosity and concern. Exactly who had that maddened Zabrak been?

... But no matter. It wasn't important. What was important was following her True Master's orders. And not just because she was eager to escape from Dooku's shoddy teachings either. The holocron had taught Asajj much, making her far more powerful at this point than she would have been otherwise, but she could tell parts of it were still locked away.

Lord Vader's message also made this clear. If she succeeded, not only would the holocron be fully unlocked, but also she would be able to use it as a bargaining chip with the Nightsisters, to allow them to train with it and learn from Lord Vader just as she had.

Once again, Asajj is struck by the sheer dichotomy between Lord Vader and Count Dooku. The latter was not the type to offer advice or assistance beyond the absolute bare minimum. Dooku would throw resources at problems until they stopped being problems, uncaring of what might be lost in the process.

On the other hand, Vader always made sure that she had the tools she needed to accomplish the missions he sent her on. He tested her, yes... but he also prepared her in ways Dooku never would. To say Asajj was happier under him than she'd ever been under Dooku would be an understatement.

Still, having received her orders, Asajj immediately begins making preparations. But before she does anything... she of course calls upon Sev'rance Tann. The blue skinned, red eyed alien and her had been forced to separate for a bit after

returning to the Confederacy. They were both technically Commanders after all, and the Confederacy needed all of the organic leadership it could get to lead its droid armies, seeing as they kept losing able-bodied leaders for their military forces.

Of course, Asajj was never just going to leave Sev'rance behind. Which is why she meets with the other woman before pulling the trigger, greeting the blue-skinned alien with a broad smile as Sev'rance steps aboard her ship at long last, two days after Vader's message had come through.

"It's good to see you again, Tann."

"Mm, you as well Ventress. What is it? Further orders from Lord Vader?"

Asajj's smile grows a little bit more at that. Ever since their shared conversation with their Lord after the events of Lotho Minor, Sev'rance has been... obsessed. Not that that's a bad thing. After all, Vader has quite a few qualities worth obsessing over.

Every time they've spoken, even over comms, Sev'rance has found a way to ask if there's been any further communication. And of course, Asajj has shared everything she can from the holocron with the other woman, helping her to grow stronger and expand her control over the Force despite her meager connection.

It's not surprising she would think that Asajj would only call her to her like this if it really were actual new orders. And indeed, she's right. Wordlessly, Asajj hands over a datapad with Vader's message on it for Sev'rance to read.

The other woman takes the datapad and reads quickly, her blue lips thinning out as her red eyes dart across the screen. When she's done, she slowly nods as she hands the datapad back. Asajj doesn't hesitate to delete the message once she does so... the last copy of it that had existed, in fact.

"I... I see. I'm happy for you then. And I appreciate you letting me know before you followed the Lord's orders."

Blinking, Asajj gives Sev'rance a curious look... before her eyes widen as she realizes what the other woman is implying.

"I'm not just letting you know, Sev'rance... I'm inviting you to come with me, of course. Faking both our deaths will be just as easy as faking my death. And there's no reason for you to stay while I go. I want you by my side when I meet my people for the first time on Dathomir."

Sev'rance looks stunned for a moment... and honestly touched. But then her brow furrows and she scowls.

"No. We can't risk that."

Just like that, it's Asajj's turn to be stunned. No? What does she mean no?

"What are you talking about?! Of course we can risk it! We *have* to risk it, I can't lose-mmph!"

The last thing Asajj is expecting is for Sev'rance to surge forward and cut her off mid-sentence with a kiss. A deep kiss too, one that completely silences Asajj. But as surprised as she is... she's not frozen in a shocked stupor for long before she's grabbing Sev'rance by the front of her uniform and pulling her in, deepening the kiss even further.

There's even a bit of tongue involved as the two women lock lips with one another, making out for several long moments. Asajj might not have initiated, but she certainly extends the situation, refusing to just let Sev'rance go again as their tongues dance between their mouths.

Finally though, they have to pull back for air if nothing else. Even as the Dark Side swirls around them with their passion, Asajj wrenches herself away, gasping for breath while Sev'rance does the same but also stares at her with lidded eyes.

"What... what was *that*?!"

“Hmph. A show of my appreciation, of course.”

Asajj is not used to feeling embarrassment of all things, but in that moment she can tell her cheeks are turning red from the heat rising within them.

“Your appreciation?!”

Sev’rance huffs.

“Do not think that just because I greatly admire Lord Vader... that I do not also greatly admire you and the woman you have become under his tutelage, Asajj. You did not have to take me under your wing as you have. You did not have to make me your confidante or allow me to train with you. But you did anyways. Lord Vader’s vision for the galaxy... I will do anything I can, up to and including giving my life to see it bear fruit. However, if it does not cost me my life... then I would not mind spending the rest of my life at your side.”

Asajj’s heart flutters in her chest at that. She hadn’t... she hadn’t even realized until Sev’rance was saying it out loud like this, but truthfully... she felt the same way. It was why she was so insistent on Sev’rance coming with her to Dathomir. She wanted the other woman at her side. Desperately.

“But it cannot be now.”

Why not?!

As if reading her mind, Sev’rance continues.

“It is one thing for you to fall in battle, to fail the Count in some way. He will believe it, merely because he still believes you to be the weak, raging marauder that he’s been training you to be. However, I am confident that our... connection has been noted by this point. They likely suspect we are already in a relationship of some sort.”

Wait, really? Asajj blinks, causing Sev’rance to adopt a wry smirk.

“No doubt they believe you have used your power over me to make me submit or something like that. Still, what they believe doesn’t matter... except for when it does. If we both die under mysterious circumstances, if we both are killed at the same time... then the ruse will be seen through. Dooku will realize that we’ve faked our own deaths and go hunting for us... and one of the first places he will look is Dathomir.”

... Fuck. She’s right. Asajj hates it with every fiber of her being, but she knows that Sev’rance speaks the truth. One of them dying is one thing... both of them dying and vanishing would be monumentally more obvious. And if Asajj led Dooku to Dathomir just because she wanted Sev’rance at her side, then not only would she be endangering her people... she would be failing a mission from Lord Vader himself.

A whimper leaves Asajj’s throat, her eyes shining with unshed tears as she stares at Sev’rance.

“... It’s not fair.”

Sev’rance smiles crookedly back, reaching up and running a hand along Asajj’s cheek.

“Life rarely is. But... this is for the best anyways. Even if I did think we could get away with it, I would still insist on staying behind. Lord Vader needs eyes and ears within the Confederacy after all. And so do you. Through me, you can stay abreast of what’s happening... and when the time comes, I can clear the way for you and Lord Vader to deal with Count Dooku... once and for all.”

Again, Sev’rance is right. That doesn’t make Asajj any happier though. But... she’s not some weakling, to wallow in her sadness and fears. She’s Darth Shar, Apprentice to Darth Vader. Letting out a shuddering breath, Asajj takes those feelings of weakness and feeds them into the furnace that is her heart. She does not let her passion or affection for Sev’rance go, but she does away with the fear and the sorrow over being separated.

And then she reaches out and seizes upon Sev'rance, dragging her in for another kiss. This time, she quickly moves from Sev'rance's lips down to her jawline and finally her neck, even as her hands begin to work the other woman's uniform off of her body.

"V-Ventress..."

"Call me Asajj... and if we're going to be apart, I don't want any ambiguity as to what we are to one another. I want to know you... every last part of you beforehand."

"F-Fuck... yeah... I mean, y-yes... okay..."

Asajj smirks as Sev'rance tries to keep her composure, even as more and more of that blue flesh is being exposed. Eventually, she drags the other woman backwards, towards her bunk... so that they can explore each other's bodies for as long as possible before it's time for Sev'rance to depart again... and for Asajj Ventress, Commander of the Confederacy of Independent Systems... to die.

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A/N: Remember to Vote, leave a Like, and let me know what you think!