”Ok, I’ll go check if they have any, but I’m not sure I vill findt them. The markets haven’t really returned to normal yet and…” Tali’s words were cut short by a soft knock on the apartment door, shifting her attention away from discussing ingredients with Koliss Welcott.

“Vho couldt that be? Are you expecting visitors?” She asked the medic-turned-chef as he was busy trying to prepare something more complicated than cup noodles; Tali’s staple diet.

“No, I didn’t exactly mention where I was going, but I guess if someone knows me well enough, it wouldn’t be hard to figure out.” Koliss replied with a meaningful cough.

Rolling her eyes, Tali headed towards the door and placed her hand on the controls, extending her senses momentarily to warn her of any harm before pressing the button. As the door slid to the side three quarters of the way, stuck and then after a moment’s servo whining managed to recede fully, Tali was left face-to-face with an older purple-hued Twi’lek woman, her green eyes mirroring her own yellow.

“F-Feen?” Tali stuttered, shocked and in disbelief of whom she was seeing. The last she’d seen of her had been, years ago it seemed, just prior to her Knighting. They had not parted in good spirits, not after she’d learned about how her mother had voluntarily sold her to a pair of slavers.

“Good evening, Tali.” Feen Zorah greeted her, offering a nod. “It is nice to see you again.”

Gathering her wits surprisingly swiftly, Tali’s expression melted from shock to a sour scowl. “The feeling is not mutual, *Feen*.” She replied, making a purposeful point of not calling her by any familial relation. After the events prior to her Knighting, she had been so disgusted by her parents’ actions she had no longer wished to be a part of the Zorah clan and family. She’d smashed their Kalikori and left, changing her surname to Sroka instead as a way to get herself as far from her parents as possible. It seemed that had not been enough.

“Vhat brings you here?” Tali inquired, standing to block the doorway and subtly deny her mother entry into her home, her lekku tensed and signaling agitation. Behind her, she could hear the kitchen had gone silent and she could only imagine Koliss straining to overhear every word spoken, although he’d of course deny any eavesdropping, the gentleman.

“I know ve didt not part at the best of terms, Tali, but I needt your help.” Feen sighed, lowering her head in shame. “More precisely, your father needs your help.”

A pang of guilt momentarily broke Tali’s stern expression into one of concern, but she soon realized her mistake and the cold scowl returned. It had been her mother who had primarily ruined her childhood, her father largely absent or powerless to stop his wife from making such a monumental decision about their child’s future as selling them away. Although she did not consider him without guilt, Tali knew the main culprit of all the abuse she’d suffered since was now standing in front of her.

“Vhat about him?” She asked, feeling the compulsion to at least find out about him.

“It’s… complicatedt.” Her mother began, running a hand down the back of her right lek. “He is not feeling vell. Your father isn’t as young andt strong as he usedt to be, andt I fear he is getting vorse. Ve vent to the doctors andt they can help him, somewhat, but it may be beyondt our means to do much for him.”

“What was he diagnosed with?” Koliss interjected, no longer able to silently lurk in the shadows and instead walking up to peek behind Tali’s shoulder at the woman she was talking to.

“Oh, who’s this Tali? Is he your…?”

“Friendt.” Tali replied curtly.

“Doctor Koliss Welcott, at your service, ma’am?” Koliss extended an awkward hand from behind Tali which the older Twi’lek accepted in greeting.

“Feen Zorah. Pleasedt to meet you, doctor Velcott. I am pleasedt to see my daughter has made such goodt… friendts.” Feen replied politely, casting a sly glance at her daughter who seemed to pout even harder.

“Yes, he’s been a great acquaintance, now about my father…” Tali pressed on, not feeling comfortable having Koliss talking to her mother. In hindsight she probably should have told him about her relationship with them a bit earlier.

“Ah yes, your father, I’m afraidt he has been diagnosedt vith Lektitis. It can occur in older Twi’leks if they haven’t receivedt a balancedt diet andt causes nerve degradation in the lekku. Starts out as twitching, but if allowedt to reach advancedt states, it can be fatal.” She explained with a solemn tone, her eyes cast down and lekku hanging limp beside her face.

Tali blinked in shock, unable to fully comprehend what she was saying. Was her father *dying*?

“There is a cure for this, right?” Tali pressed. “Andt he is taking it, yes?”

She nodded. “Yes, he has been taking the medication but ve don’t know how long the condition vill last. It might take years for him to be ridt of it andt until then, he vill needt to be on medication.”

Tali nodded slowly. “My, condolences. I vish I couldt have seen him myself, though.”

“I know andt he really vishedt to be here, but I’m afraidt his condition vouldt not allow this. You see, ve have been having trouble affording his medication…” Feen shook her head. “Perhaps he simply didt not vish to have your final memory of him be in such a sorry state.”

Tali visibly recoiled at the thought, her hand instinctively finding Koliss’ who gave it a reaffirming squeeze to comfort her. “It is that badt?” She managed a hushed whisper to which her mother could only offer a solemn nod.

“I know ve didt not part under the best of terms, but you are our only hope, Tali. Please, vill you help your father?”

Tali turned her head to Koliss who had been deep in thought ever since the medical details had been given and he placed a comforting hand on her shulder. “I have heard of this illness and although rare, I think it can be treated. If I recall, the treatments work better if the patient receives mineral rich foods and plenty of sunlight. You might wish to look into that as well to assist in a speedy recovery.”

“Thank you kindly, Doctor Velcott. I am sure ve vill try, but getting to such a planet vouldt require even more funds vhich ve simply do not have.” Feen stated with an appreciative nod.

There was a long pregnant pause between the three as the obvious request hung in the air, unspoken but clear to everyone. Finally, it was Tali who broke the silence.

“So… he is in that badt a condition, huh?” She muttered, casting a sideways glance at Koliss who remained neutral.

“I vish I couldt come to you vith better news, Tali, but I’m afraidt unless he receives his medicine…” Feen sighed.

“The illness is unfortunately rather dangerous unless properly treated.” Koliss added objectively.

Taking a deep breath of air and letting it out in a long sigh, Tali looked back at her mother. “S-so how mu…?”

“Twelve thousandt credits.” Feen replied bluntly, before hastily adding. “Is vhat the doctors saidt it vouldt cost. But if ve vant to try the sun treatment that your boyfriendt-“

“*Friendt.*” Tali interjected.

“-friendt suggestedt, then it vouldt be more.” Feen finished.

Tali glanced at Koliss for a moment and then back to her mother. “Excuse us for a moment.” She spoke to the woman who happened to be her mother only by virtue of giving birth and little else, closing the door and turning to Koliss.

Feen waited patiently outside while the muffled sounds of a spirited debate could be heard from beyond until they finally died down and a few moments later the door reopened. “Here.” Tali stated bluntly, holding out a trio of credit chits. “It’s thirty thousandt credits. It shouldt cover the expenses. Now get out of my sight andt take care of your husbandt… andt my father.”

Feen took the credits and nodded, her lekku gesturing deep gratitude. “Thank you, Tali. I knew you hadt a goodt heart. I always knew…”

“Get. Out.” Tali growled, pointing at the street outside her home.

“Of course, of course. My apologies, Tali. I vill not bother you again.” She bowed deep and backpedaled away, soon disappearing into the crowd as Tali closed the door behind her and collapsed against it, pressing her face into her hands.

Koliss knelt down beside her and patted her on the shoulder. “You did the right think, Tali. You were the better woman.”

“It doesn’t feel that vay…” The Twi’lek muttered before adding after a moment. “Vine. Ve are going to needt vine vith vhatever you’re making. Lots of it.”

“Of course, lavender. I’ll go and get some.” He gave her shoulder an affectionate squeeze.

“So, how did it go? Did you manage to get through to her?” Josruvu asked as his wife climbed aboard their small shuttle.

“In a sense, yes. She still bears a grudge andt perhaps I don’t blame her. But she vasn’t outright hostile.” Feen replied with a sigh as she strapped herself in and Josruvu started the engines, the small craft soon rising up into the air.

“Well, did she…?” He left the question hanging, too obvious to vocalize.

“Yes, she didt. Say vhat you vill about our daughter, but she has a kindt heart.” Feen replied as she pulled out the credit chits from her handbag and gave them over to him.

“W-wow! So we are going to Coruscant this year after all! I would not have believed she cared that much about our finances.” Josruvu spoke in mild shock at the tens of thousands of credits he held in his hands.

“Me neither, love. Me neither…” Feen sighed, glancing out the ship’s window as he turned it around and headed out towards the airlock, reapplying her cobalt blue lipstick and already imagining the sun kissing her skin after a long lek-massage.