

## **Fate/Knights of the Heroic Throne**

Chapter Intro

Human order: Restored.

History: Preserved.

But what of the ones who made it possible?

Heroic Spirits—echoes of legends, bound to vessels, fated to fade without remembrance.

But a wish was made.

One last miracle from humanity's saviour—  
that her fallen companions might live once more.

### **Story Starts**

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#### **Chapter 6.1 -**

#### **The Tyrant's Last Festival**

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"My beloved people of Naboo."

Ars Veruna—calm and regal—stood at a podium, his gaze directed slightly downward at the camera as his speech cycled yet again on Naboo's Local Broadcasting Stations. Each word had been chosen with precision, each pause calculated for maximum impact. He understood the power of repetition: how truth could be shaped through persistent narrative, how doubt eroded under the weight of consistent messaging.

"In times of crisis, a leader must speak truth—however difficult that truth may be. And so I come before you now, not as your King demanding obedience, but as a father pleading for the safety of his children."

His visage took on a warm, almost tender expression as he leaned in slightly, as though sharing a confidence with each individual viewer. The intimacy was deliberate—a politician's instinct honed over decades of public performance. Despite his years, he had access to the finest medical treatments the galaxy

could offer—technologies that arrested the body's natural deterioration with quiet efficiency.

His figure remained lean yet tall and powerful, his face both youthful and yet bearing the severe gravitas of someone who had weathered genuine hardship. His angular face, sharp nose and chin, severe eyes that seemed to pierce through the camera lens itself, his regal beard and moustache perfectly groomed, and his long slicked-back white hair all combined to present an image of absolute authority tempered with paternal concern.

Whether either quality was genuine mattered less than whether it was believed to be genuine.

"Yesterday, our beautiful capital—our jewel of Theed—was subjected to an act of terrorism so brazen, so calculated, that it shakes me to my very core. Innocent citizens attending a celebration of commerce and community were set upon by armed criminals. Families torn apart. Blood spilled on sacred marble. Children traumatised by violence they should never have witnessed."

The warmth drained from his features as the words left his lips. This was the moment where grief must be visible—where the populace must see their leader share in their anguish. His bearing shifted, transforming from benevolent father to righteous protector. He clenched his jaw, the muscle working visibly beneath his skin, whilst his gloved hands gripped the edges of the podium with such force that the leather creaked audibly in the otherwise silent recording studio.

It was a performance. Every gesture calibrated, every pause measured. But performances could be powerful precisely because they were crafted—and Veruna had been crafting his public image for decades.

"But this attack was not random," he continued, letting steel enter his voice. "It was not the work of mere opportunists seeking profit through kidnapping and slavery. No—this was something far more insidious. This was a coordinated assault designed to destabilise our government, to sow chaos and discord, to tear apart the very fabric of our society."

The brush felt cold against the tip of Padmé's lips as Rabbine applied the crimson ink with practised precision, layering it only over the centre portion beneath her philtrum whilst the outer edges received the same chalky white that masked her natural complexion.

The stark contrast transformed her mouth into something regal and unnatural—a symbol rather than a feature of a living face. It was beautiful in the way that monuments were beautiful: impressive, meaningful, utterly divorced from humanity.

Earlier, Rabbine had swept that ghostly white across every visible inch of Padmé Naberrie's skin, methodically erasing Padmé beneath the porcelain-like veneer. The process had been meticulous—foundation obscuring the natural flush of her cheeks, powder settling into the fine lines she hadn't realised she'd developed from months of worry, pigment replacing living skin with something carved and eternal. The effect was both striking and unsettling, like watching yourself disappear beneath layers of symbolism and expectation.

Padmé held absolutely still, barely breathing, her ribs tight with the effort of remaining motionless whilst King Veruna's voice continued its inexorable march through accusations that grew more pointed with each passing sentence.

The air in the room felt too thick, too warm despite the climate controls, heavy with unspoken tension and the weight of what they were about to do. Through the mirror's reflection, she could see the holoscreen behind her, though the image swam slightly beneath her mounting anxiety.

"For months, I have watched with growing concern as certain... elements... within our society have sought to undermine the peace and prosperity we have built together," Veruna declared, his tone shifting from grief-stricken leader to disappointed father confronting wayward children. The transition was smooth, practised—a politician's trick she recognised because she'd studied the same techniques, learnt the same rhetorical patterns.

How strange, to watch manipulation unfold and understand its architecture so completely—yet still feel its intended effect pressing against her chest.

"They cloak themselves in the language of reform, speak honeyed words about justice and change. But what they truly seek is power—power they have not earned, power they would seize through manipulation and violence."

Amidala. Beautiful flower and boundless light. The name tasted strange in her mouth—strange not because the syllables were unfamiliar, but because of what they represented. Something foreign. Something presumptuous, perhaps even arrogant.

*'Who am I to take a throne name? Who am I to position myself as Naboo's salvation?'*

The questions had no satisfying answers. And yet... the symbolism was powerful. A flower blooming in darkness. Light piercing corruption. The promise of renewal after rot.

If she was going to commit treason, she might as well commit to the imagery.

Padmé clenched her fists—her hands wanted to shake, desperately wanted to tremble with the anxiety coursing through her bloodstream, but she kept them pressed firmly on her lap, her knuckles white with pressure. An anchor to steady her breathing and centre her focus. The physical discomfort helped, strangely. Gave her something concrete to concentrate on besides the enormity of what she was about to do.

Behind her, she could feel the presence of her team—Tsabin, Eirtama, Mara, Sasha, Su Yan, all dressed identically in flowing ceremonial robes, faces hidden behind white masks that mimicked her make-up. They stood like statues, like guardians, like the future handmaidens they might become if this gamble didn't get them all killed.

Each of them had chosen to be here. Each of them understood the risks—or at least understood them as well as anyone could understand the prospect of imprisonment, exile, or worse. They had families, futures, lives that extended

beyond this moment. And yet here they stood, silent and steadfast, their trust in her vision weighing heavier than any crown.

Their silence was both comforting and terrifying—a reminder that she wasn't alone in this madness, but also that she was dragging all of them into the fire with her.

The studio lights were too bright. Far too bright, hot against her elaborately styled hair, making sweat threaten to bead beneath the make-up that couldn't show a single crack, a single moment of human weakness.

Queens didn't sweat. Queens didn't tremble. Queens didn't doubt their right to speak, their authority to command, their vision for the future.

But she wasn't a queen. Not yet. Maybe never. Just a young woman—barely out of her teen years, still learning how politics actually worked versus how they were supposed to work—about to commit treason on planetary broadcast.

The thought should have been paralysing. Instead, it felt almost clarifying. There was no more room for half-measures, no more space for cautious incrementalism. She had crossed too many lines to pretend she could retreat to safety now.

"Yesterday's attack was the culmination of their efforts. A carefully orchestrated spectacle designed to coincide with an illegal political gathering—a gathering I had specifically warned against, knowing the dangers it posed. And when my security forces arrived to protect innocent citizens from the violence these agitators had invited, they were systematically slaughtered."

*'This is insane.'*

The thought circled like a carrion bird, refusing to be dismissed no matter how many times she tried to focus on strategy, on talking points, on anything else. It kept returning, dark wings beating against the inside of her skull, demanding acknowledgement.

In approximately ninety seconds—she could see the countdown timer reflected in the mirror's edge, numbers ticking down with merciless precision—Sio Bibble would give the signal.

The slicer—some underground tech specialist Su Yan had found through contacts Padmé didn't want to examine too closely, someone whose very existence implied connections to Theed's criminal networks—would hijack every holonet relay in the system. Override every channel. Force every screen in the city, possibly the planet, to show one thing: her.

And she would speak.

She would stand before millions of citizens and accuse the King of conspiracy to commit mass murder.

She would call for open defiance of emergency decrees that carried prison sentences for violations.

She would invite thousands of citizens to march on the Royal Palace in direct violation of curfew, knowing that Veruna's security forces would be waiting, that violence was not just possible but probable.

Any one of those acts alone was sedition. Together? They were a declaration of war against the Crown, against the established order, against the entire governmental structure of Naboo.

*'If the slicer fails...'* The thought made her stomach twist. *'They'll trace this broadcast. Eventually.'*

The slicer had promised—sworn, actually, with the fervour of someone who took professional pride in their work—that they couldn't be traced, that the routing was too complex, that the intrusion would be untraceable—well, at least as long as they keep the broadcast to a certain time.

But promises meant nothing against the full resources of Naboo's security apparatus once they were motivated to investigate. Once they realised this wasn't just a technical glitch but a deliberate assault on royal authority. The

monarchy had survived for centuries; it had protocols for dealing with sedition, methods refined through generations of political intrigue.

Governor Bibble's involvement bought them some protection—his access codes, his insider knowledge of security protocols, his ability to misdirect initial inquiries—but how long before someone noticed the irregularities? Before someone connected the dots between the illegal broadcast and the demonstration it called for? Before someone started asking questions about who had been in this studio, who had access, who had motive?

*'We'll all be arrested. Not just me. All of them.'*

The weight of that responsibility pressed down on her shoulders like a physical thing, making the elaborate headpiece feel heavier than it actually was. She thought of Tsabin, standing behind her right now with that mask hiding her sardonic features, who'd already been captured once by slavers because of Padmé's idealism, who'd suffered trauma and violation and still come back to fight because she believed in this cause.

She thought of Sasha and Su Yan, whose family connections to Governor Bibble would be weaponised against them in show trials designed to discredit the entire reform movement—*'the Governor's own nieces, corrupted by radical influences, turned against their family's wisdom.'* The narrative practically wrote itself.

She thought of Mara, whose gentle compassion and emotional openness had no place in an interrogation room where threats and worse would back questions. Of Eirtama's sharp competence being wasted in a prison cell when she could be doing so much good.

And she thought of Rabbine's grateful enthusiasm—she was so young, barely eighteen, still so eager to prove herself worthy of inclusion—being crushed by the machinery of state punishment.

*'Stop. Focus.'*

She forced herself to breathe slowly, deliberately, using the meditation techniques she'd learnt years ago and rarely employed effectively. *'In through the nose, out through the mouth. Centre yourself. You chose this. They chose this. Everyone here is an adult who understood the risks.'*

The words felt hollow even as she repeated them internally. Understanding risk in the abstract was very different from facing its reality.

"One hundred and twenty-three brave men and women—your neighbours, your friends, fathers and mothers and sons and daughters—murdered in the line of duty. Cut down by foreign agents who had infiltrated our society under false pretences, who had gained your trust through deception, who revealed their true nature only when the moment came to strike."

*'What if I'm wrong?'*

The question struck with fresh force despite having circled through her mind a thousand times since they'd finalised this plan. Not about Veruna's corruption—that was undeniable, documented in ledgers Eirtama had helped trace, witnessed by thousands who'd seen the decline of public services whilst royal coffers swelled, evidenced by yesterday's massacre when terrorists and slavers—later declared as security forces—gunned down unarmed protestors.

Not about the injustice of Shirou and Arturia's arrest—she'd seen their heroism with her own eyes, watched them save lives whilst asking nothing in return.

But what if she was wrong about *this*? About her right to speak for Naboo when no one had elected her, when she held no office, when her legitimacy rested entirely on moral authority she'd granted herself? About positioning herself as the voice of resistance when plenty of others had been fighting corruption longer than she'd been aware it existed? About claiming a throne that technically still had an occupant, regardless of how unworthy he'd proven himself?

*'What gives me the right?'*

The question gnawed at her with relentless persistence.

*'Conviction? Opportunity? Palpatine's backing?'*

That last one made her stomach turn because she knew—knew with uncomfortable certainty—that it mattered more than she wanted to admit.

"I speak, of course, of the individuals styling themselves Shirou Emiya and Arturia Pendragon. Aliens from beyond our borders who came to Naboo not seeking honest work or peaceful integration, but carrying violence in their hearts and blood on their hands. We now know—through investigation of their fraudulent documentation—that everything about them was a lie. Their names, their histories, their very identities fabricated to hide their true purpose."

Palpatine. There was another source of doubt that twisted in her gut like a blade, cold and sharp and impossible to ignore no matter how much she tried. The Senator had been instrumental in positioning her for this moment—providing resources that reform movements desperately needed, connections to influential figures she couldn't have accessed otherwise, subtle guidance that had seemed helpful but now felt... orchestrated. Calculated. As if she were a piece being moved across a game board she couldn't fully see, positioned for purposes she didn't entirely understand.

*'What if he's using me? What if this entire thing is his play for power and I'm just the face he's putting on it? The idealistic young woman with genuine convictions, perfect for rallying support whilst he consolidates control behind the scenes?'*

But then—and this was where her thoughts always stumbled, where moral clarity dissolved into pragmatic murk—did it matter? If the cause was just, if the corruption was real and documented and destroying lives, if people were truly suffering under Veruna's rule and yesterday's massacre proved how far he'd go to maintain power... did it matter whether Palpatine had ulterior motives? Wasn't the enemy of your enemy, if not a friend, at least a useful ally? Wasn't it naive to expect anyone in politics to act from purely selfless

motives? Wasn't some degree of self-interest inevitable, and therefore acceptable as long as the outcomes were good?

*'That's how it starts, though.'* The counter-argument rose immediately, merciless in its logic. *'That's how good people become complicit in new tyrannies whilst overthrowing old ones. That's how you wake up one day and realise you've traded one corrupt master for another.'*

The thought offered no comfort, no resolution. Only the bitter acknowledgement that she might be making a terrible mistake for all the right reasons—or the right choice despite all her doubts. There was no way to know until after the consequences had already unfolded.

"They operated a restaurant. Served our food, smiled at our citizens, ingratiated themselves into our community. All whilst coordinating with radical elements, all whilst planning yesterday's horror. The illegal demonstration was their signal—the moment when chaos would erupt and they would reveal themselves as the weapons they truly are."

Sixty seconds. The timer in the mirror's reflection continued its relentless countdown. Sixty seconds until everything changed, until there was no going back, until Padmé Naberrie became either a hero or a traitor depending on which side wrote the history.

Her heart hammered against her ribs. Beneath the make-up, beneath the symbolism, beneath the symbolic name and the elaborate costume, she was terrified.

But she was also ready.

*'Not because I'm certain I'm right,'* she realised, the thought crystallising with unexpected clarity. *'But because doing nothing—staying silent whilst Veruna twists the truth and condemns innocent people—that would be a certainty I couldn't live with.'*

Forty-five seconds.

Behind her, she felt Tsabin shift slightly—the tiniest movement, barely perceptible, but Padmé had known her long enough to read the message: *I'm here. We're here. Whatever happens.*

Thirty seconds.

Rabbine stepped back, surveying her work with critical assessment before nodding fractionally. The transformation was complete. Padmé Naberrie had disappeared beneath Amidala's mask.

Fifteen seconds.

She straightened her spine, lifted her chin, and let the fear settle into the background where it could fuel her words without controlling them. The anxiety didn't vanish—it couldn't, not with stakes this high—but it found its proper place. Not an obstacle, but a current she could ride.

The light on the holoprojector flickered from amber to green.

It was time.

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In the countless homes, bars, and establishments scattered across Naboo, throughout the planet's lake-provinces and riverside cities, life seemed to proceed as usual on the surface. There was no armed guard corralling people to order, no visible hand forcing compliance, but at the same time there was this heaviness everyone could feel—a weight that pressed down on conversations, that made laughter feel somehow inappropriate, that turned simple gestures into acts requiring careful consideration.

"Some of you witnessed their violence yesterday. Some of you saw what they are capable of—the inhuman strength, the impossible speed, the utter disregard for the sanctity of life. One hundred and twenty-three deaths. One hundred and twenty-three families destroyed. And for what? So that a small group of malcontents could attempt to seize power through terrorism and fear."

At a random pub somewhere in the lake-provinces—a worn establishment with windows overlooking the water—regulars seemed to gather in quiet groups as they nursed their drinks. The usual boisterous arguments about sports and politics had given way to hushed murmurs.

Their attention was elsewhere, divided, as they kept one ear half-listening to the King's speech, something that had been playing all day in-between programmes, repeated on every channel until the words had begun to blur together. Some stared down into their glasses as though searching for answers in the amber liquid. Others exchanged glances that spoke volumes without uttering a word—glances that asked questions they dared not voice aloud.

"I take no pleasure in the emergency measures I have been forced to implement. A planetary curfew, oversight of communications, enhanced security protocols—these are not the tools of tyranny, but of protection. They are temporary necessities in extraordinary times, designed to shield you from those who would exploit chaos for their own ends."

In a riverside apartment in Keren, a family sat around their evening meal in unusual silence. The father's fork hovered halfway to his mouth, forgotten, as Veruna's face filled the holoscreen mounted above the hearth. His wife watched him rather than the broadcast, reading the tension in his jaw, the way his knuckles whitened around the utensil. Their teenage daughter kept glancing between her parents and the door, as though calculating escape routes from a conversation that hadn't yet begun.

"I know there are those among you who question these measures. Who fear that your freedoms are being curtailed. But I ask you—what freedom exists in a society where terrorists can massacre over a hundred people in broad daylight? What liberty is there in allowing foreign agents to coordinate attacks with domestic radicals? What peace can there be when violence masquerades as reform?"

At the Theed University dormitories, students clustered in common rooms that usually hummed with debate and friendly argument. Tonight, the debates had

edges. Voices rose and fell in sharp bursts before subsiding into uneasy quiet. Someone had muted the holoscreen, but Veruna's face still moved silently behind the glass—lips shaping words they'd already heard a dozen times, hands gesturing with practised sincerity.

A young woman sat apart from the others, her datapad dark in her lap. She'd been at the festival. She'd seen the blaster fire rain down from above, seen the Mandalorian armour gleaming in the afternoon sun. She'd also seen a petite blonde woman carve through the attackers like a figure from legend, seen a white-haired man's arrows find their marks with impossible precision.

She knew what she'd witnessed. She knew what Veruna was claiming.

The two things could not both be true.

"The individuals who supported yesterday's illegal gathering—who provided material aid to the terrorists, who helped create the conditions for massacre—they will tell you they are victims. They will claim they knew nothing of the violence to come. They will paint themselves as innocent activists crushed beneath a tyrant's boot."

In a modest home in Moenia, an elderly couple sat side by side on their worn sofa, hands intertwined as they had been for forty-seven years. The holoscreen cast shifting light across their weathered faces. They remembered other speeches from other leaders—promises of protection that preceded crackdowns, assurances of temporary measures that stretched into permanent fixtures.

They had been young once, living at an outer rim planet, where they experienced what it felt like living under the rule of a government under 'extraordinary times.'

Their grip on each other's hands tightened.

"But ask yourselves: Is it coincidence that foreign assassins just happened to operate near the very plaza where their illegal demonstration was planned? Is

it chance that the attack occurred at precisely the moment when my security forces were stretched thin, responding to their deliberate provocation?"

In the back room of a cantina in the Gallo Mountains, miners fresh from their shift watched the broadcast with the particular stillness of people who worked with their hands and trusted their eyes more than their ears. They'd seen footage—fragments that had circulated before the communications oversight had clamped down, shaky recordings from personal devices that showed something very different from Veruna's narrative.

They'd seen who fired first.

They'd seen who saved whom.

One of them reached for his canister, drained it, and set it down with a definitive click against the scarred wooden table.

"N-no. This—thi—this w...as coordination. This was cons—conspiracy—"

The screen flickered. Veruna's face stuttered, pixelated, then vanished entirely into static snow. A heartbeat of nothing—the broadcast equivalent of a held breath.

Then the image reformed.

A figure sat centred in the frame, framed by shadows that suggested depth without revealing location. Flowing ceremonial robes in deep crimson and gold caught the light with subtle richness, the fabric's drape speaking of tradition whilst the cut suggested something new—something that honoured the past whilst reaching toward a different future. An elaborate headdress rose above features rendered anonymous by white make-up that transformed the face beneath into living porcelain. Only the lower portion of the face remained exposed, lips painted in a crimson scar that drew the eye like a wound.

The figure was young—that much was clear from the smoothness of the visible skin, the delicate line of the jaw. But there was nothing youthful in the

bearing. The posture spoke of absolute certainty, of authority claimed rather than granted.

When she spoke, her voice carried a measured cadence that demanded attention without raising volume—each word placed with the precision of a sculptor selecting exactly where to strike marble. There was something almost hypnotic in that control, a quiet power that made listeners lean forward rather than forcing them back.

But then, with a sudden flash of brilliance, the set was fully illuminated, revealing her face in stark detail. The white make-up created a porcelain mask of serene authority, transforming youthful features into something timeless and otherworldly. Her eyes, framed by delicate crimson markings that echoed the paint on her lips, held a calm intensity—dark, unwavering, utterly certain. The elaborate headdress framed her face like a crown of tradition itself, each curve and ornament speaking of Naboo's heritage whilst the wearer behind it promised something entirely new.

"Good evening, Naboo," she said, each syllable clear as a bell. "My name is Amidala."

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**End**

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