

Summary: The parents have had more than enough of their sons' misadventures.

Sequel: This is a sequel to "Marcus's Miracle"

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Warnings: Very AU, not beta read yet, slash

Spoilers: None in particular

\*Author's Note: Marcus and Neroon are an "old married couple" in this story. Also, the Minbari words and phrases were found at the "JumpNow" website in John Hightower's Minbari dictionary.

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## 1. [Chapter 1](#) by Third Charm

### Chapter 1 by Third Charm

David Sheridan and Will Cole ran. They were late, and knew they would pay dearly for it. Both adolescent boys were already in huge trouble. Now, to be late for this meeting between the headmaster and their parents as well, "toast" just didn't describe it. When they finally reached the headmaster's office, they slowed down and tried to straighten their uniforms as best as they could. The young men looked at each other, and saw their own feelings reflected in each other's eyes. The main feeling being seen and felt, was of course, fear. David gathered his courage and knocked.

The headmaster's secretary let them into the outer office. They both looked at her with desperation in their eyes. Ms. Harris sighed. They were in trouble again, and this time, as so many times before, it was not by their faults. But, this time, there was nothing she could do to help. The prim and proper (with a heart of gold) secretary gently smiled and shook her head. Both boys slumped. After taking deep breaths, they regained their bearing, raised their heads high, threw back their shoulders, and stood tall. They looked at each other in silent communication. The writing was on the wall, but they would face their fate as Warriors would   "they would show no fear and accept their esteemed parents' decisions and their punishments without showing fear or bringing any more dishonor and shame to their family names.

Ms. Harris sighed again as she watched them wait to be called into the inner office. Poor boys! These two were always letting their soft hearts and outdated codes of honor get them into huge trouble of every kind   well every kind of trouble but the romantic kind. These two children of legends were already breaking hearts - Human and Minbari alike - and they didn't even know it! The secretary chuckled to herself. She'd never met teenage males who were so innocent!

Both boys were quite good looking. Each was a beautiful mixture of their parents. David looked like a younger, slightly slimmer (he still had to grow into the shoulder breadth his bone structure implied was coming), version of his living legend of a father, President Sheridan. David, though, wore his sandy blond hair shoulder length. (He'd tried to get his parents to let him grow it out

further, but his father had put his foot down. The hair length was the only thing he was jealous of Will.) He had his "Blessed" mother's green eyes and half-Crest. He also had her regal bearing and poise. The elegant Crest combined with such an attitude gave him an aura of youthful nobility.

Will was also a mix of his own just as legendary parents. (And weren't the faculty, staff, and students of Harrington's Academy shocked to find out that he had TWO biological fathers and NO mother?!) He had his human father's dark, thick, and wavy hair. Will wore his hair practically waist length - as his human father did. (Satai Na Neroon had actually encouraged him to grow it out, arrogantly stating that his son and heir should be equally as beautiful as his mala!) He also had Shai Alyt Cole's slim but powerful build. He carried himself with the same light grace as well. Will had his Minbari father's dark, penetrating eyes and a half-Crest as David did. Will's Crest, though, was not tapered to a rounded and elegant crown as David's was. Will's Crest came to an incline of sharp, deadly points. His Crest screamed his status as Warrior Caste.

Ms. Harris was pulled from her discreet perusal by the chime of her desk comm. She activated it. "Yes, Mr. Donaldson?"

"Are the boys here yet, Ms. Harris?" Asked the headmaster through the comm.

"Yes, sir. They've been waiting for quite a bit, actually. Young men in trouble really shouldn't show up so early for these types of meetings." She said with a wink to the boys. "The waiting looks to have put them on tenterhooks."

Donaldson sighed. "Well, at least those two have always been prompt. Now, send them in here. Time to put the miscreants out of their misery."

"Yes, sir." Ms. Harris replied, and signed off. She motioned to the boys, and walked over to the door. They teenagers followed her. Right before she open the door to the headmaster's office, she whispered, "Good luck." to the young men.

"Thanks. We're going to need it. Especially if Va'mala (Father) is as upset as I think he is." Will replied. Both boys winced at the mention of the Satai Na.

"Yeah, between Uncle Neroon and Dad, we'll be sure to end up somewhere on a garbage barge supposedly patrolling the Rim for the rest of our lives." David added. The young men shuddered.

Ms. Harris smiled in encouragement. "Think positively. Your parents might surprise you. Now you'd better get in there." She finished as she opened the door.

The young men walked through the opened door into the Headmaster's personal office. They stopped at the entrance and looked around. The elderly headmaster was seated behind his antique desk as usual. Five sets of adults were seated on the couch across from the headmaster's desk, in the chairs by the conference table, or were standing.

The Satai Na and the President were the ones standing behind the chairs of their seated spouses. Yes, both sets of parents were here, as well as the parents of Darren, Mitchell, and Richard. David and Will looked at their parents. They were all dressed to the hilt in their suits or uniforms of office. The three other sets of parents were dressed in the chicest business styles of Earth. Everyone looked as if they had dressed for a very important summit.

The parents' expressions, though, were another matter. David's mother looked as if she was about to burst into tears, and Will's father looked so tired and disappointed. Will had never seen him look so fragile. Then the boys looked into the faces of their father and va'mala and gulped. This wasn't going to be good! They quickly dropped their eyes, bowed low, and then straightened to stand at parade rest.

Neroon and Sheridan shared a rueful look. It looked like their sons were going to keep their mouths shut again. Well, this time, the two naive teenagers (read over-honorable idiots) weren't going to take the fall if there was anything they could do about it! It was time to put the plan into action. The two galactic leaders hardened their expressions. This would hurt them more than their sons, (and probably have them banned to their respective couches for a few weeks) but David and William needed to learn to stop letting the universe walk all over them!

Neroon growled. "Well, ah' ier'ma (my son). What do you have to say for yourself!?" he spat out in an icy voice. Neroon kept a reassuring hand on his husband's shoulder, hoping that Marcus would catch on to the act, and not fight him too strongly.

William paled at his father's tone. He kept his eyes lowered, and bowed low again. The teenager then spoke in a low and clear voice. "In'A nee atha'ri ra raha. A'defa eh'rust, Va'mala. (I have no words of excuse. I submit myself to your authority, Father.)"

Neroon and Marcus both sighed at their son's words. How many times had they heard that same speech in the past two years? It felt as if they were stuck in a repeating time loop. Marcus looked up at his mala in frustration. He caught the hooded look Neroon gave him, and felt the slight tightening of Neroon's hand on his shoulder. Hmmm, his mala was up to something. He'd play along if it would just break through to Will! Sheridan narrowed his eyes and snorted. "And I suppose that's your answer as well, David." He bit out in what appeared to be barely suppressed rage. "Vi'is, Va'mala. (Yes, Father.)" Davis said in a tone that was barely above a whisper and bowed again as well. Sheridan growled slightly at that, and watched his poor son pale even further. Delenn caught his hand then. She looked up at him with tear-bright eyes. "John." She pleaded in a watery voice. Sheridan looked down at the woman he loved so dearly. He squeezed her hand reassuringly and gave her a quick wink, hoping that she would catch on. Their silent communication was interrupted by one of the other parents in the room. "Excuse me, but what did the two of them say?" Asked a very supercilious dilettante of a woman. Will and David recognized her as Mitchell's mother. Marcus answered. "Please excuse our recalcitrant offspring Mrs. Williams. We have tried to raise them to be more polite." William almost broke into tears at the disappointed tone of his father's voice. "Basically, Will stated that it was all their fault, they have no excuse, and are ready to face their punishment. David concurred."

Delenn nodded, looking even more teary-eyed than before. "Oh, David. How do you keep getting yourself into such situations?" She asked.

David said nothing, but hung his head in shame. He hated disappointing his mother so much. It made him feel like such an ingrate!

Neroon and Sheridan shared another quick look over the heads of their spouses. It was time to go to part two of the plan. The "Guilt Trip". Neroon opened the field.

The Satai Na shook his head and took on a pained expression and disappointed voice. "I cannot believe you, William. How can you keep doing this to your Father? Do you not see the pain you cause him with your actions? He almost died to give you life, and yet you continue to dishonor him so!"

Sheridan jumped in. "And you, David. You know that your mother was no better off than Marcus when she carried you! Look --- just look at what you've reduced your mother to! Aren't you even ashamed of yourself?"

Both teenagers were now hanging their heads in shame. If you listened closely, you could also hear them trying to gulp back tears. Yet neither boy would speak in their defense. Neroon and Sheridan both looked at the headmaster now. The elderly gentleman shrugged. He'd never been able to get anything out of the two youngsters either. Oh well, time to go to step three then. The

"Judicious Application of Terror".

Neroon's voice became icy, his expression cold and hard. "Well, whatever you have been thinking, it is going to stop now! I have had enough of this, William Durhann Steven Cole! Two Standard years of your misbehavior has been more than enough! You were sent on this educational exchange program to learn of your Human heritage, NOT to let yourself become a savage! Your actions have dishonored the entire Caste! If you do not wish to act as an honorable Warrior, then you will be treated as a dishonorable one!"

Both boys snapped their head up at that statement. They now both sported looks of sheer terror. Marcus and Delenn both gasped.

Delenn began to cry softly and looked at Neroon. "Neroon, no!" When he did not return her gaze, she turned to her husband. "John, do something!" Sheridan shook his head and gently smiled at her, trying to reassure her. Delenn dissolved into tears.

Marcus grabbed Neroon's hand with both of his and stood up. "Neroon, mala, please no! No, he's only seventeen!" He begged in a broken, pleading, and tear-filled voice. "Please, for me, please. Not that!"

"I am sorry, mala. He is my only son as well, my heir. But, I do not see another way. It must be Renna ra Ahael (The Road of Fire) for him. After everything William has done, he must atone and regain his honor." Neroon said while gathering his trembling husband close.

He looked directly into the terrified eyes of his son, and his heart bled. Neroon hated doing this to his Will, but it was the only way to break the Shadow-be-damned wall of silence that he and David had erected around themselves.

"Please Neroon, he's still just a child! He's only seventeen!" Marcus choked out.

"Yes, he is seventeen Standard years old. But, Marcus, do you not remember what you were doing at his age? You were leading a Special Forces unit and fighting for the survival of your species. You were responsible for the lives of others, as well as the livelihood of your immediate family. At seventeen, you were shouldering the burdens of an adult more than twice your age. And now, our son is acting as if he is half his age!" Neroon said as he gathered his mala closer.

Neroon turned his most venomous glare on his closed-mouthed son. "Do you not see what you are responsible for?" Neroon spat out violently in the direction of a now truly terrified William. "Your Father is the strongest Warrior ♦♦ Human or Minbari - that I have ever known, and yet your dishonor has brought him to the point of begging! ♦♦ Begging for your miserable hide!"

William began sobbing freely, no longer able to control his tears. His regret and shame were eating him alive. "I do see that that, Va'mala. I cannot express my shame at my actions. I offer no excuse. I have dishonored our Family, our Clan, and our Caste. I submit myself to your authority and ask for no leniency. I know that I deserve none. The pain I have caused Father alone should have me declared Outcast." He choked out.

Neroon sighed to himself. Well, neither he nor John had expected Will to break. Even in the face of Renna ra Ahael. Will was too much like his Father in that respect. Once set on a course of action, nothing short of a cataclysmic universal force could sway him from it.

Neroon hardened both his voice and expression further. "Very well, Warrior." William gasped. Had he been disowned as well!? "Renna ra Ahael it is. May Valen and the Human's God both have mercy on you."

Both Marcus and Delenn let out choked cries at this statement. David stood frozen, completely in

shock. Will moaned and dropped to his knees. His legs could no longer support him. He was crying so badly, he could barely see.

"As you have ordered, so it shall be, Satai Na. I will walk the Fires and I will survive. I will regain my honor. He choked out. "With Valen's grace, hopefully I will also regain your love and the right to call you Va'mala again."

Oh, Valen! Will thought he'd been disowned! It took every ounce of control that Neroon had not to run to his distraught son and reassure him of his place in the family and of his love. The pathetic sight of his only son kneeling before him and sobbing out his distress almost broke his heart!

Delenn broke in. "John, don't let this happen! Please, there must be another way! Don't you see? He could die!" She pled desperately.

This statement broke the shocked silence of the rest of the room. They two most famous couples in known space were now pelted with panicked questions from all sides. Finally, after the intervention of the headmaster calling for silence, Sheridan was able to answer both his panicked wife and the other parents.

""Renna ra Ahael" literally translates to "The Road of Fire". And it's as bad as it sounds. The closest thing that EarthForce has is the Gauntlet. Only, the Minbari version is much, much worse." Sheridan said to the other parents.

The veterans of EarthForce in the group paled. They knew how bad the Gauntlet was. If the Minbari version was that much worse, there was no way a seventeen-year-old kid could survive! All the other parents looked shocked and terrified at the idea of a teenager having to endure something like that. Well almost all, Mrs. Williams looked as if she could barely restrain a smirk of triumph! Her mousy, hen-pecked looking husband sat beside her and looked thoroughly ashamed to be in his position. Neroon and Sheridan both noted this. Well, she was about to get some of her own medicine!

Sheridan went on. "As for stopping it, the decision is Neroon's and Neroon's alone. He is the Head of the Minbari government. No one else can decide the fate of an heir to a Clan Leader as well as the Shai Aylt."

Sheridan took a deep breath to steady himself. This is where he was about to be banished to the couch. "And I agree with him." Delenn gasped. "No, Delenn. Both of them are past the point where anything else will get through to them. If we were Warrior Caste, you can be damn sure that David would be walking at his coconspirator's shoulder."

"John, you can't mean that!" She practically yelled out.

"Yes I can, Delenn." He said in his best "StarKiller" voice. He then turned his most forbidding face and that voice on his son. "And you! Be sure, you little miscreant, that you will be at the end of the walk watching everything! And when it's done 💎💎" no matter how it ends - you'll be facing the Anla'Shok version!" David gasped and looked as if he was about to pass out.

"No! I forbid it! I am Entil'Zha and I forbid it!" Delenn cried out.

"And I am Etil'Zha and Anla'Shok Na, as well as the President of the ISA. And Delenn, as you seem to forget, I am the head of this family. YOU chose not to have us join the Family of Mir, not I." Sheridan took his angry and panicked wife in his arms and whispered so that only she could hear. "It'll be alright, it won't ever get to that point. Just play along." Then in a stronger voice he said, "Do NOT defy me on this, Delenn."

"Oh, John, please ---" Delenn warbled out at the same time as another parent spoke up.

"Mr. President ---" Interjected one of the other fathers, only to be cut off by the headmaster.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Hamilton. But no matter what you say at this point, the deeds are done. Young Mist'ers Cole and Sheridan are not citizens of the Earth Alliance and therefore there is nothing we can do to stop the course of punishment their parents have chosen." The venerable old teacher stated in a very sad and tired voice.

At this point, a broken and sobbing Will broke in. "Eti'l'Zha, Satai Na, please. I claim full responsibility for the incident. I am also responsible for all the incidents in the past as well. David was just trying to help me, to stop me from getting into trouble. Please, do not punish him. I am solely at fault. I will take his punishment as well as mine."

Sheridan and Neroon sighed. Well, they'd expected something like this from Will. What they did not expect was what he said and did next, and it tore their hearts right out chests and took years off their lives!

"I have no family, no honor to speak of now. But, I will ask for mercy for my brother of the heart. If it will settle this issue, and wipe the dishonor from both of your esteemed Families, I would beg for Sus Zha'Shah (ritual suicide to restore one's family's honor). William gathered his hair away from his neck and bowed down until his forehead touched the floor, thereby exposing his neck to his Minbari father in an age old and universally recognized gesture.

Marcus and David both screamed. David then immediately knelt next to his best friend and started begging him to reconsider. Neroon froze and paled. Delenn practically collapsed in her husband's arms. Sheridan paled and looked as if he was about to suffer a heart attack, and the veterans of EarthForce, having caught the word "death", gasped. Needless to say, pandemonium broke out. Even through the bedlam, David kept pleading with his silent and prostrated friend. Finally, he screamed out a denial of guilt at the top of his lungs. The noise stopped at that point.

This wasn't how they were going for it, but --- JACKPOT! One of them had finally cracked! Neroon just wished that it hadn't taken the total emotional and probably psychological breakdown of his son!

"Please, Will didn't do anything wrong! It wasn't our fault! Please, Dad, Uncle Neroon, don't let him do this!" David begged in between heaving sobs.

"Neroon gently lowered his still shocked husband into a chair and walked over to his prostrated son and his kneeling friend. He knelt down beside them. "My son, is this true?" He asked gently.

At the word "son", Will slowly broke position and raised himself to look into his Va'mala's face. At seeing the gentle and supportive look in Neroon's eyes, Will nodded. When Neroon gave him a small reassuring smile, the broken teenagers launched himself into his Va'mala's arms and began to sob uncontrollably while repeating "I'm sorry" over and over again.

Sheridan heaved a sigh of relief. Thank God, the worst was over! That had been much worse than they expected! Just how bad had things gotten for the boys? He followed the Warrior's lead and helped Delenn sit down before walking over to David. He held out a hand, and when David hesitantly took it, he helped his pride and joy stand and then he engulfed the teen in a patented "Sheridan Bear Hug". When both teens finally calmed somewhat, their fathers guided and/or practically carried them over to the sofa. Mr. Hamilton and Richard's father, Mr. Burke, both stood up in order to make room for the emotionally over-wrought boys.

"Now, would either of you like to tell us what has been happening? I do not mean just this last incident, but for the last two years." Asked the headmaster as gently as he could.

The two teens looked at each other. Finally, Will spoke. "M-m-may I have a bit of water first, please?" He stuttered out in a small, hoarse voice.

"Of course, felisil (child)." Delen said, as she poured him a glass from the pitcher on the headmaster's desk. She handed it over to Will, only to have him almost spill it because his hand was shaking so badly. Neroon deftly caught his son's hand and helped him take a few sips. When Will nodded that he was done, Neroon handed the glass over to his mala, who set it on the headmaster's desk.





Then the story finally came out. It came out of the two teens in bits and spurts, with one taking over if the other left off. Sometimes, the adults would have to wait as the two gathered their wits to go on. It was a horrible tale of bullying, hazing, and outright discrimination by both the students as well as some of the staff and faculty. When the two were finally done, the adults were all left in shocked silence. How could things have gotten this bad without anyone knowing!?

"The Harvest Dance was just the last straw. I couldn't take it anymore. When Mitchell told Alice that she shouldn't be seen with a mad scientist's experiment-freak like me, and that I ----" Will choked and stopped speaking.

"What did he say? Come now, what ever it was, it can't hurt you anymore." Marcus said gently.

"I don't want to hurt you, Papa." Will tearfully whispered.

Marcus was stunned. Will hadn't called him "Papa" since he was a small boy. This experience must truly have scarred him. "It's alright. What ever it is, I am sure I have heard much worse in my day." He said reassuringly.

Will shared a desperate look with David, took a steadying breath, and continued in a whispering voice. "He said that I couldn't ever show Alice a  a  "good time" since I probably followed my -- uh  "I'm sorry, Papa  followed my father's footsteps into becoming some bonehead's personal bitch." He finished in tears.

Shocked gasps followed that statement. Marcus went white at hearing his marriage being referred to in such a way, by a child no less! And it took a good portion of Neroon's willpower to swallow the Challenging growl building in his throat. Mitchell's witch of a mother began to shrilly deny that her son would say such a thing until he husband finally grew a backbone and loudly ordered her to shut up! In shock that he actually stood up to her, she did.

Sheridan took over the interrogation. "Is that when you broke his jaw?"

Davis snorted. "Um, no."

"So, you did it?" asked his mother. David shook his head no.

Now the parents were getting curious. "Well, who did it, then?" asked Neroon.

The boys looked at each other, then their parents, and then finally David spoke again. "If you promise not to tell Aunt Susan or Uncle David, we'll tell you who did it."

The old Babylon 5 crowd burst into chuckles at that statement. "By, God! Sasha may have been born a Corwin, but she's an Ivanova through and through!" Sheridan gasped out. Even the two teens were chuckling at that statement. "It's okay, kids. Even if we did tell her parents, I'm sure that Sasha wouldn't get into any trouble." He finished.

Delenn snorted. "Get into trouble! Why, Susan would probably buy here a new wardrobe for a job well done! And David would simply smile proudly and proclaim, "That's my baby! Doesn't she

have one hell of a right hook? She's just like her mother!""

That had everyone, including the other parents, laughing. Though some were laughing in sheer shock. When the laughter died down, the headmaster started to question the boys again.

"Who was responsible for young Mr. Hamilton's   "ahem   "injuries"?" he asked. The boys looked at each other again.

"Oh, I know where this is going. I have a feeling that was a pure "Garibaldi" self-defense maneuver." Marcus said while a very evil smirk began to appear on his face.

"Um, well Alice did warn him that if he kept spouting off that she would permanently change the octave of his voice. He chose not to believe her. And that's rather stupid. I mean, how do you not take the threat of the daughter of the Head of the ISA Intel Ops seriously?" Will asked.

The other parents and the headmaster all paled at that statement. Will looked at them, puzzled by their expressions. Suddenly, it dawned on him.

"You mean, none of you knew who our dates were? In Valen's name! We put down their full names. How could you miss it? Well, for your information, your sons managed to insult not only us, but the daughter of Mr. Garibaldi, Chairman of the Board and CEO of Garibaldi-Edgars, and the Head of ISA Intel and Madame Lise Edgars-Garibaldi, President of Mars. Sasha, as you've probably already guessed, is the child of Admiral Ivanova-Corwin, the Commander of the ISA Combined Fleets and Captain Corwin, Commanding Officer of Babylon 5." He finished.

"Alright, who broke Richard's arm?" Mr. Burke asked after he somewhat recovered from that little bombshell. It was NOT pleasant to know that his son had just made an enemy of the four most powerful families (and one of the most ruthless men) in the known galaxy!

David and Will looked at each other and sighed. Well, they were responsible for that one. David spoke up.

"Now, you have to understand, the jerks asked about ten of their friends to join in. At that point, it was two against a dozen, since we'd gotten the girls out of the situation in order to go get help. But, you saw what kind of help we got." David said bitterly.

"Help! Some help! Those horrible excuses for dance chaperones just stood there, waiting for the "nice" boys to teach the two half-breed freaks a lesson!" Will spat out, just as bitterly.

David took over. "We had to defend our selves. When we put down the majority of the jerks with no effort, most of them took off, figuring that the stories of us training with either the Rangers or Warriors were true. Only Rich and two of his buddies were in it then. Well, when Will was distracted, Rich pulled a knife. I yelled out, and Will caught the warning."

Will cut in. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt him. When I saw the knife, I reacted just like Sech Turval taught me to. I forgot that I wasn't fighting a trained Ranger or another Minbari student and used my full strength. It's my fault that Rich got hurt."

Mrs. Williams broke in then. "See, that child can't control himself! He admits it! He shouldn't be at this school! If we don't stop him now, some poor child will soon be dead at his hands!" She shrieked as she stood up and stabbed an accusing finger at William.

Neroon rounded on her with a vengeance. No one called his son a savage! No one! "Madame, I can assure you, that William is the most controlled young male on Minbar! Had he truly lost control, The only being alive in that hall would have been him!" He bit out savagely.



When she began screeching again, He cut her off. "I am sure that a Court Telepath can be brought in scan all the children to verify the truth! And if you still refuse to be reasonable, I can immediately give you a demonstration of such "unrestrained" actions, Madame!"

Mr. Williams screamed for her to shut up again, and actually pulled her down into her seat. That started a screaming match between the two of them. After reminding her that she signed an ironclad pre-nup. that his mother, may God rest her intelligent soul, had insisted on, the witch finally shut up!

Marcus took his now shaking son in a hug. "No, Will. It is definitely NOT your fault. Don't listen to that Sha'gh (cursed one). It was his fault, and I can promise you that I will be looking into pressing charges on the little hoodlum." He said in an enraged voice.

Mr. Burke had gone pale during the story, and now looked positively lived. "I assure you that if you did press charges, my wife and I would not fight you, Mr. Cole." He ground out.

After that statement, Marcus and Delenn kept comforting the teens while the rest of the parents finally began talking to each other, trying to figure out how things had gone so horribly wrong, and why no one had picked up on their children's behavior until now. Suitable punishments were decided for everyone involved. Including the rest of the boys involved in the tussle "???" after their identities were pulled from Will and David. (They both got off with only one night of detention with the headmaster himself. The old gent didn't trust anyone else to handle it at this point.). Mrs. Williams kept emphatically denying that her son would ever behave in such a way, and stating that she would fight any disciplinary actions against him. Everyone summarily ignored her. After the discussion on the topic of their children, they turned to the horrible job done by the staff and faculty.

The headmaster was completely ashamed of his people, and stated that he would completely understand if the Sheridans and Coles brought suite against the school. Neroon, of all people, stated that there would be no need for something so extreme if proper solutions to the problems were found. After a long session on the inadequacies of the faculty and staff, and how to correct them, the adult decided that another meeting would be needed to continue the discussion. They agreed to have the next meeting held with the Board of Trustees. As the other parents were leaving, they each gave their apologies to the Coles and Sheridans on behalf of the children's actions. Well, everyone but Mrs. Williams, she sailed out of the office in a high dudgeon! The headmaster asked the two families to stay behind after everyone left. When the office was clear of everyone else, he began to speak.

"I know that the extent of the problems have come as a shock to all of us. They should not have happened. The situation should not have gotten this out of control. Will, David, why did you not come to me when this started? Did you not believe that you could trust me? And if that is so, why didn't you go to your parents?" He asked gently.

The two teens looked at each other, and hung their heads. David answered the question in a soft voice. "At first, we thought that it would go away if we just ignored it. We figured that if we were patient and let the others get to know us, that things would change. Then, when that didn't work, and the adults put their two cents in it, and we began to get the blame of all the minor things, we figured that complaining to anyone in the school wouldn't do any good. As things began to get worse, we really thought of going to our parents. Really, we did! But, well, our pride got in the way at first. We didn't want anyone to think we were "cry babies" or "Mama's boys"."

Neroon looked puzzled at that those two little human tags. Sheridan explained what they meant. He snorted and shook his head. "Did neither of you two realize that the situation could have been taken care of - What is that expression? "???" Ah, yes! "???" "behind the scenes"? Really, did you really think that I would have let either of you come to such ridicule while in class?"

Both boys blushed. Will answered him. "Um, no. Please, Va'mala, don't take this the wrong way, but know that you are NOT known for your subtlety."

Sheridan chuckled. "Will, that may have been your Va'mala a long time ago. But he can now be sneakier than Uncle Mike, Uncle Londo, and Mr. Bester put together!"

Will looked back and forth between his smirking parents in shock. Then he looked over at his Aunt Delenn and Uncle John, who nodded to him. He followed this up with a shared bewildered look with his best friend. "Okay, I am proven wrong on that point. I will consider it a part of my education. I offer my apologies for underestimating you, Va'mala." He said with a bow to Neroon.

Neroon chuckled. "Do not think on it, felisil. It is not yet your place to think of such things yet. Now, are there any other reasons as to why you did not come to us?"

Both boys blushed again. "We didn't want to disappoint you. If we couldn't handle coming to a peaceful resolution with our schoolmates on our own, how we going to be able to handle our upcoming responsibilities? And, after a while, we were ashamed of ourselves for not being able to handle it, and thought you would be too." They both answered in a disjointed fashion.

Their parents looked at them in shock. How could either of the boys believe that they could be ashamed of them? Where did they get that horrible idea? Marcus was the first to puzzle it out.

"Let me guess, those sorry excuses of instructors kept telling you that it was all your faults in the first place. And if you couldn't handle it, you should just leave and show the galaxy that "half-breeds" really were just trash?" He ground out. "I'll bet that they kept saying it over and over again, until you believed part of that lie!"

Both boys nodded and started to sniffle again. At their broken sounds, Delenn had gotten over her motherly concern, and now went into the "Satai Who Wants Vengeance" phase. David was treated to a type of language he never even dreamed he would be hearing coming out of his demure and refined mother!

The headmaster decided to weigh back into the conversation at that point. "Well, I see that a great deal of damage has been done here. I believe that a great deal of counseling will be needed." David and Will groaned.

"Counseling?" Asked Neroon. He was not familiar with that word in that context.

"Meeting with soul healers." Explained his mala.

Neroon nodded. Yes, he too could see the need for that. William had taken cycles off of his lifespan with his request for Sus Zha'Shah. "You are correct, Dr'aal (master teacher) Donaldson. I believe that such meetings will be required, and for our entire family to be present."

Sheridan concurred. "Don't either of you to look so shocked." He said to the boys. "Did either of you think that you'd be facing this alone?" Both boys blushed again. "Nope! Sorry to disappoint you, but your doddering old folks are going to be with you every step of the way. Now, don't get us wrong, it's going to be a long, hard road to get out of this, but we won't let you walk it alone!"

"Now, why don't you two go and get your stuff together. Both of you will be coming back to the embassy with us. We think that you need a break from this place, and I'm sure that the headmaster agrees." Donaldson nodded. "See? This is going to be a relaxing, homework-free, training-free weekend that you can enjoy with you decrepit olds fogies of parents. Okay, off you two go!" At that news, the two boys stood up, sketched hasty bows to the adults, and practically ran for the door.

"Be back here in twenty minutes!" Marcus yelled after them.

After the youngsters left, the adults all breathed a sigh of relief. That had been worse than fighting the Shadows! How could they have missed something so traumatic happening in their children's lives? After a bit of silent thought on the subject, something John had said came back to Delenn.

"Gentlemen, I believe that you have some explaining to do!" She ground out.

Marcus, seeing which way the wind was blowing, and deciding that being on Delenn's bad side right now would NOT be a good thing, put on a suitably confused mask. "Neroon? Mala, what is Delenn talking about?"

Sheridan and Neroon looked at each other. They knew this was coming from the start. Now, how to reduce the number of nights on the damned couches?

"Well, you see ---"

\*\*\*\*\*

Will and David were walking back to there room at all best possible speed. They didn't run since they didn't want to be written up by a hall monitor after getting off so easy. They started talking about what had just happened. As they got to their door, a really nasty thought came into David's head.

"Will, do you think that we've just been played?" David asked his friend.

Will thought for a moment. "No, I don't think Va'mala and Uncle John would do that to us. Besides your mom and Father would never let them do it."

"Yeah, you're probably right."

The End

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