**Office of Darth Vader**

**Imperial Palace**

**Imperial Centre**

**8 BBY**

For the last three years, Lord Vader had trained the Pau’an now stood before him. The training had been tough, and many others had failed and been killed or even executed, but the tall alien had shown a prowess beyond many of the others. Vader had even briefly toyed with the idea of marking him for even greater things as his own apprentice, but dismissed the idea when he realised that Imperial Intelligence were watching him. With resignation, the man that had once been Anakin Skywalker had figured out that his Master, the Emperor, was never going to let his guard down. If he was to strike, to right the wrongs of eleven years before, he’d have to bide his time.

“Your training is complete, Inquisitor. It is time for your first mission,” Vader boomed, his suit enhancing, but also de-humanising, what was left of his natural voice.

“I am ready, Lord Vader,” the Inquisitor answered. His own Utapau accent had been replaced remarkably quickly by the ‘Imperial’ basic, leaving him sounding far more Human and coreward than the majority of his species. This helped a little when dealing with the more Humanocentric members of the Imperial hierarchy, though the Pau’an had been involved with more than one scuffle, particularly with the highly racist COMPNOR.

The Emperor’s apprentice stared directly at the Inquisitor. “I am sending you to Naboo. We have intelligence that a Jedi has been discovered hiding there. Go there at once. Find them. You know what to do.”

The alien bowed. “Of course, Lord Vader. I will leave for Naboo at once,”

**Imperial Star Destroyer *Inflexible***

**Orbit, Naboo**

“Priority message from Imperial Centre, sir,” a junior officer announced.

Captain Breslan smiled a little inside. Things had been incredibly quiet lately, even for the times that had followed the Clone Wars. Whilst the *Inflexible* was, like its thousands of sister ships, among the most powerful ships ever built, its full armament had never once been required and no more than a few of its exhaustive complement of ships had ever been used, except in small groups to intercept the occasional space pirate or smuggler.

The ship, like the rest of the fleet that ‘kept the peace’ above Naboo, was technically on high alert after the news had come through that a Jedi had been spotted. Breslan, though he was an old hand and had experienced the Jedi in action during the Clone Wars, did not believe for a second that there was on anywhere near Naboo. He had heard that the Order had been completely wiped out after their failed rebellion against then Chancellor Palpatine, mostly by the mysterious Darth Vader. The Imperial Captain had never personally met a Jedi, however, other than a brief conversation with the famous Anakin Skywalker. To him, their passing had meant little. He, like much of his family, was a military man. The transition from Galactic Republic to Galactic Empire had just meant a different name on his bank statements.

“Very well, Ensign,” the Captain answered, taking the datapad from his subordinate. The message, marked with the personal insignia of Lord Vader himself, was short and to the point. One of the new Inquisitors was on his way. He was to be provided with whatever resources that he needed to complete his mission.

“Interesting,” Breslan stated as he finished reading. “It appears we will soon be having a guest aboard the ship. Ready a welcoming party, Ensign!”

The young man that had informed the Captain of the message saluted. “Yes sir!”

**1 day later…**

The *Inflexible* had completed yet another geostationary orbit of Naboo. Breslan had clocked off, rested, and was now ready to greet the Inquisitor. He did not know much about the alien, nor exactly what the Inquisitors were. The rumours were that some were ex-Jedi, whilst others had been headhunted by Vader himself. The lack of knowledge had left Breslan more than a little nervous, especially as the Inquisitor’s mission had not been detailed to him or any of his crew. Was this some kind of test? Did Vader, or worse, the Emperor, suspect the *Inflexible* and its crew of some kind of treachery?

The Captain’s musings were disturbed by the familiar voice of Lieutenant Terkan, a senior communications officer. “Sir! We’ve a transport vessel requesting to dock. They’re using the latest Imperial codes. Shall I allow them aboard?”

“Yes, Lieutenant. Tell them I will be welcoming them aboard personally. Have several squads of troopers on standby, just in case,” Breslan commanded, already marching towards the turbolift.

The Captain arrived in the hangar as the white clad Stormtroopers were moving into their final positions. A quick count indicated that around a tenth of the embarked troopers were present. That, Breslan hoped, would be more than enough if the incoming transport turned out to be hostile.

The magcon field flickered slightly as the transport entered the hangar bay. It landed with perfect precision in one of the marked areas, turning to face the assembled crowd and make its forthcoming exit far easier. The exit ramp descended, and a single being exited. Breslan could see immediately that they were not Human, instead appearing to be a Pau’an. The fact that the new arrival was an alien stirred the Captain’s suspicions slightly, and he noticed a few of the troopers were reaching for their blasters.

“Greetings, Captain. I am the Inquisitor. You should be expecting me,” the alien stated, in a voice accented similar to Breslan’s own.

“Stand down, men. We’ve been expecting him,” the Human confirmed almost before the new arrival had finished. The assembled men saluted in almost perfect unison, chilling their superior a little. He did not see the troopers out of their armour, but suspected that they were still entirely or mostly clones – even a well drilled unit shouldn’t have been able to synch *that* well, even in the Empire.

“I won’t be here long, Captain. As I’m sure Lord Vader informed you, a fugitive Jedi has been found on Naboo. I will shortly head to Theed to begin my search. If I need anything from you, I shall expect it to be made available. Am I clear?” the Inquisitor queried, staring down at Breslan with a look that dared the Captain to challenge him.

“Of course, Inquisitor. My crew and I are at your service,” Breslan replied.

Meanwhile, a nearby technician listened to the conversation as he refuelled the Inquisitor’s transport. When he heard the word ‘Jedi’, he frowned, and pushed a small red button attached to the inside of his overalls.

**Everts Homestead**

**Theed, Naboo**

Jepstan Everts was adjusting his home’s heating when his datapad bleeped, indicating that he had a new message. He smiled, seeing it was from his son, Frimlin. The middle-aged Nubian had not been happy when Frimlin had signed up to help the Empire, but had kept his views quiet; too many of his friends had disappeared when they had dared speak out. Frimlin had kept in contact with his parents as much as he had been able, and it soon became clear that he had joined the Empire to assist the local resistance in any way that he could. That hadn’t been much, for the resistance was small in number, but he had managed to save the life of a local Gungan who had been marked by Imperial Intelligence as ‘potential trouble’. Working in tandem with his father, Frimlin had smuggled the Gungan offworld to a new life on the watery planet of Dac.

It was for that reason that Redsyn Wentellio had sought the Everts family out. Wentellio arrived one day in the middle of the local winter season, his hair long and unkempt. He had an equally untidy black beard, and his clothes offered little protection from the elements. Despite all that, Jepstan’s first instinct had been to guide him to the nearest refuge shelter, but he had changed his mind after Wentellio had spoken. The senior Everts male was still not sure why he had done this.

He didn’t know that Redsyn Wentellio was a Jedi, a survivor of the Purge. The former Jedi had bent Jepstan’s mind with ease, the Force helping him to persuade the local to allow him to stay as long as he had needed. They had the spare room, after all, with Frimlin away.

“Red. You’d best get out of here. My son’s just activated his beacon. That means the Empire are coming for you,” Jepstan declared, a little panicked.

“Thank you for your hospitality, Mr. Everts. May the Force always favour you and your family,” the Jedi answered, knowing he had no time to waste.

Wentellio slipped out of the Everts homestead, nodding a quick greeting at a passer-by. Since being taken in by the Everts family, he had dressed and acted as if he were a local – the family claimed he was a lodger. Since Frimlin’s enlistment in the Engineering Corps, his family were largely left alone. They seemed to always be lucky when it came to which houses were randomly selected for a spot check, and Jepstan swore that he was given preferential treatment through the city. Now, with that protection gone, Redsyn Wentellio would have to find a new home, and fast. He could sense a new presence nearby. A new, *dark* presence. It wasn’t strong enough to suggest that it was Vader, or, worse, Lord Sidious himself, but the Jedi knew that he had only minutes before the alarm would be raised. If he could not get out of Theed before it became locked down, his chance of survival would be slim.

**Imperial Governor’s Office**

**Theed, Naboo**

The Imperial Governor for Naboo sat staring at the filthy alien across the table. The governor was typical of his kind: Human, and very much intolerant of anyone who didn’t look, talk, or think like he did. One of his first acts on being installed as governor of Naboo had been to allow individual cities the right to ban Gungans, citing numerous acts of sedition against the ‘lawful government’. Every single city had quickly made the most of this and had banned the native aliens, forcing them back into their own bubbled cities. Despite the ban, the Empire heaped further misery onto the Gungans, confiscating any assets that they had left behind. Additionally, Stormtrooper patrols frequently visited the Gungan cities, often arresting any local who dared so much as look at them. All in all, the Empire had undone in days what had taken Padmé Amidala and her successors years to build – the Gungans and the Naboo were back to hating each other.

“So, what brings you to my planet, Inquisitor?” the Governor questioned, trying to hide his prejudices.

“I won’t keep you long, Governor. Just give me access to whatever I need. I’m going to be hunting a Jedi,” the Pau’an responded coldly.

“A Jedi? I think you’re a couple of decades too late. There’s not been one of those here since the days of the Republic,” the Human scoffed.

“Your faith in your men is impressive. But I suggest you just give me what I want. I’m sure you don’t want Lord Vader to come and confirm my mission,” the Inquisitor warned, glaring angrily at the Governor. He felt the man’s fear rise the second he mentioned the Sith Lord’s name.

“The resources of the Naboo garrison are at your disposal, Inquisitor,” the Governor declared.

**Naboo Swamps**

Redsyn Wentellio steeled himself as he entered the murky waters. It had been a while since he had used his A99 aquata, but he had made sure that he had it with him when leaving Theed – he had already decided where his new home would be.

His escape from Theed had been fairly straightforward. None of the Imperial garrison were looking for a Jedi, allowing him to slip away almost completely unnoticed. The only trouble he had encountered had been a snooty Imperial official who was watching the road out of Theed. The official had demanded to know exactly what Redsyn was doing, where he was going and why. Fortunately, the Force had come to the rescue and the Jedi had been allowed to leave without any further trouble.

As he swam through the swamp, the Human spotted the Gungan settlement. The large bulbous structures, designed to keep the city dry and safe, were not easily mistaken, and the Force whispered to Wentellio about the large amount of life that was located inside.

Redsyn pushed his way through the shield, finding himself at the corner of two streets. A nearby Gungan looked shocked at his arrival.

“Yousa Human! Yousa not come here!” the Gungan cried, running off before the Jedi could answer her.

*That’s not good. If she raises the alarm, it’ll be far harder to convince the local council to permit me to stay!* Wentellio thought to himself. With relations as they were between the Naboo and the Gungans, it wasn’t easy to predict what the arrival of an unknown Human would cause. With that in mind, his next destination was obvious: he had to beat the news of his intrusion to the city’s leadership. For the second time in less than an hour, time was not on Redsyn Wentellio’s side.

**Streets of Theed**

“There’s no Jedi here. If he was in Theed, he got wind of my arrival,” the Inquisitor declared, annoyed. The Pau’an had demanded that he be accompanied by a squad of Stormtroopers, and had begun searching the city. Already, only half an hour in, many had been questioned, but nobody had appeared to have any information.

“Forgive me, sir, but how can you tell?” a trooper questioned.

The Inquisitor turned, glaring angrily at the armoured soldier. “I suggest you do not question my methods, trooper. That is, unless you would like me to demonstrate them?”

There was no answer from the Stormtrooper. Just the look that the alien had given him was enough.

“We’ll try something else. Go to the city’s exit checkpoints. Review the camera footage and question the officers stationed at each one as to who has been in and out in the last three hours. I want to find that Jedi,” the Inquisitor ordered, the tone of his voice rapidly transforming into an authoritative bark.

**Bridge**

**Imperial-class Star Destroyer *Inflexible***

**Orbit, Naboo**

Captain Breslan was staring almost mindlessly out of the transparisteel window. His thought process was one of curiosity. He had never met anyone quite like the Inquisitor before, and the fact that he was not Human had made the Captain wonder if the Empire’s well known views on Humans being superior were at all accurate. How could the Empire say Humans were superior, then send an alien who apparently had the backing of Lord Vader himself to give orders? Breslan continued to ponder on this, and nearly jumped out of his skin when one of his senior officers came over to talk to him.

“Sir, we’ve had an incident. The Inquisitor’s just been in contact. It appears that someone, probably someone on our ship, may have somehow contacted the Jedi,” the officer announced, handing the Captain a datapad that confirmed the same.

Breslan sighed. He liked to run a tight ship, and indeed this was the first security incident that he had since taking command. “Very well. Then this ship is now on lockdown. I will contact Intel. We’ll find whoever this leak is, Lieutenant. While I do that, have a comms team go through everything that’s been sent to and from this ship.”

**Gungan City**

“Yousa want what?” The head of the council asked.

“I’m just needing you to provide me with a stable lodging. You don’t need to ask me any further questions,” Wentellio replied, waving his hand gently.

“Yousa shall receive what yousa asked for. I don’t need to ask any further questions,” the large, elderly Gungan said, feeling almost compelled to help the Human before him.

**Theed Checkpoint 1138**

The assembled Stormtroopers had been divided into pairs. Each pair was ordered to a different exit checkpoint, and reports had already begun to come back that many of the checkpoints had nothing to report.

Checkpoint 1138, however, had attracted the Inquisitor when the officer there stated he couldn’t remember the reasons for letting a man through. All he could recall was that the man had arrived, given his name, and then been allowed to leave the city unquestioned.

“You were the victim of a Jedi trick. Playing tricks on the mind is exactly what those vermin did best,” the Inquisitor explained as he studied the man on the holo recording.

“What are your new orders, sir?” a Stormtrooper asked.

“I want five squads sweeping the area! Report any clues that the Jedi may have left straight to me. And leave no stone unturned. He could be almost *anywhere*,” the Inquisitor snapped.

**Gungan City**

Redsyn Wentellio was finding the Gungan city an incredibly interesting example of alien culture. During his time as a Jedi, he had never had the chance to visit Naboo – his only knowledge of the Gungans was what the Republic archives had, as well as the anecdotes of the former Master Obi-Wan Kenobi. Wentellio had been one of the Jedi that shied away from the ruined Jedi Temple after hearing the warning from Yoda and Kenobi. He had heard rumours that both Masters had survived, and were in hiding, but he hadn’t dared to try and find them – Redsyn’s focus was instead on his own survival, in the hope that the Empire would somehow fall. He had to admit, however, with just how large its numbers were, that that wasn’t going to happen any time soon.

Clambering into a bed, the Jedi found it a little more comfortable than he had been expecting. As he laid on his back, he began to notice the movements in the swamp through the translucent ceiling. The semi-intelligent lift swam about, as it always had. In a way, Wentellio envied them. They didn’t care for Republics or Empires, nor Jedi, nor Sith. To lead such a simple life was, to the observing Human, a luxury.

That thought stayed with Redsyn Wentellio as he drifted off to sleep.

And that was the nightmare came back.

**11 years earlier**

**Felucia**

The battle was nearing an end. The clone troopers, after an early struggle, had been able to turn the tables and were beginning to beat the diminishing droid army back. The jungle floor was littered with corpses, remains of droids and the debris of destroyed battlefield equipment.

At the heart of it, the newly Knighted Jedi, Redsyn Wentellio, was assisting his squad of clones in fighting a Droideka. Wentellio was one of several Jedi on the planet, including the Twi’lek Aayla Secura, and was aware that the Republic was beginning to win several telling victories across the entire galaxy.

A senior clone officer watched as Redsyn’s amethyst blade slid through droid after droid, almost admiring the sheer level of skill that the Jedi clearly demonstrated. Despite his genetically altered emotions, the clone almost felt he could call Wentellio a friend. They had fought side by side at several key battles, and had come to each other’s rescue or more than one occasion.

The clone’s holocommunicator beeped. To his surprise, it was Chancellor Palpatine who appeared.

“Execute Order 66,” the Chancellor ordered, disappearing just as quickly.

The clone didn’t need asking twice. Order 66 had been ingrained within from an early age. Its stipulation was clear: the unit’s Jedi commander was to be destroyed. With a wordless nod at the surrounding troopers, the officer prepared to follow his new orders.

Redsyn Wentellio, having destroyed the final group of droids in the immediate area, turned to beckon his accompanying troopers onward, but found himself staring at the barrel of several blaster rifles. He didn’t need to know what was about to come, but he acted first, swinging his lightsaber in the direction of the nearest clone. The remaining troopers fired their blasters, driven on by an almost animalistic desire to kill their former ally. Wentellio, however, demonstrated excellent swordsmanship and deflected the shots away with apparent ease. The Jedi was relying on his instincts, but could feel fear and anger beginning to take hold. Emotions that led to the dark side.

Beginning to back away, Redsyn held his blade in a defensive stance, daring the troopers to continue their attack, which they did with an increased vigour even as their Jedi enemy felled many of their number during his forced retreat.

With only the Force on his side, Wentellio put his faith in that one remaining ally, and leapt off a nearby ridge…

**Present Day**

**Naboo Swamps**

The Inquisitor grinned. The lead provided by one of the searching Stormtroopers, a set of barely visible tracks leading into a swamp, had proven most valuable. Now he had reached the swamp, he could sense another Force user nearby.

Accessing his holocommunicator, the Pau’an linked to Captain Breslan in the *Inflexible*. Those Gungans were about to pay dearly for harbouring an enemy of the Empire.

**Imperial-class Star Destroyer *Inflexible***

“You want me to perform a bombardment on a swamp, Inquisitor? But…” Breslan scoffed. He knew that his ship’s turbolaser batteries would prove inaccurate against such a target. At full power, like the Inquisitor was ordering, anything nearby would be completely razed to the ground.

“You heard me, Captain. You’d better do as I say as I’d hate to be in your shoes if Vader finds out about the security leak on your ship,” the Inquisitor snapped back coldly.

Breslan didn’t need asking twice. He simply nodded at the man in charge of the weapons console, a senior officer known for his brutality.

The weapons officer grinned as he programmed in the target. Seconds later, emerald plasma began to spew from the many batteries on the Star Destroyer’s hull. The powerful bombardment burned through the sky, destroying anything and everything in their path.

**Gungan City**

Redsyn Wentellio awoke in a cold sweat. He could hear the screams of anguished Gungans nearby, the Force enhancing that to the point that the Jedi had woken from him eternally looping nightmare. Seconds later, he realised why the locals were dying, as the protective shield around the City overloaded under the sheer power of the Imperial’s attacks. Water poured into the bedroom where Wentellio had been sleeping, but the Human was ready for it, and began to swim deeper into the swamp, trying to escape. He could swear that the turbolaser fire was heating the swamp to the point that even the semi-intelligent creatures that dwelled within were beginning to die.

It was only as he began his journey to the netherworld of the Force that he realised the heat was from the Inquisitor’s lightsaber blade.

*FIN*