

PETER & LISA: CHAPTER 28

FIRST APPEARANCE

"Is it normally this...busy?" Lisa asks quietly, staring through the one-sided curtain as Rafi gestures towards a small wicker basket and 'Jita shakes her head. Small groups and couples are spread across the tables, the murmur of a dozen different furtive conversations filling the air. She shivers, rubbing her hands up her arms, feeling distinctly uncomfortable in the tight white leggings and white blouse, open far too much at the neck, why did she listen to Carrie's advice anyway.

"You're not nervous, are you?"

"No, of course not. Yes."

"Come on, Lise. It'll be fine. We've practised this. What's the worst that can happen?"

"Ola's out there. That means the worst that can happen is I'll be reminded of this every day for the rest of my life. And as Carrie's there, too, that means it'll be twice a day at least, about how much I suck."

Peter kisses her gently on the top of her head, "Then I guess we'd better make sure we don't suck."

"Helpful advice, Peter. Really helpful." she looks up at him, the thick hood of his black cloak pooling around his neck, "At least you're fully dressed for this."

"Lise, it'll all be fine. We're not even the main attraction."

"I know, I know, it's just..."

"Scary? Tell me about it. You haven't got the family honour to uphold."

"No, I guess not. I've just got the family outside ready to pounce. Wish Sarah was here. She'd make me think this was nothing."

"She's a bit busy at the moment."

"Yeah, I know, I just..."

A wave of applause rolls out through the curtain. Both look up as 'Jita pushes her hand up out of the tiny wicker basket and waves to the audience, the real curtains sweeping back into place.

"Well, **little Jedi, it's show time.**" he flips his hood up, casting his face into deep shadow.

"Break a leg, guys!" 'Jita grins, pouring herself out of the basket.

"That isn't a comforting expression." Lisa mutters as she walks into the crowd, ignoring the calls from a certain ex-flatmate, as she searches through the tables, getting more than one appraising look, her back tensing up, stiffening it a little. Fortunately, the only whistles come from a soon to be ex-sister. She stops at one table, four guys sitting around it. "Hey, guys. I was wondering, we need some audience volunteers to check things over for the next act. Interested?"

"Uhm, check what over?" one of them asks, his eyes flickering between her face and the open blouse.

Well, at least he's trying. Carrie, you are sooooo dead for persuading me to wear this!!! "Nothing major. We just need some hunky stormtroopers to guard me while everything gets set up." *Did I really just say that??*

"Guard you? From what?"

"Just part of the act. You'll see."

"Uh, ok, sure."

"Great. Follow me." She leads them towards the stage, the Imperial March booming out.

"What do we have to do?" one of the guys asks.

"Oh, that's easy. Just walk on stage with me and follow the guy in black's instructions. Oh, and put these on." she hands each of them a white Stormtrooper mask and bulky black plastic gun.

The March begins to fade away, the curtain pulls back and Peter stands in the middle of the stage, the metal stand in front of him, his arms folded, face lost in the shadows of his hood. There's a moment of silence, broken by the sound of his breathing, "**Bring out the prisoner.**" he demands.

"That's our cue." She walks up the steps to the stage, the quartet of Stormtroopers following behind, not looking all that sure of themselves. Lisa bows her head, her hands held as if tied behind her back.

"**So, you thought such as you could defeat the Empire, did you, little Jedi? This...**" a long sucking

breath, “displeases me. Where is the Alliance base?”

Lisa looks up, glaring into his face, trying to stop smiling as she sees his smile in the shadows, “I’ll never tell you. Never! I’d sooner die!”

“As you wish.” he draws out the lightsabre, flicking his wrist to send a blade of red light humming out. There’s a collective gasp from the audience as the light turns her costume red. He turns, his cloak swirling around him and places the lightsabre into the stand, the crimson blade rising up, casting the whole stage in scarlet. “Bring her here.” The quartet walk, rather nervously, towards her. One raises his gun, clearly getting into the part more than the others and Lisa walks over to the device. “And now, little Jedi, you face death. Join me. Rule by my side.”

“I’ll never join you! Strike me down, and I shall become more powerful than you could possibly imagine.”

A ripple passes through the audience as they recognise the line.

Peter shakes his head, “Then, fool, you will die.” he raises his hand, floating Lisa into the air above the lightsabre. He turns and Lisa tilts backwards in mid air until her back rests on the glowing tip.

“Not...yet.”

Another shake of the head, as Peter reaches up and pushes her, setting her spinning. “Fool. You could have been so much more.” He turns away, and, with a piercing scream, Lisa drops, her body going limp as the blade shoots up through her stomach. “Come. The fool deserved her fate. We shall see if the other prisoners are as stubborn.” he strides off stage, the Stormtroopers looking uncertain before they hurry to catch up, a brief laugh from the audience following.

The stage is in silence. Lisa can feel the audience watching her. Waiting to see what will happen.

“...three...four...five...” She twitches, to a satisfying gasp, slowly raising her arms up, placing both hands on the tip of the blade. “Jedi don’t die that easily.” she says through gritted teeth. She pushes, rising up the blade until she lifts above it, dropping and keeps rising high above the stage before, with a flash that rains sparks onto the stage.

Peter strides back on, glaring at the empty sabre. “Curses!” he snarls, snatching it up. “She’s escaped!”

“I haven’t gone far!” Lisa steps out behind him, her own lightsabre shining blue as it cleaves through Peter. The two halves of the torn cloak drop empty to the stage. The audience’s cheers die away as Lisa looks down nervously at the empty heap of cloth.

“I haven’t gone far, little Jedi.” Lisa turns, raising her lightsabre, as Peter steps out of the side, a black mask over his face to match his black uniform.

Red and blue light clash as they fight across the stage until Lisa stumbles. The audience gasps as her lightsabre clatters to the floor, winking out.

“And so, little Jedi, you lose once again.” his hand grips the air and hauls Lisa up, holding her off the floor, her legs kicking wildly as she struggles. “I see I am going to have to deal with you...harshly.”

The four Stormtroopers wheel out a metallic coffin on a wheels table, the sides pierced by rows of holes and withdraw off the stage. Lisa lowers into the coffin, the front falling open to reveal manacles clicking shut around her wrists, ankles, neck and waist, securing her tightly in place. “Any last words, little Jedi?”

Lisa snarls something unintelligible and probably unprintable .

“Defiant to the end. Such a pity.” he closes the coffin, lifting the thick lid into place and locking it down. “And now, little Jedi, you are done.” he raises the lightsabre high over his head, casting its bloody light over the stage and plunges it into the box, driving it through, the stand gleaming crimson. Flames roar through the holes in the coffin, long tongues erupting from each end. Lisa screams, many in the audience joining in with her. Peter unlocks the lid, lifting it off, the front falling open to reveal a charred and blackened skeleton wearing the shreds of Lisa’s costume, flames licking over it, a red lightsabre buried in its waist. “So end all who would oppose the Empire. They...” he doubles over, clutching at his chest, “they...”

“...they triumph!!” Lisa declares as she rips the mask from her face, the audience applauding, as she stands in the centre of the stage in Peter’s uniform

The Imperial March starts up again. For several long seconds nothing happens, leaving Lisa standing on the stage, and then, finally, Peter, walks through the tables to the stage, the Stormtroopers following behind. He bows to the audience.

“And a big thank you to our Audience Stormtroopers: Dave, Andy, Ian and Rick!” The Stormtroopers bow, taking off the masks and returning to their seats, to loud cheers and applause. One table in particular erupts, but Lisa's gotten used to ignoring that table.

The curtains close, hustling them backstage as Scott and Marie get ready, Scott humming the Imperial March. “Striking, my boy. Very striking.” he mumbles, shaking Peter's hand, “And you, my dear, formidable.” he kisses her cheek, “Wasn't she, Marie?”

“Yes, dear. Very well done. A very...interesting show.”

“Thanks. Break a leg.”

Scott smiles, and walks out onto the stage, a pink rabbit nose peeking out from under his top hat.

“She didn't like it.”

“Nope.”

Lisa sighs. “Fine.”

“Don't worry about it, Lise. Marie's very traditional. She thought my Dad's show was too modern.”

“Oh, well, in that case...what kept you, Magic Boy?”

“Huh?”

“Just now. At the end. When you missed the grand reappearance and left me stranded on stage like a muppet.”

“Oh. Sort of a minor emergency. Stuart got in touch.”

“Stuart? How's Sarah? It's nothing...”

“She's in theatre at the moment, Stuart's wearing a hole in the linoleum, and he's told me to let everyone know they can come visit his son tomorrow.”

“He knows it'll be a son? I thought they weren't having the tests.”

“It'll be a son, Lise. Trust me on this.”

“Another secret?”

“Afraid so.”

“Fine. I'll let you off this one.”

“There was one other thing. Stuart wants to now if we're coming to the Samhein party. I forgot to ask you earlier.”

“The Sam what party?”

“Samhein. Halloween to normal people. The time to let your inner self out into the world. It'll be a good laugh.”

“Dressing up?”

“Costumes, yes. That's the point, to honour the ghosts and goblins, but to make sure they don't know who you are if they don't like you.”

“There's no such thing as...” she looks up at him, “is there?”

“It's more tradition than actual, but you never know...”

“Yeah, right, Magic Boy. You almost had me. Now, we need to get something for Sarah before tomorrow.”



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