Andrelious had only finished his first Ebla Beer when he noticed something interesting at the bar. He blinked a couple of times, as if he didn’t believe what he was seeing, but he quickly accepted that his eyes were not deceiving him.

At the bar, ordering his own Ebla Beer, was a man dressed in part of an Imperial pilot’s flight suit. The man was taller than Andrelious, with short, largely silver hair. Without even approaching the man, Andrelious knew he was dealing with a genuine Imperial veteran; the way he carried himself indicated a product of the same training that Mimosa-Inahj had once gone through.

*Let’s see what we can find out!*

“Pretty brave to wear that out in public. A lot of people still remember the Empire,” Andrelious declared, having walked over to the man.

“What’s it to you, son?” the man replied, his accent immediately reminding the Taldryan Rollmaster of many of the veterans he’d met during his time in service.

“Let’s just say I’m an admirer. To be a pilot in the Imperial Navy takes a lot more skill than it’s given credit for. Especially, if, as I suspect, you’re old enough to have fought *BEFORE* Endor?” Andrelious ventured.

The older man studied Andrelious carefully. “So you’re a fan? I don’t give autographs,” he stated.

“No. I’m not a fan. I served in what was left of the Imperial Navy after the cowards in the Core gave in to the terrorists,” the Sith explained.

“Oh. You’re a holdout. That would explain why you were allowed in when you’re quite a bit short of regulation height. How do you fly your TIE? Do you sit on a box?” the man quipped.

“I’m pretty sure that I would fly rings around you. You’ve probably not even been in a cockpit in years!” Andrelious snapped.

The man rolled up the left sleeve of his flightsuit, revealing a tattoo of a design unfamiliar to Andrelious. He did not recognise the majority of the symbols, but he spotted the familiar logo of the Galactic Empire.

“Cocky. I like it, son. Let’s see if you’re still so mouthy when you’re put to the test. Meet me at these coordinates in an hour!” the man demanded, hastily writing the coordinates onto a small piece of paper and handing it to Andrelious.

**-x-**

The coordinates that Andrelious had been given corresponded to an area of deep space a few light years away.

The Sith had flown there with a few minutes to spare, desperate to take any advantage that he could. He had already decided that he didn’t want to kill the man; he was a fellow Imperial, a breed that was dying far faster than Andrelious would care to admit.

Checking his TIE Defender’s in-built chrono, the Taldryan Rollmaster noticed that it was exactly an hour after the man had issued his challenge. Sure enough, a second TIE Defender, completely identical to Andrelious’, decelerated from hyperspace. It came to a stop just out of the range of the Sith’s weapons.

“Ah. You’re early. Sure sign that you’re just a cocky young lad,” the man spoke, his voice crackling slightly over Andrelious’ comm.

“On time to the second. Imperial discipline at its finest. Now, let’s hear what you’re expecting us to do. I hope you’re not expecting to fight to the death. I *have* got a family to feed, you know!” Andrelious answered.

The opposing pilot chuckled. “If I killed everyone who challenged me, I’d be the last pilot in the galaxy. Besides, Imperial protocol is strict on killing *civilians*!”

Andrelious frowned under his helmet. “I’ll give you civilian. How about this? We shoot *as if* we’re trying to kill, but the first one to lose his shields owes the other a crate of Ebla Reserve,” he suggested.

“Ebla Reserve, eh? Fancy yourself as an officer? I like your style, son! Let’s do this! And no warheads!”

The two TIE Defenders quickly powered up, immediately turning away from each other. Andrelious punched a button on his control panel, immediately targeting his opponent. His targeting computer confirmed that he was facing a fully functioning TIE Defender, whilst a warning light indicated that he too was being targeted.

Andrelious’ hands gripped tightly to his control yoke. He manoeuvred up, down, left and right, jinking, turning, strafing and rolling to keep out of his opponent’s reach. He allowed the Force to help him steer his fighter, but the other TIE Defender was already proving a very tough foe.

Continuing to twist around, Andrelious moved slightly to the left. As his opponent went to counter the move, the Sith pulled his yoke all the way to the right, clicking the firing trigger as his ship turned. The laser cannons sprayed green death in the direction of the opposing pilot, but only the first salvo hit their target.

Peering at his targeting computer, Andrelious saw that his rival’s shields were still holding at 60% strength. He gritted his teeth and immediately resumed his pursuit.

Knowing his trick wouldn’t work again, the Rollmaster instead resorted to trying to outmatch his opponent’s moves.

*Well, he certainly earned his Defender!* Andrelious thought to himself as the other pilot almost managed to score a hit of his own.

The Sith allowed himself to fly in a straight line for a lot longer than he deemed sensible. Right as his opponent came up behind him, he grabbed the throttle, cutting it to nought. The opposing TIE sped past, managing a couple of hits, but the surprise move gave Andrelious all the time he needed to fire a full salvo into his rival’s fuselage. He smiled as he saw the shields flicker green, before his targeting computing confirmed that they had overloaded.

“Well, you’re certainly an unorthodox one, son! I’ve never seen anyone pull of *THAT* move!” the man congratulated.

­**-x-**

The two pilots did not go back to the cantina. Instead, they chose to sit on a bench near the spaceport, sharing the crate of Ebla Beer. They talked about piloting, Imperial policies, and even Andrelious’ family. The other Imperial was vague about his own family; Andrelious suspected it had been a long time since he had been in contact with them.

Soon, the night had worn on and the beers ran out. Standing to leave, the two men shook hands.

“So, I take it you have a name, son? It’s only the bucketheads that don’t get to keep them,” the man declared.

“Andrelious Mimosa-Inahj. And you?”

“Mareek Stele. Former Emperor’s Hand!” Stele announced, revealing his tattoo again.

Though his mind was a little addled alcohol, the name was familiar to Andrelious. Mareek Stele was a legend among his academy class- to meet him had been the dream of many of the young pilots.

Now, the majority of those had died, but Andrelious J. Mimosa-Inahj had been fortunate.

He had met a true legend.