**Spanky’s Tavern**

**Karufr**

Andrelious J. Mimosa-Inahj was always among the last to leave Spanky’s. The Warlord had a difficult relationship with both alcohol and the rest of Clan Taldryan. Though he was now fully accepted as a member of the Clan, he still preferred to partake on missions alone, a stance which gained him the ire of his summit.

“I’d best get back home. Give me a couple of bottles of Ebla Beer. Kooki gets very grumpy if I arrive empty handed,” Andrelious said to a barman.

“I’ve heard the snow’s pickin’ up again. Hope ye can beat it home,” the barman answered, handing over the beer.

“I’m used to it by now,” the Warlord responded, flicking a few credits over the bar. Placing the bottles of beer into his backpack, Andrelious moved out into the night.

**Unknown Location**

*And then nothing.* Mimosa-Inahj thought as he continued to attempt to recall what had happened. After leaving Spanky’s, everything was a blank.

The Sith cast his eyes around the room. He noticed a large durasteel door in the adjacent wall, but couldn’t help but be drawn by the appearance of space through a circular viewport.

“So I’m on a ship. Is this someone’s idea of a joke?” the Warlord wondered out loud, as he realised that his left wrist was being bound by one half of a pair of shackles. He looked along the attached chain and saw that he was chained to a second Human, a female who was sitting up and realising that she too wasn’t where she thought she was.

“Alright, jokers. You’ve made your point!” the female snapped, patting her free arm along the side of her body as if to look for a weapon.

“Who in the name of Palpatine are *you*?” Andrelious questioned, almost causing the woman to jump out of her skin.

The stranger frowned. “I think I should be asking *you* that very same question,” she replied. “Not that I meet many people who take the Emperor’s name in vain,”

Andrelious examined the woman. She was a little taller than him, and was dressed in a torn military uniform. The Warlord almost immediately noticed how immaculate her skin and fingernails were. Her hair, long and silver, was a little unkempt, a fact that seemed to be bothering her a little.

“Only an Imperial would say that..but you don’t look anything like old enough to have served,” Andrelious sneered.

The female sniggered. “Are you sure *you* served? I’m pretty sure even the janitorial regulations required a little more height!”

The Warlord’s cheeks turned a little pink. “I assure you that the ship I served on was part of the Imperial Navy! I passed all the correct flight certifications!” he snapped.

“Imperial Navy, eh? So you’re a fighter jock. Just what I need right now,” the woman responded.

Andrelious smirked. “That was a long time ago. My present employment has allowed me to further develop myself. And what about you? If you really were part of the Empire, that is,”

“Don’t think you can fool me into trusting you so easily, Sith. I know how to spot *and* how to deal with your kind,” the female hissed.

“I don’t believe that you’re going to be dealing with anything right now. I may be a Sith, Miss, but don’t mistake me for one of Pravus’ blind followers. It’s just far easier to keep my family safe without the blinkered view of the Jedi,” the Warlord answered. “Now, if we’re going to get out of here, I don’t think we’ve got much of a choice. We’re going have to work together. Going to tell me who you are?” he continued.

“You can call me Vosakia,” the woman stated.

“Very well. I’m guessing that’s probably an alias, but I can’t say I blame you. I, on the other hand, don’t feel the need to hide my true self. My name is Andrelious,” Mimosa-Inahj answered.

“Now that we’ve got that out of the way, you got any idea about where we are?” Vosakia questioned.

“All I know is that we’re on some kind of ship. Or space station. Can’t tell you more than that,” Andrelious replied, gesturing at the view window.

Vosakia nodded. “So you don’t know how you got here either? Last I remember, I was with the rest of my House. We were about to investigate rumours that Pravus’ agents had- that’s all you need to know,” she explained.

*She’s with Odan-Urr, then. Or possibly Arcona, if Atyiru’s ridiculous alliance hasn’t fallen through*, Andrelious mused.

“We can’t just sit around, Andrelious. We can’t just sit here and rot,” the female continued, her eyes drawn to the wedding ring on the Sith’s finger. “And besides, I don’t think your wife will like the idea of you being attached to me,”

Mimosa-Inahj chuckled. “You’re right on that one. She *hates* Imperials. Had a real issue with us since that business over Alderaan. Apparently blowing up her home planet isn’t something she will forgive.”

“My mother was from Alderaan. So I don’t want to hear it,” Vosakia snapped.

Andrelious didn’t answer. He could sense a third being nearby, somewhere outside the cell door.

“Vosakia. There’s a single guard outside. If we can get them to come in, I’m pretty sure that I can disarm them,” the Warlord said.

The woman smiled. She clearly had a plan.

Falling to the ground, Vosakia clutched at her chest, her face contorted in pain.

“Hey, we need some help in here! I think she’s having a heart attack!” Andrelious cried out, needing no introduction as to what to do.

The door slid open and the guard, a heavy set Twi’lek male, rushed in. Mimosa-Inahj focused on the Force, not taking his eyes off the advancing alien.

“What’s going on in here?” the guard questioned.

“A medical emergency, as I already said. We need a medic, not some trigger happy maniac!” Andrelious hissed, willing the Force into the guard’s mind.

The Twi’lek sneered. “I’ve got the basics. Just let me put my blaster down…”

As soon as the guard placed his blaster on the floor and bent down to examine the fallen Vosakia, Andrelious called the weapon to his free hand. The Twi’lek, realising something was wrong, turned to face the Sith, only to find himself staring down the barrel of his own blaster.

“You’re a stupid, weak minded fool. No wonder half of your kind end up as slaves!” Andrelious spat as he pulled the trigger.

“One dead already. You Sith don’t hang about,” Vosakia stated coldly as she clambered back to her feet.

“We’re not going to get out of this by talking our way through the guards. Now, hold still!” Andrelious commanded, pointing the blaster at the chain that bound him to Vosakia. He squeezed the trigger, but the blaster bolt simply bounced off of the chain, ricocheting into one of the walls.

“Guess they knew we’d try that. Perhaps if we can find your lightsaber we’ll have more luck,” Vosakia suggested.

“That’s assuming they’ve kept it here. If I was their intended target, it’s possible that they’ve disposed of my lightsabers,” Mimosa-Inahj answered.

Vosakia nodded. “Either way, it’s time we got moving. Guards never get left alone for long,”

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The two chained companions slinked out of their cell, closing the door behind. Andrelious kept hold of the blaster and led the way.

The corridors were deserted other than for a few service droids, which continued their cleaning tasks without paying any attention to either Human.

The search for the pair’s weapons hadn’t turned anything up. The rooms they had looked in were mainly other, unused cells, devoid of anything useable.

“So this is meant to be a prison ship. Yet we’re the only two prisoners. And there’s only been the one guard, who you dealt with. Something about this isn’t right,” Vosakia declared, narrowing her eyes at her counterpart.

“If I didn’t know better, I’d think you were accusing *me* of being part of this. Why would I kill my own men? I’m a Sith, not an idiot!” Andrelious snapped.

“Don’t you try that one with me. Plenty of Sith have slain *legions* of their own if it suited them,” the woman sneered.

The Warlord didn’t reply. He was finally sensing someone nearby. He peeked around the corner to see a man in the same uniform as the Twi’lek guard. The man was sat in a chair and was clearly supposed to be keeping an eye on some monitors. Instead, he had his feet on his console and was fast asleep, snoring. In a holster on his belt was a blaster, identical to the one Andrelious had acquired.

“Look. Turbolift. The far side of that console,” Vosakia pointed out.

“Right. Want that idiot’s blaster? He’s hardly going to miss it..” Andrelious trailed off, pointing his weapon at the sleeping man’s head. Vosakia frowned and pushed the blaster off-target.

“Killing everyone we see won’t get us out of this mess any faster. As long as this chain binds us, Andrelious, I’m not going to let you take any more lives than is necessary,” the female said admonishingly.

“You’re with those Urrite Jedi, aren’t you? Only people who can mix an abhorrence of Lord Pravus with an otherwise overzealous pursuit of pacifism,” the Sith answered, nonetheless obliging with Vosakia’s request and summoning the slumbering guard’s blaster to himself with the Force. He handed it straight to his ‘partner’.

“Took you long enough,” Vosakia replied.

Andrelious responded with a sneer, before moving towards the turbolift. Pushing its call button, he kept one eye on the guard, and one on Vosakia. If either moved against him, he needed to be ready. He knew that his ‘companion’ didn’t trust him, and now that he had discovered that she had thrown her lot in with Odan-Urr, he didn’t trust her, either.

The turbolift arrived. The pair stepped straight on and began to study the deck layout.

“Looks like we’re on an old CR-90. Guess we’ve got two real options. We can either get to the docking bay and hope there’s a ship we can take. I think we should probably just try to get to an escape pod, but that’ll mean us making sure they can’t blow us out of the sky. Unless you fancy trying to storm the bridge? I’m going to expect we’ll meet some real resistance soon,” Vosakia explained.

“First priority is to see if I can get my equipment back. I’m not having my lightsabers sold on some black market somewhere,” Andrelious answered.

Vosakia stared at the ground. “At least you’d be able to craft new ones. It’d take me some time to get hold of another version of my things. Not being able to supply a delivery address makes it rather difficult,” she said, a little ruefully.

“Ok. Seems our plan is to get our equipment first, *then* decide the best way off here. Any ideas where they’d stow a prisoner’s belongings?” Mimosa-Inahj queried.

“Well, I’m still very suspicious about how easy it’s all been. We’re dealing with a trap, or idiots. And I know where I’d put my credits. Idiots wouldn’t be able to kidnap a Sith and an ex-ISB officer,” Vosakia stated.

“Let’s try the next deck up, then. Perhaps we’ll even get some answers as we go,” Andrelious declared, pushing the corresponding button on the lift’s control panel. The lift immediately whirred into action, stopping almost immediately.

Though they were still bound, both Andrelious and Vosakia readied themselves as if they were about to enter a war zone. Sure enough, as the doors slid open, they were presented with a trio of heavily armed soldiers. Andrelious picked the nearest off with a single headshot, but the other two quickly ducked into cover.

Almost forgetting Vosakia, the Warlord charged forwards, drawing a yelp of surprise from his fellow captive. The pair had mastered walking whilst connected during their movement on the deck below, but ended up in a heap as Andrelious dove for safety to avoid any return fire from the two remaining guards.

“We’d best keep moving. They’ll probably be letting the bridge know that we’re out by now,” Vosakia said.

“Let’s do this. Objectives remain the same. Get our things, then get out of here. If we get that far, we’ll discuss what we’re going to do next,” Andrelious replied.

As the Warlord regarded Vosakia, she suddenly seemed a little more familiar, as if he had met her before, if briefly.

**Earlier**

“It’s best you don’t question our motives. We’ve finally captured a member of the Resistance, and you’ve been selected for Procedure Cresh,” Evant Taelyan ordered.

Andrelious looked in at the prisoner. She was a female, evidently some kind of soldier. She didn’t appear to be able to touch the Force, but the Warlord wasn’t going to be too careful; many could hide such things.

“Tell me everything you know,” the Taldryanite demanded.

“Why do you think we’re using Procedure Cresh? She’s proving a little tougher than we hoped. We know she’s with Odan-Urr, but apart from that, we have nothing,” the Voice replied.

“What exactly *IS* Procedure Cresh, anyway? Apart from abducting me from Karufr, I mean. I don’t think Consul Howlader’s going to be very pleased when he discovers-“ Andrelious began. Evant raised his hand to silence the Sith.

“Are you alright, Andrelious? You just completely zoned out on me! We need to get moving, like you said!” Vosakia snapped, jolting the Warlord from his musings.

The Sith blinked a few times. “I’m fine,” he managed.

Vosakia, who was on the ‘correct’ side of the pair, shot down the nearest of the remaining enemies with a well timed ‘hit and fade’ attack. The last of the men, a Zabrak, began to retreat, firing behind himself to cover his own escape.

“Not bad. You certainly remember your training. Can you see any storage rooms?” Andrelious questioned.

“There’s a couple of rooms in the corridor ahead, but I can’t see what they’re for,” Vosakia answered.

Andrelious didn’t need a second invitation. He was already moving towards the nearer of the two doorways. A quick glance into the room indicated it was little more than a break room, but the second doorway was much more promising. Inside were a number of lockers, and, on a rack in one corner, were the Warlord’s E-11s, as well as a smaller blaster that Andrelious guessed was Vosakia’s. This was confirmed when she stepped towards the rack, throwing away her stolen weapon.

“How do we get into those?” the Taldryanite asked, pointing at the lockers.

“You won’t be getting into anything!” a harsh voice yelled.

Turning as one, Andrelious and Vosakia came face to face with a pair of soldiers flanking a man who carried the authority of an officer.

“Even when chained together the pair of you are making a mess. I should probably have you both executed on the spot. You’ve already killed several of *my* men,” the officer hissed.

Andrelious nodded at his companion, before stepping forward. “You’ll forget that we killed anyone. You’ll open the lockers for us,” he said, waving his free hand.

“Men, open these lockers. These two meant no harm!” the officer ordered robotically.

“But, sir…” one of the guards started.

“Do as he says, idiot!” the other, an older man, interrupted, backhanding his colleague.

The two officers opened the lockers. Inside one were Andrelious’ lightsabers, whilst another held various equipment that belonged to Vosakia. Both Sith and soldier smirked. The odds had evened up thanks to Mimosa-Inahj’s mastery of mental manipulation.

Calling one of his lightsabers to his hand, Andrelious immediately thumbed its activation switch, slashing through the nearest guard. His grip on his lightsaber was awkward due to only having one free hand, but the Warlord had enough of an element of surprise to compensate. Vosakia fired her blaster in the direction of the officer, distracting the other guard for long enough to allow her companion to approach and deal with him, too.

The officer raised his hands in surrender. Andrelious swung his lightsaber around, trying to sever the chain, but found that was seemingly immune to the blade of his weapon.

“Now. You’re going to help us. I don’t know, or care, who you are. Can you do anything about this?” Andrelious demanded, waving the chain that bound him to Vosakia.

“I know nothing! You two were dumped here yesterday with our latest supplies! All I was told was to secure you, but make sure that it wasn’t difficult for you to escape!” the officer babbled.

“He asked about the chain, not for your biography!” Vosakia snapped with an annoyance that surprised Andrelious.

“Nothing doing. I was told not to try to disturb it. If a lightsaber can’t damage it, we have nothing. We don’t even normally *use* the prison cells! We’re just a merchant ship!” the man replied.

Andrelious and Vosakia exchanged glances. Things were beginning to fall into place. The men they had assumed were guards were little more than a security detail, with little to no proper military training. The officer that stood before them had lost his bluster the second that his defenders had fallen; Vosakia suspected that he’d dropped out of a military academy.

“Now that we have our things back, I suggest you let us leave. Nobody else needs to die if you do as we say. Right, Andrelious?” Vosakia said, glaring at the Sith.

**Earlier**

Andrelious did not like the look of the large syringe in the medic’s hand.

“This is just a precaution. If we suspend your memories of the last twenty-four hours, there’s no chance that she can get your true intent out of you. The serum will take a few hours to take effect. You’ll probably wake up on board the Corvette without knowing why,” Evant explained.

“Right. So you want me to try to convince her to work with me and find our way off the ship. To what end?” Andrelious queried.

The Voice sighed. “You will bound to her with a chain that’s designed to be unbreakable by any conventional weaponry. We need you to accompany her back to Odan-Urr’s new home. If and when you’re able to do that, Lord Pravus will lead the assault,”

“I don’t think this is going to work. I can’t hide who I am half as well as Kooki can. Why couldn’t she have done this mission?” the Warlord asked.

“Andrelious? Wake up!” Vosakia shouted, shaking her companion as if to rouse him.

“I’m sorry. I’m just finding the situation a little stressful,” the Sith replied. “Have we got a way off now?”

The female nodded. “I’ve promised to let the rest of this ship’s crew go safely on their way in exchange for letting us take an escape pod. We’ll be leaving shortly,”

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“We’re giving you one of our better escape pods. It comes with its own hyperdrive. Don’t try and go too far, though,” the officer declared as Andrelious and Vosakia climbed into the pod.

“You should just be glad that my associate was here. If I’d had my way, you and the crew would all be dead,” Andrelious hissed.

“What he means is thank you,” Vosakia interjected.

*I always seem to find the assertive ones,* the Warlord mused.

Vosakia pulled the launch lever. The hatch slid shut as the pod launched with a jolt.

“Right. We’ll hyper a few light years away, then use the pod’s distress signal. I’ll call my people and we’ll see if they can break this frakking chain,” Vosakia stated matter-of-factly.

“Forget it. Odan-Urr’s leaders will probably try to imprison me on some trumped charges. We’d be better off calling *my* people,” Andrelious responded.

“And how would I be treated? Sith aren’t exactly known for their clemency towards known enemies!” Vosakia snapped.

“You wouldn’t be a known enemy to them. In fact, you’d even be welcome to join our ranks. They let me in even after I fought them for years!” the Warlord answered.

“A recruitment attempt? You’re unusually loyal to a Clan for a Sith,” the female replied.

“They keep my family and I safe. That’s what matters to me. The time may come one day for me to increase my power base, but that’s a story for another day,” Andrelious explained.

Vosakia shook her head. “Not convinced. I’m calling my people in,”

As the woman operated the comm system, Andrelious grimaced. The last thing he wanted was an audience with Odan Urr’s summit.

“Seems I was only able to send a general distress call out. I’ve mentioned your name, so we’ll just have to see who cares enough to get you back,” Vosakia declared.

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For nearly three hours, the escape pod had flown slowly through empty space. Andrelious and Vosakia conversed, finding that they had a great deal in common in terms of political views. Both had served the Empire, though Vosakia wouldn’t explain why a woman in her 30s was familiar with events such as the destruction of Alderaan. They stayed away from discussing current affairs out of the mutual respect that they had built up.

A ship appeared on the pod’s sensors. The sensory equipment was limited; it showed that there was a ship in the area, but nothing about it.

The pair exchanged glances, anxious as to who had found them.

“This is Consul Howlader onboard the *Relentless*. Andrelious, please respond,” a voice broadcast.

“Looks like it’s *my* people,” Andrelious said with a wink.

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Andrelious and his temporary companion didn’t bother with pleasantries. Vosakia in particular was incredibly quiet; the Warlord guessed she was trying to hide her real identity from Howlader and the other Taldrya onboard.

The chain that connected the two Humans had proven incredibly difficult to deal with, but one of Taldryan’s technicians, after some thought, managed to fabricate the key and unlocked the shackles.

After being told she wasn’t going anywhere until she dropped the alias, Vosakia eventually revealed that her real name was Alethia Archenksova, who was the Aedile of House Hoth. She was picked up by members of Odan-Urr, who appeared grateful that Andrelious had not harmed her.

**Secret Location**

“We’ve just got the data back from Andrelious Mimosa-Inahj’s mission. It seems that we’d placed him with one of Odan-Urr’s leaders, an Alethia Archenksova. I don’t know what she did, Lord Taelyan, but there’s very little information in Mimosa-Inahj’s final report. He mentioned something about her being a former Imperial,” an officer declared.

Evant nodded. “He was just a distraction, Major. She was never going to think of finding the tracking implant when she had a Sith chained to her. With luck, this Archenksova will lead us straight to the Jedi,”

*FIN*