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Okay, so now we're on time. Hello everyone, welcome to session 7, the last paper session of the conference.

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Woohoo, you've made it. So you're not here to hear me talk.

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I'll go through it very quickly again. Please use the Zoom chat to ask your questions during the presentation.

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Please remember the Zoom chat will not be archived. Please copy and paste or take any notes or conversations.

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You want to continue over to the discord. Well, you'll find this thread. You'll find the full bio.

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You can interact with the presenter who put a lot of amazing stuff in this already. A quick reminder to follow our society community guidelines and that this is being recorded.

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You've all been really, really, really great so far, so I can't imagine enough to boot anyone.

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But here we go. So we have today Queens Pride, a queer reading of Star Wars character, Padmé Amidala from *Star Wars*, she her hers.

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Madeline is a psychology student at Yale University who writes about feminist and queer theory, Jewish identity and costume analysis in the context of top culture.

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Take it away, Madeline.

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Thank you so much for the introduction. Hello everyone and thank you for coming. My name is Patlin Lowen and today I will be presenting my queer reading of Star Wars heroin Queen Padme Ahmadalla.

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And I'm having technical difficulties with the Oh, there we go. Okay. As you may recall, Pad me was first depicted by Natalie Portman in the 1999 film episode one the phantom menace Her tight-knit retinue of handmaidens was enough to raise eyebrows at the time, with critic Rob Sheffield deeming her, quote, an Elizabethan

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vampire doll in Virgin Mary Drag, attended by her posse of smashingly accessorized harem girls.

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The presence of Padmir's handmaidens dwindles over the next 2 films, episode 2, Attack of the Clones, and episode 3, Revenge of the Sith, as she instead becomes embroiled in a dangerous romance with Anakin Skywalker.

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The Clone Wars, a popular TV series set between episodes 2 and 3, doesn't do much better on the handmade in front, though a trilogy of young adult novels by EK.

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Johnston, Queen Shadow, Queen's Peril, and Queen's Hope, expands on the Safac-coated relationship between Padmay and her closest companion, Sabay.

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Originally portrayed by Kyra Knightley in the Phantom Menace. Only a few scholars have touched on Patm's possible queer identity.

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Roger Kaufman argues that same gender love is represented in many relationships across the Star Wars universe.

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Quote, as with Queen Pad me a Madalla and her dedicated bodyguard Sabb, end quote.

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Valerie is still Frankel likewise acknowledges the subversive potential of Padman and Sabi's relationship, particularly as a counterpoint to the dominant male-centric reading of the text.

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Girl Power often focuses on friendship. And indeed, the handmaidens are suggested to be a source of trusted companionship as well as protection.

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They're female-centric community, arguably even celebrates a non-heteronormative community, emphasizing that Pad May is complete with her 4 maidens in her chambers with no sign of a male consort.

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The queen is certainly closer to her decoy sabay, with whom she shares a secret double life, and to the nine-year-old potential love interest of Phantom Menace.

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End quote. This reading is seemingly undercut when the handmaidens are swapped out for Padman and Anaconstrate romance.

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As such, feminist literature on Star Wars has generally written off Padmāya Madalla as nothing more than the heterosexual love interest of Anakin Skywalker.

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Even EK Johnston, author of the Queen's Shadow Trilogy, has repeatedly attempted to shut down romantic readings of Padmā Sabb's relationship, claiming, quote, I wanted to give Pad May something that was totally independent of Anakin and Skywalker.

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And the way to do that was to create a stupidly, ridiculously, almost insurmountably strong friendship, platonic love story between these 2 girls.

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End quote. While platonic love stories are important to represent in media, Sabi and Padmā do not read this way as I will demonstrate.

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Quotes like these from Johnston, therefore come across as Suffolk erasure. Moreover, her insistence that Padmā Sabi's hypothetical romance would tie back to Anakin a cis heterosexual man is problematic as it again propagates a male-centric worldview of the Star Wars galaxy.

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The same issue exists within academic circles. Despite a proliferation of queer fan works on websites such as Archive of our own and Tumblr, few scholarly papers focused exclusively on queerness in Star Wars.

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And to the best of my knowledge, there are no comprehensive queer readings of any female characters. I aim to both fill this gap in the literature and to reclaim Padmā as a feminist figure and a Suffolk character alike.

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Emblematic of many of the struggles that modern day queer women face. To do so, I will explore not only the mainstream films and TV series, but ancillary materials such as the Queen Shadow Trilogy, beginning with Queen's peril and ending with revenge of the Sith.

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Bye combining these texts, we uncover the surprising but no less salient queer narrative of Queen Padmay Amadala.

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A woman who has long been relegated to the margins of the Star Wars galaxy.

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Part One. The Perils of Queer Desire. Unlike on Earth, Nabu's queens are elected officials, but this does not absolve them of royal tradition and protocol.

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Star Wars absolutely everything you need to know. Explains the note that the NAU typically elect girls and young women to rule them, quote, believing they possess a childlike wisdom that is more pure than that of an adult.

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And, Blatant infantilization aside, the Queen of Nabu is intended as a blank slate.

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She must sacrifice her name and identity to assume a new Regional persona. With a luxurious wardrobe to match.

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The Queen's costumes are grand and imposing, but still traditionally feminine, often incorporating delicate embroidery.

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Fan and parasol motifs. And long tresses down her back.

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Trisha Bigar, costume designer of episodes one through 3 claims that she and her team quote tried to reflect the confines and constraints of protocol and ceremonial customs in the highly detailed costumes, end quote, and that she, quote, embraced the idea of their being a dress code and a precise decorative style for ceremonial regalia.

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Incumbent upon both queens and their handmaidens, which symbolizes the enduring aspects of their role in the boost society.

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And quote. Each new modic must adhere to an existing set of norms before she can truly become the queen of Nabu.

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In doing so, she engages in an extreme form of gender performativity. Coined by career theorist Judith Butler, gender performativity refers to the ways in which our outward compliance with or rejection of prescribed gender norms contributes to the development of our innermost gender identities.

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By shifting the ways that we imitate gender norms, even subtly or inadvertently, we can change the very fabric of gender itself.

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Of course, the opposite can also occur as new generations sustain preexisting conceptions of gender through faithful reenactments of the prescribed norms.

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Violating these norms challenges the status quo but also comes with risk. As Meredith Lee-gilmer and Marquis La Point right quote, in a culture with firmly naturalized constructions of gender, gender transgression may also cast out on a person's competence, social acceptability, and morality.

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End quote. The Queen of Nabu, therefore, must adhere only to acceptably gendered behaviors, lest she lose her credibility and more authority.

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Following in this tradition, fourteen-year-old Padmee Nobbery becomes Queen Ahmadalla, wise and stoic ruler of the Nabu.

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Her ceremonial makeup, white face paint, 2 symmetrical red dots on her cheeks, and crimson lipstick that bisects her lower lip.

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Symbolizes the scars of Nabu's past while also hinting at the Queen's affinity for disguise.

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Terry Brooks's novelization of the Phantom Menace describes Queen Ahmadalla as, a chameleon of sorts, masking herself to the world at large and finding companionship almost exclusively with the coder of handmaidens who are always with her. And finding companionship almost exclusively with the coder of handmaidens who are always with her.

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End quote. The handmaidens not only act as confidants and bodyguards, but even switch places with the Queen to confuse the enemy.

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However, they don't get much screen time in the Phantom Menace, and when they do, they rarely speak.

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As Valerie as Dil Franco points out, quote, With no personalities and barely a line for any maiden except the decoy queen when she's playing that role, this film, like the original trilogy, focuses on the Queen as exceptional.

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Basically the only woman in the galaxy who evolves or has a personality, her companions make up the background scenery, end quotes.

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This problem is somewhat alleviated by ancillary texts such as the Queen Shadow Trilogy.

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Pamley devotes much of her time in Queen's peril to bonding with her 5 handmaidens, though she still notes that, quote, The closeness she found with Sabb in those first 2 weeks when it had just been the 2 of them talking in the dark, had yet to be replicated with the others.

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End quote. A few weeks later, Queen Armadale tries to improve relations with Nabu's neighbors by hosting a summit at the palace.

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Sabbay hits it off almost immediately with a female guest, Harley Chiffon. Much to Padme Chagrin.

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Quote, Padmay was not so distracted that she didn't notice Harley flirt shamelessly with Sabb.

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But surprised her was the degree to which Sabi flirted back. She didn't know if Sabi was pressing an advantage or if there was a genuine attraction and she didn't know how in the world she was going to find out.



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Not without pulling rank. Her relationships with her handmaidens were progressing so well. She hadn't seen this coming.

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End quote. Despite hosting an important state dinner as Queen Amadala, Padmay becomes distracted, even dejected, as she noticed his sabbay flirting with someone else.

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This is the only time in the book that she allows her attention to wander well dressed as the queen.

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Suggesting a burgeoning crush on Sabee that she hasn't yet learned to control.

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Later, the other girls playfully tease Sabi about her flirtations with Harley, all except for Padmay, who staunchly, refuses to meet her gaze.

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And, Sabi tells the handmaidens that Harley has invited her to see a popular band in concerts, and the rest of them are welcome to tag along too.

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Pad May immediately recognizes this for what it is. Sabi and Harley's first date and tries to put a stop to it.

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But Sabi suggests that she stay behind if she isn't interested. This, quote, lights a fire under Padm's heart.

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And quote. As a handmade and swap ideas to bring a disguised padm along with them, She grapples with a surge of newfound jealousy.

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Quote, Pat may listen to them plots, feeling strangely disconnected. Yes, neurotransmitter affection were shatteringly popular, but there was no reason to be so reckless as to go and see them.

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Unless Sapi really did like Hartley. If so, she would have to keep secrets from both and surely that wouldn't be any fun.

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Unless she ended up liking hardly more. Padmig refused to go down that road. There was no reason to be jealous or doubt, Sabies loyalty.

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They were just going to a concert like normal girls. One night they could make that work. End quote.

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Padmay, says it herself. She has no reason to risk sneaking out to see the band.

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No reason except to spy on Sabb and her date. For ulterior motives become clear as soon as she and the handmaidens arrive at the concerts.

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Quote. Sabi and Harley moved well together, and Padmay almost forgot to watch the band.

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She didn't like this feeling. She didn't think it was jealousy. Not entirely, anyway.

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And quote. Later, Padman enjoys a brief flash of relief when Sabi leaves Harley's side to dance with her instead.

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Quote. Sabi came over and grabbed Pad me by the hands, pulling her into the dancers.

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They moved together and for a moment everything was the way it was the post to be. 10 Harley appeared.

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And quote. Harley is carrying glitterlets, the Star Wars equivalent of glow sticks, but when she snaps pad maze for her, she accidentally spills the phosphorescent chemicals all over Padmay's face and hands.

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The next morning, Padmi discovers that the chemicals will not come off. If she were to appear at the summit as Queen Amadalla, Harley would recognize her from the concerts exposing the Queen's double identity.

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To prevent this, Sabay assumes the role of Ahmeda, while Pad may plays one of her own handmaidens.

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Unfortunately, the ploy works a little too well. Hardly mistakes pad me for sabbat and asks to kiss her.

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Paddy refuses and pulls away a response that even she recognizes as cruel. Still, she later tries to save face, swearing to Sabi that she only rejected Harley so as not to blow her cover.

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HAD MAY'S LOGIC seems perfectly sound. That is, until one realizes she had no reason to pretend to be sabay in the first place.

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If anything, revealing herself as Pad May would have strengthened her hand made in persona, as Harley just saw Queen Ahmadalla in the throne room a few minutes ago.

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Therefore, Padmay must have had an ulterior motive for rejecting Harley on Sabb's behalf.

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Sabi recognizes this and accuses Padm of only thinking about herself, which devolves into a fiery argument between them.

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Eventually, Sabi decides to make peace and admits that sneaking out to see the concert would hardly have been worth it with O Pad May.

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The Queen can't help but snark. I thought you wanted to spend more time with Harley.

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Though her jealousy soon gives way to vulnerability, asabbe climbs into bed beside her.

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Did you really want to kiss her? Pad me prods, a bit shyly. But drops the subject when Sabi says she isn't ready to talk about it yet.

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It takes a full scale invasion of Nabu for sabbat to finally come around. She takes pad me aside and tells her, quote, Anything we have to sort out, we can do it later.

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From this point on, I'm yours. End quote. This moment captures the enduring intimacy between the 2 girls.

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Despite the current fissures in their relationship. They switch places just before they are captured, with Padm and simple handmaidens robes and sobay in a magnificent black gown.

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2 Jedi Knights come to the rescue and ferry the Queen off Nabu, but her ship is forced to land on Tatooine for repairs.

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They are Padmay, still disguised as a handmaiden, meets nine-year-old Anakin Skywalker who becomes immediately infatuated with her.

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The Jedi, realizing that anakin is 4 sensitive, decide to bring him back to Corissance, the capital of the Galactic Republic, and train him as one of their own.

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On the journey, he gives Pad me a Japore snippet necklace so that she will remember him.

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Though this moment is intended to plant the seeds of their future romantic relationship, it in fact does the opposite.

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How many comes across as more of a mother figure than a love interest, especially given the five-year age gap between her and Anikin.

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While she sweetly accepts the young boy's gift, it's clear that she does not return his affections in the same way.

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Her relationship with Sabb is a different story. When Paddy makes the desperate decision to reclaim her planet by force, Sabate confesses her feelings to her in a sweeping declaration of devotion.

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Quote, I'd rather be second to you than first to anyone else. End quote. Afterward, Pad May is forced to pick between love and duty.

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Quote, I can order you to your death, Pad me said. Her voice was so quiet that Sabi barely heard her.

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She reached out and took Padm's hands. And I would go, she said. I can't be that dedicated to you.

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Padmay said. I know. Sabi said. End quote.

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And so the SAP attention is thwarted by the demands of career. Queen Ahmadalla, who must hold fast a certain gender norms, cannot risk being that dedicated to another girl.

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A similar story arc depicts one of the handmaidens, Sasha, refusing to share a room with her female crush in the interest of remaining professional.

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Even as Harley and Sabi flirt openly, both Sachets and Padmay stories suggest that much like on Earth, queer people in a galaxy far, far away can still be susceptible to internalized homophobia.

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Part 2, shadows in the closet. Padmic quite literally reigns victorious at the end of the Phantom Menace, but she does not get the girl.

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Her reluctance to pursue sabbat only strengthens over her 4 years as Queen of Nabu.

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At the beginning of Queen's Shadow, have may identify Sabe as the most beloved of her handmaidens, though they are still not a couple.

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And with Ahmadallah's rain drawing to a close, they are running out of time.

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When Chancellor Palpatine pays Padmay and unexpected visits, he interrogates her on her plans for the future.

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She thinks, quote, She had intended to talk it over with at least Sabi before telling anyone else.

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But that was no longer an option. She hopes Abbey would understand. It was, after all, hardly the first time Pad May had been forced to see something as Amadalla.

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She might have wanted to say his padmay first. End quote. Padmay believes that Sabi may be upset if she is not the first to hear of Padm's plans, implying a certain degree of commitment between the 2 girls.

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Even so, Padm does her duty and tells Palpatine that she intends to engage an abolitionist work on Tatooine.

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As Queen of Nabu, I had to focus my efforts on this planet, putting its needs above all else, she explains, notably quote, wishing she could see Sabb's face.

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End quote. On a basic level, this moment conveys Padm's desire to share her plans with Sabbath directly.

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It also alludes to the previous book where she chose to put in the boo's best interests over her feelings for the other girl.

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Asabi later describes, quote, It's a complicated relationship. She can order me to my death, and I will go.

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And she knows it. We work so hard to maintain a balance we will never truly have. As far as I can see, she will always pick Nabu and I will always pick her.

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End quote. This power dynamic is yet another complicating factor in Sabi and Padme's courtship.



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As one of the handmaidens thinks knowingly, This was a line she had watched Padme and Anakin for all the years they had been friends.

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Padme knew in her heart that Anakin would do whatever she asked, even if it meant Anakin's life.

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And therefore she was always careful never to ask too much. End quote. When Anakin proactively offers to accompany Padme to Tatooine, The young queen is delighted and relieved.

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However, their plans are thwarted by a request from the incoming monarch who suggests that Padme may represent Naboo in the Galactic Senate of the Republic.

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Once again, duty calls. Though Padme asks for more time to consider the request, her decision is all but made.

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And with it, her first step away from Anakin. Still, the girls enjoy one last Safarria before their departure from the palace.

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Padme toasts the handmaidens one by one, meaningfully saving Anakin for last.

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Afterward, Yoda and Sasha Cuddle will, Padme lovingly brushes Anakin's hair.

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Quote, traditionally, none of them showed much in the way of personal affection in public. It was an identifying feature.

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And the strongest part of the handmaidens defense was their anonymity. These private moments were to be treasured, and Jan I hoped there would be an infinite number of them in the days to come.

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She leaned on Sasha's shoulder. What will you do, Pad May? She asked.

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It was a relief to say the name. I had thought I would go back to Tatooine, Pad me admitted.

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And see what steps I could take towards freeing people there. It was a long moment of, broken only by the steady brush of Sobe's hair.

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Weren't going to go by yourself, were you? Sasha asked delicately. No one looked at Sabbath.

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Of course she wasn't, Rabbi said. End quotes. Though the handmaidens assume that Padm and Sabi will stay together at all costs, Saba surprises them by offering to go to Tatooine and Padmay Stead.

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Pad May is hesitant but agrees, and the 2 young women bid one another a sweet farewell.

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As Padmay undergoes her sanatorial orientation on Chorus, she notes that, quote, being hemmed in on every side by tradition and expectation is starting to wear on her.

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End quote. You're learningly, she thinks, quote, She miss hobby like she would miss the sun.

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Maybe that was the real reason all of the tours and orientations were starting to get on her nerves.

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And quote. Some level, Pad me recognizes the role that tradition has played in keeping her apart from Sabbay.

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And the question of love versus duty only looms larger when they eventually reunite. Pad me learns that her sister, Sola, has had a child, prompting her to reevaluate her own future.

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She confesses to a fellow planetary queen that, quote, I'm not sure I want to mix politics and family, but I suppose it depends on a great many things.

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And quote. One of these factors could very well be whether Sabi returns her feelings. This is hinted at later in the book when the 2 women share a leisurely breakfast and discuss their love lives in a stollen moment.

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Pad me shyly asks whether Sabi likes her current boyfriend, Captain Tonra, a lot.

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And then when Sabi says yes, whether she likes him enough. What she is really asking is whether Sabi likes Conra enough to became over Padmay herself.

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Sabi hedges, quote, I don't know. We've talked about it, so it's not like I'm leading him on, and I warned him a lot.

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And he's known me us. For a long time. End quote. Like with Harley Chefon, the text implies that Sabbath outside romances are not entirely compatible with her and Padme's relationship.

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Pat me admits, quote, I've carded my heart against everything for so long. Always aware of the dynamics and the flow of power.

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I've been lucky to find so many people who understand that and give me that space. I'm worried that if someone breaks through, I'll let them.

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And it would be catastrophic. End quote. Her reference to the dynamics and the flow of power implies that she is experienced attraction to one of her subordinates.

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Potentially to Sabay herself. However, she knows that she cannot be the one to pursue Sabbath directly.

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So she is trying to send cues that she would welcome Sabi's attempts to break through to her heart.

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The added context of Queen's peril makes this explanation all the more likely. The Queen Shadow offers its own hints that Padmay is, or at least once was, in love with Sabb.

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At 1 point she reaches for a necklace, only to remember that she no longer wears it.

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As the text explains, quote, she had given it to Sabay as a token, 2 girls on a planet watching the sky above them fill with starships that block them in.

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End quote. The knot to Padm's necklace comes from a children's book by Julian Bellman, the Queen's Amulet, in which Sabay helps Pad May find a treasured amulet fashioned for her by her parents.

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At the onset of the Nabu occupation, Pad may give Sabi the necklace in recognition of her handmaiden's bravery.

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This smear's anacin giving Pad me the Japore snippet in the Phantom Menace.

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Only this time it is Pad May expressing her affections through the gift of a necklace, providing a window into her female centric desire.

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Queen Shadow further queers Padmosexuality with multiple romantic exchanges between her and Sabb.

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On recess from the Senate, the 2 women make a fleeting return to Nabu, where they look out across the vista of the capital city, Feed, and dream of one day making a future there together.

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Quote, Padmay had loved Thieves waterfalls since the first time she had laid eyes on them and being away from the planet had only made her fondness grow stronger.

00:45:57.000 --> 00:46:04.000

She stood still, leaning out over the city that her heart loved best. Listening to the far-off sound of rushing water.

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We'll come back here, you and I, she said to Sabb. We'll do what we need to do out there.

00:46:10.000 --> 00:46:15.000

And then we'll come home. Sabi rested her head on Padm's shoulder.

00:46:15.000 --> 00:46:20.000

Felt the press of Padm's cheek against her hair. And neither of them doubted it for a moment.

00:46:20.000 --> 00:46:29.000

End quote. Sadly, their happiness together is short lived. Especially once the events of attack of the clones begin.

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Part 3 The Death of Queer Hope Attack of the clones takes place roughly 6 years after Queen Shadow.

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Padm is reunited with a now grown anakin, who is one of the Jedi assigned to protect her from ongoing assassination attempts.

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Annika's actor, Hidden Christiansen, explains, quote, this film is mostly a love story, particularly for my character, when Anikin is introduced in the film, he sees Padmay for the first time in 10 years, and what was a very childlike desire and attraction and affection turns into a much more passionate love.

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Maybe that frightens Padm a little bit. End quote. Indeed, she spends a significant portion of the film fending off Annequin's advances.

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She quips that Hill Quote, always be that little boy she knew on tattooing. End quote.

00:47:16.000 --> 00:47:25.000

She covers the security cameras in her bedroom to keep him from spying on her. She even tells him point blank that the way he looks at her makes her feel uncomfortable.

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Kept by the end of the film she has not only confessed her love to him but married him despite strict Jedi prohibitions on romantic relationships.

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If we are to believe that Padmay Harbor's genuine romantic feelings were anican, which in and of itself is debatable, we must first address the question of why she would choose him a man she has barely met over her lifelong love, Sabay.

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Fortunately, the deleted scenes of attack of the clones offer some insight. She tells Anikin, quote, I'd hope to have a family of my own by now.

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My sister has the most amazing, wonderful kids. But when the Queen asked me to serve as Senator, I couldn't refuse her.

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And quote. Padm is eager to start a family life, but as we have covered, she feels she cannot be the one to pursue Sabb, unless she abused the power dynamic.

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A relationship with anikin is a much simpler prospect, even if it is a slightly less attractive one.

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There is another factor at play 2, pressure from her family to marry a man. In the deleted scene Padm's parents house, Anikin is still on bodyguard duty, accompanies pad made to her childhood home.

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Her sister Solar remarks, quote. Did you know, Anikin? You're the first boyfriend my sisters ever brought home?

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End quote. At 24, Pad May has never dated a man, a fact that worries her family to no end.

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Her well meaning sister and mother tried to match make her with anakin and with their encouragement, Pad me begins to consider a relationship with someone other than Sabb.

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She and Anika and withdraw to her secluded summer home, where she tentatively allowed him to kiss her.

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She pulls away soon afterward, claiming, no, I shouldn't have done that. Clearly, she is experiencing some guilt and regret, whether because Anikin has violated the Jedi code or because she feels she has betrayed Sabb.

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Even so, she begins to warm up to him as they share a picnic in a nearby meadow.

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Asked her about previous boyfriends and she tells him about her 12 year old crush, Paolo.

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Significantly, she can't produce more recent examples. She and Anikin then tussle in the grass, but even Star Wars creator George Lucas insists that it's more friendly than romantic.

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Quote, I wanted to do a goofy little scene where they get to roll around in the grass, which allows them to get a little bit more physically close to each other without that romantic edge.

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It's got a slight undercurrent of romance, but it's more of an innocent playful friendship thing, end quote.

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Padmay's next scene, in which she emphatically rejects Anikin's advances, seems to support Lucas's claim.

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Yet continued pressure from Anikin to give in to his demands will set the stage for her love confession later in the film.

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Eventually, the 2 receive a worrying message from Anikin's jet Imaster, Obi-WAN Kenobi, who has been captured on genesis.

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Padmi decides that she and Anikin will stage a rescue mission, prompting Lucas to remark, quote, we again reiterate this particular relationship.

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Where they come to an accommodation with each other in terms of her being in charge and him going along with it.

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So they're much more able to work as a team and be together and help each other here. They're not romantically linked, but they're in terms of a working relationship and friendship, they're linked and partners.

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End quote. This makes it all the more bizarre that Pad May confesses her love to Anicon soon afterward.

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When they too are captured and sentenced to execution, Anikin says, quote, I thought that we had decided not to fall in love, that we would be forced to live a lie, and that it would destroy our lives.

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And quote. She responds, quotes. I think our lives are about to be destroyed anyway. End quote.

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This interaction is telling, as it implies that Pad May is settling for him in the face of death.

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They kiss, resigned to their fates, but the jet I arrived to rescue them soon afterward, and the film ends with their secret wedding.

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This raises the question, if Pad May were only settling for annequin, why would she agree to become his wife?

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First of all, as I have established, She feels pressure from her family to settle down with a man.

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Secondly, she does genuinely want a family life, but believes she could never pursue it with sabbay.

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Thirdly, now that she has confessed her love to Anakin, who is obsessed with her to an unhealthy degree, she may fear for her safety if she were to back out of the relationship.

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As such, Queen's hope to pick Padmay trying to convince herself that she has made the right choice, even as she grapples with regret and uncertainty prior to her wedding.

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The book's opening scene finds her struggling to incorporate her family's wedding clock into her gown, as is tradition amongst the Nabu.

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She thinks, quote, the pain of Sabi's absence lanced through her suddenly and with no warning.

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She missed all the girls, of course, but sabbay she missed the most. Now, even though this wedding was a secret that must be kept from the galaxy at large, had they missed her.

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End quote. The phrasing of this passage implies that Padmay feels torn between Anikin and Sabay, a conclusion that is further supported by her reflections on her wedding day.

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Quote. Now her truths were split, divided amongst those she cared about, and none of them had the whole picture.

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Only she did. Alone and at the center of her own life. End quote. We know that Padm is hiding her marriage from Sabb, but this raises the question, what truth is she concealing from anakin?

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A later passage suggests the answer. Quote. Yes, she had adolescent crushes and yes, there were people she found attractive, but she'd always been able to move past it quickly.

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Avoiding entanglements and returning to work. End quote. Exactly who these people were or are is never addressed but based on the events of Queen's peril we have good reason to believe that one of them is Sabb.

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Pad May might also be referring to her 12 year old puppy love, Paulo, but given that Crush's is plural, we can assume she has experienced attraction on at least 2 separate occasions.

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Her consistent use of gender-neutral nouns likewise suggests that she has had crushes on more than one gender.

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Mike Pad may then be hiding from Anikin, her feelings for Sabb. Just as she hides from Sabb, her feelings for anikin.

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After the wedding comes Padmir's return to Korissance, and to some extent reality.

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She reunites with Sabbath, but hesitates to share with her the news of her marriage, despite having every opportunity to do so.

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She knows that to tell Sabi the truth about anikin would be to sever their romantic potential for ever.

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Padm muses, quote. It was strange to love 2 people so much so differently. She didn't quite understand it and she wasn't sure how to make it work.

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End quote. Presumably this conflict of interest would not exist if Sabi were a platonic friend and Anik and a romantic partner.

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Well, Pad May does acknowledge that she loves them both differently. This does not imply that she loves one platonically and the other romantically.

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Rather, she loves them for opposite reasons. Sabb for her steadfast devotion to duty.

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Anikin for his reckless lust and passion. Because she is torn between sabbay and anakin, Hadm is also torn between these 2 sides of herself.

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The In the end, she brushes the truth under the rug. Vote. Padmay meant to tell her she really did.

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But it was so comfortable, so familiar. They were planning and working together and Pad me was reluctant to spoil that with new information, especially something so volatile.

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There would be time later. There would always be time for the 2 of them. End quote. Her deception comes back to bite her when Sabbath disguised a senator Ahmadalla encounters Anikin and realizes that he and Padmay are romantically involved.

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Anikin notes, quote, You're angry. That doesn't bother me. I'd be angry too if she picked you over me.

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End quote. On the surface, this may seem nothing more than a straight man gloating that he got the girl.

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However, his remark also strengthens a queer reading of Pad May, as it suggests that she could have just as easily chosen Sabi over anakin.

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In this way, the Pad May Anacensabe love triangle mirrors the Harley-jafon incident in Queen's peril.

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This time with Pad May in the romantic relationship and Sabb in the role of the jilted would be lover.

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The narrative itself acknowledges this dynamic when Sabi confronts Padmay at the end of the book.

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Pad me timidly asks if Sabi likes anakin and is equated to, the girl she'd been huddled under blankets asking questions about Harley Jiffon all those years ago.

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End quote. Once again, Padm is trying to deduce Sabi's feelings about her through indirect means.

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Yet, it is too late. She has already lost her. Sabi confesses that she can no longer remain in Padm's service after having learned that she is married to someone else.

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Pad mee protests, quote, Having you packed with me was so wonderful. Even though things were different, I didn't want anything to change.

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End quote. Here we again see Padmies obsession with what could have been. Which only becomes more apparent as she and Sabi decide to spend one last night together.

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Quote. Invitation had been neither extended nor accepted but the understanding between them had not changed. They pulled the blanket over their heads and giggled long into the night, like they had done when they were girls.

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And quote. When Sabi falls asleep, Pad May longingly quote, Looks at her face in the dim light, and quote, and thinks that out of all the handmaidens, Sabi leaving her, quote, hurts the most, but Pad me will never tell her.

00:57:10.000 --> 00:57:11.000

And quote. The queer women are happy to yearn for one another, but never to act on those desires.

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By the end of the book, both Padm and Sabi have rushed back into the arms of their respective male love interests, reassuring the audience with a safe return to heteronormativity.

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Yet, Padm is happily ever after does not last long. Losing sobay incites a downward spiral that eventually contributes to her dying of a broken heart.

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Part 4 The Aftermath And the Cold War's television series, Padmay breaks off her marriage to Anikin, claiming, I just know that I'm not happy anymore.

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I don't feel safe. End quote. Only after witnessing an old friend suicide does she agree to take him back.

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It's likely that she is shell shocked from such traumatic event and is desperately seeking solace in any form.

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However, renewing her commitment to the relationship makes it harder to leave down the road. Especially when revenge of the Sith introduces yet another complicating factor.

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Per pregnancy. At first glance, it may appear that Pad May has no desire to leave the relationship.

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However, beneath beneath the rosy veneer of the Romeo and Juliet inspired love scenes, episode 3 routinely signals her dissatisfaction.

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Multiple times, she accuses Anikin of not being honest with her and shutting her out, though she also seems irritated when he goes on long-winded rants about the Jedi Order and Obi WAN.

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In the screenplay, she expresses frustration with his possessiveness claiming, quote, your jealousy upsets me so much, Anacin.



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I do nothing to betray you, yet you still don't trust me. Nothing has changed. End quote.

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Even her costumes, pale blue nightgowns with weepy waterfall backs, hint at her underlying sorrow.

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This is made all the worse by the fact that her handmaidens are glaringly absent. As Padmay gazes sadly out over Corrisant, she appears both trapped and lonely, accompanied only by her droid, see 3 PO.

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Even her living room with a low curved roof to suggest claustrophobia is shaped like a tomb.

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For lack of female companionship will be her undoing. As such, she pins all hopes for a happy heterosexual future on her unborn child.

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She gushes, quote, Annie, I want to have our baby back home on the. We can go to the late country where no one will know where we can be safe.

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I can go early and fix up the baby's room. End quote. As Pad may fantasize about a simpler, happier time, she inadvertently betrays her current unhappiness.

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She idealizes the past in a similar way, most famously when she tells Anikin, quote, Hold me like you did by the lake on Nabu.

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So long ago and there was nothing but our love. No politics, no plotting, no war, end quote.

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Of course, such a time never existed in the Star Wars continuity. The implication is that Padmay has never been happy in their marriage and is deluding herself into thinking she one day could be.

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Pad me spends much of the film weeping alone on her veranda, though she doesn't allow herself to confront her misery until the very end, when Anik and turns to the dark side, massacres the Jedi Order and helps fell her beloved Republic.

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She finally attempts to break off their relationship, but he retaliates by strangling her through the force.

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The sort of retribution that she unconsciously feared all along. After having lost her handmaidens, her family, and especially Sabay to her secret marriage, Annek's betrayal is the last straw.

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When Padmay dies of a broken heart, she is not only thinking of Anacin. She is also thinking of Sabay and her parents and sister and the death of the Republic.

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All that she has lost in suppressing her true queer self.

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Thank you.

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That was a amazing, Madeline. You've convinced everyone in the chat you have sold everyone. On this.

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Okay. Thank you.

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So if anyone has any questions, that would be great. But I, I petition, we get you to read all of those books to us.

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It was like the queer bedtime story we all needed at the end of this conference I think.

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Yeah. No. Wonderful.

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Yeah.

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Well, does anyone have any questions?

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I sure do, but also a comment first. Turns out I have the first one of these books.

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Oh, oh my gosh. Wow. Yeah.

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Didn't know it until today. Yeah. During your presentation ordered the others. And I'm liberating them from a very conservative location in Indiana.

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Okay. Hey.

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Lovely used books. So I'm delighted to be able to read these and get the full context.

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But I was actually shocked at the beginning of the presentation. When you said when you shared how EK Johnson had characterized these like the relationships as being almost romantic, but taking out the possibility of.

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Queer romance queerness because Literally every other book that I'm aware of, EK Johnson.

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Yeah, so

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Writing is overtly queer. And so that was particularly shocking to me. So my question is.

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Do you think that There's also like this is the pressure from the corporate structures that are sort of like Lucasfilm and everything.

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And meshed that are putting this lid on it or do you think that that's genuinely where the author was coming from?

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Yeah, I'm going to stop share so we can all see each other. But yeah, I think that is a great question.

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I have all kinds of theories and speculations about what's going on here and of course I can't definitively say what's going on.

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Hmm.

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But I do know that when Eka Johnston published her first Star Wars book, Asoka, she posted on Tumblr some of her queer head cannons about Asoka, the Titchler character who's the female lead of the Colombo's television series.

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And those posts were quickly taken down. Interestingly enough, and I'm not sure if this is coincidence because IK Johnston does have a tendency to take down her posts quite often.

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On both Twitter and Tumblr, but it is a little bit suspicious, right?

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And then when she published Queen Shadow in 2,019, Assoka was in 2,016 when she published Queen Shadow in 2,019 she went out of her way on a podcast called Safak Skywalker's.

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This is the first recorded instance I can find of her talking about Sabi Dalla, which is the ship name for Pat Mansabe, and she talks about how I couldn't quote every single thing she said about Sabi Dalla in this presentation, but I am actually working on a book about this and I'll have a whole chapter devoted to addressing what EK Johnston has said about

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Sabi-dala. So. For that but basically she said oh yeah you know I really was thinking about it but she gave all these reasons the main one which was I didn't want pad m's relationship with Stab A to tie back to Anakin, which was incredibly confusing and convoluted to me because how would this sapphic romance tie back to this sis

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heterosexual man like I don't understand so I I'm thinking I don't know it's suspicious I I'm wondering if because she posted her queer head cannons about a soccer, which she did have to qualify as head cannons and clarify.

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This is not canon because I can't I can't I don't have the power to define her as queer.

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That maybe some Disney execs that her down. And said, okay, you have to make clear that Padm is not queer.

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You can't do this again. Now Sabi is canonically queer. She's bisexual.

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So that already raises the possibility of queerness in their relationship. And as you can see from the books, Pad May really does read as bisexual as well.

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Yeah.

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So it's really difficult for me to read the relationship. As anything other than romantic. And again, well, I do think that platonic love stories are really important to represent.

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Don't personally read Padman Sabbath through that lens. Yeah.

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So Mina had a question as well.

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Okay.

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Okay.

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It's interesting that you just quick follow up to it's interesting that you mentioned that you, Johnson also wrote, okay, that is the other book from this sort of line that I have sitting on my bookshelves and I clearly bought them because EK Johnson writes queer books in every other context.

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Yeah, and if Soaka, she does, there's a girl who, forms an attraction to her, Kaden.

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But at the end of the book, Kayden confesses her feelings to Asoka, similarly to the Sabi and Padmay love confession that we saw in Queen's Peril and basically So it's like, oh, okay, thanks.

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Like there's there's no closure about, okay, is she queer? Is she not queer?

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It's very up in the air. And in some ways, you know, you can read her as anything from asexual to pansexual.

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There are some implications that she could be asexual. Or demisexual. There are also some implications that she could be into women romantically and or sexually.

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So it's very unclear. And I think that was deliberate. Again, probably because of Disney Lucas film.

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Control. Yeah. I think we have another question in the

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Yes, Mina had a question.

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So, my question is a bit of a broad one. So I only knew of Sabi's character from the movies where, you know, she's posing as I think if I remember correctly, she poses as Pad Bay, right, in the original.

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Yep.

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And.

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I just wondered where did the sapphic notion of their relationship step from? I just, I, she always read as a side character to me.

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So I find this quite fascinating that there's a whole That story between her and Pat May that is sapphic in nature.



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So I wanted to ask that and what is ultimately S, Sabb's fate you know because we never hear about her necessarily again.

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So I just, I'm curious if you can answer that.

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Absolutely, yes, I would be happy to answer that. So yeah, so the most of the queer reading of Padman Sabi's relationship that I was citing in this presentation comes from the Queen Shadow Trilogy, which we were discussing by EK Johnston.

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However, there is also content and that was published from 2,019 to 2022 so it's pretty recent.

01:08:31.000 --> 01:08:49.000

However, there is also Sabi content in some of the Darth Vader comics, which began to be released in 2,020, where she encounters and that too is very sapphic coded because she encounters Darth Vader and says, I, yes, thank you. Thank you.

01:08:49.000 --> 01:09:07.000

Yes, I am trying to avenge Pad May's death, I have devoted my life and founded this group called the Amadolins to finding out the truth about why she died and who killed her and I and You know, and she, she and the other handmaidens.

01:09:07.000 --> 01:09:20.000

Darth Vader actually tries at 1 point to break into Padm's tomb and she in the other handmaidens defend Padm's tomb against our theater and say you will not you will not invade Pad May's tomb, you'll have to go through us first.

01:09:20.000 --> 01:09:46.000

And so she also shows up in those comics as an adult. Well, she's an adult in most of Queen Shadow as well, but as an older, like a 40 something woman and anyway yeah so she shows up trying to defend Padmay's legacy and then eventually of course she discovers who Darth Vader really is, that he's Anneken Skywalker.

01:09:46.000 --> 01:10:02.000

There's a really interesting dynamic of, oh my gosh, like do I do I kill she has an opportunity to kill him she thinks do I kill him but Pad May loved him and she's really torn because Padm loved him and she loved Pad May and Pad May loved her and therefore she also feels like she kind of has to live.

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There's a very interesting dynamic there if you read it through a queer lens with the backstory of the Queen Shadow Trilogy.

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So yeah, and there's also a little nod to Sasha and Janet who are canonically, they're 2 of Pad Miss Han made in who are canonically in a relationship and are married.

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So they're also in the comic, but they're they play a relatively minor role. So yeah, there is also some graphic content there.

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So yeah, there is also some SAPHIC content there, though I will say the Sabbath.

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Is obviously the idea of devoting yourself to another woman and avenging her death. Is quite sapphic coded at least, but I will say the sapphic.

01:10:46.000 --> 01:10:52.000

The reason I didn't talk about those comics here was that I was focused on Padm's perspective rather than Sabb's.

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And again, in my book, actually, I will have a chapter devoted to Sabb's perspective on the relationship.

01:10:59.000 --> 01:11:06.000

Yeah. Oh. To give a little bit more context about her as well.

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Yeah, that's

01:11:07.000 --> 01:11:15.000

Yes, so we've got, sorry. So we have one more question from Tim. We are coming close to the end of the time, but I will leave the moderators to call that.

01:11:15.000 --> 01:11:16.000

Okay.

01:11:16.000 --> 01:11:19.000

I'm the moderator, but you know the people who run the car are here as well.

01:11:19.000 --> 01:11:27.000

So is Tim's question is is there any hint about the Ashoka about Ashoka as queer in the dark horse comics or more recently Marvel.

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I can't remember, but she was a comic character.

01:11:31.000 --> 01:11:37.000

So I will admit, I don't know. I'm not up to date on a soaka in the comics.

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I know a lot about her in the Clon Wars and other TV series and and the her book.

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So I will say, that in the Cold War is I could definitely see a queer reading of her character in that she only has one official love interest.

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Oh, and yes, Sasha and Janet are in the Phantom Menace and Sashi's actually played by Sofia Coppola, fun of hacked.

01:12:08.000 --> 01:12:19.000

Yeah. So anyway, she only has one love interest, but in season 4, Lex Spontary is his name, he kisses her and she actually seems pretty mad about it.

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Like, cause he, I mean, first of all, it's understandable why? Because, it's actually quite a toxic relationship.

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He couldnaps her and brings her to this planet where she then has to pretend to be his betrothed because he's brought her to negotiate with this.

01:12:42.000 --> 01:12:56.000

This terrorist group who don't like Jedi and like their whole mission is to kill Jedi basically so she has to pretend to be his betrothed and then to maintain their cover he kisses her which is like Okay, sure.

01:12:56.000 --> 01:13:05.000

And then she, pushes him away. And you could argue there's like some jealousy in season 5.

01:13:05.000 --> 01:13:16.000

He shows interest in another girl. And but there's also like maybe socas jealous because she likes maybe soaka's jealous because she likes jealous because she likes Stela.

01:13:16.000 --> 01:13:20.000

Maybe she doesn't like locks, right? Like, and she's actually, she's very upset.

01:13:20.000 --> 01:13:30.000

Well, I won't spoil it. And I think there's also there's also some evidence in the Soca the book where you could have like an ace reading of her character.

01:13:30.000 --> 01:13:43.000

Unfortunately, I don't have the book on hand, but there's one line near the beginning where Kayden comes into her home near the beginning where Kayden comes into her home and sits on her bed and a soccer thing where Kayden comes into her home and sits on her bed and a soccer thinks, oh, well, she wasn't trying to make those kinds of friends.

01:13:43.000 --> 01:13:45.000

And a soccer thinks, oh, well, she wasn't trying to make those kinds of friends.

01:13:45.000 --> 01:13:52.000

So maybe, right? And then there's also some hints that though that maybe she's into caden so it's it's unclear she could be like by romantic asexual or something along those lines.

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So yeah, there are, I think. The one good thing about leaving her identity vague is that you can.

01:14:07.000 --> 01:14:27.000

People can read her as they wish and identify with that character across many different identities. But again, I do still, I would still call for Disney Lucasfilm to make more advances in confirming characters queer identities because I feel like outside of the queer community.

01:14:27.000 --> 01:14:37.000

Often that goes over people's heads, right? and you know, obviously there's value in you know, the queer community.

01:14:37.000 --> 01:14:47.000

Having readings you know us developing meetings for ourselves but there is also value in invisibility and representation and I think those 2 can exist simultaneously.

01:14:47.000 --> 01:15:05.000

And I would call for more. For you know when Disney Lucas film abstains from confirming main characters is queer it kind of gets this idea that gets across this idea that, oh, you know.

01:15:05.000 --> 01:15:11.000

Main characters can't be queer, right? This is this is a cis straight galaxy.

01:15:11.000 --> 01:15:17.000

Queer characters can exist on the side lines, but we can't be the main characters of our own stories.

01:15:17.000 --> 01:15:27.000

And I really think they need to make that push to confirm more main characters is queer. There are like main characters in the comics such as Dr.

01:15:27.000 --> 01:15:36.000

Afra who's like, very famous, queer Asian female, she's lesbian, canonically, character.

01:15:36.000 --> 01:15:46.000

And yeah, I. Okay, sorry, and just checking the chat. Yeah, so I don't know.

01:15:46.000 --> 01:15:56.000

So there are like some main characters, but a lot of them are in the books and comics, which again, mostly only the diehard fans read.

01:15:56.000 --> 01:16:10.000

So for the majority of people watching Star Wars who are really only watching the films, maybe the TV series, it's a very Sis Street Galaxy and with the introduction of Val and Centa in Andor we do get a little bit more sapphic on screen representation.

01:16:10.000 --> 01:16:21.000

And I could also talk at length about their relationship. I'm very excited about the introduction of Ellen Centre into Star Wars.

01:16:21.000 --> 01:16:35.000

And I actually might write something on that as well at some point. But yeah, that is my long tangent about, I apologize, that is my long tangent about, I apologize, the question took me on a tangent about I I apologize the question took me on a tangent about career, I apologize, the question took me on a tangent about career representation as a whole.

01:16:35.000 --> 01:16:40.000

But yes, I'm glad you asked. And I'm going to have to catch up on the comics.

01:16:40.000 --> 01:16:41.000

I

01:16:41.000 --> 01:16:44.000

I've been copying a lot of it onto the into the chat because it's all been very positive so I've been putting a lot of it in there.

01:16:44.000 --> 01:16:49.000

Awesome. Thank you. Thank you. I wanna sleep.

01:16:49.000 --> 01:16:50.000

Yes.

01:16:50.000 --> 01:16:54.000

We are technically. End we have an hour break until if anyone wants to do the film viewing or the bartic circle I will leave Grace and Tim to call whether we have an keep going with this.

01:16:54.000 --> 01:17:01.000

Out of my hands.

01:17:01.000 --> 01:17:02.000

What?

01:17:02.000 --> 01:17:06.000

I think out of fairness for everybody that was up against hard stops, let's move more, discussion to, discord.

01:17:06.000 --> 01:17:14.000

Okay. Okay, well thank you everyone for coming and thank you. Madeline, we all had a wonderful time.

01:17:14.000 --> 01:17:15.000

You.

01:17:15.000 --> 01:17:16.000

Oh.

01:17:16.000 --> 01:17:19.000

And move everything over to the discord. Keep having the chat over there. We'll have a good time.

01:17:19.000 --> 01:17:22.000



This is absolutely incredible presentation.

01:17:22.000 --> 01:17:23.000

Good night.

01:17:23.000 --> 01:17:33.000

I will say. There there is an AV channel on Discord. You could easily get on there if you want to keep talking rather than having to type back and forth.

01:17:33.000 --> 01:17:34.000

Okay.

01:17:34.000 --> 01:17:35.000

Right, yes. And I'm.

01:17:35.000 --> 01:17:40.000

There absolutely is and I highly encourage it. It's a great sort of like additional con suite space during breaks too.

01:17:40.000 --> 01:17:41.000

Yeah.

01:17:41.000 --> 01:17:43.000

Amazingly done, Madeline.

01:17:43.000 --> 01:17:44.000

Thank you so much. Thank you, everyone. I really appreciate you.

01:17:44.000 --> 01:17:46.000

Yeah. That's great. Alright.

01:17:46.000 --> 01:17:49.000

Oh, super well done, Madeline. Thank you so much.

01:17:49.000 --> 01:17:55.000

Yeah, you so much.