

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

**A/N: Asajj shares her victory with Sev'rance~**

**-x-X-x-**

“... Come. We will report our success to Lord Vader together.”

The decision is made partially on a whim, but that doesn't stop Asajj from greatly enjoying the way Sev'rance jolts in shock, red eyes widening at the kind gesture. A small voice in the back of Asajj's mind says she shouldn't be doing any such thing, of course. That as someone of the Dark, she should never be kind, never be nice, never be *good*.

However, that small voice sounds suspiciously like Count Dooku. The fact of the matter is, Asajj wants one thing and one thing only... power. Power enough to never be anyone's pawn ever again. Power enough to choose... power enough to forge her own path.

And right here and now, Asajj was confident that forging her own path... it involved Tann. The blue-skinned alien woman with her intelligence and her drive to succeed was critical to Asajj's future. It wasn't just Asajj against the universe anymore... no, that was what Dooku wanted for her. So he could keep her small and weak and easily disposable for him and HIS Sith Master.

Leading the way to the back of the ship, Asajj holds her head high as she feels Sev'rance follow her to the ship's common area. There, in the center of the table is an in-built comms device. Fiddling with the controls, Asajj sends off a encoded message to her Master to make it clear she wants to speak to him. The instructions were in his holocron.

Of course, as soon as she's done that she realizes... well, she has no idea when he'll have time for her. It could be minutes... or more likely it could wind up being hours. Even possibly days. Turning to Sev'rance, Asajj lets out a slight laugh.

“Hah... apologies. I realize now I might have dragged you into quite the wait if our Master is not immediately available to speak with us.”

Sev’rance quirks an eyebrow along with one side of her mouth, the curl of her blue lips drawing Asajj’s eye.

“No need to apologize. Sith Lords are not exactly famous for punctuality of all things, are they?”

That gets another laugh from Asajj. No, that was indeed quite true. Hm...

“I’ve worked up a bit of an appetite. Let’s eat while we wait.”

Nodding, Sev’rance heads to the ship’s small kitchen immediately. The fare she brings back with her is little more than rations to be fair, nothing particularly exciting. She also brings some caf, which Asajj accepts with a grateful nod.

They eat quietly, neither doing much talking. Asajj doesn’t quite know what to say, truth be told. Should she talk about Sev’rance’s aim? Or maybe future training? Or-

Fortunately, she doesn’t have to figure it out. A call from the center table’s comms unit comes through, signaling that their Master is ready to contact them. Quickly putting away the remains of their meal and brushing at her face to make sure she’s presentable, Asajj moves to stand in front of the projector, gesturing for Sev’rance to stand with her.

It’s the alien woman’s choice to stand slightly behind her however, moving so she’s hovering just over Asajj’s left shoulder rather than side by side. Asajj almost glances back at her, but in the end she simply leans forward and accepts the call.

Darth Vader’s visage appears in half-sized blue light on the center of the table before them. But while the sight of him does not do him justice, as soon as the call connects, Asajj feels it... his presence in the Force focused in her direction.

Such is his power that she can sense him flowing out into the room, filling it with his strength in the Dark Side. It sends a shiver down Asajj's spine, while at the same time a sharp intake of breath reaches her ears from behind her. Even Sev'rance Tann, despite not having as strong of a connection to the Force, can sense their Master's indomitable presence invading the space around them.

*"Darth Shar. Report."*

Lowering her head in submission, Asajj starts with the obvious. Even if Vader can see Sev'rance right in front of him, even if he was the one who gave Asajj permission to reveal him to her comrade... it was still polite and respectful.

"Greetings Master. I have Sev'rance Tann with me here at my side."

*"I see that."*

He sounds neither disapproving nor approving. Neither pleased nor displeased. His mood is... impossible to read. Asajj swallows thickly and continues on.

"She and I have completed the task you set before us, Master. We are currently on the surface of Lotho Minor... and the threat you sent us here to defeat has been dealt with most decisively. The Zabrak-Machine Hybrid no longer draws breath. He will never leave this world or be able to threaten your plans again."

Silence reigns for a moment and Asajj stays very, very still. So does Sev'rance at her back, not even a whisper of movement coming from the blue skinned woman. For a long beat, Lord Vader is quiet, seemingly processing what he's been told. Finally...

*"You seem keen on sharing the credit with your companion, Darth Shar."*

Asajj straightens up at that. She valiantly resists the urge to shoot a glance back at Sev'rance. Perhaps that was why the other woman made sure to stand back a bit, so that it would be much harder for Asajj to look at her at any point.

Still...

“She was of great assistance in completing my mission, Master.”

*“Oh? Would you say you could not have done it without her then?”*

A trap... or at least, that's what it felt like. Really, it felt unfair. To admit that she couldn't have done it without Sev'rance felt like it would be admitting weakness. But to admit that she NEEDED Sev'rance's help would be... a bit more than Asajj was prepared for.

If this were Count Dooku, Asajj is confident he would expect her to claim she could have handled it all on her own. If he weren't already torturing her with Sith Lightning for daring to try and share credit in the first place. But this is not Dooku. And she is not the same as she once was.

... She will be honest. Even if it comes back to bite her.

“She was instrumental in the defeat of the threat, Master. Could I have done it without her? Yes, I believe I had the strength to defeat the enemy by myself. However, I chose not to risk such a thing for the sake of something as petty as my own vanity. We worked as a team and came out the other side fully intact. Our opponent... did not.”

There. That was the truth. Now all that was left was to see how Lord Vader took it. He's silent again for a long moment, his true feelings hidden from her as usual. And then... all of the sudden, she feels something. She feels... amusement?

Asajj nearly staggers back as her Master's good humor fills the room alongside his presence. If it wasn't for Sev'rance surreptitiously placing a hand on the small of her back to steady her, Asajj might have embarrassed herself.

It's almost as though Vader is booming with laughter... but only in the Force. In reality, he's entirely silent for a moment longer before finally speaking.

*“Well done, Darth Shar. You have exceeded my expectations. I am pleased with your progress.”*

Asajj’s eyes widen at the surprisingly effusive praise. Her mouth opens... and then closes again before she quickly bows her head.

“T-Thank you Master. W-We appreciate your compliments.”

*“Hm... yes, ‘we’.”*

Darth Vader’s attention suddenly focuses rather intensely on the blue-skinned woman at Asajj’s back. Sev’rance’s breath hitches again as the Sith Lord seems to almost seize her with his Force Presence.

*“Sev’rance Tann. You and my apprentice have gotten close rather quickly, haven’t you? I wonder... what are your goals? What are your desires? What do you seek from this partnership with Darth Shar?”*

This was not the kind of conversation to have while standing behind Asajj’s shoulder. With a flourish, she steps away and to the side, leaving Sev’rance room to step forward. The other woman seems to be unfortunately frozen in place however, pinned under Lord Vader’s stare. Asajj tries to give her an encouraging look with her eyes, but Sev’rance doesn’t so much as glance at her.

“I want... I want control, Lord Vader. I seek... stability.”

*“Oh?”*

Sev’rance swallows thickly, seemingly forced to expound upon her words.

“This galaxy is... Chaotic. Unwieldy. Unruly. The Republic does not work... so I joined the Confederacy in the hopes that it could be something better. I realized all too late that the likes of Count Dooku will never let that happen.”

*“Indeed. The Confederacy is built on a pack of lies. Lies that are little more than a foundation of sand. It can no more grow beyond its pitiful purpose than the Republic can hope to claw its way back out of the proverbial Sarlacc Pit its languished in for centuries now.”*

... Huh, those were actually excellent metaphors, Asajj can't help thinking. The whole point of Dooku's Confederacy was to create an enemy for his Sith Master to pit everyone else against. But that didn't make the Republic much better. Not by a long shot. The Republic was rotten from within... slowly deteriorated by the acidity of unchecked political maneuvering and rampant greed and selfishness.

Sev'rance looks... intrigued now as she stares at the hologram of their Master?

“What... what do you propose then, Lord Vader? If not the Republic or the Confederacy, then what exactly?”

Another burst of amusement suffuses the extremely powerful Force Presence that pervades the ship's common area. It curls around Asajj like a friend sharing a good joke and she can't help but imagine it doing the same for Sev'rance.

*“A good question, Lady Tann. The answer, simply put... is Empire. Though I do not propose it. Sith do not... propose things. I will make it happen. I will tear down the likes of the Banite Sith. I will bring low the corrupt leaders of both the Republic and the Confederacy. And I will bring this galaxy under my control. Peace, prosperity... and stability. These are the things I will bring to my galaxy.”*

Another shiver runs down Asajj's spine. He certainly doesn't dream small, does he? But then what else could she expect from a Sith Lord of his power? Her Master was going to go all the way... and it sounded like everything she could hope for. Now all they needed was for Sev'rance to not fuck this up...

“That sounds... like something I would very much like to be a part of, Lord Vader.”

... Huh. What was that Asajj heard in Sev'rance's voice just then? Not trepidation, or hesitation, or even doubt. No it was actually quite the opposite. In

fact if Asajj didn't know any better, she would even say... that Sev'rance's tone sounded husky in the face of their Master's words.

*"Continue to impress and you very well shall be. Darth Shar."*

Just like that, Asajj steps forward again, snapping back into place without a single moment of hesitation.

"I'm here Master."

*"You shall have to return to Dooku's side after this to avoid suspicion. Keep him unaware of your true loyalties and your true power for the time being. In the meantime, you will find new depths to the Holocron I gave you. Use the training within well to continue growing stronger. Teach Sev'rance here whatever you wish to teach her, I leave her tutelage in your capable hands."*

Asajj bows her head in wordless agreement though internally she's all but bouncing with glee at the thought of more to learn from her Master's Holocron. It had already proven to be of incredible value to her, making her five times the Sith she was when she was still loyal to Count Dooku! What more could it hold for her? She couldn't wait to find out.

*"Eventually, I will have another mission for you. Until then, do not stop growing. You will need every ounce of power you can obtain for the trials ahead."*

"As you command, Master."

For just a moment, Lord Vader's gaze seems to return to Sev'rance. And then the call ends and his presence disappears from the room. Asajj finds herself sucking in a deep breath, not even having realized how much pressure she'd been under until then. Sev'rance outright staggers forward, having to catch herself on the back of a nearby couch.

She's fine though, she just needs a moment to catch her breath, so Asajj just chuckles darkly as Sev'rance recovers.

“Our Master is certainly an impressive specimen, isn’t he?”

Sev’rance swallows dryly, quivering for a moment longer before lifting her head and staring at Asajj with wide eyes.

“M-More than impressive. He... his mere presence felt like it expanded my connection with the Force. He is... what IS he?”

Asajj hides her surprise at Sev’rance’s words. Expanding her connection with the Force? That sounded... well, maybe she’d felt something similar but it was too miniscule for Asajj to really pay it any mind. However, someone with less innate Force Sensitivity like Tann might find the difference to be more noticeable.

“He... is a true Sith Lord. Darth Vader is what the pitiful likes of Count Dooku wishes he could be. Perhaps Dooku’s true Master can match him, but of the two, I at least know which one I wish to serve and help make sure his designs come to fruition.”

Pushing off of the back of the couch, Sev’rance slowly nods.

“A-Agreed. Our Master... will need our help in bringing the disorder and chaos of this galaxy to heel. All the help we can offer him. We will have to show him just how useful we can be.”

Asajj can’t help but smile at that. It was the first time Sev’rance Tann had referred to Lord Vader as ‘their Master’, after all.

**-x-X-x-**

**A/N: Remember to go back and VOTE!**