Andrelious J. Mimosa-Inahj sat up in bed. He remembered that he’d been having a very strange dream, but couldn’t seem to recall any details.

Next to him, Kooki was still sound asleep, but the Dinaari Aedile suspected his spouse would soon wake up, too. The couple very rarely got to sleep in.

Climbing out of bed for a quick visit to the fresher, Andrelious tip-toed past his daughters’ bedroom. He didn’t dare to look inside to check on the twins; he’d made that mistake too many times.

As he washed his hands, the former Imperial peered at his reflection in the mirror. Usually, the time of the day and the familiarity of the face staring back at him passed him, but this time, he noticed something different about himself. His eyes had returned to their natural colour, completely free of the yellowing effect of the dark side.

*What in the Force…*

Andrelious walked briskly back to bed. He could sense Poppy and Etty were beginning to wake up in the next room. He wouldn’t have long. The male gazed at his sleeping spouse, and reached out to softly stroke her hair.

“What the frak are you doing!?” Kooki hissed, waking up suddenly.

“I’m sorry. It’s just the way you were sleeping. For once, you looked peaceful. At ease with the emotions that trouble you every day,” Andrelious replied softly.

The Alderaanian cocked an eyebrow, studying her husband as if sizing up a prospective opponent. The way he was speaking didn’t sound right, and, worse, she could sense an unfamiliar warmth flowing through the male. It reminded her a little of when the twins were around, but far more intense.

“Something is very wrong with you. You were tossing and turning all frakking night. I think you’d best get yourself to a medic,” Kooki said, after a few moments thought.

“I don’t need a medic. There’s nothing wrong with me,” Andrelious replied.

The twins toddled through, their comfort blankets trailing behind them. Andrelious turned to greet his daughters with a warm, loving smile.

Looking straight at their father, the girls did not return the smile. Instead, they burst into tears.

“See? They can tell something’s wrong with you too!” the Alderaanian snapped, scooping Poppy and Etty. The girls were so upset that they started tugging at their mother’s top, and began to feed.

“If you were actually prepared to *listen*, you’d understand. There is nothing wrong with me for the first time in decades. I don’t know exactly what’s happened, but I am free of the anger and hatred that had consumed me. Without that, I am seeing everything so much more clearly,” the Aedile explained.

“Great. There’s talk that we’re going to form an alliance with Odan-Urr, and you’re starting to sound like one of them. What happened to keeping the Jedi well away from our children? It was bad enough when we had that frakking Nautolan here!” Kooki answered.

“The dark side has been clouding my judgment, Kooki. I’ve been so obsessed with taking revenge on Pravus, on Arcona, on everyone, that I was endangering all of us,” Andrelious responded calmly.

Kooki scowled. “No! This is endangering us! We cannot sit here as long as Pravus and his wannabe Imperials are still alive. Inaction will kill us. Revenge is what is keeping us going. Knowing that one day, I will be able to crush all of those that hurt us!”

“Until I woke up this morning, I shared your thirst for revenge. But it makes you believe you are more powerful than you are. With that arrogance, you’re going to get yourself killed. Do you want to leave the girls without a mother?” the male stated.

“Ha! You’re just jealous! Ever since the first time I outsparred you, you’ve been trying to downplay it. I’d have thought you’d have been used to the fact that I can overpower you now, babe,” the Alderaanian said, smirking.

Andrelious felt himself blushing slightly. He hoped Poppy and Etty were too busy feeding to notice the barb.

“It really isn’t that, Kooki. I love you. I love the girls. I think that the time has come for us to leave Taldryan behind. The whole Clan’s putting itself in danger by going to war. Let’s leave. Let’s find a quiet corner of the galaxy to raise our daughters in peace,” the former Imperial declared.

“I’ve given up way too much to run away like a coward. We must bring Pravus down. If it means we have to stick with Taldryan for now, then so be it! Besides, I’m perfectly capable of keeping the twins well away from any immediate danger,” Kooki replied. The girls wriggled around as they fed, as if responding to the conversation.

“For now. The fight against Pravus is only going to get more intense. What would you do if they cornered the fleet? If they boarded our ships? You’re a great mother, and a fierce fighter, but you’re not immortal. There are things out there that you cannot handle. That even together, *we* cannot handle,” Andrelious said, his tone almost reduced to a plea.

“I’m starting to doubt your commitment to our family. I’d hate to think that your sudden change of heart would get in the way of my plans,” the female hissed, glaring at her spouse.

“Too many people will get hurt. And what kind of thing are you going to teach these two innocent children? If you keep on raising them the way you are, those girls will be killers by the time they’re six! Could you live with yourself?” Andrelious questioned.

“We’ve already agreed. We’re teaching them how to be strong. How to use their power. That doesn’t mean I’m going to teach them how to kill. At least not until they are *much* older. I always intended to let them have a childhood first. It’s you who is always saying that the Jedi denied their younglings that right. You’re not backing out on me, now, Andrelious. These girls need their father. I don’t want them ending up as messed up as that half-sister of theirs,” Kooki said, her words carefully chosen to dig at her husband.

“I know what you’re trying to do. I’m not going to lose my temper with you. Especially not while you feed our daughters. I’ll get us some breakfast,” Andrelious answered, flashing another smile in the Alderaanian’s direction.

**-x-**

The smell of breakfast cooking soon encouraged Poppy and Etty into the eating area, but they were still very cautious around their father. This bothered Andrelious, but with his sudden shift in perspective, he understood and even tolerated why they were so standoffish. Kooki, meanwhile, ate her breakfast far more silently than usual. The former Imperial could sense the darkness still swirling around his wife, her presence so cold that he could have sworn his mug of caff was losing its heat fast.

“I’m going to take a few days leave from my duties as Aedile. I need to work out what’s happening to me, and if I still even want to continue in the role. I may just step away before I have to hurt anyone else,” Andrelious explained.

“You’re really beginning to worry me. You made a promise to me that these girls would always come before anyone else. No matter who and what that entails. Don’t you remember what happened back on Selen? Even *Atyiru* was willing to kill to keep the girls safe. Are you saying that you’re backing out of that vow?” Kooki snapped.

“I wanted to talk to you about that. Right now, the girls aren’t safe here. I’d like to take them to my parents for a few days. Perhaps see about leaving them there until we can make sure that we have a safe home for them. Whilst we’re gone, hopefully you can help the Clan find-“ the male was cut off by the iciest death stare he’d ever seen.

 “If you try to leave with my girls, I will treat *YOU* as a threat. I’m starting to think that the man they know of as their father is dead. You’re just a stranger wearing his face and stealing his memories,” the Alderaanian hissed.

“I’ve told you. I am still Andrelious. It’s just that the dark side is no longer clouding my judgment. I’m finally free to make the right choices. And one of those is getting the twins away from the danger posed by Pravus and the war that’s starting around him,” Andrelious responded, his tone still echoing serenity.

“They are going nowhere! And neither are you! I don’t know what the frak has happened to you, but you’re staying here until we can get to the bottom of it!” Kooki roared.

“This place isn’t safe. Please, let me take our daughters. Let me get them clear of this warzone. You used to *LOVE* travelling. Maybe we can look into doing that as a family now, but we’ll need time to prepare. The girls will be much safer on Corellia with my parents,” the former Imperial stated pleadingly.

“No. The only danger is whatever’s happened to you. Nobody is going to Corellia. How do you even know that your mother would welcome what has happened to you?” Kooki challenged.

“Kooki. If you really care about the twins, you will let me take them to safety. I’ve already promised you that it’s only going to be temporary. Please,” Andrelious replied, grasping his wife’s arm softly.

Seizing the chance, the fuming Sith pushed the father of her children into the nearest wall. She moved towards him, activating her lightsaber. She held its purple blade at Andrelious’ throat.

“Don’t you *EVER* question what I feel about my daughters! I’ve let you get away with a lot of what you’ve said because you’re their father, but my patience is running out!” the female roared.

The twins, who were still eating their breakfast, started to cry again.

“Kooki…please..you’re upsetting the girls,” Andrelious coughed, feeling very pinned down by the familiar amethyst blade.

“I am not the one who has completely changed overnight. You’ve turned into everything you always hated. I suppose it’s fitting that you’re sounding like a Jedi. You did always say they were hypocrites,” Kooki observed.

“For the sake of Poppy and Etty. I’ll talk,” the male said.

Kooki just smirked, then deactivated her lightsaber.

Then, for Andrelious, things went black.

**-x-**

“I still don’t like it, Consul. Messing with the nature of the Force is incredibly unnatural,” Rian Aslar stated.

“Perhaps it is the Force itself that is unnatural. That would certainly explain the incredibly unfair distribution of those who can touch it, and the vast majority of those who cannot,” Rhylance replied coolly.

“But doing it to one of our Sith? Especially without his knowledge? Or Kooki’s? It’s asking for trouble,” Vodo added.

“I promised our new allies in Odan-Urr that the Enlightener’s first test would be on one of our better known dark siders. Andrelious fit that bill perfectly,” the Consul explained. He didn’t need the Force to tell that his colleagues were sceptical.

“I suggest you make Kooki its next victim, and fast, Consul. I very much doubt that she will take too well to her husband’s sudden change of outlook!” Rian warned.

“We need to fully analyse the results first. That’s going to include paying Andrelious a visit. I can see for myself how Mrs Mimosa-Inahj has reacted,” Rhylance continued.

“I really don’t think that’s a good idea…” Vodo began, trailing off as he realised the Chiss was already on his way out of the room.

**-x-**

Andrelious awoke, immediately realising that his head was incredibly sore. Before he could puzzle over what happened, he realised that he was back in his bedroom, tied to a chair by several sets of binders.

“Is this really necessary? I already agreed I would talk about this,” Andrelious commented.

“I’m not taking any chances. You were about to take the girls from me. Besides, you don’t *normally* complain when I use those on you,” Kooki replied with a wink.

“So what exactly did you want to talk about?” the Aedile questioned.

“Are you *SURE* you don’t know what’s happened to you?” Kooki began, leaning in towards her husband.

“I’ve already told you what I know. I know what I feel, but I don’t understand for a second what’s happened to me or why. It’s like something sucked away all my anger and hate. I’d say it was like being sucked into an emotional black hole, but I still feel things. Like love for you, and the twins,” Andrelious explained.

“So after everything that Pravus did, after everything we’ve been through, you just want to run off and let him win?” the Alderaanian demanded.

“It’s more that my judgment isn’t so clouded by rage. I’m seeing that fighting him will only get us hurt. And that’s not a price I’m prepared to pay. Not anymore. I just…don’t think it’s worth it,” the male countered.

Kooki sensed a sudden coldness in Andrelious. It was only brief, as if a single snowflake were falling through autumnal air.

“Do you not wish to harm anyone? What if someone was here, right now, threatening our daughters? What if someone tried to take them from us? Remember Sephilios Braxant?” Kooki hissed, her memory digging up a name that had brought out fury in both husband and wife.

“What Braxant did deserved death. But he didn’t need- he didn’t need to suffer. Even the worst criminals deserve a trial. Mob justice isn’t- isn’t the way,” Andrelious answered, wavering a little.

“So you admit that some people don’t deserve a second chance. Perhaps there is hope for you, yet,” the female observed, sensing a familiar being approaching.

*What the frak does that blue bastard want?*

Rhylance marched through the Mimosa-Inahj family’s living area, and straight into the main bedroom.

“Oh. Am I interrupting something?” the Chiss asked, peering at the bound Andrelious.

“Perhaps you can shed some light on what is happening here. Andrelious isn’t feeling himself at all,” Kooki declared, her hand instinctively moving towards her lightsaber hilt.

“Yes. I selected your husband for a test. I am pleased to see that it has worked so well,” Rhylance answered stoically.

Hearing the Consul’s words sprung Kooki into action. The fuming Alderaanian charged at Rhylance, wrapping her hand around his neck as she pinned him to a wall.

“You had no frakking right to do that! How dare you test one of your creations on the father of my children? He nearly took them!” she roared.

Rhylance pushed at the female’s arm, but found her far too strong. He started to feel the air being squeezed out of his windpipe, making it incredibly difficult to continue to remain calm.

“Let’s hear him out. I’d hate for the girls to walk in halfway through you killing someone,” Andrelious stated.

“They need to learn what happens if somebody hurts family!” Kooki hissed.

“If he has done what he’s claiming to have done, we’ll take our case to the Taldrya. They’ll make sure we get justice. That, or we’ll deal with him ourselves,” Andrelious answered.

Kooki released her grip, allowing the Taldryan Consul to drop to the floor with a loud thud.

“You’re starting to make sense again,” Kooki observed.

“Whatever he did to me is starting to wear off. It’s like anything I was feeling was sucked away from me into some kind of emotional black hole. Other than the way I feel about you, and the girls, anyway,” Andrelious explained.

“Fascinating. The effect is only temporary. Perhaps I need to have the amount of power increased…” Rhylance mused.

“You will do nothing of the sort!” Kooki declared in her most demonstrative tone. “You will make sure whatever you did to Andrelious is completely reversed, then you will get the frak away from my family! You have 24 hours!”

“I am not going to walk away from this Clan now, Mrs Mimosa-Inahj. Rest assured I won’t experiment on any members of your family again,” the Chiss answered.

Kooki’s expression remained angry.

“Not good enough. I don’t want you anywhere near any of us again! Do I have to show you how protective I can be?” she snapped.

“She means it, Consul. You didn’t see her when the twins were snatched. Or, more recently, on the way off of Karufr. I suggest you resign your commission, and let the rest of Taldryan get on with things in their own way. As they always have,” Andrelious added.

“From what I have seen, you are in need of my leadership. Your Elders are busy trying to rescue Keirdagh. You *NEED* me. I will, however, stay well away from your family. Good day!” Rhylance declared, rapidly backing away. He had exited the Mimosa-Inahj living area before Kooki had a chance to intercept him.

“Frakking bastard escaped!” Kooki snapped, punching the nearest wall.

“Save your anger. We will deal with him in time,” Andrelious replied. “He will pay for whatever it was he did to me,”

The female smirked. She could once again sense darkness surging through her husband. He wasn’t quite fully restored to his regular self; that would hopefully come soon.

Andrelious J. Mimosa-Inahj was back.

*FIN*