Breaking Point: ‘Through the Fires and Flames’

Despite being under Taldryan’s rule on Karufr for about eighteen months, rumours were transpiring that Kookimarissia Mimosa-Inahj was quite the undercover specialist. She had joined forces with other Clan members to complete missions and a few private ones of her own. The Alderaanian was beginning to build up quite a reputable trait within Taldryan and people were starting to talk. It was becoming widespread news that this Sith was willing to do anything as long as her family were safe from harm and she would stop at nothing to protect them. Her daughters were at the heart of every decision she ever made. That was where Kooki’s loyalties lay, now and always. Nothing and no one would ever change that or convince her otherwise.

**34 ABY**

**Mimosa-Inahj Homestead**

**Karufr**

It seemed to be another normal day for Kooki. She had done the necessary housework and tended to the growing needs of her toddling daughters, who were now starting to walk more independently round their mountainous home. Dinner was cooking away in the kitchen and a rare five minutes gave the mother time to sit down with a caf and check her datapad. Scrolling through messages it was mainly the same old correspondence, but an unusual one flagged up.

***To:*** *K.M-I*

***From:*** *D.C*

***Subject:*** *TOP SECRET! Fe Operations*

*Miss M-I,*

*We have heard through the grapevine that you are a highly skilled female, with a feisty attitude to match. We are looking for highly reputable individuals such as yourself. Taldryan is not what it appears to be. We understand that your family mean everything to you and we feel if you stay where you are much longer, your safety cannot be guaranteed. Ask yourself do you really want to put your family at risk? Traitors walk amongst us. As do many unwanted Jedi. And it’s time for us to do something about it.*

*Join us. Before it’s too late!*

*We will be in touch soon.*

*D.C*

Kooki sipped slowly at the steaming chestnut-coloured caffeinated beverage. So many questions swarmed round Kooki’s mind about this mysterious correspondence. *Who was it from? What was it all about? Dare she respond? Who were the traitors?* What she did know was where her loyalties lay…and that was with her spouse and her daughters. *Maybe she should go along with it? And be a double agent? But would she be believed?*

She hastily, and spontaneously, without thinking drafted and sent a reply.

***To:*** *D.C*

***From:*** *K.M-I*

***Subject: Re:*** *TOP SECRET! Fe Operations*

*I am yet to work out who you are or what you are doing exactly, or even WHY you are. But you seem to know an awful lot. My family are indeed my paramount priority. So send me more details and I shall do whatever is necessary to keep them safe.*

*K.M-I*

A timer dinged, louder than usual, startling Kooki. She had a lot to mull over, but for now dinner was ready.

**The Following Day…**

They had been in touch overnight, and upon checking her datapad while everyone else in the household slept, Kooki apprehensively opened the new message.

***To:*** *K.M-I*

***From:*** *D.C*

***Subject:*** *Meeting*

*It is far too risky to send you any information regarding this highly secret operation. It could easily get intercepted. We are already risking a lot sending you what we already have. Be ready for 06.30 and we will send someone for you. Your family will remain unharmed, but come alone. Make an excuse. And delete all messages once you have read them.*

*That is all.*

*D.C*

Kooki glanced over at the timepiece on her bedside table. The digitalised numbers displayed 05.45. She didn’t have long. The female noticed her spouse was snoring away next to her. She could sense her twin daughters too were fast asleep and wouldn’t rouse for a while. A note was scribbled to Andrelious and was placed on the bed next to the sleeping Sith. Kooki quietly got herself washed and dressed, and she headed downstairs to make herself a thermos of caf to help her wake up fully. Grabbing her coat, she proceeded to wait outside her house for the arrival of her lift.

At exactly 06.30, a speeder ground to a halt. No one got out. The rear door opened and a black sleeve reached for Kooki and pulled her inside. Before she could secure herself or make sense of her surroundings, the speeder had sped off. The sleeve belonged to a hooded stranger cloaked in an all-black outfit which concealed their appearance. No words were said between either of them. Eventually the vehicle arrived at a deserted spaceport.

**Deserted Spaceport**

**Karufr**

Looking out of the window, Kooki noticed that this spaceport was clearly abandoned and had been for some time. She couldn’t see clearly, but there were fragments of shuttles and speeders kicking about on the ground. It was all so grey and dismal, as if someone had cloaked the entire piece of land in a depressing cobweb. The Alderaanian prepared to exit the speeder, once it had stopped at this mysterious, desolate location, but she was stopped by the hooded stranger.

“So why am I *here*?” asked a confused Kooki.

“Simple. We need you.” Replied the stranger in a deep voice.

“But why me?” Kooki queried.

“Rumours have transpired that you have a family to protect. We are selecting those who deserve protection and saving them from such dire consequences.” The unknown person soothed in a gentler tone.

The concealed person may not have been physically visible, but Kooki saw right through them. This person deemed her a vulnerable mother, therefore she was seen as pliable and would be scared into silence to keep her family safe at all costs. As feisty as she was, they knew that as she hadn’t been in Taldryan all that long, she would unlikely have formed secure attachments to the Clan. As true as all this was, Kooki was far from vulnerable and as much as she would keep her family safe, she did not fully trust this person and wherever he came from not to go back on his ‘promise’ of safety and protection. However, she managed to quickly hatch a plan that they weren’t to know she wasn’t a vulnerable person and that she could go undercover and report back to her immediate superiors.

“What’s going on?” Kooki asked, trying to sound worried and frightful.

“Betrayal. Taldryan have betrayed the entire Brotherhood. And now justice must be served.” The stranger continued.

To avoid suspicion, Kooki kept up her clever guise and continued with the pretence.

“So what I have to do exactly?” she enquired.

“We have also heard that you boast unbelievable lightsaber duelling expertise. We will need ones like you on the front line amongst the armies to defend us. Have no fear, Miss, there will be lots of backup should you need to retreat or you suffer injury. There will be many Stormtroopers to assist us in serving justice. But rest assured no matter what your family will be spared the fray and you will receive optimum healthcare should it be required.” The stranger explained.

Such radicalisation was not going to work with Kooki, although she did want her family to be safe at all costs. It was such a conflict of emotions. She didn’t know if she could trust this person, even if he seemed to have information that only the Dark Council or her closest companions would know about her.

She agreed to go along with the plan and infiltrate from within, unbeknown to anyone else.

“So when do you need me?” Kooki asked.

“We will message your comlink, so have it ready at all times!” stated the stranger, who now sounded rather serious.

He outstretched his arm and patted the back of the driver’s seat in the speeder, which right on cue sped back to the base of Kooki’s mountainous home.

The driver ground the vehicle to a halt once again.

“Tell no one of this adventure, Miss. And do not breathe a word of this plan. After all you wouldn’t want the first bombing to be aimed at this mountain house would you?” The stranger sneered.

Kooki was starting to feel unusually scared, but she liked to hope it was all a big bravado image. It seemed childish and rude, trying to blackmail her and it just made her trust in this person and whoever they were representing, even less.

Keeping her cool, Kooki simply responded, “It’s all about trust here, Mister....Mister…”

A chuckle came out from under the dark hood.

“Indeed it is, Miss. I can’t reveal myself to you can I?” he mocked.

“Don’t be childish! How can I trust you when you don’t trust me?” Kooki stated crossly.

Her feistiness reminded the stranger of himself in many ways.

“Cotelin…Jac Cotelin!” he exclaimed, revealing his unique facial features and hastily concealing himself again.

In that brief moment, Kooki glanced over at his face. She had never met him, but had heard others speak of him many times. His face was as terrifying as people had said.

“Now scram! You will hear from us soon! This operation is moving fast. And remember one word to anyone…” he teased, and imitated an explosion with his hands in the direction of Kooki’s home.

Kooki clambered out of the speeder, and with her feet barely on the snowy ground beneath her, it sped off again. The Alderaanian trudged through the snow up to her home. She inhaled a chilly breath and looked down at the landscape around her. Soon this entire planet would become dust and Kookimarissia Mimosa-Inahj would be losing another home…

**Mimosa-Inahj Homestead**

**Karufr**

It was now early afternoon and Poppy and Etty were happily munching on some sandwiches and fruit for their lunch. Their father kept a watchful eye, whilst Kooki busied about upstairs frantically packing clothes and priceless mementos into cases and storing them a few feet away from her bed. Photo albums, toys, and anything valuable got strewn into cases in some sort of logical manner. Andrelious knew better than to question her actions, so he left his spouse to it.

By the time evening was coming, Kooki was starting to finalise her plan in her head. So far there was no word from Jac or any of his associates. At least this time Kooki knew she was losing her home, she could prepare and maybe save lives. But she didn’t have time on her side. Time was running out.

Once the twins were asleep, and Andrelious was relaxing on the sofa with a monitor nearby for a listening ear in case his daughters were to wake up, Kooki headed out. Andrelious once again didn’t question his spouse and just assumed it was just another late night mission.

**Spanky’s Tavern**

**Karufr**

The door of the tavern swung open and a cleverly disguised Kooki looked around for Bobecc, but he was nowhere to be seen. Harbouring electric blue coloured hair and an uncomfortable and rather unusual outfit, made up her latest guise. The female was feeling very heavy hearted and that the fate of all these people was unbeknown to them. In just a couple of days they could be obliterated along with their homes.

Kooki was not usually one to give up, but she didn’t know what else to do. No superior Taldryanites were about. The only thing left to do was to go home and tell Andrelious everything. Maybe he could help her locate Bobecc or any of the others before it was too late.

Just as she turned to leave, the Sith spotted an elderly male in a booth sipping a drink with a stuffed panda next to him. SUCCESS!!! She had located Howlader!!!

Kooki cautiously approached him as she hadn’t conversed with him much in the past.

“E…excuse m…me,” Kooki stuttered.

The sexagenarian looked up from his drink.

“Yes?” he asked, a little uncertain of this peculiar-looking female.

“I have some information for you, Sir.” Kooki explained.

“Sorry, Miss, but who are you?” the panda-loving male enquired.

“That is of no importance. But you MUST listen. Your future could depend on it.” The Alderaanian insisted.

“Look, Miss, I don’t know who you are or where you’re from, but you are talking nonsense. I am fine. My lifestyle hasn’t killed me yet has it?” chuckled Howlader.

“Don’t laugh, Sir. This is serious. You are not safe. No one is safe. You must get the word out. We must all evacu…” Kooki urged.

Howlader continued to laugh.

“Can see into the future can you? You’re one of those people? Look, Miss, whoever you are, whatever you’ve heard, it’s crazy!” he mocked, interrupting Kooki’s panicked utterance.

“So you aren’t going to listen to me?” the disguised female asked, fearfully.

“Course not! Now away with you. And don’t bother me again! I have contacts that can deal with crazy people like you.” The male stated, angrily.

Kooki headed out of the tavern rather sullen.

*Should she have just gone as herself? Would Howlader have believed her then? Would that have put the twins at risk?* So many unknowns ran through her head.

The sad mother felt like she had failed. Suddenly she had an idea. Still disguised she ran into Spanky’s and smashed a glass on the bar. The bustling tavern fell into a room of silence. She jumped onto the bar counter and began yelling at the top of her voice.

“Save yourselves. The end is coming. Flee!”

Panic began to erupt until Howlader too smashed a glass on his table. Silence occurred once again, aside a few nervous whispers.

“This woman is crazy! Send her away. Send for the Justicar immediately!” Howlader shouted.

Kooki jumped down and fled up her mountain in which her home was situated. Without realising her comlink fell onto the icy ground and damaged it. She managed to get into her house and burst into tears.

Andrelious held his spouse whilst she tried her best to explain things amidst her tears. He had very rarely seen her cry, especially like this. He believed every word of what Kooki was saying. It was very surreal seeing his usually strong woman so vulnerable.

“We will leave in the morning, babe. I promise.” Andrelious stroked his wife’s black and purple hair, as she slowly fell asleep in his arms.

**Meanwhile…**

**Spanky’s Tavern**

**Karufr**

Howlader had managed to get the staff in Spanky’s to settle and reassure everyone that the crazy lady was gone and the Justicar would find her and lock her away in the Chamber of Justice for what she had done.

A male approached the Taldryan Consul and broke the news.

“Sorry Sir, we can’t get hold of the Justicar. It’s most unusual. He seems to have severed contact with everyone.”

“Fine!” Howlader snapped.

“Get me contact with my second in command. Send for Zoron. NOW!!”

**Kr’Tal System**

**Karufr**

“Howie, calm down!” Zoron explained via comlink to his colleague.

“We need to catch that crazy woman! She claimed we are all in danger.” The Proconsul yelled.

“We will. I will contact the Justicar and then we will find her and punish her.” Zoron stated, coolly.

“That’s just it, Jac has vanished too.” Howlader exclaimed, fearfully.

“We will sort this all out. Look I’ve got to go. I have a visitor. Rest. We will sort this in the morning. Out!” expressed the Consul.

“Enter!” he shouted.

“Ah Zoron. So nice to see you. We need to talk!” the new arrival hissed.

“Jac?!” came a shocked response. “What are you doing here?”

**Mimosa-Inahj Homestead**

**Karufr**

Andrelious had helped his sleepy spouse to bed and now they slept, Kooki tightly clinging to her spouse. The twins too were fast asleep. The large Corellian brandy had helped Kooki numb her feelings enough temporarily to help ease her into slumber.

All of a sudden a loud klaxon-like sound echoed, causing everyone to awaken. The twins were wailing, causing their mother to rush in and hastily wrap them into two slings. She had developed the art of wearing her girls at top speed.

“Must be the bombardment, love! You were definitely right. I’ll grab the bags. Get to our ship!!!” Andrelious ordered.

Kooki was normally the one barking orders, but right now she was taking no chances. She didn’t trust Jac not to target her and her family- especially if it transpired she was the ‘crazy lady’ trying to save everyone. The Justicar wasn’t stupid. If he knew Kooki was a powerful saberist, he would likely know that she was too a master of disguise and would come seeking revenge upon realising Kooki’s betrayal.

Andrelious, Kooki and their girls boarded their personal ship and soon the ex-Imperial was in the pilot seat and flying his family to safety.

Kooki looked out the window. Another home was about to be destroyed. But there was nothing she could do. She had done all she could. It wouldn’t be long before Stormtroopers as part of the Iron Fleet, together with the Dark Council would be attacking Karufr. And soon the entire planet would become dust and pieces of rock floating in the galaxy where it once stood.

Kooki looked around her. Her family were safe. That was where her loyalties lay, now and always. Nothing and no one had or would ever change that or convince her otherwise.