

Lore & Flavor Text

IP: *Destiny 2* (spec work)

Upon A Wire

Caiatl is no stranger to the machinations of diplomacy and war. She has been here a thousand times before, mind wandering as her wardrobe attendants dress her in the trappings of Princess Imperial for full effect.

She bites back a growl and thumbs an overlooked speck of Hive-green ichor from one pauldron hanging on the stand before her. There are no attendants here now, no bustling servants or visiting client races. Her hands still sting from scrubbing the blood of Torobatl from her armor, the armor that only made it off the planet by merit of being upon her back.

Caiatl lifts the first pauldron and secures the fastenings. The razor thin wire she now walks cuts deep enough to bleed, but she must stand fast. She *will* stand fast.

Taurun slips into the room behind her. “Empress.” Her eyes rake over Caiatl. “This isn’t appropriate.”

“What isn’t appropriate?” Caiatl says absently, knowing full-well what Taurun will say.

“This is... Empress, this is the armor of the Princess Imperial. You cannot face the Earth’s Commander dressed like—”

“Like what?” Caiatl grunts. The title of Empress chafes, ill-fitting, stark and hollow and unwanted on her shoulders. “Like a Princess? Like my previous title wouldn’t be enough to stake dominance here all on its own?” She grabs up the second pauldron and pushes it into place. “Tell me, Taurun, where is the armor intended for my ascension?”

Taurun’s tusks dip and waver side to side. “In the royal vaults, Empress.”

“You’ll forgive me for not fetching it, then.” Caiatl closes her eyes. Takes a slow breath. Opens them. “The Guardians will recognise my authority. I have no doubt of that.” She lifts the helm, staring into the eyes. “If any others wish to spit poison under cover of formality, they are cowards who saw nothing of what just occurred on Torobatl.”

“Understood, Empress.”

Caiatl takes another slow breath, and slides the helm into place. The Empress of the Cabal Empire will meet the Vanguard Commander.

MUTABILITY IN FLIGHT

SOMETIMES, THE HARDEST PART OF A CAREER CHANGE IS FINDING THE MOMENT TO TAKE A LEAP.

Snow piles up over the Titan's ankles. There hasn't been a radar ping for miles in hours, and her fingers are numb on the rifle's trigger.

“I don't want to do this anymore,” she says suddenly.

Her Ghost vibrates against the meager warmth of her neck. “Hmm?”

The Titan lays her gun down in the snow. “I'm not good at this. I'm good at... at words. Stories. At creating stuff that makes people feel things.” She rolls over, delicate ice crystals scattering off her armor. “Like during the Festival of the Lost last year! I helped those Ghosts with their horror stories, made sure they weren't too scary. Fixed their spelling mistakes. Made sure everyone's names stayed the same.”

“Their book really was a hit, in the end.” The Ghost hums. “So, let's go help people tell stories, then. The very best stories they can. That one writer does keep asking if you'll give her notes on her new novel.”

The Titan chews her chapped lip for another minute before standing up from the snow. “Yeah. Okay. Let's try.” She grins and shakes the last of the frost from her shoulders. “What's the worst that could happen?”