The Dichotomy of Darth Vader

by zukoslover

Summary

Two years after the events of RoTS, Darth Vader and his former Master, Obi-Wan Kenobi, are reunited through a series of unforeseen circumstances.

Notes

Medical advances in regenerating tissue and regrowing limbs are much further than in canon, so Vader is fully healed and suitless and looks like Anakin before Mustafar. Hair's shorter though since it had to grow back (and because I think RotS hairstyle is stupid and girly). Basically, think of Hayden in this picture- http://es.doblaje.wikia.com/wiki/Hayden_Christensen. Yummy. Oh, and old Palpy's still alive and kicking, although whether that will remain the case remains to be seen.

Regarding the slash pairing, I'm still unsure as to how much actual slash there will even be, so if it's not your thing you could probably just skip those parts and still read this. And its possible, but unlikely, that the rating may go up.
The Benefits of Meditation

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Present Day, Coruscant

'I hardly see what preventing me from meditating is going to accomplish. It's not as though I can meditate my way out of here,' Obi-Wan protested.

'I told you, I don't want you releasing your feelings into the Force. That way you'll actually be forced to feel something, for a change,' Vader replied pointedly.

'I wouldn't be here were it not for my ability to feel. Or have you already forgotten that I came to you willingly?'

'Your willingness is questionable, my old Master.'

'Perhaps. But that is neither here nor there. We were discussing your reluctance to remove this abomination from my neck.' He seethed at Obi-Wan's dismissiveness; for all that he was no longer the man's Padawan, he never failed to make him feel like a foolish youth, unworthy of consideration.

'You'll attempt to leave,' he said, unconvincingly.

Obi-Wan ran a weary hand through the hair flopping over his eyes. 'We've been through this, Vader.'

'I don't trust you.'

'Yes, you do, about this.' And it was true, he did. But he had needed a reason.

'I'll remove it if you promise not to be a fucking Jedi and act like a human being for once!'

'I am a 'fucking' Jedi, as you so eloquently put it,'- Vader started, because hearing coarse words in Obi-Wan's polished Coruscanti accent was unnerving...and also rather arousing- 'and I know how much that makes you want to thrust a lightsaber in my gut.'

Vader flinched, somehow not expecting Obi-Wan to bring up his murderous actions in the past. He ignored the twinge of guilt in his chest.

'I don't- that's not- look, this is the deal, take it or leave it. I know what it's like being cut off from the Force and I have no desire to inflict it on you if I don't have to. But I don't want you keeping your feelings from me either, like before,' he continued fiercely. 'I won't tolerate it.'

'One more thing you won't tolerate? How novel. But I thought I wasn't capable of emotion anyway.' He really hated Obi-Wan's dry wit sometimes, when countering it coolly, without rising to the bait, was nigh on impossible. Vader had been trying to keep his patience, but now it was wearing thin.

'Just give me your damn word!'
He shot him an annoyed look. 'You must understand, Darth Vader, that meditating for a Jedi is akin to breathing; in fact, it's an integral part of being a Jedi. And the benefits of meditation are manifold, why even you might profit from- '

'I know what meditating is, Obi-Wan! I was a Jedi too once, remember?' Vader gritted his teeth.

'Oh, yes. Pardon me, I almost forgot.' Behind the apologetic mien, there lingered a thread of smugness in the Force - he had done that on purpose, Vader realised. Obi-Wan continued to speak.

'I propose an alternative suggestion. Allow me to meditate, and I promise to examine each feeling and emotion and not ignore the more unwelcome ones. I will only release the darker, more negative emotions into the Force- the others, I will feel and permit to affect my actions, just like a regular person. Does this please you, my Lord?' Obi-Wan was leaning back, looking at him from under half-lidded eyes; his lilting voice was pleasant and even. Vader knew it was only a mockery of respect on the others part, yet even so it was strangely gratifying to hear his former Master refer to him in that manner.

'Very well. I would insist you not release your anger and fear, but I'm aware that its more likely for Yoda to become a Sith than you,' he snorted, anger faded away.

Obi-Wan inclined his head. 'You flatter me.'

'That was not my intention. In any case, I wouldn't have you any other way.' He looked at him, affection burning in his gaze. 'There's always been something about you, Obi-Wan, all that lightness, it-it defines you. So much Light, it's almost unbearable for one such as me, and yet...intoxicating.'

Obi-Wan was looking at him with an expression of fondness twisted up in sorrow so piquant that Vader was forced to look away. He had said more than he had meant to. He looked up in shock when Obi-Wan placed a firm hand on his shoulder.

'I will always possess this Light. That I promise you, Ana-,' he stopped mid word, lips tightening at the edges at the error. He shifted away, eyes downcast, auburn fringe obscuring his face.

He would speak no more, Vader knew, and so, wordlessly, he left Obi-Wan alone in his chambers. But not before sending a tendril of the Force out behind him. He smiled as heard the clatter of the Force inhibitor falling from Obi-Wan's neck.

Chapter End Notes

Just to clarify any confusion, the first chapter is starting from the middle of the story- earlier events will be explained later on.
Chapter Summary

Obi-Wan makes a choice.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Two weeks earlier

'Master, I must help her, she is in danger! I cannot knowingly allow any harm to come to Ahsoka.'

'You will do no good to her or anyone by exposing your existence to the Empire. Your place is here, with young Luke.'

'I will be careful,' he insisted. 'They will not recognise me.'

'Obi-Wan, don't do this.'

'I must. Don't you see that I cannot simply sit here doing nothing when she has begged me for help?'

'If it is the will of the Force for her to pass into it, as all things do, then you must accept it.'

Obi-Wan shook his head. 'I am going, Qui-Gon, and you cannot stop me. I owe it to the memory of Anakin Skywalker to save her.'

Qui-Gon sighed resignedly, having realised he would not be dissuaded. 'You must let go of this attachment to Anakin once and for all, Obi-Wan, or you will never be at peace.'

There was an expression of infinite sorrow on Obi-Wan's face.

'I have already let go of it - on Mustafar.'

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He was crouching behind a crate of boxes in the cargo hold, bent over a prone and injured Ahsoka.

'Hold on, young one. I will get you to safety, I promise,' he whispered, with an assurance he did not feel. She nodded and squeezed his hand, but did not look very convinced. Obi-Wan frowned, considering their few viable options. They were currently hiding from Imperial Stormtroopers in the cargo hold of the massive Imperial Star Destroyer where Ahsoka and a few other rebels had been taken prisoner. Obi-Wan could only hope that they had made it to the Outrider, the ship he had arrived in for his daring, but possibly failed, rescue. The two of them had separated from the others to throw the Imperial troopers chasing them off their tail, but they had proved harder to shake off than anticipated. Obi-Wan had chosen to flee rather than stand and decimate the lot of them, which, though doable, would most certainly have drawn far too much attention.
Unfortunately, a stray blaster shot had hit Ahsoka in the side in the ensuing chase, resulting in their current predicament.

The sound of his commlink chiming was a welcome interruption; he answered it, hope churning in his stomach.

'Master Kenobi, do you copy? Are you and Ahsoka alright?' It was Drun Cairnwick, one of the Jedi he had freed along with Ahsoka, sounding urgent and worried.

'Ahsoka's injured, so we're hiding down in the cargo hold. Where are you?'

'We've all made it safely to the Outrider, thank the Force, but it won't be long before they realise we're still on the ship. I suggest you make your way to the hangar, and quickly.'

'We'll be on our way, but do not hesitate to leave us behind if you have no other alternative.' With that he cut off the commlink before Drun could respond.

He could feel a Dark presence on this ship, heavily shielded, but nonetheless leaking hate and anger in the Force. It felt disturbingly familiar. He tightened his own mental shields so that the Darksider could not sense him, feeling a sense on foreboding. With a prescient certainty, he knew he would not make it off this ship.

'Do you feel that,'

'Yes. We cannot linger here much longer.'

This Force-signature must be none other than the Sith Lord Ahsoka had informed him the Inquisitor who had arrested her had been waiting for, in order to interrogate the imprisoned rebels. Obi-Wan shivered - if he had not made it in time, Ahsoka could very well have been dead by now. They needed to get off this cruiser now.

The Force whispered to him that the way ahead was clear. He quickly gathered the surprised Togruta into his arms before she could protest, then began to find his way out of the hold.

After hurrying through several twisting corridors and lifts, but hardly encountering any Imperials, they finally arrived at the hangar; the ship right ahead of them, no Stormtroopers in sight. His heart leaped in his chest, joy mixed with disbelief - they had made it, Ahsoka could very well have been dead by now. They needed to get off this cruiser now.

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'Get on the ship,' he hissed at Ahsoka, who shook her head frantically, nails digging painfully into his nape.

'No, Master Obi-Wan, I won't leave you.'

'Go! You won't stand a chance against him in this state!' And before she could protest further, he used the Force to throw her the short distance to the Outrider, next to which Drun stood waiting.

'Obi-Wan!' She cried out, huge blue eyes spilling with tears. He smiled sadly, watching as Drun practically dragged her back into the ship, too weak to resist. He doubted he would survive this encounter but he intended to distract the Sith Lord long enough for the others to escape. He faced the entrance to the hanger, stance in his usual defensive Soresu form, lightsaber raised high next to his head.

*Qui-Gon, you must watch over young Luke for me.*
The Force recoiled and protested as the Sith strode in, a nauseous, suffocating sense seeming to emanate from him. He was dressed all in black, with a helmet and mask on his face that resembled a battledroid. This, then, was Sidious's new apprentice.

The Sith unexpectedly stopped short at the sight of him. Obi-Wan could feel shock, anger, hurt and, most curious of all, an overwhelming sense of nostalgia rolling off the man in waves.

'Obi-Wan?' He asked. The voice emerging from the mask was mechanical and emotionless and yet...he knew that voice.

'A little familiar don't you think, Sith, considering we've never had the pleasure,' he said, raising his eyebrows at the use of his first name.

And then he attacked, deciding to take advantage of the Darksider's odd reaction to him. Their lightsabers clashed, red and blue plasma hissing at the contact.

'You don't recognise me, Obi-Wan? Especially after what you did to me!' His blade pounded back at Obi-Wan's, hard and aggressive, fuelled by his rage, which appeared to be, inexplicably, personal.

Obi-Wan gave ground, allowing himself to be pushed back, saber deftly blocking the relentless hacking. A sense of déjà vu flashed through him.

As they fought, he registered the sound of shots firing and ricocheting off the escaping ship- sparks flew at the edge of his vision. He hoped desperately that they would be able to get away, but he realised that would only happen if he took the Sith's attention away from the fleeing rebels. It was risky, choosing to antagonise the Sith further, but it was possible his anger would cloud his judgement so that he was too focused on Obi-Wan to worry about the ship.

'I don't even know who you are! Are you sure using the Dark Side hasn't addled your mind?' He taunted, hoping to incite him. It must've worked, because he was now being attacked with twice the fervour- Obi-Wan barely managed to hold him off, their lightsabers moving too fast to be tracked by the naked eye. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw the Outrider speed off the hangar- hope blossomed in his chest.

'You'll pay for your crimes, Obi-Wan,' the Sith hissed, his mask inches away as his blade slid along the length of Obi-Wan's, pushing both humming plasma bars dangerously close to Obi-Wan's neck.

'Why do you keep calling me by my name?' He asked, struggling to resist the other's superior strength.

'Search your feelings, my old Master,' he said like it was a promise, then pushed him away with so much force that he stumbled.

And then the truth crashed into Obi-Wan like the weight of the galaxy on his shoulders. He stared, walking backwards away from Anakin - no - Vader, shaking his head in muted horror and disbelief. I killed you.

Suddenly Ahsoka's voice was screaming in his mind, jerking him out of his stunned stupor.

Obi-Wan! They caught us in the tractor beam!

No. He was already reeling from the revelation of Ana-Vader's continued existence, and hearing this now hit him like a blow in the gut. After everything we've been through, to get so far, and then
fail, this close to freedom...I must do something. But what? And then it occurred to him that there was one thing he could do—far-fetched and suicidal, but worth a shot.

He threw his lightsaber to the ground. Vader visibly started at the action, radiating confusion and disbelief.

'Are you surrendering?!

'Yes. Let them go, and I will willingly give myself to you.'

'Always the self-sacrificing martyr aren't you, Obi-Wan?' He sneered. 'Give me one reason to accept your offer. I could easily kill you in a fair fight, and then kill them after.'

Obi-Wan swallowed; it was a gamble, and he was throwing the dice where he couldn't even see it.

'But you don't want to merely kill me, do you, Vader?' He purposefully lowered his tenor, attempting to sound persuasive. 'You want to make me suffer for what I did to you. A quick, easy death would be too good for me. And you of all people know I do not fear passing into the Force.'

'You know me far too well, my old Master,' he replied. 'Though perhaps not as well as you think.' There was a pause. 'I accept.'

He turned to one of the armoured troopers standing at attention. 'Captain, allow the rebel ship to escape. We have more important matters at hand.'

Chapter End Notes

The Outrider is Dash Rendar's YT-2400 class freighter in the Shadows of the Empire multimedia campaign. I copied the name of that ship for Obi-Wan's starship. According to Wookieepedia—Drun Cairnwick was a male Human Jedi trainee who served the Jedi Order. Escaping the fall of the Order during the Great Jedi Purge and the rise of the Galactic Empire, Cairnwick became a member of the Alliance to Restore the Republic.
Obi-Wan had been not been shown into the the brig as he had expected, but rather into large and luxurious personal quarters which could only belong to the ship's Admiral. His hands were cuffed, but that was a mere formality- as soon as he was left alone in the chambers he used the Force to find the chink in the electric binders and they sprang open. To his surprise, Vader had not personally escorted him here, although he had had the foresight to hold onto Obi-Wan's lightsaber. He had already tried the door and found it to be unlocked and unguarded - evidently Vader was testing his resolve. Obi-Wan couldn't see why he had bothered; even if he wanted to, trying to escape off a star destroyer occupied by hundreds of Stormtroopers and a very dangerous Sith Lord, unarmed and with no getaway vessel, was downright suicidal. And whatever his feelings were regarding death, he wasn't so far gone as to actually invite it with no cause. In any case, he had no intention of absconding, for he had given his word and intended to keep it. He also had an inkling that if he did not, Vader would relentlessly hunt down Ahsoka and the others - probably the only thing keeping them alive and unpursued even now was Obi-Wan's own surrender.

He wondered what the man could be planning, keeping him in such comfortable quarters. Most likely, it was to throw him off and keep him in a state of perpetual worry and suspicion, waiting for the other shoe to drop. Or perhaps he wanted Obi-Wan to grow complacent and forget that he was in mortal danger, though surely he had to know him better than that. Whatever Vader's intentions were, Obi-Wan would not give him the satisfaction - he lay his cloak on the ground and knelt down on his knees. Closing his eyes, he began to meditate.

An hour passed, perhaps more, he was not sure, when someone noiselessly entered the chamber. Obi-Wan's eyes remained closed but he knew it was Vader from the way the Force seemed to blacken.

'Desperate to release all those feelings from seeing me again, old man?' he asked mockingly.

'Merely meditating to pass the time, that is all.' Vader made a sound that could've been scoffing. For the first time, Obi-Wan was curious about the mask that concealed his face and voice - was his face too scarred from the flames of Mustafar to be seen, his voice ruined beyond use? Because other than that, his movements seemed as fluid and graceful as Anakin's had ever been. Obi-Wan wondered again how he was even alive, but was not foolish enough to ask and remind Vader of what he had taken from him.

'Get up. I want to show you something,' Vader said curtly. Obi-Wan obeyed, not that he had much choice in the matter.

Vader led him into the bedroom, locking the door behind them. Is he going to torture me now? But the bedroom seemed a strange place to conduct an interrogation - surely the cells would have served such a purpose far better. Vader motioned at the bed. 'Sit,' he ordered.
'I'd rather stand, if it's all the same to you.' Vader made a shrugging motion, as if it did not matter either way.

Obi-Wan remained standing in the centre of the room; Vader came up to him, stepping forward until he was less than a foot away. He cut an imposing figure- it irritated Obi-Wan more than he would admit that he had to look up to meet that frightening visage, more so now that he was closer. It was impossible to guess what the Sith was thinking or what he was going to do next. His heart hammered against his ribs in anticipation.

Slowly and gradually, inch by painstaking inch, Vader started to lift the helmet off his head. He was going to reveal himself, Obi-Wan realised, in stunned dismay, for he quite selfishly had no desire to see the damage he had inflicted on the man, his intense curiosity notwithstanding. Time seemed to stretch and dilate - it was taking an unbearably long time. He held his breath as the mask came off fully.

The face opposite him belonged to the man who was dearer to him than anyone or anything else in the entire galaxy; his best friend, his partner, his brother, and so much more that could never be put into words. It was the un tarnished and unscathed face from a lifetime ago, before he had watched it light up in flames. Obi-Wan's eyes burned painfully.

'Anakin,' he said, and it came out as something between a gasp and a sob, wrenched out of somewhere deep inside him that he had thought was long buried.

'I go by Vader now, Obi-Wan,' said the man, and even his voice was exactly the same, not scratchy and harsh, but that familiar beloved tenor, deep and with the slightest sweet yet contrastingly menacing edge to it.

'How?' It was inconceivable; he had watched him set aflame before his very eyes.

'The Kaminoans,' he began, blue eyes - not yellow - that he had thought to never again gaze into, looking directly into Obi-Wan's, 'are very good at what they do. Provided with my DNA, it was relatively simple for them to regrow my limbs. Nonetheless, it was a long and arduous process, but one I, thankfully, was not mostly conscious for.'

'I didn't think you could possibly have- that you would've survived the injuries.'

'That you gave me?' Obi-Wan flinched but Vader seemed surprisingly calm considering their topic of conversation. 'I, too, did not expect to survive, but as it turned out, the Force had other plans.'

He turned away abruptly and walked over to the window, his back to Obi-Wan. He tried to probe unobtrusively at his mind but came up with blankness; the others shields were iron tight. When Vader spoke again his voice was swelling with restrained emotion.

'My master found me on that bank of lava, a broken husk. I was scorched, charred, less than a man, a shadow of who I once was - and in agony so complete that I forgot I had ever experienced anything else. What happened after that I was not aware for, but when I awoke again, I was as you see me now.' He tilted his head, his eyes slanting to look at Obi-Wan over his shoulder. 'I suppose you could say I was...reborn from the ashes of my immolation.'

And reborn he had been indeed. There was not a mark or blemish marring his face; even the scar on his right eyebrow was gone. His skin was paler, smoother, and with darkened depressions under his eyes that granted them a haunted look he had not possessed before. He had clearly lost weight for his face appeared thinner - the edge of his jaws defined, the planes of his cheek taut and flat - and with a maturity conferred no doubt by the past few years. The greatest change, though, was his
hair; long curling locks replaced by a short haircut, clipped relatively close to the scalp at the side, the thicker front hair standing off his forehead. There could be no question that he looked handsomer than ever.

But if his crude matter was identical to Anakin's, he was his very antithesis in the Force. Where Anakin lit up the Force like a beacon, Vader sucked in all light like a black hole. The blinding brilliance of a thousand suns was now a blazing inferno of darkness.

Guilt racked through the Jedi. He had made his best friend suffer unimaginably, beyond belief, all because he could not bring himself to watch the spark go out of Anakin's eyes as he struck him down. And it had been for nothing, nothing at all because here he stood now, alive and well and a Sith so powerful he had brought the Jedi to their knees. He had not been able to do his duty, whether out of love or some misplaced sense of righteousness he could not say, and now the whole galaxy was feeling the ramifications of his weakness. It would have been better if he had killed him, or been aware enough of his own inability to refuse Yoda's order.

His self-remonstrations must have shown on his face, because Vader asked, 'Tell me, Master Kenobi, are you rueing the fact that you did not kill me that day?'

'I would rather see you dead than the creature you have become,' he said, the taste of the words bitter in his mouth with regret. Vader wore an expression of studied blankness and when he spoke his voice was deceptively quiet.

'Even if it would have meant going against your own teachings of compassion and mercy? That is not the Jedi way,'

'It is what Anakin Skywalker would have wanted,' he pronounced calmly, words infused with utter conviction. Yellow flashed momentarily in the Sith's eyes. There was no warning from the Force - all of a sudden Obi-Wan was choking, clawing uselessly at his throat as he tried to prise off the invisible grip that was restricting the passage of air into his airways. His eyes began to water and his face deepened in colour from the desperate fervency of his efforts.

'Anakin Skywalker is dead!' Vader hissed malevolently. 'And you know nothing of what he wanted, nor of his secret hopes and desires.'

'I know - he would - never - hurt me!' he forced out painfully, lungs crying out for air. Dots of colour swam before his eyes.

'You cut me down and watched me burn! You don't deserve my mercy - I should make you suffer for what you did!' He shouted, enraged, twisting a closed fist in the air.

'I-' But he could not go on, the lack of air making him dizzy and close to fainting. This is the end then, he thought with a sense of finality, tinged with regret for his failures, for the Jedi and Anakin and Luke, and for never finishing learning Qui-Gon's technique.

And then it was gone, and he could breathe again, collapsing onto the floor in a spluttering, coughing heap as he gratefully gulped mouthfuls of air. Vader stood above him, breathing harshly as he struggled to regain control over himself. The screaming in the Force eventually subsided as he succeeded in suppressing his rage. He crouched down next to Obi-Wan, hard fingers grasping his chin and cruelly forcing his flushed face up.

'You can't imagine how long I've waited for this day. For this decision. I should kill you now, I know, because you will only turn on me if I don't, but I won't. No, you're going to make up for what you did that day...and for everything else.'
'What will you do to me?' he whispered predictably, knowing Vader wanted to tell him.

He smiled, and it was at once beautiful and terrifying. 'I'm going to make you love me, Obi-Wan.'

Chapter End Notes

Yup..he's a psycho..
Vader's behaviour may seem at times to be contradictory or erratic, but worry not - its entirely on purpose.
Chapter Summary

Vader explores his feelings towards his former master, and comes to some conclusions.

Chapter Notes

Chapter four is up, folks! And finally a bit of long-awaited Obi/Vader. Probably not enough for you though, Phoenix_Soar :P. Yes, I know, I'm a tease.

On a side-note, you all have absolutely got to watch this video if you're craving some Obi-Wan and Anakin, An unfinished life by Sweetladybat - https://youtu.be/feVCbgQFfoU

The moment he entered his chambers, he flung off the hateful helmet and chucked it petulantly across the room. He crossed the distance to his bunk in a two, large strides and heavily sat down, head in his hands. Breathing deeply through his nose, he began to recite the mantra of his new religion in his mind, still strange for all that it ought to be long familiar by now.

Peace is a lie, there is only passion. From passion, I gain strength. Through strength, I gain power...

He repeated it continuously until he had centered himself, attaining once more some measure of discipline over his unruly emotions. Not that he was ever truly calm anymore - serenity eluded him like silk slipping between his fingers. The closest he had come to it had been only moments ago, in his former Master's presence - but at the same time he had felt a rage so powerful it had frightened even himself. The man had always had the ability to elicit reactions from him that no one, not even Padme, had been able to. It had taken all he had to let go of his grip squeezing Obi-Wan's throat, consumed in the heady feeling of having this particular Jedi powerless and completely at his mercy. The Dark Side had caressed him eagerly, goading him into giving into his anger - to make Obi-Wan beg, to force him down on his knees before him, to push him down to the ground and have his way with him..

Vader hitched his breath; he did not know where that thought had come from. It lingereded in his mind, unbidden, like the silvery embellishments of a musical note. He imagined that milky white throat, no longer gasping for air, but arched forward, bared naked for his lips, and his alone. He shuddered.

But it was a delusion more far-fetched than even his wildest dreams - Obi-Wan would rather be choked again a hundred times over than surrender to his touch. The thought made him scowl; he had felt the sorrow, regret and self-reproach permeating the Jedi Master's Force-signature to an almost suffocating degree, so deep-rooted that it had irrevocably changed his feel in the Force. Vader despised it, wanting his old Obi-Wan back - the one who was filled with affection at the sight of him, not this insufferable grief (never loathing of course, Jedi did not entertain such strong
passions).

Even so, he found he could not let go of the man. In spite of Obi-Wan's barely contained revulsion at his Darkness, and his own virulent wrath and resentment and even anguish, there was an irrevocable bond between the two of them. One that could not be destroyed by barriers of their own making. And the thought of being parted from him sent panic shooting through Vader, filling him with an irrational desire to rush to Obi-Wan's side and make sure that he was really there; that he was not abandoned and alone. It was attachment - his Master would call it weakness -, of that he was fully aware, and discouraged by the Sith even as it was by the Jedi, (perhaps the only thing they agreed on, he thought with a sense of grim amusement) but the difference now was that no one, not even the Emperor, could make him give up the ones he loved. There was no one left to challenge his power and his might, and he fully intended to use it to keep Obi-Wan close - in whatever manner the Jedi would agree to.

The Sith promised that if one fully embraced the Dark Side of the Force, it would free you from your chains - but he had been welcomed by only cold and loneliness in the Dark's inexorable hold. Yet to walk away from that addictive power was beyond the capacity of any Force-sensitive who had drunk at its cusp. Yoda had been right about one thing, if nothing else - Once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny. To continue to live the way he had all this time as a Sith, however, was intolerable to him. Sith were meant to function alone and independently, trusting no one; to gain mastery over themselves, requiring nothing but the Force, and even that was a tool to bend to their will. But lately the silence and isolation of his life had been eating away at him, driving him to distraction. He had found himself unwillingly longing for affection and trust, for camaraderie and humour, for kind touches and teasing jests- the vivid brightness that had been Anakin Skywalker's life. And, more than anything, that feeling of being truly alive; to live, not just function.

All of which could only be found in the presence of the one Jedi on this ship.

He would make him realise how hollow were his objections, see the truth hidden by his Jedi sensibilities, and open his eyes to the hypocrisy of their teachings. He would have his Jedi back, no matter what.

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It had been two days since he had first shown himself to Obi-Wan. He had not visited him since in order to allow the Jedi Master time to process his avowal, meditate if need be, which he was aware his proximity would hinder, and most importantly, come to terms with the fact - clearly implicit in his actions - that Vader would never let him go.

He too had used the time to look introspectively, and examine his feelings - another choking episode was hardly desirable. For all his overwhelming need for Obi-Wan, he was fully conscious of the fact that he could not absolve him for what he had done to him. He might have recovered fully from his injuries, but the memory of it haunted him nonetheless. It was not so much the physical pain now - for although it had been horrific, its shadow had passed along with the physical proof of it - but rather the knowledge of how far Obi-Wan put his duty above all else. Above him. That the man who had been his one protectorate and caregiver for half his life was capable of cutting him down in cold blood was chilling. True, he had attacked first, but he could now admit that he had been drunk on his first taste of the Dark Side, his judgement clouded - but the same could not be said for the Jedi Master. And worst of all, worse than the unpremeditated action of the moment, was knowing he had stood and watched as he burned in that lava pit, and then walked away, turning his back to him. As far as Obi-Wan had been concerned, he had killed him that day. Vader knew he would not be able to trust him - the betrayal ran too deep.
Nonetheless, if he was not to choke him to the point of oblivion again - he wanted him to live after all - he needed to move on from Mustafar. To at least forget where he could not forgive.

He entered the luxurious quarters he had given him (that were originally meant for himself, he thought childishly) without knocking, knowing Obi-Wan would have already sensed him approach. He was not in the living area, nor when he checked, the bedroom. He headed towards the fresher and slightly pushed open the ajar door - there, standing under the shower was a very wet, very naked Obi-Wan Kenobi. His face was tilted upwards to receive the rather limited spray of water, which trickled down the enticing flesh of his shoulders and back. Droplets of water clung to every inch of his body. Vader could only gaze on, transfixed - he was as flawless and exquisite as he had ever been, untouched by the passage of two years.

'At least have the decency to look away,' came at last the dry acknowledgement from the ever imperturbable Jedi Master.

'Nothing I haven't seen before,' he answered hoarsely, his voice not as nonchalant as he would have liked it to be.

'Our present relationship does not allow for that sort of intimacy. Vader is not the boy I raised, nor the man I fought beside.' His eyes remained closed, words almost inaudible over the sound of running water.

'Darth Vader came to being from the sum of my experiences,' he responded sharply. 'He is me as Skywalker was always too afraid to become, because Vader is not a slave to his fear.'

'Merely a slave to his anger,' said the other quietly, and turned off the shower. Obi-Wan turned around, meeting his eyes without qualm, then grabbed a towel and brushed past him as he left the fresher. The momentary contact of bare skin on his clothed body sent a flash of heat through him. He clenched his fist, trying to ignore the effect of the heady mixture of lust and annoyance coursing through his body.

He followed after him to the bedroom to see Obi-Wan towelling his hair dry, a towel hanging impossibly low on his hips. The V formed by his pelvic muscles seemed to encourage him to look further down, arousing his curiosity as to what was covered by the towel. The faint line of auburn hair travelling down his chiselled abdomen did not help matters.

'My face is up here, An-Vader,' said Obi-Wan, a note of bemusement in his voice. Reluctantly, he drew his eyes up to his face, making sure to fully appreciate the view - he doubted he would get another such chance. One hand still held the towel to his head, damp locks of hair sticking to his forehead and an expression of perplexed amusement on his face. Quite frankly, thought Vader, he looked adorable. A rush of affection surged through him; he made a split-second decision.

'Obi-Wan,' he said hesitatingly, 'I don't mind if- I mean, you can call me Anakin, if you want.'

Obi-Wan looked floored. 'I...' he faltered, and looked away, seeming to have lost some of his equanimity. There was a pregnant pause - Vader waited impatiently.

'Well?' He demanded at last, when Obi-Wan continued to remain silent.

'I don't know if I can - if it would be right,' he spoke, looking discomfited.

'I don't see what the problem is.' Vader frowned, not expecting this reluctance. He had thought his offer would have pleased the older man.

'Vader is your self-styled moniker, and your preferred name, isn't it? And you yourself said that
Anakin Skywalker is dead,' Obi-Wan pointed out, looking relieved to have found an answer that he
could not refute.

'I was angry at the time,' he admitted, scowling. 'And the truth is, it feels strange to have you call
me by that name, well, its more of a title really. I've always been Anakin to you, after all - I could
be your Anakin again. Only to you.' He looked into his face earnestly. 'If you'll let me.'

'We can't go back, Vader. Too much has transpired - I can't see you as that boy anymore,' Obi-
Wan said slowly, glancing warily at him, as if just waiting for him to start suffocating him for
daring to disagree.

'That boy had the same potential for Darkness that I do. He just wasn't aware of it,' he argued.
'Vader he..he's an unchangeable part of me. And now I see that he has always been a part of me in
some way. I used to think of him as a dragon I had locked away in me, one I could always
eventually tame. But now I am the dragon.'

'I can't accept that,' he whispered. 'I refuse to. But,' raising his voice, 'I will call you Anakin, if you
truly wish it.'

'I would like that.'

'Very well..Anakin,' Obi-Wan said, inclining his head. The familiar name sent a warm feeling
straight to his chest; impulsively, he reached forward to clasp Obi-Wan's exposed shoulder,
forgetting his own susceptibility to the others bare skin. Heat warmed his fingertips. The feel of
skin on skin was a long forgotten one, but exhilarating nonetheless. Obi-wan seemed completely
ignorant of the effect he was having on him, for he was looking on rather fondly with an
imperceptible curl of his lips.

Tentatively, he began to run his hand up the other's shoulder, and along his collarbone. He felt Obi-
Wan breath in sharply. Keeping his gaze fixed, he came closer, trailing his fingers down his
pectorals. An expression of uncertainty and apprehension crossed Obi-Wan's refined features. He
prayed desperately that he would not pull away - and incredibly, he did not. Emboldened, Vader
reached up with other hand to grip the nape of his neck, so close now that their breaths mingled.
Obi-Wan seemed to come undone at his proximity, screwing his eyes shut, his face open and
exposed in a rare display of feeling. The Force was awash with his conflicting emotions.

'Anakin,' he said, breathlessly. Vader shivered at the thrill that went through him at all that was
trapped in that one word, that could never be conveyed. Instantly, he was transported to a time
before Vader, before they stood on opposite sides in the timeless war between Jedi and Sith; a time
when they had been more intimate in spirit than any two other beings.

'Say it again,' he entreated. He wanted to keep pretending for as long as he could, to hold on to the
precious warm glow lighting up in him and filling the Force between them, making it sing.

'Anakin, you can't-' started Obi-Wan, looking at him with the utmost pity, as if he knew exactly
what he was thinking.

'Please,' Vader all but begged. He needed this, needed Obi-Wan so very badly. Please, Obi-Wan.
Don't reject me, not now.

'Oh, Anakin, I'm so very sorry,' he sighed, 'I have failed you.' Obi-Wan's blue-gray eyes were
ringed red with repressed emotion.

He pressed their foreheads together. 'I've missed you so much,' he breathed. 'Master.'
Chapter End Notes

The Sith Code that Vader recites at the beginning can be found on Wookieepedia.
Attachment

Chapter Summary

Obi-Wan has always been prone to attachment.

Chapter Notes

Yes, this story has actually been updated. Is anyone even following it anymore?

There was a feeling building within him from deep inside, growing bigger and bigger each second, verging on consuming him. He felt breathless, reeling from emotion.

'Master,' Vader whispered. 'Oh, Gods, I've missed you - Obi-Wan, I can't - ' the words caught in his throat and he broke off, unable to continue. Obi-Wan's eyes remained shut, but he reached up to touch his cheek. Vader trembled.

He wanted - no, yearned - for so much, that it was impossible to express in words. The yearning was a bone deep ache, something that had always lingered just below the surface but had been continually repressed. And now all his restraint had been shattered in a single moment, by this hand on his face, this whisper of his name. His mind felt blissfully blank - all he knew was that he needed to hold his Master close, closer than was physically possible, until it became just as impossible for the older man to tear himself away as it was for him. He had to make him realise - to understand - this feeling. He needed some outlet for it before he burst from the sheer effort of keeping it within himself.

'I need -' he tried again, desperate to express it in some way. Obi-Wan interrupted him.

'Don't speak,' he said pleadingly. 'Please.'

He gripped the back of Obi-Wan's neck more tightly. 'I must! I can't... keep it all in - you have to know -' But he was cut off once more.

'I do, Anakin. I know because - because I feel the same.' He looked into his eyes, each word weighed down with the insistent truth.

But Vader laughed ironically, a manic edge to the sweet sound. 'Master, It's impossible that you do. You - detached, cool Jedi that you are - can't even begin to fathom what I feel. You wouldn't know how to.' He said it matter of factly, not to accuse the Jedi for his inability which was a defining aspect of his vocation.

'Anakin, I...' Obi-Wan found himself at a loss for words. He knew his former apprentice was a high-strung man swayed by his unruly emotions, but perhaps he had never truly acknowledged the extent of it. Little wonder, then, that his fall had come as such a shocking blow. But he had to do
something, had to at least make the man realise he was not quite the perfect Jedi Master Anakin perceived him to be. *That I have always been prone to attachment.* They were already holding each other close, heads bent as they pressed their foreheads together. Obi-Wan reached up to hold the younger man's face in both of his hands and forced him to look up so that he could look directly into his dark cobalt gaze. He tried to convey all the strength of his intense affection in that one look. Anakin's eyes were spilling over with need, yet there was fear lurking there as well - fear, Obi-Wan realised of Obi-Wan himself.

And then it was gone and the menacing Sith lord was desperately hugging him. He petted and pawed at Obi-Wan like an animal, pressing his face into his neck one moment, then caressing his face with his smooth cheek. It was as though neither of them could quite believe the utter pleasure that was coursing through them at the others touch. They were drunk on it, and unaware of it what it meant or its consequences. Only that they were were finally together, able to acknowledge and admit their attachment as they never could.

Finally Vader pulled away to beam down at him, his joy spilling out like the rays of an incandescent sun.

'Obi-wan,' he said smilingly. 'You can't imagine what it means to me to know that you were never like the other Jedi. That you love - have attachment.'

'If you had only looked closely enough, Anakin, you would've realised that my attachment to you was always my undoing.'

Obi-Wan's tone was slightly rueful but it made Vader's smile, if possible, even broader. Impulsively, he brushed his mouth against Obi-Wan's jaw, his lips impossibly gentle. The Jedi looked at him in embarrassed surprise, two spots of colour high up in his cheeks. Vader looked nervous at his lack of response.

'I just, well, I used to kiss Mom y'know I - I didn't think it was a big deal,' he stammered.

Obi-wan burst out laughing, the rich deep sound filling Vader's chest with a pleasant hum. He smirked, finally looking like the old General Kenobi during the Clone Wars, before everything went to shit.

'Tell me, old friend,' his tone was entirely dry and nonchalant. 'How did you survive these past few years without me?' Though his words were clearly meant in jest, Vader looked down. Obi-Wan mentally bit his tongue and wished he could take his words back.

'I had no other choice,' he said quietly. 'You left me.' There was no censure or blame in his voice, only pained hurt. When he looked up Obi-Was was taken aback by the haunted look on his face.

'All this time without you, Master...without a kind look, word or touch. Only the Dark Side as my constant companion and my only ally.'

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