**T-4a Lambda-class Shuttle *Kappa Six***

**Aurora System**

**39 ABY**

Andrelious steered the shuttle among the dagger shaped vessels that formed the bulk of the Emperor’s Hammer Strike Fleet. He hadn’t been to this sector for nearly two decades, but on arrival he noticed little had changed. The Hammer’s fleet was still incredibly large for the amount of space it controlled. Its flagship, the *Sovereign*, loomed as large as ever, flanked by dozens of support vessels of all classes.

“You must be in your element among all these wonderfully Imperial ships,” Kooki stated, with more than a hint of sarcasm in her tone.

“Hardly. These people will kill me if they discover who I am. I may have changed a lot in that time, but the fact I’m wanted for treason, among things, hasn’t,” Andrelious replied, choosing to ignore his wife’s continued sulking.

“I just hope your codes work!” Kooki snapped at Saskia.

A TIE Defender approached the shuttle. Andrelious didn’t need the Force to know what was coming next.

“This is Mu One hailing *Kappa Six*. Please state your name and intentions,” a voice crackled over the shuttle’s comm.

“*Kappa Six* to Mu One. This is the personal shuttle of Admiral Mehfrahka Din. She’s come to meet with your Fleet Commander,” the Warlord replied smoothly. He didn’t bother to disguise his voice; he had never lost the Core accent that was so common among Imperial officers.

Mu One’s pilot flew closer to the unknown shuttle. His ship’s sensors quickly scanned the vessel, confirming its IFF codes were correct.

“Confirmed, *Kappa Six*. My wingmen and I will escort you to the *Sovereign*,”

Andrelious smirked at Saskia. The false signal that the Epis had rigged onto their shuttle had worked perfectly.

They were in.

**1 week previously...**

“You had no frakking right!” Kooki yelled.

“Darling, please, you’ll wake the girls,” Andrelious pleaded. When his wife became this angry, he usually hid. This time, though, he had to face the music. Her anger had fired as soon as the Warlord had returned. He had been summoned to the *Suffering*, the Brotherhood’s flagship, at the request of the Dark Council on a matter of ‘severe urgency’.

“You might as well have asked Atyiru to go on a killing spree! What the frak were you thinking when you told the Council that I’d come with you?” the Alderaanian hissed, throwing a cup at the Warlord. Andrelious ducked, the hurled crockery missing him by inches.

“I need you for this one! There’s no way I can just waltz back to Emperor’s Hammer territory on my own!” The former Imperial replied, his own anger increasing.

“And what is this mission, anyway? What’s so important?” Kooki asked, still seething.

“Here. Read what the Master at Arms gave me. That explains it all,”

The female snatched the datapad from Andrelious.

*Operation:Red Window*

*Priority: High*

*Due to a lack of developmental talent, our attempts to develop our own, newer starfighters have fallen largely flat. At present, our lead units are equipped with TIE Defender starfighters. These are, of course, starting to show their age, so the Grand Master has demanded that we upgrade. For this reason, we need a Dark Jedi to infiltrate the Emperor’s Hammer Strike Fleet and bring back a TIE Praetor starfighter, as well as its complete schematics. With these in our possession, we are confident that we will be able to produce more TIE Praetors and give ourselves a far more effective frontline force.*

*Primary Objectives:*

* *Infiltrate Emperor’s Hammer space*
* *Acquire access to a TIE Praetor starfighter*
* *Obtain a copy of the TIE Praetor’s schematics*
* *Leave no evidence pointing to the Brotherhood*

*The Dark Council will reward successful completion of this mission with one million credits, plus a single rank elevation.*

“One million credits? Is that each?” Kooki asked.

“I inquired about that. That’s one million credits to be shared amongst whoever I choose to accompany me on this mission. Saskia’s already going to help, and I’m bringing Swil and Xyrilia, as well. But I need another Force user. I was hoping to make this a family outing..” the Sith replied, smiling nervously.

“Fine. But if we’re having to dress up as bastard Imperials, it will be *me* who outranks *you*. No-one’s going to believe that you’re my superior. And I expect something out of this for myself,” the Alderaanian answered stoically.

“Once we actually get to the TIE Praetors, I suspect it’s going to turn nasty. You’ll get to kill lots of Imperials,” the Warlord explained.

Kooki’s face began to light up. “I *was* considering killing one Imperial. But if you can get me more targets, babe..” she trailed off, smirking.

Andrelious chuckled. “As I said, I spoke to Saskia. She and Swil are going to slice into the Hammer’s network, and make us all a credible alias. My plan is that we’ll pose as another Imperial faction interested in an alliance with the Hammer. Since you, uh, asked so nicely, I’ll have her set you up as the senior officer,”

**6 days later...**

Saskia, although now a little closer to her father, still acted very nervously around him and the rest of the family. Even her twin half sisters brought little joy to the socially backwards Epis, as they rolled about and crawled on the floor, smiling at their parents.

“I have our aliases all set up,” the Cirran declared matter of factly.

Andrelious began studying his datapad.

*Name: Varsk Grinpak*

*Rank: Lieutenant Commander*

*Home planet:Corulag*

*Assignment: Personal attaché to Admiral M. Din*

*Backstory: Varsk Grinpak, despite his age, only came into prominence when his ability to spot a threat almost before it happened saved the life of Admiral Mehfraka Din. The Admiral was impressed enough that she immediately pointed Grinpak as her personal attaché. In this role he acts as her bodyguard and pilot. A man of few words, Grinpak tends to let his blaster do the talking.*

The Warlord frowned as he read the final sentence. “So you’re telling me I have to be quiet?”

Kooki, reading over his shoulder, smiled.

“Looks that way, babe. I told Saskia that I didn’t want you slipping up and breaking cover. She’s not just a pretty face,” the Alderaanian chuckled, as she began to read her own profile.

*Name: Mehfrahka Din*

*Rank: Admiral*

*Home planet:Chandrila*

*Assignment: Commander of 6th fleet, Imperial Remnant*

*Backstory: Mehfrahka Din, the daughter of former Commander Namuura Din, has spent her life correcting the mistake her father made- he first served under Grand Admiral Zaarin, before attempting to defect to the Rebellion. Mehfrahka, however, stayed loyal to the Empire and enlisted with the Imperial Navy as soon as she was old enough. In time, the female overcame the bias against her gender by proving to be one of the best tactical minds of the faction calling itself the Imperial Remnant. Now, Din has been sent to the Emperor’s Hammer in an attempt to re-establish a link between the Remnant and the Hammer. She is known as a tough negotiator, with a sharp tongue.*

“I’m the daughter of some Imperial traitor now. Fantastic,” Kooki mused.

“This is what I came up with for me,” Saskia continued.

*Name: Helena Freeg*

*Rank: Operative*

*Home planet: Coruscant/Imperial Centre*

*Assignment: Analyst, Imperial Remnant Intelligence*

*Backstory: Helena Freeg is a young, talented member of the Imperial Remnant’s Intelligence division. A whizz with computers of all kinds, there is no system that Helena cannot crack. As part of her role, she is accompanying Admiral Din under the ruse that she will offer the Hammer’s Intelligence division a number of new security techniques.*

“Clever girl. That will get us closer to the TIE Praetors. I’ll assume the other arrangements are all made?” Andrelious queried.

“Swil and Xyrilia managed to arrange a meeting with the Hammer’s commander. I’ve hacked the IFF transponder of that Lambda shuttle the Council gave you. Those two will be coming along, but I’ve just given them a basic alias each - they’ll be Din’s insurance if anything goes wrong. We know how backstabbing Imperials can be,” Saskia smirked, turning away from her father’s angry stare.

“I’ve been studying a DIA guidebook on how to act as an Imperial. I have to basically be slimy and want everyone under me to lick my boots. Oh, and destroy people’s homes,” Kooki declared, also getting a stare from Andrelious.

“Are we leaving the twins with Atty again?” the Warlord asked. On hearing their godmother’s name, the girls covered their eyes, remembering the bubbly Miraluka’s lack of such a feature.

**Present day...**

The main hangar bay of the *Sovereign* dwarfed many smaller systems’ primary spaceports. In full it could carry up to forty-two fighter squadrons, not counting the elite Omega squadron, as well as dozens of transports, tugs, and support vessels. Andrelious had never actually been aboard the flagship during his brief service in the Hammer, and found himself almost in awe at just how organised the group were, even though a sizeable portion of their membership had been born after the fall of Palpatine.

A cadre of Stormtroopers gathered around the arriving shuttle. Andrelious peered nervously through the cockpit window at the sea of white armoured troopers standing guard. As the Warlord watched, a man dressed in an equally white uniform marched between the two formations, flanked by officers in the more traditional grey.

“That’s the Fleet Commander. Grand Admiral Rusklin according to our information,” Andrelious explained as he lowered the shuttle’s boarding ramp. He moved to take position behind Kooki, remembering he was supposed to be her ‘attaché’ rather that her husband.

**-x-**

“Welcome to the *Sovereign,* Admiral Din! On behalf of the Emperor’s Hammer Strike Fleet, I hope that these talks will go well,” Rusklin began, offering his hand to Kooki.

“Thank you, Admiral. You’ve got an impressive force here. I’d heard that you had an active *Sovereign*. I’m going to tell you that the mood isn’t good back on Bastion - my superiors feel that we’ve been apart for too long,” the Alderaanian answered, shaking Rusklin’s hand.

“Once you see what we have to offer, I’m sure you’ll be able to send a positive report back to Bastion,” the male replied, eyeing but ignoring Saskia and Andrelious.

“I hope so, Rusklin. One of our intelligence operatives, Operative Freeg, has accompanied me. She’s got some suggestions for your Intelligence Division. Could you show us to their headquarters?” Kooki questioned.

“Excellent. I look forward to seeing what she’s got for them. Shall we get started?” Ruskin smiled, gesturing to ‘Din’ to follow him deeper into the *Sovereign*.

**-x-**

Andrelious stuck close to Saskia, not wanting to arouse suspicion. He was sure he recognised some of the older faces as they wandered around the massive Star Dreadnaught, but noticed that nobody addressed him. Imperial officers weren’t renowned for their social skills, and the *Sovereign* had always had a reputation that its crew were particularly hard nosed.

“What exactly did you see in these people, Dad? They’re not exactly an interesting bunch,” Saskia whispered.

“Why do you think I drunk so much?” Andrelious responded simply.

“So what’s the plan now?” the Epis asked, aware of the details but not sure how they fit together.

“We can’t do anything right now. We’ll have to wait until Rusklin offers Kooki, sorry, Admiral Din, a tour of the fleet. Once we can get to the Intelligence flagship, we’ll be right on top of the TIE Praetors. Then, I’m not sure,” the Sith responded, shrugging his shoulders. He and his daughter could both sense that Kooki was nearby, probably enjoying a bottle of brandy with Rusklin and his top brass. Luckily for the group, Rusklin was not himself a Dark Jedi. Many still served the Hammer, even two decades after the Exodus, but their influence had waned to the point that they were far less common outside of the Avenger Task Force.

After a short walk, Andrelious and Saskia reached the quarters that they had been assigned. Neither were very impressed; they each had a bed, together with a small foot locker. There wasn’t even a fresher - there was simply a communal facility at the end of the corridor.

“Guess you’re not bunking with Kooki tonight?” Saskia teased.

**-x-**

After a fairly rough night’s sleep, Andrelious and his eldest daughter shared breakfast, which consisted of a fairly disappointing ration, with some of the *Sovereign’s* numerous crew. They both noticed that the crew were a little more jovial before going on shift, but the atmosphere was still very sombre and businesslike.

*How did you live on this stuff?* Saskia questioned, using the Force rather than her mouth.

*You get used to it. The rations seem a little smaller than I remember,* Andrelious replied, not even turning to look at ‘Freeg’ as he struggled to swallow a small green item on a slice of toast. Years had passed since he had last been forced to eat something so mass produced, and he could almost hear his stomach willing him to refuse the plate of food.

“Any word from the Admiral today, *sir*?” Saskia asked, hating the formality required in addressing her own father.

“Nothing yet. I’m sure she’ll be in contact with us soon. You know how she is,” ‘Varsk’ answered.

“You’re with that Imperial Remnant woman, aren’t you?” a younger man asked. His rank insignia indicated that he was a Lieutenant.

“That’s correct, Lieutenant. And that’s Admiral Din to you. Don’t you know how to properly respect your superiors?” Andrelious hissed.

“She may be *your* superior, but we don’t follow the Remnant. My loyalty is to the Hammer and to Grand Admiral Rusklin,” the Lieutenant replied. Andrelious could sense hostility.

“Is that what they teach you? Your loyalty should be to the Empire, Lieutenant, not Rusklin. What would you do if Rusklin wanted to hand over the ship to the Rebels?” the Sith retorted.

The Hammer officer stood up, his hand balling into a fist. “Are you calling the Fleet Commander a traitor? Take that back, at once!”

Remaining calm and in his seat, Andrelious focused on the Lieutenant’s mind, massaging it gently with the Force.

“I didn’t call anyone a traitor,” the Warlord said, waving his hand.

“You didn’t call anyone a traitor,” the Lieutenant mimicked.

“It’s time you reported for duty,” Andrelious continued.

“It’s time I reported for duty,” the taller male stated, wandering off.

“Shouldn’t we be more careful?” Saskia whispered.

“We’ll be fine. But the sooner we’re back home, the better,” her father replied quietly.

**-x-**

A short time later, breakfast was finished and Andrelious and Saskia, with little else to do, returned to their shared quarters. Andrelious laid boredly on the bed, wishing he had his hip-flask, whilst the Epis tapped away at her datapad. She scanned through personnel records of various members of the Hammer, mostly their command staff. Finding little of interest, she noticed another file that caught her eye.

“Hey, dad. I’ve found you!” the Cirran announced.

“What do they say about me, these days?” the Warlord asked.

“Well, they’ve not updated your name. My my, you were a bad boy. Murder, espionage, treason, theft of Imperial property. They even issued a bounty for you, but it seems nobody ever bothered to chase it up,” Saskia replied stoically.

“Bounty, eh? How much?”

The female smirked. “Two thousand credits. No disintegrations.”

“Sounds like standard Emperor’s Hammer policy. Five hundred credits per murder, plus doubled because I was training in their Brotherhood. Two thousand won’t be enough to attract the big time hunters,” the former Commander replied, a little hurt that the bounty was so low.

Andrelious’ own datapad bleeped, indicating he had a message.

*Grinpak,*

*Grand Admiral Rusklin is giving me a personal tour of parts of the fleet. I will need you and Operative Freeg to meet me in the main hangar in ten minutes.*

*Admiral M. Din*

*Commander, 6th Fleet*

“Looks like we’re needed. Come on, Helena,” the Warlord smiled.

**-x-**

Even on his second look, Andrelious was still in awe at the *Sovereign’s* main hangar. The sounds, sights, and even smells, were familiar to him, but not their magnitude. TIE squadrons were taking off and landing on an almost second-by-second basis, whilst engineers tinkered with all kinds of ships and equipment. As he continued to study the area, the ex-Imperial spotted Rusklin and Kooki arriving from a turbolift. Kooki had chosen to walk side-by-side with the Fleet Commander, although he was technically her superior. This was a deliberate move, indicating that ‘Din’ and her allies didn’t recognise Rusklin’s authority as a Grand Admiral.

As his wife approached, the Warlord saluted, Saskia doing the same moments later.

“Well, Admiral, you certainly have your people well trained.” Rusklin observed.

Another man approached Rusklin, saluting the Grand Admiral. Andrelious regarded him carefully. He could swear that this new arrival, wearing the rank insignia of a High Admiral, looked familiar. His hair was largely greying, but there were tinges of red left around his temples. Clearly, he was part of the Hammer’s Brotherhood - he carried a lightsaber.

“This is my Security Officer, High Admiral Demonis,” Rusklin began. Demonis nodded in Din’s direction.

*Lenzar.* Andrelious thought.

*Quiet, Andrelious. Rusklin can’t hear your thoughts, but I can,* the older man ‘replied’.

*Lenzar? Isn’t that one of the Entars?* Kooki added.

The High Admiral gazed first at Andrelious, then at Kooki. *We’ll discuss this later. I’ve working for the Brotherhood for some time. I understand you’re here for a TIE Praetor. I can help you, but you must play along, for now.*

“I’ll assume you’re going to be taking me on my tour, Admiral?” Kooki questioned as if nothing had happened.

“I will be showing you to the Intelligence Division’s flagship. I was told that your Operative had some codes for them. I also believe that you’d like to see our TIE Praetors? I’ve heard of your interest in starfighter technology. Interesting that the daughter of one of Zaarin’s Commanders would be so interested in TIE technology,” Demonis replied.

“I’ll be taking you on the tour once we have the codes,” Rusklin added.

*Could be a trap.* Kooki mused.

*This is my doing. If you’d gone on the tour first, you’d have risked being detected the second you stepped on the Avenger,* Lenzar ‘answered’, whilst publically gesturing to Kooki and the others to board a nearby Escort Shuttle.

**Lictor-class Dungeon ship *Conker Blackwood***

**Aurora Prime orbit**

The ship that had once been known as the *Lichtor V* was nowhere near as heavily crewed as the *Sovereign*. Its hangar was also far, far smaller, allowing it to hold only a single squadron of fighters, along with a few shuttles.

On arrival, Kooki and the others had been given a quick tour by Lenzar, who kept character so perfectly that nobody aboard appeared to suspect he was anything but as loyal to the Hammer as he had always been. Andrelious still couldn’t place quite why Lenzar was so familiar to him. He also noticed that the ‘High Admiral’ was missing a finger on his left hand, but chose to leave the questions to his ‘superior’, who was feigning an interest in everything that Lenzar had to say.

“So, Operative, do you have the codes for us?” ‘Demonis’ asked, addressing Saskia.

*What do the codes actually do?* he added via the Force.

*They’re to help us escape. You’ll see*. Saskia answered.

“I just need a dataport, and you can have them, Admiral,” was the verbal response.

A Mon Calamari officer, dressed in the uniform of a Praetorian Squadron pilot, walked past the group. On seeing the alien, Andrelious panicked. He was an old colleague, and from the look he gave the Warlord, clearly recognised who he was.

Stopping what he was doing, the pilot moved to whisper something into Lenzar’s ear.

“Colonel, perhaps we should discuss this in private,” the Entar answered. The alien nodded, following his superior without saying a word to his allies.

**Meeting Room**

“Can we talk now, sir?” Colonel Greit Crevix burbled in his thick Dac accent. The Colonel was one of very few of his species that served the Empire, but had proven himself to be a capable enough pilot that few questioned his right to be in Praetorian.

“Of course, Colonel. This room is protected, as you well know,” Lenzar answered.

“As I said, I’m certain that the man you were with is Andrelious Inahj. He fled from our space many years ago, after he was found to be spying for the rogue Dark Brotherhood. He even stole a TIE Advanced from the *Colossus* to make his escape,” Crevix continued. He had served alongside Inahj for many months, finding him incredibly unpleasant company due to his drinking and obvious xenophobia.

Lenzar’s face broke into a knowing smile. “I am aware of who he really is, Colonel. Of course, I can’t risk you doing anything about this. I’m sorry, Greit,” the Admiral declared, activating his lightsaber. Crevix was a skilled pilot, and a talented field agent, but there was little those skills could do to save his skin as the aging Human approached. With a single swing of a lightsaber, the deed was done.

Andrelious’ secret was safe.

**-x-**

“Is everything ok, Admiral?” Kooki questioned as Lenzar returned. She had noticed the Colonel wasn’t with him - and could sense that the Entar had done something to the Mon Calamari.

“I’m afraid that Colonel Crevix was threatening to reveal certain information to our enemies. He won’t be doing that again,” Lenzar answered.

“Operative Freeg found a dataport. She’s uploading the codes now,” the Alderaanian stated.

“Good. Once that’s done, I’ll show you the TIE Praetors. I had arranged for a demonstration for you, but seeing as the volunteer was Colonel Crevix..” the Security Officer explained.

Saskia, as usual, was in a world of her own as she uploaded her codes. She started scanning through the ship’s databanks, finding all sorts of interesting information and copying it to her datapad. Eventually, she found schematics for not only the TIE Praetor, but for other ships that were unique to the Hammer. She copied these, too, smiling slightly as she realised her part in the mission was complete. Finally, once the codes were loaded, she erased the system’s logs, hiding that she’d ever been logged in.

**-x-**

An entire squadron of TIE Praetors were docked in the hangar. Their jet black hulls and crimson tinged cockpits added a little colour to the typically dull scene of an Imperial hangar. Even Kooki found herself a little in awe at the ships, whilst Andrelious was trying his best not to break character. He wanted to get in one of the ships and fly it away, but the timing had to be just right or he’d be blown out of the sky by the rest of the fleet.

Praetorian’s Commander, a Human male with the rank of General, had joined Lenzar and the others, and was briefly describing that the TIE Praetor was far more special than the ‘pretty TIE Advanced’ that it looked.

“Would you be willing to supply the Remnant with a few squadrons of this ship?” ‘Din’ questioned.

“I’m afraid not, Admiral. The last thing we’d want to see happening is this technology falling into enemy hands,” the General replied coolly.

Kooki’s face dropped so convincingly that even Andrelious believed she was disappointed.

“I can’t even explain much more than what I’ve already told you. Most of the Praetor’s systems are classified,” he continued.

“Perhaps you could let my attaché here take one for a flight? He’s a pretty good pilot,” Kooki queried.

“You must be joking!” Praetorian’s Commander replied, becoming incredibly animated.

“He’ll be fine. What could go wrong?” the Priestess retorted with a wave of her hand.

“He’ll be fine. I can’t see anything going wrong,” the General repeated monotonously.

**-x-**

Andrelious had wasted no time in clambering into one of the TIE Praetors. Having made the usual pre-flight checks, he launched carefully, knowing that the advanced fighter was a little faster than he was used to. As soon as he was clear of the hangar, he switched to sublight engines, feeling the ship lurch as it reached full speed.

“Fly no further than four klicks, Praetorian Seven,” a voice demanded.

Meanwhile, Kooki and Saskia were making preparations to re-board the shuttle that had flown them between the *Sovereign* and the Dungeon Ship. Lenzar boarded the ship behind them, moving to the cockpit. The two females heard the *snap-hiss* of a lightsaber, then a cry of pain.

“We need to go back to Brotherhood space. Now!” Lenzar yelled, launching the shuttle without bothering to get clearance.

**Bridge**

“Sir, Praetorian Seven is headed out of range. High Admiral Demonis’ shuttle is following it. I can’t get a response from either. What should we do?” an officer questioned, frowning at the events unfolding on his scope.

“Send the rest of Praetorian out. Have our Interdictors activate their gravity wells,” Rear Admiral Frisklan ordered. The *Conker Blackwood’s* commanding officer remained calm, even as he began to realise just what was happening.

“This is the *Fairchild*! Our gravity wells are out of action!” the comm crackled. Several other Interdictors reported a similar fate.

“The Interdictors have been overridden by a signal from this ship, sir,” another crewman added.

Frisklan began to figure out exactly what had transpired. Operative Freeg’s codes had, rather than provide the Hammer with the new information promised, had disabled the fleet’s ability to activate gravity well generators.

Furthermore, it appeared that Admiral Mehfrahka Din had been sent, presumably by the Imperial Remnant, to acquire a TIE Praetor. High Admiral Demonis’ role wasn’t clear - he was either in league with the Bastion based Imperials, or had been kidnapped.

Rusklin was not going to be pleased.

*FIN*