

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

A/N: Empire.

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“How could this have happened? His power...”

Padme just shakes her head.

“He underestimated Dooku’s spite. When the Count discovered what our Master had been doing behind his back, he reacted poorly... and all the power in the galaxy is meaningless when one is exposed to the vacuum of space.”

Sly Moore scowls while Mas Amedda grimaces. Neither the Umbaran nor the Chagrian are particularly happy with the current circumstances.

In Moore’s case, she’s upset because between her and Padme, she is the one who is Force Sensitive. Padme, as much as Sidious treasured her as one of his tools, had never been able to touch the Force like Sly could. Sly had been used by Sidious countless times over the years to influence particularly weak willed politicians.

No doubt the Chief of Staff for the Supreme Chancellor’s Office felt like she should be their Sith Master’s successor, all things considered. But she was nothing more than an Administrative Aide, regardless of her meager connection to the Force. She simply didn’t have the political connections to accomplish their Master’s plans.

Mas Amedda, meanwhile, likely feels much the same way. The Chagrian Politician had served in the Senate for multiple decades at this point, under both Finish Valorum AND Sheev Palpatine. He had been Chancellor Valorum’s Vice Chair, but when it became clear that Palpatine would become Supreme Chancellor with or without him, Amedda had switched sides and pledged his loyalty.

This was rather smart of him all things considered, because it allowed him to survive both politically and literally. Padme knew that Sidious had eventually confided his true nature in Amedda, bringing the career politician into his confidences.

But the fact was, if not for Sidious' late appointment of Padme as his chosen successor, a power granted by the massive amount of emergency war powers that the Senate had granted his office, Mas Amedda should have technically been next in line. He should have become Acting Supreme Chancellor in Sidious' place until a proper election could be called.

Now though... neither of them were quite getting what they wanted. The 'proof' of Sidious' demise had been supplied to them, a story made up of Dooku luring Sidious onto a ship under false pretenses followed by an explosion that destroyed them both. Both Moore and Amedda were happy to keep Dooku's death a secret for a little bit longer in order to milk the war with the Separatists as far as they could, but they were less happy about Padme's coming ascension.

"What of the Jedi? They will not allow this. They will try to stop us."

The corner of Padme's mouth quirks up in amusement as Sly Moore grasps at straws. And the timing... well, the timing couldn't be better. The door to the chamber slides open a moment later and her husband steps through the doors, his eyes a dark orange as he strides forward.

"The Jedi are no longer a problem. I have dealt with them... personally."

Moore straightens up, her perpetually wide eyes fixing on Vader and remaining there. Amedda, meanwhile, fidgets and squirms. This was the other part of Padme and her husband's gambit with these two... the 'reason' that Dooku had killed himself and Sidious. Namely, he'd 'found out' that Sidious had a new apprentice... Vader.

Ironic, considering it would have been true in another version of events. It was what Sidious was working towards all along, after all. Replacing the old with a newer, stronger apprentice. All they'd done was move things up a bit, altering the narrative.

Any of Sly Moore's resistance to the idea of having to serve a non-Force Sensitive like Padme is subsequently washed away by Vader's presence. Padme's husband radiates such power that even she feels like she can sense it... though that just might be the connection he forged between them in order to protect her mind and true intentions from Sidious.

His presence feels like warmth. It feels like coming home. Padme's smile is honest now as she regards her husband, even as he moves to stand at her side, a hand coming to rest on her shoulder in a quiet show of support.

"Now is the time to accomplish my late master's final plan. If we wait too long, we miss the opportunity. If we dally, we squander the potential of this moment."

His words, crisp and commanding, have a visible effect on Amedda and Moore. The former merely dips his head, ever the self-serving lackey eager to simply submit to the greatest power he finds himself faced with. The latter on the other hand...

"Are you not the Master now, Lord Vader? Lord Sidious intended for the galaxy to be unified under the rule of the Sith. Should you not be the Emperor of the new Galactic Empire he envisioned? You could-urk!"

An honestly pathetic attempt at trying to drive a wedge between Padme and her husband. Then again, Moore was probably hedging her bets, trying not to sound too against Padme. Not that it matters. Her husband lifts his hand and curls his fingers... and Moore begins to choke.

"I find your lack of faith in my wife's political acumen... disturbing, administrator."

Sly Moore's hands go to her throat, her eyes as wide as ever as the bald Umbaran continues to choke and gasp for air. She drops to her knees as Vader looks down at her.

"Do you think I cannot sense your duplicity? Do you think I will allow any threat to my wife to remain? We will rule this galaxy together... and we do not need *you* to do so."

Finally, just before the Umbaran can fully expire, Padme reaches up and places a hand on her husband's, specifically on the hand he has on her shoulder. Instantly, he pulls back and releases Moore, allowing her to gasp for air and breath in lungfuls of oxygen. As she stares up at both of them, Padme smiles coldly.

"My husband is right. We do not need you, Sly Moore... but in deference to our late master, I will give you one more chance to prove yourself useful. Do not test us again."

Slowly, Sly Moore nods as she carefully makes her way back to her feet and bows her head in silent deference. Padme glances to her husband, who inclines his head wordlessly. In one fell swoop, they've forced Moore's loyalty... she won't risk earning Vader's ire again any time soon. At the same time, they've shown just how much of a unified force they both are.

Finally, Padme rises from her chair.

"Come. It is almost time for the Senate to meet."

There is no more resistance. No more second guessing everything. Moore and Amedda both fall in line, while Padme's husband walks at her side. Their guards escort them to the Senate Chambers, where hundreds of Senators are already in their pods.

Soon, Padme rises up on the Chancellor's Podium between them all. Her presence there is not too unexpected... Palpatine has been absent for weeks now, and she's taken over as Acting Chancellor in his absence. However, the

presence of Vader at her side causes a bit of a stir. Or rather, as they all know him... Anakin Skywalker. The Hero Without Fear.

Silence is called for. Silence falls. A handful of Senators rush into their pods at the last second from the outer halls, while even more hologram in. At the same time, there are thousands upon thousands of cameras filling the chamber, all of them on her, all of them projecting her image across the galaxy to the Republic's *many* member star systems. Padme watches all of this wordlessly, an imperious gaze sweeping around the chamber.

She meets the eyes of some of her 'friends' as she does so. Riyo Chuchi. Mon Mothma. Bail Organa. She knows she will displease some of them with what she's about to do. She knows others will likely come together to try and rebel. It matters little, in the end.

"Citizens of the Republic. I come to you with a sorrowful heart, to announce a tragedy. Sheev Palpatine, our beloved Supreme Chancellor... has perished."

A cacophony of noise answers her words, of course. But the Senate Chamber is made for a whole lot of unimportant people to be shouting and the important to still be heard. And so Padme continues, her clear, even voice resounding through the chamber, drowning out all of the shouting.

"For you see, Chancellor Palpatine only ever wanted peace. Peace at any costs. That is why he named me as his successor... so that he could go to a secret set of peace meetings with a clear mind and the knowledge that even should the worst come to pass, we would be able to continue on without him."

She has the attention of quite a few people now, her words even silencing some of the screamers as they penetrate through their thick skulls.

"The peace talks turned out to be a Separatist plot to take the Supreme Chancellor's life. A plot that succeeded... because of treachery within this very Senate."

In that moment, the doors of dozens of Senate Pods are forced open and members of the Senate Guard push inside to arrest those Senators within. Alarmed shouts and cries ring out, with some of the many cameras swiveling to take in these arrests.

Padme barely even reacts to all of this, watching with a calm, clinical eye. Obviously, none of these many Senators were actually involved in a plot to kill Palpatine. But every single one of them deserves to rot in a cell. Every single one of them either served Sidious knowingly in some way or had some other terrible skeleton in their closet that made them worthy of being a patsy.

And of course, there was plenty of manufactured evidence to go with the real evidence of their actual crimes too. Sidious had planned to use the Jedi as the patsies in his overall plot to form a new Galactic Empire from the remains of the Republic. But with Vader's success, they needed... others to take that fall.

"For a thousand years, the Republic has stood as the crowning achievement for all civilized beings. However... it is clear now that to have true peace, to secure our borders and bring an end to the Separatist Movement once and for all... we must follow a new path into the future."

The Senate Chamber is quieter now. The arrest of so many of their colleagues has left those that remain afraid to speak their minds. Padme continues on unabated.

"It was the final wishes of my predecessor, who gave everything he had for this great nation, to see us continue to thrive going forward, no matter what form it took. In his private files, I have found a plan that will see us strongly into the future... a plan I intend to enact now, on this day, with the powers granted to my office by this august body."

Padme can't help but meet Bail's eyes as she speaks. He looks uncertain, like he doesn't know what to expect. She sweeps her gaze away from him... as she delivers the death blow to the Galactic Republic.

“From this day forward, our Republic will be reorganized into the first Galactic Empire. An Empire that will set a new order, an Empire that will no longer submit to the weaknesses of our past!”

This provokes some shouting, some shocked reactions... but much more subdued than before. Padme wouldn't have stopped either way, she's come too far at this point.

“The Separatists intended for the death of my predecessor to leave us shaken and afraid. To turn us to infighting and squabbling amongst ourselves. But I say no! My resolve has never been stronger! And our next steps have never been clearer! The Galactic Empire will stand, united and free, for the next ten thousand years!”

She does something unprecedented then... she steps aside. Vader slides into her place so smoothly it's like he belongs there. Anyone who had been shouting goes silent in the face of Anakin Skywalker staring at them all. His eyes are blue at the moment, even as he speaks clearly and concisely.

“It is time for the Republic to evolve. It is time for us to cast off the shackles that bound us. Shackles of corruption, shackles of self-interest. The Order stands with our new Empress.”

That's all he says... but that's all he has to say. Vader steps back and Padme retakes her place, clutching at the podium in front of her as she brings it home.

“Together, we will secure the future. For the sake of our children. For our children's children!”

Any hesitation or uncertainty is gone from the majority of Senators at this point. The cheering and applause come in a massive wave, louder than anything before it. Her husband's support along with the support of what they believe is the Jedi Order, is enough for those on the fence to go along with it. And the rest... well, the rest were always going to do what they thought would be best, regardless of Vader's words about self-interest and corruption.

As the wave of sound washes over her, Padme stands there in the center of the chamber, a grim smile on her face. In this moment, she became Empress of a Galactic Empire. In this moment, democracy died with thunderous applause.

In this moment... everything was exactly as it should be.

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