**Mimosa-Inahj Homestead**

**Mountains of Selen**

As usual, the snow fell thickly outside, adding yet another layer to the already deeply snowbound ground. Inside his home, Andrelious J. Mimosa-Inahj checked briefly on his sleeping girls. The Force told him they’d wake only when their mother came home, despite the fact that two tiny lumps had appeared on their bottom gum. The long, tiring process of the infants gaining teeth had begun – one of the reasons that Andrelious had elected to ‘semi-retire’ from active service. Since his change of status, Soulfire had slipped back to its old way under previous leader Nadrin, and Saskia, Andrelious’ daughter and second-in-command, had defected to the far quieter Clan Scholae Palatinae.

The Warlord was relaxing with a bottle of Ebla Reserve when he was interrupted by a knock at the door. Frowning, he walked over and opened it.

“What?” he snapped rudely.

“Quaestor Cortel requests your presence for a tournament. You and your wife,” Mordamen Bast declared, a little nervously.

“Tell her if she wants me there, she comes herself. As I told her before, I’m off duty unless I’m needed. This doesn’t sound important. Now, you’re welcome to come in for a drink, but otherwise, I’m quite happy where I am,” the ex-Rollmaster replied, his tone colder than the outside air.

**2 hours later…**

Kooki and Andrelius were both settling down for the night. The girls had indeed awoken on their mother’s return, but a quick feed and application of a numbing gel that Atyiru had provided soon sent them back off to sleep. As they slumbered, they moved their mouths as if they were still feeding.

A loud bleeping from the Warlord’s holocommunicator disturbed the family. Andrelious sat up in bed, activating the device. Arcia Cortel’s image appeared, stoic as ever.

“I was informed by Bast that you told him where to cram my tournament, Inahj,” the Exarch began.

“*MIMOSA*-Inahj! And yes, not quite that rudely, but then you never were one for manners. Now tell me why this frakking thing is so important and we’ll *consider* showing up. I’m still recovering from Korriban, as you well know,” the male replied. He had been badly hurt in the three-way battle that had occurred on Korriban. Whilst his wounds were largely healed, he still had a little trouble moving as briskly as usual. Lately, Kooki had been winning the majority of their training spars.

“I could easily send a team to escort the pair of you. It starts tomorrow. Eight hundred hours. And your twins aren’t welcome,” Arcia stated coldly.

“Frak off, you ice bitch! They’re coming if you want Andrel and I. I’ll at least leave them with my Master! What did you think I’d do? Feed them in the frakking arena?” Kooki hissed.

**Tournament Arena**

**Estle City, Selen**

**0830 Hours**

After arriving exactly five minutes late, as if to prove a point, Andrelious was quickly embroiled in the tournament. Using a brutal combination of taunts, mind tricks and saber blows, the Warlord began to fell opponents with a pleasing regularity, and soon was in the final four – alongside his wife, who had again shown her prowess with a saber to be among the best of those in the Shadow Clan.

Facing off against his ally, Nadrin, in the semi-final, Andrelious fought his fellow Warlord with far less gusto, and ended up, after a long fight, forcing what looked like a stalemate. Arcia intervened and advanced Nadrin, deeming him to have ‘won on points’.

Kooki, after defeating Wes in the other semi, managed to go one better than her husband, though the fight was long and hard.

The tournament was over.