A Bend in the Road

by EmilaWanKenobi

Summary

When their ship malfunctions on the way to Obi-Wan's home planet, our heroes'...
I observed Obi-Wan's hands shaking as he reached to check the navigation parameters yet again. We were well into hyperspace; there was no need for him to be fidgeting with the controls. No need ... except as a distraction from the sexual compulsion that even now simmered across our training bond despite his strongest shields.

I put my hand on his shoulder in a gesture that was meant to be comforting, but only made him shiver. I withdrew the hand. "Are you all right, Padawan?"

He took a deep breath and let it out. Fever-bright eyes flashed over at me for a moment. "It's got to the point that even ..." He gave me a self-deprecating smile and a shrug. "Let's just say, I'm finally looking forward to the ceremony." He shifted uncomfortably in the pilot's chair, no doubt due to the painful erection he'd been sporting almost constantly the last few days. Having nowhere else to sit, I merely swiveled my chair partly away from him, to give him the illusion of space and privacy.

The ship we'd been given for the journey to Obi-Wan's home planet of Dhuron was little more than a day-tripper, a small yacht with one tiny cabin and storage barely adequate for our three-day journey to the Middle Rim. We'd had to borrow it from a sympathetic Senatorial aide who owed me a favor. I was grateful for any sort of conveyance at all; nevertheless, my proximity was only enflaming Obi-Wan's already over-sensitive nerves. I'd expected that; what I hadn't expected was to be fighting my own battle for control.

The sight and smell of him, the heat that radiated from him, the erotic vibrations he was unconsciously leaking to me, all conspired to test my resolve. It had been a long time indeed since I'd needed to release such feelings to the Force -- which only confirms once again the maxim that as soon as one thinks one is beyond a particular temptation, one is destined soon to be proved wrong.

As a young man I'd sometimes chafed at the padawan learner's required vows of celibacy. As I'd
grown older, I'd come to appreciate the need for them -- and for continued celibacy once I'd
passed my trials. The Council sometimes grants permission for one of us to marry, but only
grudgingly. A Jedi can ill afford the distraction of a wife and family, not to mention the
prospective vulnerability should our enemies attempt to use them as hostages to influence us.
Casual sex is even more problematic; the potential for disease and pregnancy notwithstanding,
there are always emotional consequences to such a liaison for both parties, but especially for the
Jedi. Most galactic religions have instituted as dogma what we Jedi know for a fact -- sex is a
powerfully spiritual experience, with consequences far beyond the physical. To bind one's self to a
stranger in that way is ... distasteful. At least that's what I'd been taught, and I believed it.

Obi-Wan believed it, too, which made his situation all the more difficult. The biological imperative
called the Obligation that drove his subspecies to mate every few years was hardly a surprise to
either of us. I'd read of it as soon as I'd received his files after taking him as my padawan. As he'd
reached puberty I'd watched for signs, which, thankfully, were slow in coming. He'd been almost
nineteen years old before he'd felt the first stirrings of Obligation. Of course he'd been feeling lust
for years; he'd experienced the wet dreams, the unexpected erections, and the frequent sweaty-
palmed nights of self-gratification shared by all human youths. But the Obligation lust was
exponentially stronger -- enough that the usual meditation and cold showers had no effect. I'd
informed the Council, and they'd given us a leave of absence to attend to the problem. I'd
contacted our liaison on Dhuron; he'd been most gracious in arranging a ceremony with a similarly
affected young woman! . To their culture, such a situation was an everyday occurrence, no cause
for embarrassment or distress. Marriage, as such, was nonexistent in their society. Obi-Wan would
not be bound to the young woman; he would not even be expected to care for the child that almost
invariably resulted from such a union.

Unfortunately, Obi-Wan had been mortified by his situation -- ashamed, resentful, and angry.
We'd spent time on our journey working to release those negative feelings, and he'd managed
finally to accept the call of his nature, which was, after all, the will of the Force. Still, I knew it
pained him to break his vows, despite approval from the Council. He prided himself on his strict
adherence to the Code. My gentle suggestion that this situation might have been meant to teach
him humility in that regard had met with incredulity, but after meditating on it for a while he'd had
the grace to thank me for the lesson.

I was learning a similar lesson, but he did not know it. Although I had on more than one occasion
in my younger days lusted strongly for a woman, males had never tempted me, even one so
attractive as Obi-Wan. To find my body responding to his unconscious signals was more than
disconcerting. Compounding the purely physical reaction was my own strong affection and
admiration for my padawan. He is a fine young man, pure, strong, brave, noble, and very comely.
I imagined that if he knew my thoughts he would cringe from me in disgust. Luckily my shields
were and are far stronger than his, and my control over my body's reactions much surer. He
suspected nothing.

That self-assurance may have been my first step toward the edge of the precipice.

"Master ..." he said softly, tentatively.

I swiveled to look at him. "Yes, Obi-Wan?"

He stared out at the starlines, refusing to meet my gaze. "Have you ever been with a woman?"

"You mean, have I ever had sexual intercourse?"

I saw a flash of annoyance cross his features. "You know exactly what I mean."

I sighed. "No, Obi-Wan, I have not."
"Oh." He was silent for a moment.

"However," I said soothingly, "I am not entirely ignorant regarding the act. If you have some question, I would be happy to share what I know."

I felt him gathering his courage. Finally, he blurted out, "Suppose I'm no good at it? I don't want to hurt her ..."

I smiled gently. "She is not a virgin. She will be able to guide you."

"That makes it worse," he said miserably, and turned slightly away from me.

"You are afraid you'll make a fool of yourself."

He crossed his arms to hug himself. "I know it's prideful, but I hate being incompetent at anything."

"You rarely are," I said, my smile carrying through my voice. The urge to touch him was very strong. I was amazed that the evidence of his need could so easily overcome my natural inclinations. Perhaps it was the pheromones he emitted. I would have to study the issue in the future, but for the moment my padawan needed reassurance. "Never fear. I have every confidence you will know what to do when the times comes."

"How?" he demanded.

I hesitated. "I will show you," I said after a moment, and rose to stand behind his chair. The Force seemed to be telling me to touch him; or perhaps it was my own desires. Either way, I could no longer deny the urge. I placed my hand on his shoulder, at the join of his neck, and rubbed my thumb along the hinge of his jaw. His skin was smooth and warm. My mouth began to water, and I had to swallow hard against it.

At my touch, his breath hitched. "What are you doing?" he asked huskily.

I bent and let my breath fall against his ear. "I have never made love," I said softly, "yet I can see by your reaction that this feels good. Is it not so?"

His reply was but a whimper. I could feel his pulse pounding madly, see the rapid rise and fall of his chest. My own breathing had begun to speed up; I consciously dampened my reaction. He could not -- must not -- know how he affected me.

"Your body will tell me what you like, and what you don't." I rumbled into his ear. "I can map your desires with my hands." I let the other hand drift over his shoulder and down inside the open neck of the flight suit, stroking whatever warm flesh I could reach. He moaned, and shifted again in his seat.

I began to realize I should stop, immediately, before my own arousal became apparent, and yet I could not. I felt as if I'd been drugged. All my thoughts and senses were focused totally upon my apprentice. The idea that my touch could affect him so powerfully was like an aphrodisiac. Male though he be, and my padawan besides, I wanted him as I had not wanted anyone else in all my years. I turned my head and brushed my lips against the rim of his ear. "With my mouth," I whispered, raining kisses there. "With my tongue." I followed words with actions, laving the hot flesh and tasting each contour thoroughly. "With my teeth." I nipped the lobe, then sucked it into my mouth and swirled my tongue around it, relishing his reaction. His breath had changed to panting moans, and his hips rotated involuntarily as if seeking contact. His hands gripped the arms of his chair tightly, but he did not tell me to stop.
I let my mouth drift downward, kissing and licking and biting and sucking all along his exposed neck, pushing the collar aside to gain access to more of the sweet-salt flavor of him.

"Ahh," he moaned, loudly. "Ahhhh ...." One of his hands loosed its grip on the seat and darted to his groin, pulling at the erection almost frantically. Suddenly he seemed to realize what he was doing. Only a warning through the Force allowed me to avoid injury as he jerked sharply away from me and rocketed out of the chair. He scrambled to the far side of the cockpit, holding the other chair like a barrier between us. "What are you doing?" he almost sobbed.

I straightened and brushed my tunics, thankful for their length that hid the evidence of my arousal. "I was showing you how easy it is to read your partner's desires."

"Easy," he said flatly. I felt anger from him, and hurt. I had hurt him. It shamed me.

I bowed my head. "Forgive me, Obi-Wan. I went too far. I am sorry."

"Yes, you did," he said shakily. He brushed past the chair and punched open the door to the cockpit, not looking at me. "I'll be in the 'fresher for a little while."

The door hissed shut, and I sat down heavily in the pilot's chair, shaking my head at myself. _What a cruel imbecile you are, Jinn,_ I thought.

I was still berating myself a few moments later when a loud bang sounded from aft, and the ship shuddered. Before I could rise to my feet to investigate, the ship shuddered again, and with a sickening lunge we decanted into realspace. I checked the navcomputer; we were still almost half a lightyear from our destination. At sublight speeds, it would take months for us to arrive.

The door opened, and Obi-Wan rushed in, flipping switches even as he slid himself into the copilot's chair. "What happened?" he asked. He smelled strongly of sex; likely he'd not had a chance to wash his hands after relieving himself. Desire twisted in my gut as I imagined him jerking himself to hasty completion in the 'fresher.

I shook myself out of my reverie. Red warning indicators blinked all over the console. I hadn't bothered to familiarize myself with them before the flight, trusting to Obi-Wan's excellent piloting skills. One more mistake to feel guilty about. "Whatever it was, it didn't sound good."

He gave me a withering look and stood. "I'll go have a look."

I waited in the cockpit. It was cramped enough in the engine compartment without my assistance. At any rate, hyperdrive mechanics is Obi-Wan's forte, not mine. His strong connection to the Unifying Force allows him to sense and understand the inner workings of machinery far better than I ever will.

He returned after a few minutes. His hands and face were blackened with soot and green lubricant. "Hyperdrive's shot," he said, a note of desperation in his voice. "Looks like a shorted power coupling overloaded the main circuit. And before you ask, no, we don't have the parts to fix it. Please tell me we're close to an inhabited system."

I had been scanning the charts. "Dhuron is the closest," I said regretfully.

"How far?" he asked, his hands clenching.

"Around half a lightyear."

He muttered a curse and turned, resting his fists against the bulkhead.
"I'll put out a call for assistance," I said, turning back to the console.

"Forget it," he said harshly. "The explosion took out the subspace communications array. We are effectively stranded."

I was silent for a moment, thinking. "The Dhurons will alert the Council once they realize something’s amiss. That shouldn’t take but a day or two at the most. We can turn on the distress beacon ... by following our trajectory and dropping out of hyperspace every few lightyears ... "

He did not turn to look at me. "That’s like finding a grain of sand in the desert, and you know it, Master."

"The Force will guide them," I chided gently. "We will be found, probably within four to ten days. We have enough food capsules and recycling capacity to last that long."

Obi-Wan put his forehead against his clenched fists. His spine was ramrod straight. "I may not make it that long," he said quietly.

I knew what he meant. Regardless of his level of control, regardless of the number of times he relieved his growing tension through masturbation, the hormonal changes that had triggered the onset of the Obligation could not be reversed except by coupling. This phenomenon is yet another evidence that sexual intercourse has far more mysterious implications than biologists can explain.

Be that as it may, I was not interested in scientific inquiry at the moment. I had a young man in very obvious distress, who, if his need to couple with another of his species was not met, would in all likelihood lose his sanity or perhaps even his life. I was not about to allow that to happen, not if there was any way I could prevent it.

"Perhaps I can help." I turned to the onboard computer and pulled up the files on the phenomenon known as the Obligation.

"Can you turn yourself into a Dhuronian female?" he asked bitterly.

"What I can, I will," I said, sharper than I had intended.

He sighed and came to stand behind me. "I'm sorry, Master. This is painful for me, but I should not be taking my frustration out on you."

I had found the passage I was looking for. I skimmed it quickly, long enough to confirm my hopes. I spun the chair slowly and looked up at him. "On the contrary," I said gently, and took his hands in mine. "That is exactly what I should like you to do." I lifted his hands to my face, breathed in the scent of sex and lubricant on them, then turned them over and kissed the palms, one after the other.

He gasped and pulled away. "What are you doing?" he asked for the third time that day.

"I am offering my body in service to your need."

He took a step back, wiping his hands on his trousers. Then, as if suddenly realizing what he was doing, he pulled out a cloth and began cleaning the soot from his hands and face. "In case you weren’t aware, you're neither Dhuronian nor female," he said after a moment, avoiding my gaze.

"The files indicate that certain compatible subspecies can alleviate the condition as well as native Dhurons. My subspecies is listed as one."

He snorted, a bit of characteristic humor coming through despite his predicament. "That only
leaves the problem of your sex, Master."

I smiled. "The files specifically mentioned that same-sex coupling works just as well as the more
typical male-female match."

He stuffed the cloth back into his pocket and tilted his head. "Forgive me if I seem ungrateful, but
I'm pretty sure I'm heterosexual."

I spread my hands. "So am I. Yet what sort of master would I be if I watched you suffer and did
not do what I could to help?" I dropped my hands. "I would die for you, Obi-Wan. Making love
to you would be no hardship."

He paused, considering. "What about the Code? The Council gave me leave to fulfill my needs on
Dhuron, not with you. Bad enough I should have to break my vows at all; I don't want to drag
you into this mess as well."

"I think the Council would prefer a slightly debauched master to the alternative."

He looked at me, his brow furrowed. I could not tell what he was thinking. I only knew I felt like
the galaxy's biggest hypocrite, making myself out to be the self-sacrificing master when in fact I
was burning for him.

"I _do_ love you," he said at last, with great dignity. "Though not in that way. And I _do_ trust
you with my life. I suppose, if it comes down to it ..." He drew himself straighter. "I would prefer
to wait and see if we are rescued, but if I cannot ... control myself, I would be grateful if ...

Tears stood in his eyes. He looked away, his mouth firmed so that the dimple in his chin stood out
in stark relief.

"Whatever you need," I said quietly, "I will give it gladly, and more."

He said nothing. His body had begun to tremble. I had never seen him in such a state, so
tremendously vulnerable. My eyes stung with sympathetic tears.

"Obi-Wan." I waited until he turned and looked at me. "Padawan. We do not _have_ to wait."

He closed his eyes and was silent for a long time. At last he whispered, "I hurt."

I rose, moving toward him slowly, giving him ample chance to stop me or flee if he wanted. He
did neither, only staring into my eyes as I drew nearer, until I was close enough to put one hand
out and cup his cheek in my palm.

He flinched slightly at the touch and closed his eyes again. He swallowed rapidly. His body
shook, and his breathing had become ragged again. "I'm sorry," he whispered, miserable and
ashamed.

"Don't be," I said, and kissed him.

It was a gentle kiss, born more of my love for him as my padawan than of lust. Yet it seemed to
break something in him, and he groaned even as he reached for me, buried his hands in my hair,
tugged me down into a harder, more demanding kiss that didn't let up until we were both
breathless.

When we broke apart his eyes were filled with wonder, and not a little humor. Our bodies were
pressed together from knee to chest, our mutual arousal unmistakable. "This might be easier than I
thought," he said dryly.
"We'll muddle through," I agreed.

He laid his head on my chest and gripped me in a hug. "I love you, Master."

I buried my face in his spiking hair and kissed the top of his head. "I love you also, Obi-Wan." I tipped his face up with a finger on his chin and stepped a little apart from him. He raised an eyebrow in mute question. "You need to clean up, and I need to prepare as well."

His eyes grew wide, then he swallowed and nodded. Hesitantly, he let go of me and turned, making his way to the 'fresher.

I took a few deep, cleansing breaths. I had no idea what I'd got myself into, but I knew I was looking forward to it far more than was probably decent. I made sure the distress beacon was set, then went to the tiny kitchen unit to look for what I would need. A flexible water bottle, a bit of tubing, some cooking oil ... I might be inexperienced in such matters, but I was by no means ignorant. A Jedi rarely remains ignorant of anything for long; despite our image as warriors, our lives are spent mainly in research and scholarship. I'd observed or studied the cultures and practices of hundreds of worlds, including their sexual practices. It was amazing how varied the sexual response could be, even among humanoid species, and the Temple archivists were very thorough.

My preparations had to wait until Obi-Wan was finished in the 'fresher, by which time my ardor had cooled considerably. What seemed unbearable desirable in Obi-Wan's presence had become an awkward, messy, slightly repugnant prospect once I had time to dwell on the particulars of the act. I loved him no less, but the idea of having something inserted _down there_ -- especially something as large as Obi-Wan's not inconsiderable organ -- did not fill me with anticipation. I knew many men found such a thing pleasurable. Yet I was filled with trepidation. What if I hurt him? What if he hurt me? Neither of us had the slightest idea, beyond the academic, of what we were doing. It was all well for me to lecture him that his body would know what to do when it was an experienced woman he was facing. When it was his old, virginal, and very male master, he might well feel completely repelled.

When he emerged at last, pink from scrubbing and smelling of soap and depilatory, it was apparent that he no longer shared my doubts. He was naked and rampantly hard, with a wicked gleam in his eye as he brushed past me, murmuring, "Don't take too long," and trailing a hand down my arm.

I took the oil and my bottle into the 'fresher and set about getting myself ready. Once I was clean, inside and out, I took the oil and tried to prepare myself for his entry. It was awkward, much more difficult than I had imagined, and very definitely not arousing. I had trouble accommodating a single finger without pain. The idea of adding another and stretching filled me with dread.

I felt a pulse of emotion across our bond, longing and pain mixed, and I knew I had run out of time. Feeling vulnerable and slightly ridiculous in my nakedness, I picked up the oil and crossed to the small cabin with its narrow bunks, one on top of the other.

The sight that greeted me stopped me in my tracks. Obi-Wan had pulled the mattresses from both beds onto the floor and lay sprawled across them, stroking himself languidly.

"Master," he said breathlessly, holding out a hand. "Please, I need you."

All of the desire I'd felt earlier came rushing back, making me dizzy. I set the oil aside and knelt, reaching out to touch the long strands of his unbound braid. "Obi-Wan," I said, unable to say more.
"Master," he said again. He took my hand and without preamble placed it on his penis. "Touch me," he said urgently.

I stroked him, feeling the silk-on-steel of his sex. He let his eyes fall closed and moaned, rocking his hips into my touch. "More," he urged.

I'll give my padawan credit for his adaptability. Once he'd decided on a course of action, he had no more doubts. I wish I could say the same of myself. I was still filled with trepidation. It was only my affection for him and the obvious need pulsing through the bond that kept me going, that urged me to bend and kiss him.

He took control immediately, grasping me and pulling me against him in a frenzy of want. He flipped me onto my back and ground himself against me, kissing me deeply the whole time, moaning as if in agony. His penis, slick from my oiled hand, slid against mine with delicious friction. I was astonished to feel fluid leaking copiously from the tip of my own penis, adding to the slickness and increasing the pleasure almost unbearably. I think we both moaned aloud as he rubbed himself against me again and again, driving himself to completion in only a few strokes. By that time I was achingly hard, on the edge of completion myself and fighting it with all my might.

He rolled off me, gasping, and drew my hand over to his still-rigid penis, which was slick with our combined juices. He guided my hand in a hard, fast rhythm, his hips pumping, almost sobbing in his need.

I rolled over and kissed him on the mouth. He latched onto me like a drowning man, sucking the air from my lungs. In between great gasping moans he licked and suckled on my lips, my tongue, tasting me inside and out. I felt myself responding instinctively, burying myself in the heat of his mouth, dangerously close to climaxing just from the feel of his tongue on mine, and the pulsing organ in my hand.

Despite his shields I felt a desperation building in him. I reluctantly broke the kiss. "Drop your shields," I whispered in his ear. "Let me in. Let me give you what you need."

He did so, letting all his barriers fall. The trust of that simple act was enough to fill my heart to overflowing. And when I was finally able to sense his emotions, I was almost overwhelmed. How he had endured such stark, excruciating need.... Anyone not a Jedi would have been shattered by it. The hormones of the Obligation flooded his system, sensitizing every nerve to the point of madness, swamping his brain with a soup of lust-inducing chemicals that could only be counteracted by the release of other hormones as he buried himself in a compatible partner.

"It's all right," I soothed in his ear. The sound of my voice and the touch of my breath on his neck sent another spike of pain/pleasure through him, and I withdrew slightly, appalled, wondering how much distress I had caused him earlier with my cavalier actions in the cockpit. I tried to withdraw my hand from his penis, but he held it captive in a tight grip, pumping himself into the channel of my palm. After having seen into his mind, I knew with certainty that even this would not be enough.

"Help me," he pleaded hoarsely, turning bright eyes to me.

I reached over and called the oil to my hand, opened the bottle with my teeth, and dipped a finger into it, all the while not letting go of him with my other hand. Reaching between and behind, I inserted the finger as far as it would go and held it there, willing myself to relax, willing the burn to ease.

He saw what I was doing and groaned loudly. "Oh, yes! ... Oh! ... Oh! ... please!" he begged.
I withdrew the finger and dipped it again into the oil, along with another one, almost shaking with my haste as I felt his yearning for penetration accelerate even further. I gasped as the fingers slid inside, stretching the tight ring of muscle. As I pumped the fingers in and out, I felt the burning finally begin to ease. The sensation could not by any means have been described as pleasure, but at least the pain had abated. I began to hope I could get through this with some sort of equanimity.

After a moment, I deemed I was as ready as I could ever be. Taking a deep breath, I tried to settle myself into the Force, relaxing further. I threw one leg over him and straddled him, releasing his penis as I did so. This time he let go, for he could sense my intentions. He only watched, fists clutching at the sheets, as I tipped more oil into my palm and used it to slick his penis. He closed his eyes and moaned loudly as I touched him, then louder still when I shuffled forward on my knees and guided the tip of his erection against the entrance to my body. Very slowly I began to lower myself onto him, feeling the pressure as the turgid head of his organ tried to push past the still-unyielding ring of muscle.

As soon as he touched me he wailed and lunged powerfully upward, impaling me. The head of his penis slipped entirely inside and then stopped. I hissed involuntarily.

He froze, his eyes opening wide. "I'm hurting you," he croaked, distress crumpling his features. He was gasping, hanging frozen on the edge between his need to thrust and his conscious decision to wait, wait ...

"Go on," I said through gritted teeth, trying to will myself to relax even as my muscles spasmed painfully against the intrusion.

He gripped my thighs, pressing his fingers into my flesh so hard there would be bruises later. In his mind I saw a swirling miasma of sharp-edged craving warring with his feelings for me: a tender regard, affection, admiration, even love. "I don't want to hurt you," he sobbed, still not moving.

I shifted, impaling him still further inside me, and we both cried out, he in pleasure, I in pain. Tears began to leak from the corners of his eyes, running down to wet his ears and the sheets below. I could only watch in astonishment as with a supreme effort he mastered himself and pulled back, withdrawing from my body completely. I gasped in relief, even as I ached for him, and for the torture he was putting himself through on my behalf. Sensing as I did his level of desperation, I was humbled to my very core. Certainly I did not deserve such sacrificial consideration.

I tried to move back down upon him, but he detained me in a steel grip, panting in his effort to hold himself back from what was an almost overwhelming urge simply to take me, take me hard, with no regard for anything but the need for completion.

"Open up to me," he pleaded. "I need to feel what you feel."

"Obi-Wan," I said warningly. I was willing to make myself vulnerable to him in all ways physical, but the very idea of dropping my mental and emotional shields -- to anyone -- filled me with something akin to fear. A Jedi is supposed to know no fear, but even masters are not entirely without flaws ... especially this master.

"Oh, Force, please, Master!" he begged. I began to fear he would pass out soon if matters did not proceed quickly.

"All right," I said reluctantly. I lowered my shields, but only enough to let him sense my physical reactions. My mind was still mostly closed to him. It was hardly fair, since he had been brave enough to make himself completely open to me, but it was as far as I was willing to make myself
go at the moment.

It was enough. Very slowly, he pushed forward again. This time the muscle gave more easily, and he slipped inside with a minimum of pain. He held himself still, sweating and panting with the effort, until at last he allowed himself to move inside me another small increment. He withdrew almost completely, then pushed forward again, and again, each time gaining a little more ground, each time stopping when he sensed my pain, until after a seemingly interminable, agonizing length of time he was buried completely inside me.

By that time the pain had fled, replaced not by pleasure but by a feeling of fullness which, at any other time, I would have tried to expel. Now, I had to simply relax and let him begin a long, slow glide in and out, in and out. His head fell back, his eyes closed, and with little sighs he took his pleasure in me.

During this time my apprentice did not for one moment relinquish his rigid control, despite an overwhelming urge to do so. My heart filled with awe and admiration for him, that even at such a moment he would still put the needs and feelings of others ahead of his own. Feeling a sudden tenderness, I bent to kiss him. His hands came up around my neck as he returned my kiss, and he pulled me down, thrusting more forcefully as he realized he was no longer hurting me. My erection, which had long since dissipated, began to make a reappearance, much to my surprise and chagrin. I still felt a tremendous amount of guilt at the whole situation. It is one thing to break one's vows out of dire necessity; it is another thing entirely to enjoy doing so.

As our bodies began to move together in a sinuous rhythm, the character of his emotions began to change. The longer we remained joined, the calmer he became. I could only assume his body had begun secreting the hormones that he needed to assuage the ravages of the Obligation.

After a moment he broke the kiss and placed his hands on my chest, pushing, forcing me to sit upright again. The position allowed him deeper penetration, and he rumbled, "Mmmmmm," as his thrusts became faster, harder.

For my own part, the new position had enabled his shaft to rub against the gland deep within my body that sent a flare of pleasure rocketing along my nerves. With each stroke, the pleasure built, like a white-hot fire in my brain, and as from a distance I heard myself moaning aloud. His hands slid down, across my abdomen, and he grasped my renewed erection in one fist even as the other cupped my scrotum in a firm caress. He stroked me in time to his thrusts, and it was all I could manage simply to ride him, lost in bliss. A very small part of me was alarmed that I was letting myself take pleasure in this; the rest simply melted into acquiescence. He filled me, and stroked me, and it wasn't long until I was convulsing, pouring my essence over him and roaring my fulfillment.

He was still completely open to me; I felt his astonishment as my muscles gripped him, wrenching an orgasm from him. His whole body contracted; he thrashed and shuddered, nearly bucking me off. One of the convulsions caused him to slip out of me, and with a groan I tipped over onto my back. I lay next to him, feeling suddenly bereft and very, very guilty.

He dropped back onto the mattresses, flinging his arms wide. "Thank you!" he said, grinning. Suddenly he rolled on top of me, taking my face in his hands. "Thank you," he said again, softly, and kissed me with unutterable tenderness. For a moment I couldn't breathe, so affecting were the emotions he projected to me -- gratitude, affection, regard -- and yes, love. I admitted to myself, as he lay his head on my shoulder, that whatever feelings he had for me, I returned them tenfold.

Wishing with all my heart that I could tell him, knowing it could only cause us both further difficulties, I let my arms come up to embrace him. _This is dangerous,_ my head warned, and my heart said, _Hush! Live in the moment!_
Until that point I hadn't allowed myself to consider what must happen once the Council learned of what we had done. Despite the inescapable necessity of our actions, we would most likely be condemned, possibly punished, and almost certainly separated. Our only hope to mitigate the consequences would be if I could honestly report, once safely back at the Temple on Coruscant, that we regretted the necessity of breaking our vows and repented of what we'd done.

At the moment, however, the affection shining from Obi-Wan's eyes was making it nigh impossible to feel sorry for anything.

His nose crinkled endearingly, and he smiled. "I think I need another shower," he said, and rolled to his feet. He stood, looking down at me, and held out a hand. "Join me?"

I hesitated, my heart warring with my head. He was sated for the moment. What justification could there be for continued intimacy?

"It will save water," he said slyly.

I smiled. "All right." I rose and followed him into the tiny compartment, slid up next to him in the stall, and tried not to think about his heat and proximity as we soaped each other, jostling for position beneath the spray. Touching was unavoidable, and by tacit agreement we began to wash each other. When I finished scrubbing his back he turned, guiding my hands downward to his groin. He was hard again, and as I lathered and stroked his shaft he wrapped his arms about my waist, laid his head on my shoulder, and moaned, thrusting into my hands.

He was still open to me, wholly exposed and trusting. The need for penetration had begun to build in him again, but he held it in check, reticent to ask for more so soon. He did not want to appear greedy.

An idea occurred to me, a theory to test. I drew back a little to let the hot water wash the soap from between us, then I slid to my knees and took his shaft in hand. He understood my intentions immediately and went stock still, his emotions spiking with desire and anticipation.

I also held still for a brief moment, just looking at him, at the fine, muscular frame, the taut abdomen, and the heavy sex, shades darker than the rest of him. It pulsed in my hand, hot and silky, so erect the foreskin was stretched tight. I leaned forward and ran an experimental tongue down the length of it, ending at the tip. I tasted a bit of tangy fluid at the slit, astringent but not at all unpleasant. He moaned softly, hands fluttering on my shoulders, not urging but simply waiting in an agony of expectation. I slid my mouth over the head of his shaft and held him there, sucking lightly, swirling my tongue, letting his pleasure wash over me through the bond. I got the sense of heat and wetness, pressure, almost unbearable bliss. He groaned loudly and his hands convulsed, bruising my shoulders. I brought my hands up to support him, grasping the firm mounds of his buttocks, holding him up as I licked and sucked and worshiped him with my mouth. I found the cries he made incredibly erotic; I worked his shaft constantly, wanting to elicit those sounds from him, again and again. By this time my own penis was throbbing with need, but I ignored it.

I could feel him nearing completion, and I wondered briefly what to do. I was saved the decision when he cried out. Hot fluid pulsed into my mouth, and without thought I swallowed it, wondering at the mild taste and thinking I could easily become addicted to this, to him. I wanted more; I wanted to learn everything about him, pleasure him in a thousand ways, and have him forever by my side and in my arms. The knowledge that it could never be filled me with sudden grief that staggered me in its intensity.

Meanwhile he had regained enough control to stand unaided. I let him go and he slid, boneless, to sit beside me on the shower floor. The water had grown cool. I reached out with the Force and
turned it off, still fighting to master my emotions.

He grinned, still panting. "We are going to overtax the recyclers if we keep this up."

"We'd best be more mindful," I agreed, grateful for a safe topic in the aftermath of such a powerfully moving experience.

He glanced down, and could not help but notice my own neglected erection. I had almost forgotten the ache of my physical need in the face of my emotional distress. He reached out and ran a finger along my shaft, a question in his eyes.

"No," I said huskily, and levered myself to my feet with ungraceful haste.

"I want to." He rose also, running a hand along my flank. "Let me," he said, his tone deeper and more seductive than I had ever heard it. His fingers circled down, and he took me in his fist, pumping lightly. Oh, but it was good. He dropped light kisses on my shoulder, my chest, working his way down as he continued to speak in that sultry voice. "I want to touch you all over. I want to taste every inch of you. I want to pleasure you like you've pleased me." His lips were dangerously close to my groin, and with alarm I realized he was going to take me in his mouth, do to me what I had just done for him.

I stopped him with a hand on his chin, and drew him up to stand, schooling my features to serenity despite the terrible craving that burned through me. "Whatever I've done, it was for your sake alone. It is not right that I should take pleasure in breaking my vows."

He frowned at me, hurt and not a little angry. "I suppose you expect me to take no pleasure in it either? Well, I'm sorry to disappoint you, Master, but I find that I cannot turn my emotions off as if I were a droid."

"I don't expect that of you, Padawan."

He raised his chin at me, the slightest defiance creeping into his voice. "When I came in here earlier, to get ready for you, I thought about it, and I decided that if I was going to be forced to break my vows I might as well enjoy it."

"An acceptable way of dealing with a difficult situation."

"But not yours?"

"No."

He stared at me, and I felt his mind withdraw from mine completely as he raised his heaviest shields. The loss of that bright presence made me want to weep.

"Obi-Wan ..." I hardly knew what I wanted to say.

"It's all right, Master." He took a step back. "I guess I understand now why they call it the Obligation."

He left without a word, taking a towel with him and locking himself in the cabin. I dried myself, wrapped one towel about my hair and another about my waist, then went to the cockpit and sat down to brood.

What was worse, to let him continue to feel hurt, or to foster even greater intimacy between us, given the possibility that he would not feel the same way about me once the Obligation was over? Who was to say that he would not be disgusted with me, later? No, I could not take advantage of
his situation to thrust my own emotional needs upon him. Besides, our feelings on the matter were moot. Once we returned to the Temple, I had no doubt we would be separated, interrogated, and forced to prove that we were not at risk for unseemly behavior in the future. Given that likelihood, would it not be better to keep myself as distanced as possible, for his sake as well as my own? I wondered if I could be _more_ miserable that I already was, whatever happened, and thought not.

I laid my head back against the headrest and closed my eyes, sinking into meditation. Perhaps the Force would lead me down the correct path.

I was roused from my trance a few hours later when Obi-Wan entered the cockpit. He stood, naked and erect, holding the bottle of oil in his hand and looking at me with a total lack of expression. He had braided his hair and tied back the tail, and even bare he was the picture of the perfect padawan.

I held out a hand to him. "Obi-Wan."

His mouth firmed into a thin line. "My apologies, but it's time again," he said tightly. "If you would be so kind?"

I stood and took a step toward the passageway, removing the towel and shaking my hair out as I did so. I found myself anticipating our next encounter with a shameful eagerness.

He took the towel from my hand and brushed past me to place it on the floor at the foot of the copilot's chair. "Here will be fine," he said.

I frowned at him. "Whatever you wish," I said neutrally. I wished fervently for a renewed connection to his mind, I could gain nothing from his aura or his expression, but the deadness of his eyes unsettled me.

"If you don't mind, Master, would you please get on your knees and bend over the chair?"

I complied, then stared over my shoulder at him as he knelt behind me and opened the bottle of oil. "Padawan?"

"Yes, Master?" he said coolly, even as he rubbed oil over his shaft.

I shook my head, turned to face the seat. "Nothing."

He coated the fingers of one hand with oil, then steadied himself with his other hand on my hip. "I thought it better this way," he said conversationally, as he inserted a finger into me and twisted it. "Less illusion of intimacy." He inserted another finger, and another, readying me, making me slightly breathless with the clinical probing and the impersonal tone of his voice.

He withdrew his fingers and wiped them on the towel. His breath hitched, then steadied. "I'm sorry you have to endure this," he whispered.

I had wondered if I could feel more miserable. Now I knew that I could.

"Obi-Wan ..."

"Shhh ... Don't say anything. Please, just ... don't speak, Master." He rubbed his hands over my flanks, caressing me for a brief instant, then he took me in a solid grip and tugged, thrusting forward at the same time to plunge into me. Even prepared, the shock of the sudden penetration made me gasp. He didn't seem to notice, but drove himself deep and began pumping in and out of me in a steady, brutal rhythm, propelling himself to a quick climax. Even such a brutal taking had brought me near to completion, but this time he expressed no concern for my needs. As soon as he
was done he pulled himself from my body, took up the bottle, stood, and walked out. The door hissed shut behind him, leaving me alone in my wretchedness and guilt.

I concluded quickly that I could not let the pretense continue. No matter what else happened, I could not endure another round of such ... travesty. I rose and followed him.

The 'fresher door was locked, but through the panel I could hear a muffled sobbing. I used the Force to slide the lock open and entered. He lay in the corner of the room, folded into a fetal position, weeping. I had never felt such misery emanating from him, nor seen him cry so openly, not in all our association.

I knelt and gathered him into my arms, sending love and reassurance through our bond. "It's all right," I said soothingly.

He buried his face against my chest and shuddered in my embrace, battling to master himself. He sniffled. "I'm sorry."

"It's all right," I said again.

"I hate this," he said softly. "I hate using you this way, making you break your vows."

"It's not your fault," I soothed.

"Some Jedi I am," he chuckled weakly. It warmed my heart to hear the humor in that beloved voice. I realized he was dearer to me than my own life. It was time he knew that.

I kissed the top of his head. "I love you, Obi-Wan."

My words prompted a fresh bout of tears, quickly stanched. I picked him up and carried him to the other room, then laid him down on the makeshift bed. He lay there, limp, his eyes red and puffy but full of affection, staring up at me. I felt utterly drained, and with a shock realized that it was well past the normal sleep cycle for us. No wonder our emotions were so out of kilter. I fetched a blanket and covered him, saying, "Sleep, Padawan. We'll talk more of this in the morning."

I crossed the corridor and cleaned up, fetching the discarded towels and stuffing them into the autocleaner. Yes, we were definitely taxing the little ship's resources. Hopefully it would not be for too much longer.

The thought chilled me.

_"My Obi-Wan,"_ I thought despondently. _"You are wiser than I._ I thought about his statement: "If I am going to be forced to break my vows, I might as well enjoy it." _"Let me see if I can start living by your wisdom for a change._

Having made sure the ship was in order and the distress beacon still on, and that we were still on course for Dhuron, however slowly, I returned to the cabin and slipped beneath the blanket to lie next to Obi-Wan. He was on his back, already deep in slumber. I fingered his braid, then drew it to my mouth and kissed it. Laying one arm across his chest, I settled in and forced myself to sleep.

I awoke as I always did, one moment fully asleep, the next fully aware. I lay in the cabin, bundled under the blankets with Obi-Wan, both of us naked. A lingering twinge of soreness reminded me of what we'd done the day before, and what we were likely to do again today. The thought of it stirred my sex, and I grinned. Somehow during the night we had spooned together, and now Obi-Wan lay enfolded in my arms. I wondered if his hormones had been busy during sleep, filling him with the compulsion again. No matter, I was feeling a bit of a compulsion myself.

I ran a hand over his chest, circling the nipples with a finger and watching them peak. I slid the hand down further, finding him fully erect. I began stroking him. His hips undulated. Then his
breath hitched, and I felt him wake.

"Good morning," I rumbled, and kissed him behind the ear, not stilling my hand.

"Oh, Force," he breathed, and spilled ejaculate over my fist. I pumped him for a moment, relishing his gasping cries. He was still hard, as I knew he would be. I took some of the ejaculate and used it to prepare myself, then turned my back and let him spoon up behind me.

He let out a sound like a growl and reached for me, spreading the mounds of muscle and pushing himself into my body. We both groaned at the pleasure of joining. He grasped my hips and rocked into me, slow and sensual, and I let myself relax and enjoy it. I didn't protest as a shy hand inched its way forward, tentatively taking me in hand and pumping me to match his languid rhythm. It wasn't quite enough to bring me to climax, and I realized he was prolonging the act deliberately, drawing out the pleasure for both of us. I sighed with each thrust, my mind and body filled with nothing but Obi-Wan ... Obi-Wan ... Obi-Wan ...

He sped his pace, and I found myself repeating that name like a mantra in my mind as he drove into me. I shouted that name when I came. He followed me almost immediately, gasping, "Qui-Gon!" and then covering my back with kisses.

When we had both stopped shaking, I turned and let him sprawl atop me, half covering me. He blessed me with a deep, lingering kiss. "Now I know why people kill for this," he said.

I grinned. "For sex?"

"For love," he corrected, and kissed me again.

A bit of my earlier trepidation returned. "Obi-Wan ..." I said warningly.

He sat up and stared down at me, a hint of anger in his eyes. "Are we back to that again so soon?"

I tugged him back down into my arms and kissed him until he relaxed against me. "Obi-Wan, I need to let you know that nothing I have done with you has been out of obligation."

"As you say, Master. At any rate, I think it's over. I won't be burdening you much longer, if at all."

Could it be he didn't believe me? "It's no burden," I said.

He was silent. I could no longer sense what he was feeling, whether he believed me. Suddenly it was very important for him to believe me.

"Open to me," I said.

"No." His voice was quiet, but firm.

"Padawan ..."

He rolled away from me and sat up again. He pointed a finger at me. "Don't 'padawan' me, _Master!_ This whole time I've been as transparent to you as water, hoping you might be able to eventually trust me with your own feelings." He rose to his feet and turned his back on me, his fists clenching. "I ... I don't think I want to make myself that vulnerable again."

I sighed. "You want to know how I feel?"

He shrugged wordlessly.
I dropped my shields. The act sent something akin to a physical pain through me -- a Jedi rarely drops all his shields, and mine had been erected for more than fifty years.

He shivered as my emotions washed over him. I gave him everything, my fears, my longings, my love for him. I no longer felt odd at having made love to man -- at least this man, and I let him see how I had grown in the last day. Finally, I let him see my regret at the certainty that after this brief time together, we would be forever apart. After a moment, I raised my shields again and waited for his reaction.

He turned and looked at me. "We don't have to go back," he said calmly. "We could leave the order."

I was astonished that I hadn't had the same thought. But even as I contemplated it, I felt the wrongness of the idea. "You _will_ be a Jedi," I said firmly.

He sat, hugging himself. "I know," he said quietly. "I have been thinking and meditating, and I just don't see a path through this. All I do know is, we have to go back to the Temple."

I opened myself to the Force. I was never as adept as Obi-Wan at picking out the threads of the Possible, yet I, too, saw only one path for our immediate future. "I feel the same," I said slowly.

I stood and began putting the room to rights. He watched me curiously. "What are you doing?"

"When I opened myself to the Force just now, I felt Mace's presence. They're close."

"Oh." He stood and helped me get the mattresses back in place. I bundled the sheets, still fragrant with our sex and took them to the ‘fresher. He stoppered the oil and replaced in the galley. We donned our Jedi habits, then met again in the cockpit. Before I could take my place in the copilot's chair, he stopped me with a hand on my arm.

"Whatever happens," he said soberly, "know that I will always love you."

"And I you," I assured him.

His chin lifted defiantly. "They can't take that from us."

I cupped his cheek and kissed him one last time, letting my love and regret pour through me. When it was done I let him go. "Bury your feelings deep," I admonished. "We may yet get through this without being separated, but not if they sense our lack of remorse."

He bowed. "Yes, Master. The Force will provide."

I was comforted by his platitude. Yes, I truly believed the Force _would_ provide, somehow. After all, why had the Force allowed us to fall into this situation? There must be a reason. The Force is always speaking. It is our duty to listen, and trust, and follow.

We took our seats and waited, watching the sensors. I could feel Mace's presence very close now, and I knew he must be able to sense me as well. In only a few minutes a ship emerged from hyperspace. It was a _Katana_-class cruiser bearing Dhuronian registry, and it took our yacht in a tractor beam to guide it into the landing bay.

Obi-Wan stood one step behind and to my left as I popped the hatch and let the gangplank descend.

Mace Windu, looking concerned, stood at the head of a small delegation of Dhuronians. He stared as a serene-looking Obi-Wan followed me off the ship and bowed his greetings.
After the obligatory introductions, Mace scowled at me. "I expected to find Obi-Wan incapacitated."

Obi-Wan remained silent, leaving all the explanations up to me. "I am glad to report that my subspecies is apparently compatible."

Mace's frown turned to a full-fledged scowl. "Are you implying that you two ...?"

"Obi-Wan was in dire straights. I had no option."

He was silent, staring at me with challenge in his eyes for a long moment. "Regardless of your reasons, there will have to be a disciplinary hearing."

"I understand."

"In the mean time I want you confined in separate quarters. There is to be no contact between you."

_So it begins,_ I thought. Outwardly, I only bowed my acquiescence and followed him into the hangar bay.

"Pardon me," the healer said softly, scurrying along beside me, "but am I to assume the young man has fulfilled his Obligation?"

"Yes."

"Ah! That is good news indeed. We had feared the worst for him."

"How is ... how is the young woman?" Obi-Wan asked softly.

"She is well. When it became apparent that you would not be in time to prevent her distress, we found another partner for her."

"Thank you."

"It is really no effort. Any willing partner will do, as long as they are compatible. If you had grown up on Dhuron you would never have to worry about such things."

"Yes, well, thank you all the same."

"You are lucky to have a partner who is compatible. As long as you stay with him, you need never fear."

Obi-Wan looked at me, a gleam of irrepressible humor in his eye. "Oh, I am well aware of that," he said.

He followed me to Mace's transport, and soon we were on our way home.

END -- for now

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