

Can One Displaced Hero Save a Galaxy?

(Chapters 111-114)

Novus Peregrine

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Chapter 111: The Grind

- Bimmisaari – 280 Days into the Hutt Crusade

“So, that’s the long and short of it then. The digital ink is on the dotted line, as it were. This is going to cause a bit of a shift we won’t be able to take back, you know?”

Aayla might not be as politically versed as some of the others present, but her comment got nods from those around the table of the conference room. The emotions behind those nods ranged over quite a spectrum from person to person. Padmé looked a bit *dejected*, but not confrontational. Over the course of their entire political tour she, in particular, had been forced to open her eyes to some standing issues within the Republic. For all that she was genuinely *good* at politics, and her growing power base had exposed her to a lot of Mid-Rim world politics in particular, her view had still been far narrower than she’d realized. Within the Senate, she’d mostly been dealing with other worlds, or collections of worlds, that had decently strong voices. Discovering how so many of the Outer Rim, and less fortunate Mid-Rim worlds, viewed the Republic had been a heavy blow to her worldview. Made worse by the fact those worlds had completely legitimate reasons *why* they held those views. It hadn’t been pleasant for the senator, but it had likely been a revelation she’d badly needed if she wanted to make effective change or attempt to prolong the current relative peace.

Others present, such as a Shaak Ti and the majority of Padmé’s Handmaidens, were less moved by the fact that the Halla sector capital had, just hours before, signed their shift of allegiance from the Republic to the League of Free Stars. Shaak Ti didn’t really see it as an issue either, viewing it simply as a peaceful people doing what was best for themselves to retain that peace. She might regret that the Republic she and her Order were tied to had failed the people here, but she was too pragmatic to view the Republic through the rose-tinted lenses some Jedi were prone to. The Handmaidens, meanwhile, were more concerned how it would affect their and Naboo’s own position. They were, every one of them, honestly better at the cutthroat parts of politics than Padmé was, even if they lacked the raw charisma that made their boss the better choice for the role of senator.

Izuku was the one to speak up after the nods of agreement. Aayla’s comment might have been more a general statement than a true question, but he was still the appropriate one to answer. Something he did with a shrug.

“It will cause a splash, but it’s within the letter of the existing agreements. The fact that virtually all of the worlds joining us, even Bimmisaari, are considered remote and of little practical

value to the Republic, will offset a lot of the issues. At least hopefully. Even our total number of new worlds, when the list eventually comes out, shouldn't cause *too* much of panic, since the vast majority of those shifting into the League are unaligned worlds, not Republic worlds."

Padmé stirred at that comment, voice unhappy but resigned as she spoke up.

"There are still over sixty worlds that have some measure of Republic membership involved in the shift. With the grumblings of the so-called 'Separatist' movement in the Senate, that's not going to go unnoticed. It may even enflame the situation."

Izuku nodded, but it was Shaak Ti who actually spoke up, voice serene.

"Perhaps. That movement, however, is likely inevitable, as you well know. You've seen the data that Master Tholme sent along, just as we have."

Everyone around the conference table grimaced at that particular reminder. To say the knowledge that *both* the loyalist and separatist factions were subtly arming to the teeth was alarming was an understatement. The details of *who* was doing the arming were even worse, as it made it painfully obvious that the public issues and official positions were masking an uglier push by parties that sought to profit off the conflict. To say a galactic-scale war would be good for KDY's bottom line, for example, was something of a hilarious understatement. It put a far darker outlook on the chances of attempting to divert the conflict, too.

Not that people like Padmé and the Jedi Order weren't going to try anyway, of course.

It was in the nature of both good people and idealists to attempt to prevent mass casualties. The Hutt Crusade had been one thing, the League having been able to spin a completely legitimate narrative of doing the 'right thing.' They'd been taking on an openly criminal, largely reviled, empire. Not to mention freeing slaves, rooting out galactic corruption that was being concealed by corporations using Hutt Space for their dirty deeds, and liberating oppressed populations. Add in the fact they'd fought a remarkably 'clean' war, with virtually all atrocities (excepting a few by rebel groups not directly associated with the League) being from the *Hutts' side*, not the League, and it had been possible to come out looking like the Good Guys overall. Despite the initial unhappiness and bellyaching by the more pacifistic members of the Republic, their observers had found nothing truly usable to paint the League as violent warmongers.

A galactic scale war, on the other hand, with a potential for *far* higher death tolls and fought at least partially for war profiteering? That was another thing entirely, something that various factions and power blocs would rightfully try to derail. Not that most of those in the room here and now expected it to work. Even Padmé grudgingly accepted that it might not be entirely possible to prevent a conflict, focusing instead of trying to mitigate its scale and the damage it might cause. That was, in fact, partially why she was okay helping with those sixty worlds leaving the Republic. Many of them were pressure points that could have been used to enflame the debate even if they'd stayed.

A hush fell over the group for a short bit, with it being a curious-sounding Dormé who finally broke the silence.

“You know if you spread this out over more time, you’d probably draw in far more worlds? Doing this in such a big chunk *will* cause a reaction in the Senate, demanding you redraw the treaties regarding the ‘soft border.’ If you let this happen over several years, instead, you could probably draw in two or three times as many worlds before the Senate acted.”

Several people shifted at that, uncomfortable with the more coldly calculated observation, but Izuku was completely unbothered by it. He shrugged, waving the idea off as he replied.

“We easily could, yes. If I thought we had the time, I might have even been inclined to do it that way. If for no other reason than the bolster the thin connections between Tythe and Hutt Space by directly seducing some of the worlds in the relevant sectors. I honestly can’t see the building conflict taking longer than two to three years to come to a head, though. I want the League’s borders properly built up and secured before that happens.”

Dormé pursed her lips, but nodded at the logic. Padmé tried to rally as best she could a moment later.

“I’m sure it won’t be bad enough to worry the League. Look at the Bimm! They are leaving specifically because they want no part in a fight, really. Even King Dendup’s position is an argument that many worlds will mostly want to stay out of the way.”

Aayla snorted at that.

“And you’re old mentor Senator Bonteri is evidence of the opposite, that many will seek more drastic solutions. It isn’t *only* the corrupt war profiteers driving the wedge in and hammering it deep.”

Padmé winced, unable to properly respond to that telling point. Before things could become acrimonious, Shaak Ti thankfully stepped in.

“Both of you have points, yet I think, among ourselves, there is little need to debate said points. None of us *want* the conflict, after all. Instead, I think it would be nice to take our last day here to tour more of the Bimm homeworld. They *are* known for their incredible works of art. It would be quite a shame to leave without seeing more of it.”

Thankfully, the other women at the table all agreed to that quite easily. Much to the relief of Izuku, who abruptly realized how badly out numbered he was by the gender split. Well, at least the Bimm weren’t the right body structure for this to turn into a shopping expedition. Thankfully, he could use the tour the group was slowing growing in enthusiasm for to review the results of their *political* tour, rather than being expected to give answers to loaded questions. There was going to be a lot yet to do once they got back to Tythe, and spending a bit of idle time mentally pre-sorting it could only help.

After all, there were now nearly three hundred worlds that were making moves and signing treaties with an eye toward joining the League...

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- Sleheyran – 290 Days into the Hutt Crusade-

High Admiral Lin, recently so titled in a command restructure that put her in charge of the entire League Navy, reporting only to Sovereign Midoriya, stared at the map of the region she was now in charge of taking. Gathering the Fleets for the assault on the Shield Worlds of Bootana Hutta hadn't been a quick endeavor. While their quiet and secret mapping of the other worlds inside the subsector had revealed just how tough of a nut many of the Hutt Throneworlds were going to be to crack, none of that would matter until they broke through the Hutts' Shield Worlds in the first place.

Their back channel lanes into Bootana Hutta, mapped for them by some Force using group she'd never even heard of before, weren't suitable for taking anything larger than a frigate through. They were more smuggling-appropriate routes rather than the sort of hyperlanes you could trust battlecruisers or battleships to. At best, with a Jedi or two involved in jump calculations, they could get some Volitions through those paths on a good day.

No, if they wanted to have a go at capturing Bootana Hutta and the Throneworlds within, they were going to need to directly assault Mulatan, Gos Hutta, and Sakifwanna. That last was less critical, the Elgit-M'Hanna Corridor wasn't suitable for moving large fleets through, even if was the main 'civilian' route in and out of the subsector. Mulatan and Gos Hutta were both critical, however. Each was set up as a 'Shield World' for the 'Garden of the Hutts,' where all the major clan Throneworlds resided. That meant the two systems were absolutely bristling with weapons systems, defensive fleets of actual Hutt-built warships, and ancient gravity well generators from before that technology was mostly lost. Bootana Hutta was a hard defensive point for a good reason, as *any* assault into the subsector would need to punch its way through at least one of those two Shield Worlds.

Rana was going to take both.

Gathering the forces to do it had been a painfully slow affair, compared to most of the war, and it was going to cost more than any other set of battles in the entire Crusade. Yet, as far as she was concerned, trying to ram their attack on the subsector in through a single vector would give the Hutts too much of a chance to dig in even farther. So they needed to break both systems.

Thankfully, she was now confident she had the ability to do so.

The last several months had let their building and refitting programs run wild. Despite a number of new Paladins being committed to defensive roles, she now had three dozen of the powerful battle cruisers to work with. On top of those, she *also* had fully half of the Battleship modified Lucrehulks they'd discovered at the Nimban yards assigned to her. Those twenty-five ships, even if they didn't quite fit the doctrine of the rest of the Fleet, might as well have been sent by a higher power to help in bashing their way through the Hutt Shield Worlds. Their immensely tough, yet minimally crewed, design made for a perfect vanguard to soak up the inevitable nasty surprises the Hutts would have waiting for them. Even if Rana lost every last one of them, so long as they shielded the Paladins long enough to crush the defenses of the two systems, she'd count it as coming out ahead.

Not that she intended to lose all of them, of course. The fact she could and still count it a win if they pulled through still stood as true despite her intentions, though.

“Alright. I think we’ve got the best plan we can make here, everyone. Both Fleets move out in five days. Make sure your crews are ready and in top form. It’s going to be rough, but once we’ve punched out these two systems, we’re golden to start grinding our way through the rest of the Hutt trash. Get to your ships and may the Force be with us all...”

There were quite a few who looked at her oddly at the comment about the Force. Maybe she’d been spending too much time around the various Force users in the fleet? Eh, even if she didn’t have much sensitivity herself, she wasn’t about to deny the Force existed after the things she’d seen so far during the Crusade. So she considered it an acceptable way to kick things off, and she had to admit it really had quite a bit more *gravitas* to it than ‘Good Luck.’

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-Hidden Laboratory – Muunilinst -

Celeste was pleased. At least as much so as she could be while standing in a ruined lab heavy with the Dark Side. It had taken her months, but she’d finally found something that revealed more of the mystery that was Hego Damask II. Specifically, after a *lot* of winnowing through his old holdings and several clandestine visits, she had discovered a laboratory on the island of Aborah, in the Western Sea of Muunilinst. The lab had been well-hidden in the lava tubes of an inactive volcano, connected to a mansion belonging to the Damask clan.

Someone had, unfortunately, been through the facility and stripped it of *directly* incriminating evidence. What whoever that had been *hadn’t* been able to do was quiet the Force in this place. The Dark Side lay *thick* in the striped facilities, and Celeste was no novice with such things. Her entire purpose, all of her training since childhood, had been laser-focused on hunting down the Sith and their works. She knew not only how to detect such Dark Side presence, which had led her to the lab itself despite how well hidden it was, but also how to draw a certain amount of information from the echoes here.

Most of the echoes were of pain, of course.

Such was to be expected of what had clearly been a research laboratory of a Sith Lord. Such cruel entities were not given to gentle experimentation, but to brute torture that produced results mostly by forcing them, rather than properly understanding the Force. It was *unpleasant* to experience those echoes, to say the least. Yet, it had also been enlightening, as the echoes had come with faces and a name.

Hego Damask II either had been, or possibly still was, Darth Plagueis.

Personally, she suspected at this point that Damask was truly dead, and that she would be chasing the trail of possible apprentices, rather than the man himself. Yet that hadn’t yet been confirmed, so she would act on both possibilities until she could say one way or another. Either way, it was a major step forward. She knew the name, both the civilian mask and the true identity, of a *recent* Sith Lord. It was only a matter of time now, before she found more links in this chain and followed it to its end...

Chapter 112: An Unexpected Offer

- Tyche Central – 310 Days into the Hutt Crusade-

Izuku was pleased as he looked over the results of the attacks on the Hutt Shield Worlds of Mulatan and Gos Hutta. Yes, the casualty figures and ship losses from the two battles were by far and away the worst of the war. For the first time, they'd actually lost a trio of Paladins, and five more had been damaged enough to be forced back to shipyards for repair. They'd lost 12 of the Battleship-refit Lucrehulks too, though those were far less important, and had done an incredibly good job of soaking damage for the Paladins. Combined with the number of smaller ships lost, it was the equivalent of an entire Core World peacetime fleet being destroyed. Not somewhere like Kuat or Corellia of course, but the average Core World defense fleet, at least.

Yet it was still cheap for the price paid.

Those Shield Worlds had been upgraded time and again over the course of a good 20,000 years. Entirely aside from their own ships and static defenses, the Hutts had managed to hit the assaulting fleets with *multiple* old superweapons that had been mothballed into defensive hard points in the past and brought back online during the Crusade. Yet their own tricks, including bombardment by extremely expensive extended-range missiles fired from far outside the usual ranges to help strip defenses, had still won the day. Arguably the two toughest systems to crack in the entirety of Hutt Space had been taken, the considerable Hutt Fleets defending the two Shield Worlds shattered. Bootana Hutta in general was now open season, even if every world inside was likely to be its own tough morsel to chew on.

It was just as he was closing out the overview of the battle that a quiet knock came on the door of his personal quarters. He immediately keyed the opening command, having been awaiting just that knock, and having already sent Aayla and Zavra to have fun sparring with each other. Padmé and Sabé entered a moment later, the pair having asked for this private meeting. After quick, friendly greetings were exchanged...the pair seemed to stall out. Rather, Padmé did, blushing lightly, even as Sabé looked a bit exasperated. Finally, it was Sabé who broke the slightly awkward silence.

"Oh, for fuck's sake, this is ridiculous! Izuku, Padmé and I *both* want you to get into our panties. Even better if we get to have fun with Aayla, Shaak, Zavra and Mei in the process. The only reason we haven't is due to political concerns."

Izuku blinked, jaw dropping just a little bit at that...blunt statement. He hadn't been oblivious to their interest, of course. Nor to the reason why they hadn't followed through on aforementioned interest. The fact that it had grown from rather *strong* physical attraction to something more than that over time hadn't been lost on him either. Yet, he hadn't exactly expected either of them to just come out and say it. From the mortified expression and deep blush on Padmé's face, she hadn't intended to be *quite* that blunt with this conversation either. Sabé apparently wasn't done being blunt, either.

"I mean, you should have seen how hard Padmé came after getting stuck in one of Aayla's chastity belts for a few days back on Kashyy—"

Padmé made a distressed noise as she lunged for Sabé, attempting to silence her with hands over her mouth...or perhaps around her neck, it was a bit hard to tell as Sabé dodged and continued.

“—the point is, we’re really interested in a relationship, but not sure how to...oh stop that or I’ll spank your bare ass for Izuku’s viewing pleasure.”

A beat-red Padmé was still struggling, but Sabé had taken advantage of Padmé’s desperation and poor form to get her into a hold. She’d continued to squirm...right up until Sabé’s threat seemed to cause her brain to crash. To Izuku’s empathic senses, she was frozen in a mix of mortified horror at the idea...and extreme arousal at the exact same thought. The conflict was fascinatingly distracting, enough so that he almost missed Sabé continuing.

“Right. We’re not quite sure how to make it all work, but we have...well...*part* of a plan? Maybe? If you’re even interested...”

It was Sabé’s turn to look just a bit uncertain, and Izuku considered the situation for a moment. Obviously, this was what they’d wanted to talk about, and it wasn’t as if he’d been oblivious to the building feelings between himself, Aayla, and the two women from Naboo. Their friendship went clear back to that first ‘forced’ vacation Aayla had suckered then-queen Amidala into, and their months together since the Crusade started had only brought them closer. In some ways, their existing relationship was honestly still a bit deeper than he had with Shaak Ti, having spent a bit less total time around his newest lover than he had this pair.

Aayla, he was pretty sure, had been angling to at least have some ‘fun’ with them since that weekend on Naboo. Izuku himself had to admit that he wasn’t against it, either, even if the odd situation he was in with so many women seeming content to share a relationship still weirded his sensibilities out from time to time. Mei had felt almost natural to include, his close friendship with her easily morphing into more when she was all he had left from home. Zavra had been weirder, but the logic behind the unique situation with her was such that he hadn’t been able to deny the idea of including her being sensible. Shaak Ti had genuinely taken him off guard, but Aayla had *very obviously* wanted to include her, and he’d grown to like the Jedi.

Somehow, he’d found himself in a harem anime. More accurately, a harem hentai, a part of his brain insisted on noting. He still wasn’t quite sure *how*, other than suspecting it was somehow Aayla’s fault. It had crept up on him in a way that *somehow* felt like it made sense, despite objectively being very odd when he took a mental step back to wonder how he got here. It had also, he was pretty sure, destroyed his sense of normality in ways that not even being dropped into another universe with casual space travel on tap had done. So much so that the idea of including Padmé and Sabé into his already odd relationship left him only with a feeling of ‘well, obviously that’s going to happen and is a great idea,’ instead of the uncertainty he really felt it ought to. Pushing past the feeling of surreality that came with that realization, he slowly nodded in Sabé and Padmé’s direction. Perhaps it was time for some bluntness of his own to see where this goes?

“I admit, I’m still not quite sure how you two got so interested, but I admit the feeling is mutual. Aayla is all for it, Zavra gets a dreamy look and mutters about ‘twin fantasies’ whenever you’re brought up, Mei thinks having more ‘kinky sex friends’ is fun, and Shaak Ti seems okay with

things, at least. I was leaving all of that be, however, as I understand the awkward position the two of you are in...and I don't mean the way that you're currently holding your boss."

Considering the *suggestive* pose that had resulted in the hold Sabé was using, with one of her legs firmly between Padmé's thighs and the senator's arms held behind her, his comment caused Padmé's nuclear blush to return in full force. Even Sabé developed a light dusting of pink at the comment, but she bulldozed right through it, tone teasing as she replied.

"Oh, we *really* got interested when we accidentally spied on your absolutely railing Zavra for what I think was the first time? After the two of you sparred back on the Knight Errant? It was *super* hot."

Izuku blinked, then made an 'ah-ha' noise unconsciously as a few things clicked into place. He'd *wondered* why the pair had avoided him and went on a spree of 'questioning his crew' back then. Aayla had seemed to figure something out after a few days, so perhaps she'd already made the connection? Blinking, he realized he was blushing a tiny bit himself, even if most of it was suppressed by the satisfaction of solving a mystery. Clearing his throat, he pushed down the blush.

"Ah. I suppose that makes some sense. You...uh...were saying something about a plan, though?"

Sabé nodded and let Padmé go. The senator sort of *flopped* back into her own chair, seeming to have lost the will to brutally murder her minion. Possibly due to Izuku admitting his own interest?

"Padmé *can't* be seen to be involved with you, in even a casual fling sense. Not while she's still a senator, at least. It would radically weaken, possibly even outright destroy, any belief in her ability to be neutral in regards to the League. You and I might know better, that she's more stubborn than a tusk-cat when it comes to her beliefs, but the Senate would never believe it."

While Izuku wasn't quite sure what a tusk-cat was, the sentiment was obvious from context, and entirely accurate. Padmé wasn't the type to be moved by anyone or anything when she felt she was doing the right thing. The only way to shift her stance on anything was to prove she didn't have all the information, such as what she'd learned about the opinions of the Republic in the Outer Rim and less influential Mid-Rim worlds. Sadly, Sabé was also right about the odds of the average person believing that. For that matter, even if someone in the Senate *did* believe she couldn't be so easily swayed, it still wouldn't prevent them from slinging mud for their own benefit anyway.

Nodding to acknowledge he understood the problem, Izuku gestured for Sabé to go on, curious where she was going with this. *He* certainly didn't see any real solution to the problem beyond waiting it out. Even that possibility assumed that Padmé would choose to leave the Senate when her current term was up, rather than seeking reappointment. Which wasn't at all a given, to his thinking. She wouldn't have agreed to *become* a senator, if she hadn't felt she could make a difference. Worse, she now had enough of a power base to argue that she realistically *could*. Her power bloc wasn't huge, but it was much larger than should have been possible for a senator so earlier in her career to form around herself.

“The thing is...we eventually realized, when brainstorming solutions, that such *isn't* the case for *me*. Many in the Senate *already* think she uses her Handmaidens as honeypots to manipulate others. If they caught a hint of *me* slipping in and out of your bed, or something similar, they would almost certainly assume that Padmé is using me to render you more...pliable. Idiocy, of course, but misogyny is surprisingly strong in the Republic Senate. You'd think, with the number of powerful female senators and rulers around, that such wouldn't be the case. But somehow it still is, and we've even taken occasional advantage of that fact before.”

Izuku blinked. That was...not a direction he'd thought the conversation would go? It *was* true that he'd been surprised to see misogyny was still a thing in a 20,000+ year-old star faring society. Yet, while it wasn't *as* common as it had been on Earth, he'd still run into far more of it than he would have expected. That such things crept into even the halls of power and influenced thought processes there shouldn't surprise him, even if it did a little bit.

Once he got past that momentary mental whiplash, he pursed his lips as he started to get the general thrust of their idea. Or, more likely he thought, Sabé's idea that she'd somehow gotten Padmé to go along with. If people assumed Sabé was acting on orders to 'incentivize' him, and Sabé was Padmé's *body double*, one accurate enough via body sculpting that she could legitimately fool even security software meant to recognize faces...

“You could both easily pretend to be *you*, so long as you weren't both caught at the same time. More, instead of being a risk to your powerbase, it would be more likely to *enhance* it if you do get caught. After all, they would think you had managed to get leverage on the Sovereign of the League of Free Stars, or at least an inside source.”

Sabé was nodding enthusiastically, even as Padmé was blushing again at their suggestion being put out into the open.

“Yes! I mean, it wouldn't be perfect. I wouldn't get to be around to watch you ravish Padmé, or maybe see her squirm as you left her tied up and had fun with me and Aayla while she was forced to watch! But it would be *something*...and we really kinda want there to be something? I mean, it could be awkward, and maybe even risky a little, but otherwise...”

Sabé trailed off and Izuku almost flinched at the emotions abruptly wafting off both women. Uncertainty, fear of loss, frustration. Padmé had *years* left before her term was up, assuming she did leave the Senate even after her first term there was over. It was pretty obvious, based on what he was feeling, that the duo were afraid of what that would mean if they just...waited. Afraid that he might lose interest, that a door they both very much wanted to open would be shut by the time they could act more overtly. Personally, Izuku didn't think that would be the case, but he couldn't promise that.

People could change, *did* change, over that much time. It could be that his relationships with Aayla, Mei, Zavra and Shaak solidified to the point they didn't want to risk adding another element, let alone a high-profile one with strings potentially attached. Possibly more likely, he thought, absences from each others' presence might cause the embers of interest to snuff out over time. Though, if that were going to happen, the fact that they'd been separated for months at a time already likely would have done it. Given her status as an Ambassador, it would be unlikely Padmé

would be separated from their group for the length of time needed for feelings to fully cool, and where Padmé went, so to did Sabé, as a general rule. Sabé was still primarily a bodyguard and body double, where the other handmaidens now filled other roles that took them away from time to time.

On the one hand, bits of this felt wrong. Naughty too, in a way that he was all-to-familiar with from some of the fun times with Aayla, but also a *little* wrong in that they would be outright hiding their relationship with misdirection. On the *other* hand...he was effectively still doing the same thing with Aayla, even if the cover there was threadbare at best, and mostly unintentional at this point. They no longer really cared what the Jedi Order had to say about their relationship. Frankly, the only reason they hadn't publicly held a joining ceremony of some sort to formalize things was the same sort of political complexity that Padmé and Sabé were dealing with. That there was no reason to 'rock the boat,' so to speak, when there were a number of other issues straining their relationship with the Jedi Order and Republic.

Aayla and Izuku knew what they were to each other. They couldn't *not* know, given how they were bonded.

They didn't feel a *need* to formalize that, when doing so could do nothing but harm.

All of which meant that what the pair across from him were presenting as a plan wasn't all that different than his relationship with Aayla had been almost from the start, didn't it? The subterfuge was a bit more *calculated*, which is probably what made it stand out in comparison, but it wasn't really significantly *different*. Nodding slowly, he spoke after the long few seconds of pause it had taken him to work through all of that.

"I can see it working, *possibly*. It's something everyone involved would have to agree to, though. Why don't the two of you join us for a casual dinner tomorrow night? I'll cook my best attempt at my mother's Katsudon, which will lure Mei over from her personal station, and we can all talk this out together. Assuming we can all agree on how it would work, I can personally say I'd be okay with giving things a try. I *do* find the two of you attractive and interesting, even if I admit I'm still puzzled how well such an...unusual...relationship seems to be working out so far."

Sabé's smile was huge at his agreement, and even Padmé was giving him a very hopeful look through her blushing. Yes, Izuku decided, this might just be worth trying to make work. Though he was pretty sure he was going to have to put his foot down about picking up any *more* entries into their group if it did work out. It was getting a little unwieldy, given all the complications involved and how busy everyone in the relationship was. Of course, that was probably part of the reason it worked *at all*, as well.

Still, he was pretty sure there was a balance to be found before even the Force thought he was being greedy...

... ..

"Huh, this is actually really good."

Izuku beamed at Sabé's comment, his smile only growing as Padmé seconded it a moment later.

“Katsudon was my favorite food back on my homeworld. It’s a regional dish even there, so it took me years to find good enough replacements to come at least *close* to duplicating my mother’s recipe.”

Aayla nodded at that, from where she was enjoying her own serving with gusto, putting in her own two credits between bites.

“I can attest to that. Izuku tried, and he’s hardly a bad cook, but some of the early attempts were...dubious. He had a lot of trouble duplicating the broth stock used for it, something he called ‘dashi,’ I think?”

Izuku nodded, indicating she’d gotten it right.

“Yeah. Dashi is, itself, made from a mix of kombu, a type of edible kelp, and fermented fish that were common around the island I was born on. It took dozens of attempts to get a decent substitute, and that in turn was only one of several things that needed replacement. A few things I was able to surprisingly find one-for-one. Still amazes me that the galaxy has chicken, given they originated on my homeworld, to the best of my knowledge.”

Padmé and Sabé blinked at that, with Padmé voicing their joint surprise.

“Really? So far as I know, no one knows where chickens are from, they are so common. Isn’t your world in the unknown regions? How in the galaxy...”

Izuku had the decency to look sheepish.

“That’s not...*quite*...accurate. The reality of where Mei and I are from is a little more complicated than that. We usually claim the ‘unknown regions’ because it’s honestly *more* believable than the truth, while still getting the general idea of how thoroughly we are outsiders to most of the galaxy. Still, that’s a story for another time, given it would derail what we *intended* to talk about pretty thoroughly.”

The visiting pair looked *intensely* curious, but the reminder of what they’d actually come to discuss tonight also brought a blush to Padmé’s face. Something which was enough to get things back on track as an amused-yet-serene Shaak Ti spoke into the conversational gap that reaction created.

“Yes, I do think we should get on to the obvious. As inevitable as it clearly was that the two of you would join us, do you believe you will be comfortable living a double life, as it were? I myself took a fair bit of time to evaluate exploring my own addition, even taking some time away on Ossus to meditate and seek wise council.”

Even Sabé blushed lightly at Shaak’s casual mention of inevitability, the Togrutan having managed a teasing lilt to the words despite her serenity. Still, she predictably rallied faster than Padmé could manage. At least when it came to this sort of thing, she was pretty obviously the more confident and outgoing of the pair.

“Yes. We already talked it over and, frankly speaking, *any* sort of relationship while Padmé is senator is one we would want to keep low-key anyway. If not because of the numerous political angles involved, then because ending up as a target of the paparazzi and slush news

sensationalists would be hard on both parties, no matter who they were. The fact there's more reason to keep it quiet with Izuku specifically is really more a matter of degree than concept."

Shaak nodded, but narrowed her eyes as she noted Sabé had only answered on *Padmé's* behalf.

"That explains the Senator having thought this through for herself, but not you. You could have a more normal relationship, if you wanted."

Surprisingly, it was *Mei*, of all people, who snorted at that and spoke up from where she'd been doodling blueprints on a napkin.

"She looks *identical* to her boss, at least with their clothes on. If she started a relationship without having some sort of excuse, the idiots would just use pictures of her to pretend Xena is having fun with someone on the sly."

That got more than one person around the table to blink at Mei. Partly because it was sort of an obvious observation in hindsight, but mostly because Mei wasn't normally the one to pick up social details like that. Nor to actually pay attention at all when having discussions like this in general. More curious than most and sitting right next to the pinkette, Zavra leaned over Mei's shoulder and looked at the blueprint she'd been doodling...then made an amused noise at what she saw.

"You're paying attention because you're planning all the kinky ways to have fun at long distance, aren't you? I have to say, that's a somewhat inspired reuse of some of my implants, and the streamlined designed for your portal chastity belt looks fun."

Mei beamed excitedly at Zavra's approval, even as realization and bemused acceptance settled on Izuku, Aayla, and Shaak Ti's faces. Sabé looked startled...and Padmé was blushing all the way down to the neckline of her collar, if not farther. Lips twitching, Izuku tried to get the discussion back on track.

"Well, if Sabé is sure for *herself* as well as for Padmé, the real question comes from everyone else, I think. Mei's clearly alright with this if she's already planning *experiments*. What does everyone else think?"

Zavra, possibly predictably, was the first to pipe up.

"Can we require they wear some of Mei's gear to keep them honest while away? I mean, I'm happy either way, but it would be *super hot*."

Padmé somehow managed to blush even deeper, while making a choking noise. Aayla didn't help with her own response.

"Hmm, that *does* sound fun. It's almost traditional, too. I mean, I first met Izuku that way, Mei made her portal belt not long after joining us, and Zavra came pre-installed with control

chips that do some of the same things. Really, only Shaak has missed out. We could include her too, to make it a proper tradition."

Even Sabé was a *little* wide-eyed, with a light blush on her cheeks, as Shaak's amused voice added to the fire.

"Hmmm, I don't see a problem with it, really. It could be a fun experiment, so long as safe guidelines are established. I wouldn't want to be caught distracted in combat, though even there it might make for an interesting control exercise?"

Taking pity on poor Padmé, who looked like she was about to discover spontaneous human combustion, Izuku tried to keep the amusement out of his voice as he cut off the joke. Well, probably only *mostly* joke, given some of those involved.

"I think we can save details like that for later, even if Padmé *is* radiating a lot of interest in a room with a bunch of Force sensitives." He couldn't resist, really he couldn't. "For now, I think we can settle for it being safe to say that everyone is onboard with this plan, yes?"

There were affirmatives all around, even from Padmé, managing to get her confirmation out past her embarrassment. Clapping his hands together, Izuku rose and headed for the small kitchen attached to their shared quarters aboard the station.

"Right! I made a new attempt as some wagashi for dessert! I tried a bunch of different fruits to see what would work best! We can sample some while we talk details about how to make this all work out..."

Chapter 113: Clandestine Rendezvous

- Tythe Central – 312 Days into the Hutt Crusade-

Despite their agreement to keep things out of sight in the long run, as well as Sabé and Padmé's clear interest in the *intimate* bits of a relationship with him, Izuku was intent on doing things at least partially 'right' while he had the opportunity. He had pointed out, rightfully, that the pair of them were currently guests of his while they performed their ambassadorial duties. As the first inaugural meeting of the new legislature of the League was upcoming in a few weeks, something that Padmé would have been called on to attend anyway, she and parts of her retinue had planned to stay through that event from the start.

Padmé, in her position as senator, had been doing her own politicking along their route, and all of her handmaidens but Sabé had actually been sent away after Bimmisaari. Dormé and Cordé, being her more politically-focused pair of minions, had been sent back to the Capital to begin prep work for when Padmé herself returned. Eirtaé, in the meantime, had been sent to Naboo, with the intention of briefing Queen Réillata on everything that had transpired. A

number of new deals had been made for Naboo, not just the League, along the way, and someone needed to properly present them for royal approval.

Not, of course, that there was any risk of *disapproval*. Réillata and Padmé's politics were quite well aligned. If anything, Réillata was a bit more pragmatic and a bit less idealistic than Padmé, perfectly willing to add to her predecessor's defense reforms in a way that saw them enhanced considerably. More than Padmé herself was all that happy about, in fact. Though with Naboo being Naboo, its defenses were still focused on non-lethal options as much as possible.

None of which was relevant, really, except for the minor, yet critical detail that this left Sabé and Padmé as the *only* official representatives of the Republic still present. The crew of their ship and fighter escorts were still present, but not part of their diplomatic group, and thus not close enough to notice anything odd going on with their boss. Izuku had, as a result, pointed out that many traditional 'date' ideas could quite easily be covered up as the Sovereign simply hosting the Ambassador.

It was a cover that *might* have held up even elsewhere in the galaxy. Here on Tythe Central, or down on Tythe itself, where Izuku's people had so much control over information flow? Here it would hold up to virtually any scrutiny. Doubly so since the visiting pair had *already* been known to engage in some social activities with Izuku and Aayla, such as their original visit to The Delve.

Thus it was that Izuku had arranged a pair of dates with the two women, the first of which was about to get underway as he held out his arm to Padmé in a courtly gesture as she stepped out of an aircar. Her head was practically on a swivel as she looked around at their surroundings, causing his lips to quirk into a smile.

"I take it you haven't had a chance to visit any of the other Wards yet? Aside from the day we took you to the Sea of Stars and The Delve, at least."

Padmé shook her head, even as she accepted the offered arm.

"No. I admit, we did look into them when we first arrived, and some of the others had spare moments to go exploring, but I never had the chance."

Smiling at accidentally making the right choice, at least possibly, Izuku gestured around them.

"While most of the Wards are styled after interesting architecture of various worlds, *this* Ward is the only one I and Mei had a specific hand in. The hodgepodge of architecture here is a fusion of traditional styles from our home region of our homeworld. Not just Japan, the island we are both from, but with subsections of the Ward that show styles from greater Asia, a region that took up a good chunk of one hemisphere of our world. I can hardly be called any sort of expert, but I thought you might like to see the best replications we could manage of some

famous structures. Down the street there, for example, you can see a replication of Osaka Castle. Inside is an art museum, gardens, and meditation rooms.”

Padmé was very obviously enthralled as Izuku got them moving. They wouldn’t be able to visit more than a few of the reproductions, but somehow he knew that he’d chosen correctly in giving Padmé this little secondhand peak of where he’d come from. They weren’t anything remotely like perfect reproductions, of course, but the bones were similar enough, and he thought he could do a decent job of telling her the history behind at least a few of the originals. There were some significant advantages to enhanced memory, and he’s had that much from the age of four. Who knew mandatory history classes would eventually prove legitimately useful...

... ..

- Tythe Surface – 315 Days into the Hutt Crusade-

“Wooooohooooo!”

Izuku’s grin was fit to split his face as he followed after Sabé whooping form, rocketing across the open space that still dominated much of Tythe’s reclaimed land. The world had come a long way toward recovery, but flora and fauna was still fairly basic, and neither got in the way of the high-powered swoop bikes they were riding, fully opening up the throttle over the flat plains they were crossing. He was letting Sabé set the pace, following after her with his senses cranked up and ready to intervene if she lost control.

Not that he was expecting she was going to.

He’d realized long ago that Sabé was the more adventurous soul between her and Padmé. Padmé was unquestionably *capable*. A decent pilot, a solid markswomen, and generally possessed of many of the skills required for a galactic adventurer. What she lacked, that Sabé had in spades, was a hidden adrenaline junkie side. Izuku had realized the presence of that side of Sabé and sneakily spun a ‘tour of the industrial facilities on Tythe,’ as a chance to let loose with a pair of swoops. Sabé had been startled by the date plan when it had been sprung on her, but had quickly grown enthusiastic once she realized what she was being given a chance to do. Something she was very clearly enjoying whole-heartedly now.

He had a somewhat more romantic setup planned for later, in the form of a hidden picnic under the stars. But for now he chased after the thrill-seeking handmaiden as she indulged in a rare chance to cut loose...

... ..

-Lime/Lemon/Ecchi content makes up the rest of this chapter. Skip to next chapter entirely if that’s not your thing-

- Tythe Central – 320 Days into the Hutt Crusade -

There was something to be said about being the boss, a bit of wisdom Izuku noted for very much not the first time. Sure, there were a ton of annoyances that came with that status, but there were some definite perks, too. Such as, in this case, where Izuku had booked out one of the Delve

levels completely, with no employee oversight aside from a fresh droid whose security had been gone over with a fine-toothed comb. With no chance of any recordings from their Delve getting out by any means, one previous, entirely platonic run of a Delve on record from the past, and the inclusion of plenty of people with Shaak Ti, Zavra, Aayla, and Mei along? Well, under those circumstances, and with assistance from Mei who had designed most of the Delve's hardware from the start, it was entirely possible to have a group date without risking anyone being the wiser.

As for what they were doing? Izuku had allowed Aayla to set up the scenario, knowing full well that she wouldn't be able to resist the temptation of pushing boundaries that were no longer as *firm* as they had been before. The result, given several days and access to the combination of Mei and Zavra to prepare, had been an entirely new production that was decidedly on the *adult* side of the spectrum. Instead of a 'dungeon crawl,' Aayla, Mei, and Zavra had worked together to create a 'puzzle' dungeon. Of course, the 'puzzles' were all geared for, as Aayla primly put it, 'Group Bonding Activities.'

The very first puzzle room had required everyone to not only be naked before it would let them continue, but to 'lock up' their clothes, with individual pieces to be returned only if they successfully completed a certain number of puzzles. Predictably, this had resulted in a blushing Padmé...but perhaps equally predictable she'd gone along with it once it was clear that everyone else was willing to do so. The result of her and Sabé naked, side by side, had ended up highlighting an interesting point that Izuku hadn't considered previously.

Sabé had undergone sufficient bio-sculpt, of high enough quality, that she could pass a *full body visual scan*, without giving away the difference between her and Padmé. To Izuku, Shaak Ti, Zavra and Aayla, of course, the two were easily told apart by their Force Signatures, which was quite possibly why he hadn't ever really, *fully* processed just how similar they were. Mei, similarly, had her Quirk to lean on. Ever since arriving in this reality, Mei's already insane visual acuity had only spiked higher and expanded in capability. To the point that she could not only see well beyond the usual human visual spectrum, but when she'd started studying Force Influenced objects like Holocrons and Kyber Crystals, she'd actually gained a way to *visualize* the Force.

That little detail had pointed to the fact that she could almost certainly learn to *use* the Force if she wanted, substituting her ability to see it react to her efforts for traditional Force Sensitivity. She'd declined the sort of intense training required to do so, though. Instead, she'd only bothered to learn to do a few basic, passive things like identifying Force Sensitive people and Force influence on objects. Certain, recent realizations about how Izuku and Aayla's level of connection to the Force was likely to extend their lifespans had caused them to tally 'harass Mei into learning properly' as a thing to do for the future. For now, however, the relevant point was that Mei could *also* tell the difference between Sabé and Padmé.

Standing nude, side by side, and without any of the little makeup and hairstyle tricks they normally used for differentiation when Sabé wasn't actively playing decoy? Any more ordinary soul than those present would have been *hard pressed* to tell them apart. Not just in the face, but in every last detail down to the shape and size of nipples and the contours of their intimate bits. As they all looked the pair over, Zavra in particular couldn't help but whistle, impressed.

“Damn, you two really are identical. Possibly actually *more* so than the average set of identical twins. Even Empress Acina would have been impressed by the level of detail you were able to achieve. Bio-sculpt of this level would *absolutely* have required Sith Alchemy from her, not just traditional surgeries. Got to say that biomed science, at least the cosmetic stuff, has come quite a way forward compared to a lot of other tech I’ve seen since waking up. Were there any side effects?”

Padmé was struggling to get her blush fully under control, but Sabé only preened at the attention, and happily answered Zavra’s question.

“Sort of! Part of the secret to how we got *this* identical is that I wasn’t the only one to go under the scalpel. When we did the initial matching, Padmé and I sat down with an advanced medical droid at a facility we can’t speak about and went over our deep scans to decide which direction we wanted each change that would have side effects to go. Not the minor facial reconstruction and such, this gorgeous face is all natural Padmé! But modifications to *sensitive bits* was always going to have some minor side effects.

Sabé grinned as she smoothly slid behind her boss and cupped her boobs with both hands, giving a firm squeeze that caused Padmé to eep.

“Padmé had the potential for more sensitive nipples, while I had the potential for bigger tits. I had a larger clit with more nerve endings, while she had a more symmetrical set of lower lips. That sort of thing. Of course, being horny teenagers at the time the surgeries and minor gene edits were first done, we picked to go in the direction of most sensitivity and best aesthetic looks. Since they were using cloned tissue, grafts, and gene edits, rather than cruder methods, the result was pretty awesome in the bedroom. Though *internally* were still have some slightly different hot spots you’ll have to put some effort into finding~.”

Surprisingly, Padmé’s blush seemed to have given up. Oh, she was still lightly flushed looking, but she it was no longer sporting the nuclear blush going most of the way down to her nipples she’d had before. Possibly, she’d just resigned herself to her fate. More likely, from what those with the Force were feeling from her, the situation and the fact Sabé had been rolling her boss’s nipples in her fingers while she explained had resulted in Padmé being turned on enough for her inhibitions to somewhat crumble. The fact that her eyes were darting between the other nude bodies present, with the longest hesitations being on Izuku’s half-erect cock, was also rather telling to where her state of mind had gone. Of course, the fact that Sabé winked at the rest of them when she pulled away from playing with Padmé’s tits, told them all that it hadn’t exactly been unintentional.

Aayla shook herself, clapped her hands, and pointed to the door farther into the puzzle dungeon that was now unlocked.

“Well, that is fascinating and I *will* be exploring both of your bodies eventually if I have my way! But for now, onward!”

Putting a deliberately provocative sway in her hips that got every eye following her, Aayla moved to and through the door into the next room. A grinning Zavra and eager Mei followed after, Shaak Ti trailing behind with twitching lips and calm steps. Izuku gestured their two newest

members on before him, and Sabé smirked, managing to sway her own hips to present a glorious view even as she towed Padmé after the others. Izuku chuckled...and enjoyed the view. He *had* let them go first for a reason beyond just curtesy, after all!

By the time Izuku joined the girls, they were all reading the ‘puzzle’ provided by the next room. A set of locks all around the door were present, one for each of them, with each lock looking *suspiciously* shaped. True to that suspicion, the ‘puzzle’ was labeled ‘Orgasmic Security,’ and required each of them to successfully ‘find the sensitive parts’ of each lock and ‘stimulate it into opening.’ All, of course, within a certain timeframe of each other.

Lips twitching as the girls argued over the best way to finger their way to victory, Izuku let them sort it out among themselves. Somehow, given the three girls behind the design of this ‘dungeon,’ he figured that the challenges would only escalate from here...

... ..

- The Wandering Fate – 325 Days into the Hutt Crusade –

Padmé whimpered helplessly, squirming in her bonds as a single lowly-thrumming vibrator, taped to her pussy, edged her mercilessly. That would have been torment enough, but it was really only the cherry on top as she lay, arms bound behind her back, directly below Sabé’s apex...as her best friend was getting thoroughly railed by the cock they’d both been dreaming of for months. The taste of Izuku’s cum, somehow fruity instead of salty in what she had to assume was Force Bullshit, lingered behind her gagged lips to emphasize exactly how she’d gotten into this situation.

They only had a bare fistful of days left before she and Sabé had to return to the Capital, after which they’d have to more fully commit to the charade that only Sabé was ‘entertaining’ Master Izuku. In light of that, and after several dates both separately and together, they’d both approached their new boyfriend/lover with the desire for their first time to happen before they left. A first time they’d requested to have *together*. The pair of them had been on-and-off lovers for years, and with the nature of the relationship they were joining, somehow it just felt *right* to them, to take that next step at the same time.

Izuku had been slightly surprised, but hardly against it, and had easily arranged a means to vanish for a couple of days. *Officially*, he and Aayla were taking her and Sabé on a tour of some remote R and D facilities. In actuality, that had only been an excuse to get them both aboard their personal ship, *The Wandering Fate*, for a day of travel alone. They really were heading toward a secure system, on a well patrolled route, so the lack of an escort wouldn’t make anyone even blink particularly hard.

So far, the trip had been amazing. Izuku had insisted on cooking again so they’d ‘have energy,’ and had succeeded in setting the mood nicely. Aayla had retreated to piloting afterward, which was a *slight* disappointment in some ways, but better in others. Their first time with Izuku would be alone, and Aayla had teasingly promised to join them ‘on the way back.’ The best of both worlds, really. Padmé, for one, was looking forward to that...though *right now* she was looking forward to actually getting to cum more!

She *probably* should have been suspicious when, after a joint strip tease, Sabé had let her at Izuku's cock first, pressing her own breasts into Padmé's back even as Padmé herself knelt between Izuku's legs and put their 'practice' performing blowjobs on toys to good use. The real thing had been intimidating, neither she nor Sabé having been old enough to fool around with boys before Padmé first becoming Queen made such things *complicated*. Thankfully, Izuku had been patient, Sabé encouraging, and their practice with some of their more realistic toys a solid place to start. She'd been quite pleased at drawing moans out of Izuku, and even more pleased when she managed to swallow most of his cum!

Sabé, sexy traitor that she was, had taken her happy distraction at her accomplishment as a chance to handcuff her.

She must have sneakily asked Aayla where all the toys were kept, too, since she'd been entirely too confident in retrieving the rest of Padmé's current bindings. An additional binder for her elbows, a spreader bar for her ankles, a ring-gag to 'keep her pretty mouth busy,' and the lone vibrator currently taped to her mons, just above her clit, set teasingly on low. Enough vibration to torment her and keep her moaning, but not nearly enough to actually take her over the edge.

Izuku, undoubtably able to feel just how hot the situation was making her, had aided and abetted her handmaiden, resulting in their current position. Namely, with Sabé pussy being directly over Padmé's face, Izuku's knees just behind and to the sides of her head, as he pounded her best friend doggystyle. Padmé had never been more simultaneously turned on and jealous in her entire life! Triply so since Sabé had already cum twice and Izuku was still...

With one final thrust that went extra deep, clapping loudly against Sabé's cheeks and slapping his balls against her bits, Izuku audibly groaned and convulsed. The sight of him filling her handmaiden up, combined with the sound of Sabé half-raggedly shouting her *third* orgasm of the night, was *almost* enough to make Padmé cum despite her lack of serious stimulation. *Fuck* that was hot! She whimpered again in a mix of wild arousal and frustration as Izuku slowly pulled out and cum oozed from Sabé's pussy, a small amount of it falling to splatter over Padmé's nose.

For a moment, she thought her wobbling friend would fall on her as her own orgasm took its toll, only to blink and muffle-giggle as an unexpected use of the Force had Sabé's body floating up and away. Sabé landed a few moments later on her back, still panting but adorably wide-eyed at her brief, unexpected flight. Then, Padmé felt a thrill of anticipation as Izuku's gaze turned to her with a smirk...and she realized his cock was still mostly-hard and practically slapping her in her face. A moment later, she found herself flipped by the same ethereal grasp that had lifted Sabé away, pulled up on her knees but with her arms still trapped behind her back. The new position brought her face to face with Izuku's glistening cock as he spoke.

"It would be a shame not to properly test that ring-gag, now wouldn't it? Besides, I'm sure you'll enjoy a taste of Sabé and I after being forced to watch us make the mix, hmmm?"

A shot of pure arousal arced through her at the idea, something Izuku clearly detected from his chuckle, causing her to blush a little despite everything they'd already done. Thankfully, he didn't comment on that, instead bringing her head to his cock even as his erection hardened back up to full mast. Moment's later, as he seamlessly threaded his cock through her gag's opening, she

was met with a complex explosion of flavor and smell. The same fruity undertones from his own cum, mixed with the familiar taste of Sabé, and combined with the heady musk from both of them as he pressed himself past her gag reflex and into her throat. He was gentle, and she'd managed it earlier on her own, but she still choked a bit as he entered her throat. Not that she had the slightest thought of protest as he pulled her nose flush to his flesh, balls pressed into her chin, and she went a bit dizzy with the intensity of his and Sabé's mixed smell.

He didn't stay there long, taking the time to pull out and thrust just a bare handful of times, impossibly seeming to get even larger and harder as he did. Then, he was pulling away, causing her to whimper for a moment...until she realized he was falling onto his back and using the Force to pull her over him. She barely managed to note that, somewhere along the line, he'd released the spreader bar on her ankles, before she was settled astride him. A gag-muffled gasp as his tip brushed her absolutely *sopping* entrance was followed by another as he reached down to rub for just a second at her magic button, vibe still buzzing away on low just above it.

"So close, huh? Well, I think we should push you over the edge the fun way, hmm?"

Her pleasure-addled mind didn't have enough time to process that before her position shifted slightly...and his hips came up to meet her even as *hers* went *down*. The natural consequence was his cock brutally spearing her pussy, her sex far too wet to give more than token resistance despite her inexperience. She was barely halfway down his cock when the single strongest orgasm of her life ripped through her body, sending white stars through her vision.

She must have completely blanked out of mental existence for long moments as she shuddered through that first climax of the night, for she blinked back in with his cock already fully hilted inside her and throbbing. She swore, in the part of her mind that was just barely functioning, that she could feel his heartbeat through it as he waited for her to come back from wherever her *soul* had just momentarily vacationed too. She belatedly noticed that he'd had time to disable the vibe...but hadn't removed it.

"Well, that was a good place to start! Now, let's see if we can one up it!"

Padmé barely had time for her eyes to widen before he'd flicked the vibrator back on, set to 'high' this time, and lifted her almost entirely off his cock. By the time he'd slammed her back down on it, she was too far gone again to do anything but moan...

... ..

- The Wandering Fate – 327 Days into the Hutt Crusade –

"You know, I was joking when I suggested we fit both of them for chastity belts and send them back to Coruscant that way. I didn't think they'd actually *go* for it."

Izuku snorted in amusement as Padmé did a surprisingly good job of *not* blushing or walking funny as she exited their private landing bay on Tythe Central, with her handmaiden dutifully trailing behind her. Of course, after the last couple of days, the only reason *neither* of them were limping was the fact that Izuku was pretty decent at Force Healing. The pair had been *enthusiastic* on both the going and returning legs of the journey, the latter of which had seen Aayla joining in on the fun,

as promised. Clearly, they'd had a *lot* of pent up desire to work through, and they'd made a solid effort at burning through it all.

Which honestly made more than a bit of sense, come to think of it. The pair had to have pre-planned the chastity belt thing, after all, given that they'd arrived aboard with two custom-fitted, Mei-built belts in their luggage. Since they *weren't* 'portal' belts, the pair wouldn't be getting any from Izuku at long-distance, and the biometrics had been set to unlock for only him or Aayla. They *did* have a safety release key code, just in case, given that they had no idea how long it would be before they saw him again. But, unless they used it, they would be stuck in chastity until they did see one of them again.

If he hadn't been able to feel how incredibly aroused the idea had made both of them, he might have discouraged it. As it was, he'd merely asked careful questions to make sure they'd thought things through properly. Thankfully, it was a Mei-design, that had been farther sanity-checked by Zavra. So things like sanitation, comfort, cleaning needs, and even the ability to have a bit of 'fun' with a set of high-security, remotely controlled neural stimulation functions that Sabé had the command codes for, had all been considered. They wouldn't be *completely* without the ability to get off, even if they didn't use the safeword codes. But, if they managed to hold off from using those codes, neither of them would be touching their pussy at all until they returned to him or Aayla.

Honestly, he gave it even-odds if they gave in and used the release codes or not. It would likely depend on how long it was before they saw one of them again. Or whether or not they ended up in a situation where they needed to wear something that would reveal the low-profile belts, he supposed. He assumed they wouldn't risk that, and Mei had thoughtfully made them scan-resistant. So they wouldn't be detected by anything short of the highest levels of security scans. Shaking his head at their antics and wondering if they'd regret the choice to follow up on Aayla's 'joke' or not, he turned to Aayla with a smirk tugging at his lips.

"So, does this mean you're going to try getting Shaak into one for longer than the few days she got stuck after Kashyyyk? She *is* now the only one who hasn't tried something like it after joining our relationship, what with how Zavra's implants were set by her Empress's defaults."

The way Aayla's eyes lit up at the suggestion caused him to chuckle, wondering how Shaak Ti would take her inevitable suggestion. Their Togrutan lover was willing to try almost anything once, but was the least interested in that specific sort of play, he thought. It would be entertaining to see how effectively Aayla managed to wheedle, cajole, or bribe her into giving it a longer try than that one-off experience which Shaak had neither loved nor particularly hated...

- End of Lemon/Ecchi Content -

Chapter 114: Time to Speechify!

- Tyche Central – 330 Days into the Hutt Crusade-

Izuku braced himself as he stepped out into the middle of the large chamber. Despite not wanting to ape the Republic Senate, there were only so many ways to set up an arena for a large

legislative body. Still wanting to put their own spin on things, the designers of the new meeting hall for the Council of Free Worlds had accepted that the near-standard 'horseshoe' arrangement for such places was inevitable, yet leaned into some of the unique technology available in the League to help differentiate it. Instead of the hovering platforms of the Republic Senate, they'd settled on hard-light platforms that extended out from entrances labeled for each world represented. All with the ability to be programmed with emblems, flags, or other symbols that represented each world.

Admittedly, the result was both impressive looking...and would likely result in a few panic attacks from less courageous politicians who were forced to step out onto a Hard Light disk over empty air to address the chamber. The *entire chamber* was rigged to allow the combining of such disks, or the creation of pathways and platforms so that one could literally pace in mid-air as you gave a speech, or approach the Sovereign's Throne (so named despite his own protests) via an air-bridge. The result was just as visually impressive as the designers had hoped, but would likely make more than a few politicians nervous to use the system, despite the many safeties built into the entire thing. Izuku personally suspected anyone with a fear of heights or falling was going to be quickly disqualified from office by inability to attend sessions without a panic attack.

He was extremely glad he'd never suffered that particular fear himself, as he walked the only *physical* path in the entire chamber. One that led directly to the 'throne' which he wasn't all that pleased with the existence of. Someday, he hoped to completely separate the legislative branch from the executive arm the Sovereign was in charge of, replicating the democratic systems he was most familiar with from Earth. That, unfortunately, was still a hope for the far future, as there were still only one hundred worlds represented here today. Precious few of the former Hutt worlds had enough government to them for proper representation just yet, and some of the previously unaligned border worlds were barely better. There were far more with stable governments among the formerly independent or Republic worlds acquired during their political tour, yet they were being very careful about potentially unbalancing things by introducing too many of those too fast. It would be far too easy for the former Hutt worlds to end up as poorly represented within the Council as the Outer Rim was within the Republic Senate.

The result, at least for now, was that thirty-three of the worlds with representation were formerly Hutt worlds, the same amount were former independent worlds, and the final major block of thirty-three were former Republic worlds. The final world was, of course, Tythe itself. Which was, while technically represented by the same sized contingent as the others, pretty definitively first among equals. No perfect solution truly existed to granting utterly fair voting power, at least not that Izuku had ever heard of, but the League had decided on a Tier system. Tier 1 worlds had only a single vote at the table, and were defined by low population and limited economic output, but with a fully functioning government. Tier 2 worlds got an extra vote, achieving their tier by contributing in a major way to either the Economy, Military, or Core Industries.

Contribution could be in many forms, so even an agriworld could contribute to the Military or Core Industries in particular by helping supply needed food for said military, or to support the League via Core Industry exports. Aka, selling a certain quantity of output to either other League worlds that needed it, or to established League trade partners at pre-defined rates. Any world could go up to a maximum of Tier 4, gaining an additional vote per tier, by supplying contributions to all

three categories in addition to its base vote. Currently, Tythe was the only Tier 4 world in the League, but there were already several Tier 2s and two Tier 3 worlds.

Imperfect, but still a lot fairer than the Republic had become. Particularly as your world's Tier did *not* affect how the laws applied to your world or how well your world was defended. It only granted greater say in overall League policy. Something which, as the League was more of a Federation than anything, with a *lot* of local autonomy in how world's ran *themselves*, was an adequate carrot for the time being. The Council would, after all, be setting things like general trade rules, required education standards, expected minimum legal protections that carried across all League worlds, and so on. All things that any sane world would want to have a say in if they could. Most such measures would be temporary for now, of course, since only a fraction of the League had proper representation. That only made for a stronger imperative for most worlds to get themselves sorted out before things became to set in stone, though. So that was fine.

Pushing all of that aside as he came to a stop in front of the Sovereign's Throne, Izuku didn't sit. Instead, he turned to face the few hundred people and cameras present. Every representative was present, most of them with the two aides they were allowed each, and a few observers boxes were full as well. Some with official persons, such as Padmé, others with press or potential future representatives from worlds still working on straightening out a government or finalizing their agreements to join. Pitching his voice to perfectly carry with the microphone and speaker setup, drawing on orator skills that he'd copied from others to cover for his own lack of talent in that area, Izuku spoke.

"Welcome, gentlebeings all, to the inaugural meeting of the Council of Free Worlds. While I would usually prefer to get right into a working session, given the weight of this occasion, a few words are perhaps appropriate."

Pausing to let the anticipation build for a few heartbeats, he did his best not to show how much he hated speeches as he continued on.

"Our goal, as a people, is to seek freedom for the oppressed, and to protect those who seek shelter under our aegis from any who would seek to oppress them again. This Council is not the first step, nor is it the last. Just as this Council is taking over from the Liberty Council that began the Hutt Crusade, bringing more complete and fair representation to the worlds of the League of Free Stars, so too will our own actions here spawn still more apparatuses. A full judiciary, a fully realized treasury, a war office, and more. To build a new power in the galaxy is not an undertaking to be begun lightly, but all of those here today are in agreement with the need to do so."

Another brief pause, to let what he'd said so far settle in and allow various translators to catch up.

"Our people are, almost to the last being, made up of the underrepresented and disenfranchised. The disillusioned, the cynical, and the formerly oppressed. Yet, for all their cynicism and all the horrors many of your worlds have endured, you remain. You remain, unbroken and now unfettered. The chains of your pasts have been shattered, a hope for a better future kindled in the hearts of men, women, and others alike."

One final pause, and a very mild push with the Force to help the import of his next words settle firmly. Not to *influence*, but to *enhance*. He wanted this moment to live sharply in the minds of all those present for the rest of their lives, however long or short they might be.

“On this day, we take not the first, but certainly an *important* step forward in living up to our name. We are the Council of Free Worlds, representing the League of Free Stars, and it is into our charge that is placed the fate of untold billions. Both those living now, and those who are yet to come. Go forward with pride, surety, and a thirst for wisdom, knowing that your actions from today onward will shape the very galaxy through which trillions trod. May the Force be with you all, and may a righteous light forever shine forth to guide your steps.”

One last sweeping gaze around the chamber, and Izuku turned with deliberation to settled into the Throne. Saying just one more thing as he settled into his role as, primarily, an observer here. Hopefully.

“Speaker Rotsino, the chamber floor is yours.”

Esa Rotsino nodded to him and, with a firm step, took her own place at the largest disk that rested dead center, just below the Sovereign’s Throne. By practical need, she was the First Speaker, who would guide the session. Though her very first task would be to start the process of replacing herself, as she was first and foremost meant to be their ambassador to the rest of the galaxy, not the head of their legislative branch. That would take time, given they needed to *define* the process of such selection before it could even begin. But that was alright, the important thing was that the ball was rolling now. Soon enough, there would be a proper government that he could offload oodles of his paperwork onto.

He was very much looking forward to that, thank you very much...

... ..

- Coruscant – Mid 24 BBY

– 1 Year to the day from the start of the Hutt Crusade -

A decade ago, Esa Rotsino hadn’t had any inkling that she would one day be addressing the Republic Senate. Given her own political skills and who her cousin was, she might have believed you if you’d said she’d someday stand in the Abrion Sector’s Senate platform. Perhaps as an aide, or even just as a favor to see what the Senate was like for herself while visiting her cousin for a vacation. Abrion Major, even the entire Abrion Sector, had never been a mover or shaker, the sector being home mostly to agriworlds and quite unimportant in galactic politics. So the idea Esu would let her little cousin into a session, where she was unlikely to even speak, would have been at least *believable*.

The last few years, since Abrion Major and other worlds in their sector had first come into contact with the force of nature that was Izuku Midoriya, had changed things in ways that younger version of her could never have imagined.

For that matter, she didn’t think Esu had understood what a saber cat she’d let loose on their poor, unsuspecting sector, when she’d first enthusiastically accepted Izuku’s offers to help

build up the industry of several of their worlds. That industry, focused on allowing them to cut out the Core World and Trade Federation influences and *properly* process their agricultural exports locally, had *massively* improved life for the entire sector. The worlds of Abrion Major, Gibad, Tieos, and Ukio were *all* major agriworlds which, added to a dozen minor ones in the sector, actually provided the breadbasket for several *thousand* worlds Coreward of them.

Yet, they'd all been relatively poor despite that, as those same worlds had made a concerted effort to make trade between the Abrion Sector worlds and the Core hideously unequal. They were up charged massively for all the materials they needed to keep the massive agricultural works running, refused any chance to build up their own home-grown industry to offset that, then screwed over a third and forth time by deliberately suppressive taxes and high costs for transport of their goods. Izuku had cut through the entire 'Gordan knot of bullshit,' his words not theirs, by bringing in both the industry *and* shipping concerns they needed to take the teeth out of the efforts to keep them suppressed.

He hadn't even tried to force a monopoly, actively aiding Abrion Major in particular with the construction of a modest shipyard that could produce home-grown freighters. Even then going a step still farther by helping finance a number of locally-owned shipping concerns that meant they could slowly grow out of the need to lean on him and his businesses. These days, nearly a third of the sector's product actually shipped in freighters owned at least fifty-one percent locally. Freighters that could, in turn, buy and ship much of what they still needed from the Core back to the sector for *reasonable* prices.

The changes this had wrought for the sector as a whole were almost difficult for everyone in it to wrap their heads around.

Even now, the sector wasn't wealthy by Core World standards, of course. For that matter, it might never be. Yet, by Mid Rim standards, they'd gone from 'scraping by' to 'actually influential.' They were experiencing a boom economy and *thoroughly* enjoying sticking it to many of the Core Worlds that had screwed them over in the past. The fact that they now also had plenty of other markets they could reach meant that, even if those worlds tried to threaten them by just not buying, it would barely be a temporary blip for Abrion's growing economy. They still might not be truly *important*, by galactic standards, but people at least now had to listen to them when they spoke.

That alone would have been enough of a rapid, whirlwind change of fortunes to cause whiplash in the population of the sector.

Then, Esu and her fellows had learned just how *badly* they'd underestimated the saber cat they'd thought was a prized bantha.

Esa remembered her *thoroughly drunk* cousin calling in the middle of the night, rambling about a 'stupidly important but very crazy' job that she'd wanted Esa to drop everything and take. Esa hadn't seen her cousin drink enough to be impaired by it since her university days, and had been equally concerned and baffled. Doubly so when, *despite* being three sheets to the wind, her cousin had still somehow had the wherewithal to be tight-lipped over the comm.

The visit she'd made the next day had nearly driven Esa into the same bottle her cousin had temporarily climbed into.

After all, it wasn't every day that you were let in on a plan to start a *war* with the Hutts...and shown *proof* that the people planning it had the firepower to make a serious go at it.

Her life had become one kriff of a wild ride after she'd recovered enough from her shock to decide that she wanted in. Sometimes a thrilling ride, sometimes a terrifying one, with ups and downs that beggared belief and might have given her grey hair early, if not for access to beyond-bleeding-edge medical care that had come right along with everything else.

A year ago today, her work, along with the work of tens of thousands of others, had come to fruition when the newly revealed League of Free Stars had taken Nal Hutta in a lightning raid no one had seen coming. An assault that had cut the head off the Hutt's government, kicking off a campaign that now had them in control of 90 percent of former Hutt Space. Even the Hutt's throne worlds were now under slow but steady assault, with very little chance any of them would manage to hold the League off in the end.

All of which culminated in the fact she was about to address the Republic Senate in full session. A session that was virtually certain to be heavily attended and reported, given that the League of Free Stars now represented a legitimate foreign power large enough to actually pay attention to. Something that hadn't happened since the Ruusan Reformation and reformation of the Republic into its current form. Yes, the Hutts had technically been a large enough power to be so treated...but they'd never bothered playing the game. That would have, quite frankly, required them to have some measure of actual respect for the Republic. Which they manifestly had not. Such had been their wealth and power that occasional individual cartels had made deals with the Senate, but very rarely had the Grand Hutt Council bothered to communicate in more than holocalls to subcommittees. Never had a representative bothered to come and speak before the Republic Senate itself.

Well, no pressure Esa.

You're only about to make history and set a new galactic precedent...

... ..

-Republic Senate Chambers-

"...and now, gentlebeings all, we have another small matter to deal with. I invite Ambassador Esa Rotsino, representing the newly established Council of Free Worlds and the League of Free Stars, to address the Senate."

Leaning hard on the meditative exercises taught to her by her Sovereign and his lady, Esa signaled the 'guest' platform to the center of the Senate Chambers. Turning first to the Supreme Chancellor, who had just ceded the floor to her, she spoke clearly, precisely, and most of all politely. It was her job today to set the best possible impression of the League in the minds of the senators now watching her.

"Thank you, Supreme Chancellor Palpatine, from granting me the opportunity to address the Republic Senate. It is an honor to be here, and I hope this is the start of a fantastic relationship between the League and the Republic."

The stately older man nodded politely at the political filler. With polite, politic, obligations fulfilled, Esa didn't hesitate to turn to the *rest* of the Senate and push her voice for a slightly more *theatric* effect. A very specific impression was intended to be made today, and it was her job to deliver it in just the right way.

"Gentlebeings of the Senate! As many of you may know, with victory in our Crusade against the evil of the Hutt Cartels rapidly becoming a foregone conclusion, the focus of the League of Free Stars had turned to building a full and proper government that will support the very freedoms we fought for! The first 100 League worlds have formed into the Council of Worlds, with more waves of additional voting planets already planned to be added, as their system governments organize sufficiently to take part."

A pause for effect, but not long enough to let someone try to disrupt her flow.

"It is under this new Council that we have formed our official constitution, underlining our policies, a firm stance against *any* form of slavery in the galaxy being foremost among said policies. We of the League are hopeful that, in the Galactic Republic, we will find the allies needed to stamp such fowl trade out for good! The League will not rest until the last slaver or slave owner has been reformed, imprisoned, or executed."

The stick. There were quite a few, hundreds a minimum, beings in this very chamber who owned slaves. The Republic's bullshit stance that it was illegal to buy and sell them, but not own them, was always going to be a hot button issue for the League's own people. Better to own that now and control the narrative with a firm declaration, as their huge ex-slave population would never abide by anything but a direct and uncompromising stance on the issue anyway.

"In light of our view that the Republic, which has long outlawed slavery and many times attempted to exterminate it, is a potential ally in this matter, I also bring to the table a many bits of good news. The Judicial Interpol suggested by your own Supreme Chancellor Palpatine, and made to work by the dedicated efforts of Senator and Ambassador Padmé Amadila, has produced rapid results. Over seventy five percent of Republic-owned businesses that were operating in Hutt Space have now been processed, those guilty of breaking your own laws punished, and those innocent freed to continue doing business in what is now League Space. At the same time, new agreements to continue Hypercomm Access and maintain the Hypercomm arrays in our space have been reached and formalized. Indeed, the League is now actively expanding coverage, believing in Freedom of Communication just as we do in the freedom of people."

Carrots were needed now, with the most basic being in the form of assurances. The return of commerce and the continuation of access to the Hypercomm being big ticket items there. The League of Free Stars, having seized the vast majority of Hutt assets, was just as outrageously wealthy as the Hutt's had been. Despite pouring vast quantities of that money into building new infrastructure and expanding their armed forces, they *still* had money to burn and everyone would want a piece of that. The Hutts had been hoarders, not spenders, sitting on the bulk of their wealth despite their lavish lifestyles. Making it clear the purse strings were now open and there was a lot of profit to be made as a result? That was one major carrot.

The Hypercomm was another. In a lot of ways, the Hypercomm was the *reason* for the Republic, at least in this era of peace where little worry was put into banding together against outside foes the way the early Republic had needed to do. The enormous relay stations required to connect a million worlds and hundreds of trillions of sentients were *far* too expensive for any one world to build. Even for the Republic, a *significant* amount of the galactic budget went towards maintaining that network. Actually *expanding* it was the sort of thing that came up for *major* debate whenever it was proposed in the Senate. It was just *that* expensive. So the idea not only that access to the existing and important stations within The Slice that the Hutts had controlled would continue, but that the League was working on expansion on their own credits? A powerful carrot indeed.

“In addition, our Sovereign’s recent political tour through your Grand Republic has generated numerous new trade agreements and fantastic new connections. Likewise, now that we have properly established ourselves, we feel it is time to begin formalizing boundaries between the Republic and the League, instead of relying on old agreements inherited from the Hutts. It is for this reason that I will remain here on Coruscant, to begin the process of reworking those agreements to the satisfaction of all.”

A reminder of the advantages of *not* being belligerent with the League, while also ceding the need to deal with the one thing that had many in the Republic Senate most up in arms. While 60 star systems was a piddling quantity against the vast bulk of the Republic, the current succession debate that was raging more and more hotly within the halls of power here made so many systems successfully leaving a hot button topic of its own. By being the ones to start the process of renegotiating the soft-border clauses that allowed such a thing to happen at all, the League was signaling a willingness to resolve the issue. Of course, the Senate was *slow* and she had every intention of deliberately dragging the process out, without being obvious about it. Her analysts’ best guess was that the Senate wouldn’t be able to agree on new terms for *at least* another year, during which the soft-border clauses would remain in effect.

“The League of Free Stars looks forward to a positive and profitable exchange with the Republic, with all of us gaining from the exchange. The oppressed will yet be free, and strong ties will undoubtedly be forged! Thank you all for your time today!”

Not wanting to drone on in what was, frankly, really only an opening volley, Esa cut it there. She’d given the Senate plenty to chew on, and needn’t deal with them as a whole at this time. Padmé was already moving behind the scenes to create a committee that would handle the minutia of negotiations with the League, and her own staff were on the ball with a charm offensive toward various power blocs. Gifts of useful tech, bribes of valuable art from many worlds recovered from Hutt vaults, and far more. They were in the Big Leagues and swimming with the sharks now, and Esa was intent on doing right by her new home...

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