

A Lover You Don't Have to Love

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/13402905) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/13402905>.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Rogue One: A Star Wars Story_(2016)
Relationship:	Cassian Andor/K-2SO
Characters:	Cassian Andor , K-2SO (Star Wars)
Additional Tags:	Robot/Human Relationships , Robot Sex , Angst and Feels , Dark , Unhealthy Coping Mechanisms , Pre-Rogue One , Rough Sex , Hand & Finger Kink , Hand Jobs , Grinding , Sensuality , Wet & Messy , Wire Play
Language:	English
Collections:	Chocolate Box - Round 3
Stats:	Published: 2018-02-19 Words: 3,898 Chapters: 1/1

A Lover You Don't Have to Love

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Summary

It's just sex, Cassian is still telling himself, it's not like K-2 and he are lovers. Getting attached would be unprofessional and he's anything but. He's just slipping, walls crumbling. But as long as he tells himself it means nothing it will be fine, right?

Cassian whines in a choked-up mix of pleasure and pain as hard, cold metal fingers breach him. It is too much, too fast, too soon, but it is exactly what he needs. He thrusts back and throws his head back as far as it will go, his spine is arching with the motion.

K-2 makes an alarmed mechanical noise and he squeezes tight around his fingers before he can even think of withdrawing, growls out a low and throaty demand of, “I’m *fine*, Kay!” His hands clench tighter around the edges of the desk K-2 has him bent over, still fully dressed except for the uniform pants pooling at his ankles. Cassian rocks back again, hissing, jerking when K-2’s fingers find just the perfect spot deep inside him.

He’s still too careful, taking too long.

“Just... Just do it, Kay!”

He can’t afford for Kay to hesitate and worry and take his sweet time, if that happens he will start *thinking* again and he’s trying so hard not to think.

It’s only if he loses himself in the momentum of their need that he can permit himself – can permit *them* – to have this. Thinking is far too dangerous, thinking will ruin everything. If he has time to think he will remember all the good reasons they shouldn’t be doing this, all the ways in which he is betraying his own principles by permitting himself such weakness.

Mercifully, K-2 knows – he may not like it, he may be hurt by every time Cassian pulls him close in what is really only a backhanded rejection, but he knows the rules to this *thing* between them, and he loves Cassian more than he loves himself.

This, Cassian knows all too well. He too loves K-2 more than he loves himself.

For a little while, K-2 reduces Cassian’s world to the fingers thrusting into him and then to the hand that wraps around his cock and jerks him off with harsh, robotic precision – never loving, never gentle, though they both can read between the lines of the dispassionate, clinical pleasure Cassian permits them. Sometimes you have to cling to your pretenses, even when you both know them for what they are.

He is so close, a whimpering, pleading mess under K-2’s unforgiving hands and then one of these hands suddenly releases his cock and yanks at his hair, wrenching his head back again and Cassian arches and howls a strangled, wordless scream and he comes without being touched at all.

Cassian sinks down onto the desk, boneless and gasping for air, sweaty and slick within the confines of his tangled uniform.

K-2’s fingers remain within him, still now, he runs his fingertips over the arch of his spine and Cassian guiltily wishes there were no layers of fabric between them.

There are always too many things standing between them.

K-2 withdraws, Cassian hears the sounds of him taking a step back, but he still feels too sluggish to move. The edge of the desk is digging painfully into his hips and it's everything but comfortable but it's better than all the walls that will have to come down between them once he moves.

"Cassian?" K-2 asks, his voice as gentle as his vocabulator can manage. A tense, anxious silence, and then, "did I hurt you?"

Cassian bites down on his bottom lip until it aches. Sometimes he hates himself even more for what this does to K-2 than for his own weakness.

"No. I'm fine." He forces himself upright onto wobbly legs, tucks himself away, still dripping wet, and closes his uniform pants. He wipes off his sweaty palms on his trouser legs and then he is sure he can almost pretend again that nothing has happened.

Except when he faces K-2 he looks so uncertain, hunching more than he is slouching, and why does his unmoving metal face have to be so expressive anyway.

Cassian quickly diverts his eyes again, grunting, "I'm fine. Weren't you going to report to the droid bay for that leg gyro upgrade?"

K-2's bright photoreceptors don't stray from Cassian's face. He can feel the panic bubbling up in him again, for the life of him he can't tell what is going on in K-2's processor right now and if he pushes... Cassian doesn't know if he has the willpower to push back.

"Please remember to rehydrate," K-2 tells him and walks away.

Cassian sits down at his desk again and tracks him with his eyes. He briefly wonders if he should tell K-2 that his fingers are still glistening with lube and precum but they never speak of what happened once it is over.

These are the rules Cassian made, the least he can do is respect them.

Sometimes, there are large droid hand-shaped bruises on Cassian's hips.

Late at night, when he lays awake in bed or has the showers all to himself he likes to trace them and relive how it had felt being held down by K-2 – hard enough that it ached a little bit, and thus something he could explain away as liking it rough, yet still *held* and made to feel safe and sheltered and delightfully small in the droid's hold.

Vulnerable, his traitorous mind whispers, he likes to be vulnerable with K-2SO.

It comes far too close to forbidden things, but after a mission has gone south he needs more than he can let K-2 give him, and if he can't let himself fall asleep in his arms then having tangible proof that it isn't all in his head will have to do.

Sometimes, he wonders how it could come to this.

They are friends, best friends, he trusts K-2 with his life, with his deepest and darkest secrets, with everything he has and is.

It's just what he wants that he can't trust him with – can't trust *himself* with, rather.

K-2 and he both know how it goes. Everything for the rebellion. It's always been more than words for him, it's been the one golden rule by which he lives his life. It's *everything* for the rebellion, nothing held back to be given to one special person only.

Other spies may have lovers and dreams for a future with them, but other spies aren't Cassian Jeron Andor, the best spy in the Massassi Group. Other spies aren't the best exactly because they have something left to lose, and when push comes to shove that split second of hesitation while you mourn the life that could have been makes the difference between a dead spy and a successful mission.

(He tries not to think about all the time he wastes mourning what could have been.)

Another mission that costs him too much, another price he pays because somebody's got to do it. Better him than one of these wide-eyed kids who come to the Rebel Alliance believing in fighting the good fight and being the better people and all these things heroes can only afford to believe in as long as other people do the dirty work for them.

They make the requisite jumps to shake off pursuers, then another one into the middle of nowhere.

Ten minutes later Cassian is up to his wrists in K-2's chest wiring, the droid's plating indecently exposed as he lays pinned beneath Cassian in their shuttle's cargo hold. He can still feel the drying blood itch on his hands – it's all in his head, he knows that, he's far too good at his job to make a mess – but now it's mingling with the tingle of static dancing over his skin.

"Just like that," he coos, his voice husky and low, nearly quiet enough to get lost amidst the humming of the ship and K-2's overheating systems.

Cassian slows, the harsh yanking and rubbing turning slow, almost ponderous and beneath him, K-2 writhes as he is gently forced down from the brink.

"Why did you stop?" he protests once he regains control of his vocabulator. His hand closes around Cassian's wrist.

His photoreceptors are still flickering, and tiny little sparks are dancing over Cassian's hands. K-2 is always beautiful to him, but never more so than when he is so completely Cassian's.

Cassian's fingers thrust a little deeper into the nest of wires until they find sensitive circuit boards and internal sensors. He pushes down with his thumb and rubs firm, torturously slow circles while K-2's eyes flare bright and he returns to making nothing but needy staticky noises.

“I didn’t stop,” Cassian murmurs, picking up a twitching hand to nuzzle the sensor-riddled fingers with his lips, “we’ve only just started.”

He grinds feebly against metal that is just not shaped right to give him relief, curses himself for not having ripped off his clothes before they began. K-2 knows what he needs, he slips a hand into his pants for Cassian to rub against and then yanks them down all the way and then he is the one once more reduced to whimpers and pleas as K-2 strokes his already painfully hard cock until Cassian is coming all over him, just barely aware enough to avoid spilling his cum over exposed wires and circuit boards.

His seed coats gears and joints instead, and the tiny seams between K-2’s parts. Mere moments later, Cassian’s lips follow its path, licking up his own salty taste that is now mingled with machine oil and the metallic aftertaste of K-2’s frame.

“I have heard there are attachments for droids,” K-2 tells him when Cassian crawls up along his tall frame to once more devote himself to his wires.

His breath hitches, eyes wide. “Really?” he forces out. His mouth is suddenly very dry. He can almost imagine what it would feel like to know all of K-2’s massive strength behind every stroke inside him, to feel connected to him even more intimately.

K-2’s fingers caress his cheek and for just a moment, Cassian permits himself to lean into his touch. “Would you like that?”

He exhales, eyes fluttering shut as he whispers his defeat. “I want you in every possible way I can have you.”

There’s nothing fast or impersonal about the hours they spend making another come over and over again, but afterward they slip back into their respectable roles.

Cassian has always been an excellent liar and his lies never ring truer than when he lies to himself.

There is a spy he barely got to know before he sent him to his death bleeding out in front of Cassian, the life slowly leaving his eyes as his hold on Cassian’s hand weakens, only to strengthen again for one moment and a too-wet gurgle of, “tell Rodma that I love her.”

He does, and stands stiffly while she soaks his uniform jacket with her tears, but when he tells her, “you knew the risk of getting attached,” she just looks at him furiously and snaps, “do you think it would hurt less if I were mourning what we never had?”

He stands there, stunned, and finally stammers out, “I... I don’t know.”

Cassian knows that to be a lie.

He tracks K-2 down to the shooting range. Normally he would drag him off to some empty room to keep up the pretense of a casual hook-up, never mind that he only ever has them with K-2 and couldn't even fathom wanting anyone else.

Instead, he follows up the lingering looks and little touches that signal to K-2 that he would like more than a chat with a curt, "Kaytoo, come see me in my quarters if you have time later" and leaves the droid behind confused.

Maybe there's a little part of him which takes vicious glee in making K-2 feel as confused and lost as he is. The larger part of him knows that he is already hurting K-2 more than his friendship can ever make up for.

Sometimes he thinks K-2 would be better off if he found someone else, but while it isn't in Cassian's nature to openly display jealousy or possessiveness, there is absolutely nothing which obligates him to be the better man within the confines of his own mind. He may acknowledge it as a fact that K-2 would be better off with someone else, but he is with Cassian – except he is not, because there is nothing between them, they just happen to be conveniently there when there are primal needs to be met – and Cassian has no intention for that to change.

"You wanted to see me, Captain," K-2 says as he steps into Cassian's quarters. He still sounds confused, it's devastatingly charming and makes Cassian's throat feel tight.

Cassian, sitting on the bed while he had been working on a mission report, looks up and permits himself to take in how tall and broad K-2 looks in his tiny quarters, how much he fills them. It's not that he never visits Cassian, they are best friends, it just feels distinctly different on the rare occasions K-2 is here as more-than-friends.

"Sit. I need you to take a look at this and tell me if I forgot anything important."

He thrusts the report at K-2 and waits.

This here feels normal in spite of all their tension.

Working together, being together without the strict divide between all their neatly compartmentalized interactions is so close, just barely out of reach.

A Cassian who isn't terrified of letting K-2 close could lean against him while K-2 reads and find comfort in the physical reassurance that he is still here, still with him, still at his side after everything that has been seen and done and said. Maybe he would even tell him that he will always remain at his side until the time comes for them to make the ultimate sacrifice for the rebellion.

He can't, though, for their friendship doesn't come with more than the shortest of touches and everything else is strictly shut away to be only uncovered at the appropriate moments.

It's tiresome, that's what it is, like maintaining a false identity with no end in sight and never a break to be yourself, not even in sleep.

When K-2 looks ready to leave, Cassian's hand finds his hip, just a gentle brush of his fingers over the curve of his hip strut to make K-2 pause and turn bright, confused photoreceptors on him.

"Cassian?" he asks, his head thrust forward as if getting a little closer to Cassian's face would bring him the answers he desires.

Cassian swallows hard. His throat is dry again.

It feels huge. It shouldn't feel huge. They have been intimate in so many ways and K-2 knows all his deepest, darkest secrets besides. And still, this is huge and scary, with a painful knot of anxiety quickly growing in his belly.

"I was wondering if you'd like to stay." His voice is mostly even, just a little too choked up to pass for smooth. Cassian figures he could be proud of himself if he didn't feel so utterly pathetic for his show of nerves.

K-2 does, in fact, know Cassian better than he knows himself. There's no need to elaborate what he means or what he wants, or the dizzying knot of strings that would come attached with saying yes. All of these things are the building blocks that make a life they already share.

His photoreceptors dim like they sometimes do to signal his attention has turned inwards while he runs complicated calculations.

Cassian remains still and busies himself with brushing imaginary lint from his uniform jacket. After all the time it has taken Cassian to get to this point the least he can do is give K-2 time to process, even if every second feels torture.

"How do I know you won't change your mind tomorrow?"

He swallows hard, once more on the verge of choking up. Hurt mingles with uncertainty in his eyes as he looks up to meet K-2's still so very bright photoreceptors.

"Kay, I'm not fickle," he protests, yet try as he might he can't muster any heat for his outrage. He cringes. He deserves it. After he has hurt him in so many ways, he deserves K-2's doubt. He deserves a lot worse than doubt after all the ways in which he has hurt K-2, he thinks, his fingers clenching around his thighs. He needs to hold on to something, anything.

"You are not," K-2 concedes. He still isn't moving closer to Cassian but neither is he moving away. "You are loyal to the rebellion."

Cassian opens his mouth to argue, but... "I am. It will always come first." He reaches for K-2's right hand and pulls it close, cradles it between his own, smaller hands. He gets slowly onto his feet and crosses the distance between them. He presses his palm against K-2's chest, right over the hatch which protects his most vital systems. "Stay... please."

K-2's fingertips trace his brow, they trail over his temple all the way down to the scruff that covers his chin and don't come to a stop until they feel his pulse at his throat. "You are very

fragile.”

Cassian’s lips curl into a mournful half-smile. “I guess I am.” K-2 leans down to him and Cassian surges up onto his tiptoes. It’s not enough so he places a hand on the back of K-2’s smooth skull and tugs him down even further and then he can finally mouth at K-2’s faceplates. It’s not a kiss, they will never have kisses, but this is close enough.

They part and look at another, both equally at a loss what to do with themselves without the frantic, desperate passion that has always driven them.

“You look a mess,” Cassian notes, rubbing his thumb over a splatter of mud on K-2’s shoulder. “Let me help you clean up?”

K-2’s lenses shutter. “I would like that.”

While K-2 situates himself on the bed, Cassian gets out the bottles of cleaning fluids and oils he has collected over the years.

He sits behind K-2 and gets to work, at first feeling clumsy and awkward and so very hesitant to touch him at all. As he works he falls back into the years-long routine of doing maintenance on K-2. It’s not very different, just...

Well, it feels different, and there is something new to his touch now, just not in a bad way. He lets the polishing cloth linger, when he could be telling him to turn around he presses himself close to K-2’s back and reaches around to slide the cloth over his chest.

His eyes linger on K-2’s photoreceptors as his fingers dip into the jar of machine oil grease. He works it gently into his shoulder and hip joints and then moves on to dribble a finely raffinated, thin oil over his hands and massages it gently into his fingers.

K-2’s fans hum like a content purr but within Cassian desire is stirring, he craves to hear that even hum pick up and stutter, he wants his ears to be filled by static and the crackle of electricity.

They don’t speak, yet the silence isn’t tense or awkward, it feels peaceful.

Tonight, Cassian isn’t afraid to let himself think. All his thought are focused on K-2 anyway.

“Look at you,” he murmurs and lets the cloth fall. Cassian runs a finger over K-2’s glistening chest. His hands too are covered in an oily sheen and all the blaster callouses have been softened. It’s almost a shame K-2 won’t feel the difference.

K-2 wipes a smear of grease from Cassian’s chin, Cassian quickly dips his head and catches his fingertips between his teeth. They still, and oh, there it is, that crackle of delicious tension that makes his belly tighten. His fingers cradle K-2’s wrist, thumb hooking through the ring joint to hold him in place. He tastes of oil more than of metal and Cassian’s eyes flutter shut as he suckles first on one finger, then on the other until all of K-2’s fingers are slick with his saliva. There is still a thread of spit connecting them when he draws back, he darts out his tongue to catch it and then he gives up on decorum altogether and crawls onto K-2’s lap.

A large hand grasps his ass and steadies him and Cassian ducks his head, coyly looking up at him from underneath long eyelashes. His lips part, yet the words won't come, everything he can think of strikes him either as too much or too little. So all he does is sigh a plea of, "Kay."

He starts out hesitant as he tugs off Cassian's jacket – Cassian has always been loathe to lose more clothes than absolutely necessary, sometimes because he was unwilling to commit even so much to the moment, other times simply because he was too desperate for what short-lived connection they could have to waste time on trivialities.

There is time now and Cassian readily helps him. His breath catches in his throat when K-2 takes off his shirt with more confidence, he rewards him with caresses that linger and kisses that promise more. Losing his heavy boots ends up somewhat of a tussle and he's too distracted by K-2's hands to pinpoint when or how he loses his pants, but he's very aware of suddenly being back on the floor, K-2 kneeling over him very tall and broad, one hand easily pinning both of Cassian's wrists to the floor above his head.

Cassian scowls at K-2 as if his sheer overwhelming size and strength didn't send delicious shivers down his spine. "This will be more fun for you if I can use my hands."

"I doubt it." K-2's photoreceptors shutter pointedly. "I'm having fun."

He grits his teeth. "Kay..." If he told him to, K-2 would release him. But then he would lose the thrill of feeling utterly breakable under his hands, and every other time he had surrendered himself to K-2 he couldn't savor it, not fully. Not like now, when he has finally decided that he might not shatter if he exists in this moment and lets it linger. "If I'm too tired to get you off you only have yourself to blame."

K-2 dips his head. "Then I will wait for you to recover."

Cassian arches his brows. "That could take a while."

"I know. Organic designs are very inefficient."

He snorts, far more amused than annoyed and so very, very overcome with affection that it nearly chokes him up all over again. "I'll do my best not to bore you in the meantime."

"I would hope so. You keep telling me I'm a menace when I'm bored."

They could easily fall into an hour of bantering back and forth, but for all that they can afford to take their time, Cassian is no more patient than any other time they have been together. He twists himself around and he can all but hear K-2's attention snap back to his writhing, aroused body. K-2's fans pick up a notch. Cassian doesn't even try to keep the smug triumph out of his eyes.

It will take time to prove with deeds not words that he isn't *fickle*, but Cassian is hopeful that when they tire today, neither of them will be in a hurry to leave. For now, that is enough.

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