Summary

Hera develops the ability to hear the background music.

Notes

Prompt from Pomrania on Tumblr, "Hera develops the ability to hear the background music."

Hera didn’t panic. As always when things got dangerous in the cockpit, she let instinct take over, let her senses communicate directly with her fingers on the control and took evasive maneuvers as Kanan let loose a volley of blaster bolts. A few dramatic notes filled the air, almost drowned out by the sound of the battle. She ignored it, she had to, there were more important things happening.

“Something the matter?”

Hera looked up at Kanan. In the background, music that she couldn’t identify played. It sounded sad, somehow. She shook her head. “No, why?”

The tone of the music changed, deepening, as though it demanded attention.

Kanan frowned. “What is it?”
She sighed. “Do you hear that?”

His expression answered the question before he could. Confusion, and a faraway look, as though he were listening very closely for something that he couldn’t hear. “The engines?” he asked, shaking his head. “You were always more in tune with the ship than me, does it sound like there’s a problem?”

Well, it was as good an excuse as any. “Nothing major”, she said. “I’ll take a look tomorrow.”

It was blissfully silent. Hera lay on her bunk, not daring to move. If she did; if she did anything that might be construed as interesting, it would come back.

She was going insane. It was the only explanation.

No, not going; gone. She was already there. Somehow, it had managed to creep up on her, and now there didn’t seem to be anything she could do about it. It wasn’t all the time, but the music played whenever anything significant was happening, whenever things got dangerous, whenever she and Kanan got close… there were different pieces that she was getting to know, similar ones. She could almost use them to gain a greater understanding of what was happening.

Only she couldn’t of course, not really. Believing that she could was nothing more than a symptom of whatever was wrong with her.

She had been laying in bed now for over an hour, not able to sleep, not daring to get up in case she heard the music. While she lay there, it was possible to believe that it was all her imagination. The moment it started again, she would know that it was real.

There was no reason at all to believe that it was an ambush. They had been there a dozen times before, they knew and trusted everybody, and they had been providing them with extra rations for months. Absolutely nothing was different today, kids were playing nearby, people strolling past discussing their day; there were no danger signs whatsoever. Even Kanan and Ezra, who should have been more attuned to any danger, appeared calm and relaxed.

But… the music had changed. It was subtle at first, so subtle that she barely noticed it; a few deeper notes mingled into the pleasant tune playing in her head. They grew stronger though, and more numerous, more ominous.

The music began to build toward a crescendo, and she couldn’t stop herself. If there was even a chance that she wasn’t insane, she had to do something. “Watch out!” she yelled, not sure what she was warning them about, or what they could do to protect themselves. Even as she called out, she was certain that she was making a fool of herself; that she was going to have to come up with some kind of an explanation for her behavior.

Kanan reacted immediately, without question, reaching for his lightsaber, instantly alert. Ezra followed suit, while Sabine ducked, pulling out her blaster.

The first bolts came from the left, Kanan deflected them easily. Stormtroopers emerged from the buildings, weapons drawn. For a moment, Hera was almost too busy watching the scene unfold to react.

She had known. She hadn’t known what was going to happen, but she had known that there was danger. Nothing had happened until she had raised the alarm, but it hadn’t been a case of people reacting to her alarm. There had been stormtroopers there, laying in wait, preparing an ambush.
Whatever the music was, it was on her side.

“Danger music?”

Hera shook her head. “Just music music,” she confirmed. “That was the first time there was any real
danger since it started.”

Kanan frowned, his hand absently touching his beard as he thought over what he was being told.
“Music?” he asked again.

“Music.”

“But, what kind of music?”

That was a more difficult question. “It varies,” she said. “And it’s not like I have a lot of knowledge
to call upon. But it has moods, and I guess one of them becomes more apparent when there’s
danger. Right now, it’s just a few quiet notes playing in the background.”

Kanan’s frown deepened. “But there’s no music,” he said.

“I know,” she said. “But I can still hear it.”

“And you can hear it now?” he asked her.

She paused for a moment, listening. It was a tune she was growing to recognize and enjoy, the one
that played whenever Kanan was around, but it was different this time. There was a mistrustful note
to it, there was worry there too. She nodded. “I can,” she confirmed.

“What’s it telling you now?”

It didn’t work that way. Or if it did, she hadn’t quite figured it out yet. Still, there was something
she did know, whether it was being communicated to her by subtle changes in the music, or by her
own instinct. “You don’t believe me,” she said. “You’re worried that I’ve lost my mind.”

Kanan didn’t reply.

Sitting alone in the control room of the Ghost, Hera leaned back in her seat, pressing her back against
the well-worn upholstery of the pilot’s chair, and sighed. A few notes played, she couldn’t identify
the instrument, but it sounded sad. That was appropriate, she felt alone, and the music reflected that.

As she reflected on that, the music grew faster, happier, and and slowly morphed into a variation on
something that she recognized. A tune that only ever played when Kanan was nearby. She turned
in her seat, and waited. The door did not open.

Puzzled, she checked the make sure autopilot was engaged, then got to her feet, moved to the back
of the cockpit and opened the door for herself. As predicted, Kanan was on the other side, one hand
hovering near to the door control panel, the fingers of the other threaded through the handles of two
cups. Her mouth began to water as the smell of fresh caf filled the air.

“Going to stay out there all night?” she asked.

Kanan frowned. “How did you know I was here?” he asked.

She shrugged, but didn’t reply. “Come on in, I could use the company.”
Kanan handed her a cup before walking through the door and sitting down in the co-pilot’s seat. The music was hopeful, pleasant, there was no sense of warning in it. Hera relaxed, checked the course corrections on the computer, then took a sip of her caf.

In the background, the music changed subtly; something was about to happen. The volume dropped to allow for speech to be heard.

“I don’t think you’re crazy,” Kanan told her.

Despite herself, Hera couldn’t help but laugh. The musical build-up had seemed like it was heading to something better than that. “That’s good to know,” she said.

Kanan placed his cup on the flat surface at the side of the co-pilot controls. She eyed it nervously, but the ship was steady and she trusted his reflexes if it should fall. She also trusted the music to warn her, if anything unexpected was about to happen. He turned to face her. “The other day,” he said. “You asked if I thought you’d lost your mind. I should have said no.”

Instead of nothing, which is what he had said. Yeah, he should have.

Kanan took a sip of his drink and leaned back in his seat, like he was done talking.

“That’s all you came to say?” she asked.

He hesitated. “Pretty much,” he said. “That, and I’m sorry. Ever since I started telling people again about my being a Jedi, I’ve had people not believe me. Most of the time, I don’t care, but I know how frustrating it can be. And I’ve witnessed what your ability can do, so as strange as it seems, I know it’s real.”

Hera shook her head. “It’s not an ‘ability’,” she said. “It’s…” she faltered. What was it? “It’s just music.”

He nodded. “I wish I could hear it with you,” he told her.

She wished that too, but there were other ways that she could share it with him. “It’s getting stronger right now,” she told him. “That usually means something’s going to happen.” She reached across and took his hand in hers, and the music swelled. He leaned a little closer, and she did too, their lips were just about to touch when the music stopped suddenly. The door behind them opened.

“Oh, uh… sorry guys,” said Ezra, and beat a hasty retreat.

Hera sighed and leaned back in her chair. “Every time,” she muttered. “Every single time.”

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