**74 ABY- Corellia**

The tall female entered the cantina and scanned the area. Her long black hair with purple streaks flowed beside her shoulders and her all black outfit made her look even more powerful than she was. Soon a familiar feeling entered her body and she smiled to herself. She headed over to a booth with a high-backed, scarlet-coloured leather seat and a face appeared.

“Ah, you made it then?” the familiar female teased.

“Come on, Etty. We both know I have always been the better timekeeper. I AM older than you.” The older twin mused.

“Only by 2 MINUTES! And you never let me forget it!” Etty whinged.

Poppy just smiled and sat beside her sister.

“All by yourself today?” Poppy enquired.

Before her sister could answer, two more familiar faces appeared from the fresher door.

“Aunty Poppy!!!” the two girls chorused in unison.

“Licon! Marissia! It’s great to see you!” Poppy exclaimed.

“We were just about to head to nursery weren’t we girls?” Etty asked her identical daughters.

The two four-year olds nodded.

“We can go see Dad after if you like? It’s been a while.” Etty whispered to her sister.

Poppy nodded silently, whilst the two youngsters slurped the last of their drinks and started doing up their coats.

“Will Jongstram and Parck be there?” Marissia asked, with a glint in her eyes.

“Of course. They are doing all day today as I am needed at the lab again this afternoon,” Poppy explained.

“See you later Mummy!” the young twins called out and waved.

The female behind the bar smiled and waved.

“Bye girls! Bye baby!” she replied.

Etty smiled and blew a kiss to her wife who promptly caught it and returned the gesture.

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Once the young girls had been dropped off at nursery, the Mimosa-Inahj twins headed to go and see their father. They hadn’t seen him for a few weeks, as the workload at the laboratory had increased recently.

The girls headed through a run-down area of the town, since it was a faster route to their destination. Even as married adults, with their own children, the twins remained close as ever, and huddled close together as they ventured into this poorer district.

“So glad we all became settled on Corellia nowadays.” Poppy commented.

“Agreed. It was always a special place to both Mum and Dad, so having the lab here made sense, really.” Etty replied.

Poppy chuckled.

“What?” her sister asked.

“Etholiemarissia. Always the ‘sensible’ one.” The older twin smirked.

Out of nowhere, a homeless male approached them and held out a blaster, which had a broken trigger. He had ripped, tatty clothes that emitted a stale, unwashed smell adorning his dishevelled body.

“Got any spice? Or any change?” he croaked, before coughing vigorously.

The younger twin quivered slightly and took a step back.

“No!” Poppy yelled.

The bedraggled male staggered towards Poppy.

Etty feared for her worryingly calm sister.

“Leave her alone!” Etty screamed.

“My beef is with HER! You stay out of it, or you’ll die first!” the man threatened.

“How? There’s not…” Etty began arguing back.

“Hush!” hissed Poppy, to her twin.

“Who do you think you’re talking to?” boomed Poppy.

“HER!” the homeless male replied, aggressively.

“But there’s only me here!” Poppy responded, calmly, whilst waving her hand slyly.

Her new foe looked puzzled, but replied robotically, “There’s only you there!”

“You have double vision,” continued the female Sith, still slyly waving her hand.

“I have double vision,” the male continued.

Poppy squeezed her sister’s hand, with an edge of reassurance and threw some credits to the ground. The homeless male threw himself to the floor and outstretched his ravaged hands and started gathering up the coins as fast as he could.

The twins began walking away from the scene. Etty smiled a grateful smile at Poppy. Without even saying anything the older of the two could feel her sister’s gratitude. The male was just starting to rise to his feet and a sharp kick in the back of the shins sent him back to the concrete ground before him. He looked up and saw Poppy looking down at him with sheer power.

“No one messes with a Mimosa-Inahj and gets away with it!” she teased.

“M…M…Mimosa I…I…Inahj,” the male stammered, all the colour drained from his face whilst Poppy turned to leave once more, her sister beside her.

Etty chuckled.

“What?” her sister asked.

“Poppeliamarissia. Always the ‘feisty’ one.” The younger twin smirked.

The now wounded male looked up helplessly.

“T…t..the t…t…twins!” he stuttered.

“Our reputation precedes us!” the girls chorused simultaneously.

Within seconds, the twins ignited their identical sapphire-bladed lightsabers. One from the front of the male and one from the back. Both met… in the middle of their victim’s neck. A sudden thud echoed and resounded around them. A cold, lifeless body fell to the floor. The girls hastily retracted their weapons and fled the scene.

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The journey was soon coming to an end.

“Shall we stop here and get Dad a little something?” suggested Etty, as they approached a much more aesthetically pleasing district.

Poppy smiled and nodded.

“Good idea. I think Mum will be more than happy with the fact we have completed that report and located the sample she was looking for in the laboratory. We will go see her after. So, no need to get her a gift.” She replied.

Etty popped into the shop and appeared a few moments later.

“Good choice,” her sister agreed.

The identical twosome took a left turn and opened the familiar gates, which as usual emitted their squeaky, yet eerie noise.

“Still not been fixed,” Poppy mused.

Etty let out a little chuckle.

Nothing more needed to be said.

So, they continued the walk up the windy path in silence.

Soon they came to a stop.

“Hey Dad!” they chorused in their unique way.

“You’re looking kempt, considering how long we’ve been away,” Etty soothed.

“Hope you like the gift we chose…well Etty chose,” Poppy said, softly.

Etty placed the blue flowers on the little patch of soil at their toes, whilst her sister stroked the cold, concrete engraved stone.

This was all that remained of Andrelious Jongstram Mimosa-Inahj.

After about an hour elapsed and much reminiscing later, the twins dried the tears off their cheeks.

“We won’t leave it so long next time, Dad,” Poppy managed to squeak out, trying not to have her voice break.

“Shall we go sit on his special bench by the lake?” Etty asked her sister.

Her elder sister agreed and followed her through the large graveyard and out another set of gates on the other side.

Once at the lake, Etty stroked the embossed engraving on the back of the bench. This little plaque was a small, yet powerful gesture that helped their father’s courageous memory live on forever. The girls sat beside each other and found themselves thinking back to the fateful day their brave father lost his life.

“Who could have thought that the Arconans would start a toxic war?” Etty questioned, her head and heart full of anger and loss and inner sadness.

“We all knew they were nasty, but no one quite knew HOW nasty!” Poppy stated, firmly, with anger in her voice too.

“It all happened for a reason! That’s what Mum said!” Etty whispered, although she knew she sounded like a child.

Poppy nodded. “Indeed it did. After Dad got caught in the firing line trying to protect us, Mum AND US went on that mass rampage. The Mimosa-Inahj Empire was born.” Poppy exclaimed.

Etty managed to smile slightly.

“It sure was. And although we fought hard, the Brotherhood collapsed and the Arconans destroyed themselves, when that Death Star ship blew up our old home. So at least the last of them perished too. And think if Mum hadn’t gone on that killing spree with our fellow Taldryanites and organised our mass exodus to safety, two things wouldn’t have happened. One, we wouldn’t be alive. Two, she wouldn’t have felt the compelling urge to bring life and peace to the galaxy.” Poppy ranted, in her methodical manner.

“And me and Valmassia would never had been able to conceive our little miracle babies.” Etty realised, and was once again sobbing, but this time happy tears.

“Exactly! It all happens for a reason! Mum’s research into genetics has helped thousands of unique families from many species to have the families they had only ever dreamt about.” Poppy soothed, as her sister rested her tearful face on her shoulder.

“I love how Dad’s memorial bench is in our old childhood picnic spot. Whenever we visited his parents, Mum always encouraged us to come here and enjoy the view.” Etty managed to say, happily.

Poppy agreed and breathed a heavy sigh. It was a spectacular sight. Day or night the sun and moon always sparkled in the water. At night, the stars would look like little diamonds stuck under the water’s surface. Over the years the water had got murkier and murkier, but local authorities refused to disturb the area.

Etty suddenly had a thought.

“Hey! You know Mum was looking for a large piece of land to build another research laboratory, and birthing centre?” she exclaimed.

Poppy soon realised her sister’s genius idea.

“YES! I love it. Here would be perfect. But…you do know we’d have to drain this lake first, right?” Poppy mentioned.

Etty sighed, but was still smiling.

“And that sounds like a job for the Mimosa Empire sub-ordinates!” she grinned.

“Quick! Let’s go find Mum, tell her our fantastic idea and get our plan in place.” Poppy too grinned happily.

And off they set.

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Meanwhile, at a laboratory not too far away, an aged female sat in a large, comfortable chair and analysed the sample under the microscope. Her eyesight may not have been as sharp as it once was, but her mind was still very much ‘all-there’. She brushed her hair back out of the way of the eyepiece. Many years ago her flowing hair had been luscious and jet black, with iconic bright purple tips, and as the Brotherhood fell and her own Empire rose, her unique appearance soon became feared, and a reputation began infesting itself into societies beyond her Corellian town which she now resided in. Nowadays, her hair had faded and had streaks of silver weaving in-between the remaining black strands. The tips remained colourful since her daughters would tend to her and still help their widowed mother hold on to her heavily spiritual mannerisms.

“Nikina! Here!” Kooki called out, her voice sounding rather tired.

A middle-aged Twi’lek assistant adorning a long, white, knee-length lab coat rushed over to Kooki’s side.

“Yes, Miss,” the female creature replied.

“Here. Insert this sample from this syringe, into this petri dish. CAREFULLY!” the powerful female urged.

Kooki’s hands were not as steady as they had been in her prime days. She watched on through the microscope as the Twi’lek obeyed her Master’s orders, nervously. Once the procedure was complete, Kooki moved herself back and pressed a switch on a projection device adjacent to the microscope. Seconds later a projection of the petri dish appeared on the large white wall before the two females. Slowly millions of wriggly creatures began frantically swimming about. A lonely sphere sat hopefully awaiting a visitor. Kooki’s elderly hand clasped inside the bright blue hand of her employee. Minutes later, a wriggly creature successfully swam and reached the centre of the sphere. The two females both shed a tear at their latest success. Nikina promptly wrote a label and affixed it to the petri dish lid.

“Oh, Miss. Isn’t it beautiful? You really are truly remarkable. You bring life into this galaxy and make so many broken dreams come true.” The assistant exclaimed, admirably.

Kooki was about to turn off the projection and get the sample sealed, labelled and frozen, when one of her latest recruits burst in frantically.

“Miss Mimosa! Miss Mimosa!” the male officer yelled.

The female staggered a bit as she rose to her feet.

“At ease Zedrick. Where’s the fire? Keep your voice low! Life is being created!” she replied.

Nikina continued in switching off the projector and carefully stored the successful fertilisation sample in the freezer.

“For the frakking love of Alderaan, calm yourself down!” croaked Kooki.

“But Miss...Miss… Mimosa, there’s TWO of them coming this way. And they look shifty.” the trainee officer cried, still in hysterics.

Inside her aged, yet very astute mind, Kooki smiled to herself.

“Three things...One, come closer to me. Two, calm down. And three, repeat yourself SLOWLY!” Kooki cooed.

The novice edged forwards until he was about a foot away from the laboratory Master. He was trying not to make evident how nervous he was. The male stood there in an all-black outfit, a Mimosa-Inahj crest upon his chest on the right-hand side.

“Miss Mimosa...there’s two of them coming this way and they look...hey! Wait! They look like YOU!” he exclaimed, suddenly.

“Of course, they look like me...they are MY children!” Kooki boomed.

“Ah!” said the new recruit, with a sense of realisation about him.

He turned to report back for duty, forgetting to ask for permission first. The ‘offences’ were stacking up against him.

Kooki grabbed the male’s wrist sharply with her right hand and applied pressure. He started to go a bit pale in the face. With her left hand, she retrieved her trusted personalised hilt.

“And for the LAST time…it’s Mimosa-INAHJ!!” she retorted, as she managed to ignite an amethyst blade.

Within seconds, the lilac weapon sliced through the young male’s uniform directly opposite to the crest. His heart literally shattered and his lifeless body slumped to the ground.

Nonchalantly, Kooki sounded an alarm twice and soon two officers dressed identically to the deceased recruit approached the scene. They took one look at their colleague and one look at Kooki to know what needed doing. Their knowledge and experience excelled and didn’t disappoint.

“In the incinerator with this one, Miss Mimosa-Inahj?” one asked.

Kooki smiled and nodded silently, whilst the two workers picked up the body and began hauling it away towards the desired location.

“Much easier than that body we hauled when we first signed up.” One male commented once they were out of Kooki’s ear shot.

“I still can’t believe that was THREE decades ago!” the other commented.

“Well you are nearly the big 5-0,” his workmate teased.

“Very funny! But that is one body I will always remember shifting! It was my first week on the job too. Mimosa-Inahj told me I had the makings of a great officer there and then!” the male holding the latest victim’s shoulders continued.

“You still got that medal she awarded you? The sheer size of that woman we had to move into the incinerator, you definitely deserved it. I still have mine, right here.” Explained the fellow officer who had put the dead body down to reveal his treasured award on the inside of his outer cape.

The other officer revealed his award in an identical location, now the body was on the floor. “Of course! I swear her red hair made the fire burn brighter for hours after we deposited her.” He commented.

The two picked up the body and continued on their way.

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Meanwhile, Kooki sat at her desk and began writing labels and filling out forms. Suddenly the doors burst in and two identical girls walked in and headed towards the busy female. Before they reached her, Kooki spun her chair round and rose to her feet.

“Poppy! Etty!” she exclaimed, wrapping her loving arms around her daughters.

“What brings you here today? I wasn’t expecting you until the end of the week for a family dinner.” She asked.

“We went to see Dad and you see we…kind of…” began Etty.

“We had an idea!” squealed Poppy, interrupting her stammering sister.

“Oh?” enquired Kooki, who had now sat down.

Holding her hands out, two chairs appeared adjacent to hers and the girls sat down.

“Well…you know the lake? Our special one?” Poppy asked.

“Hmmm…” Kooki murmured.

“It’s so dirty. Why don’t we drain it…and use the site for your new birthing centre you wanted to build? If we started today we could be done by…” Etty rambled.

“NO!” Kooki boomed.

The girls looked rather taken aback.

“What?! Why?!” they chorused in unison.

“Dad’s bench could be the centrepiece of a garden there?” Poppy suggested in a soft whisper.

Kooki went to order them out, but she realised that she had harboured her secret for over sixty years.

She reluctantly agreed and silently nodded.

“Good!” piped up a suddenly confident Poppy.

“Shush!” hushed Etty, shyly.

“What?!” Kooki boomed, now rather confused and agitated.

“We already got some Mimosa-Inahj sub-ordinates to start the draining of the lake.” Poppy exclaimed, happily.

Kooki was tempted to screech at her eldest child, but she realised she hadn’t technically done anything wrong. She didn’t know any different. She was just acting impulsively- and it was no question as to where she got that trait from.

Kooki sighed heavily.

“Look girls. I need to tell you something,” Kooki explained, her voice almost breaking.

“When I was sixteen, I did a lot of care…” she began.

Suddenly Poppy’s commlink went off. It was a sub-ordinate.

“Miss Poppy. You better come down here QUICK! There’s been a discovery!” he explained, before abruptly ending the call.

“Story time will have to wait Mum. I need to go!” Poppy stated assertively.

“This can’t wait Poppeliamarissia Mimosa-Inahj! But I’ll explain on the way.” Kooki explained.

Poppy sighed, just like her mother, whilst her sister arranged a speeder to collect the three females.

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Once in the speeder Kooki began retelling her story and revealed her shocking past secret.

Kooki was almost in tears and her daughters were pale and speechless.

“So…you…you…KILLED…actually KILLED Great Grandma?” Poppy stammered.

“And…and…dumped her body in the…the…our…OUR lake?” Etty stuttered.

Kooki nodded.

“I tried to be as humane as possible girls. She was very sick and didn’t know who I, or even who she was at the end. I did what I had to do. I don’t regret it!” Kooki, whispered, croakily.

A sense of fear and vulnerability shrouded them. The few minutes silence between then felt like it lasted a lifetime. Soon the females all huddled close and the girls understood their mother had actually done the right thing.

The speeder ground to a halt.

They had arrived at the lake.

The three Mimosa-Inahj women got out.

There was a crowd of subordinates huddled around a patch of ground where the entire lake had been drained. They cleared a space and elderly Kooki shuffled forwards. Hastily followed by her protective twins. There on the ground confirmed her story. Her secret. Her inner fear. All that remained was a mis-shapen skull and a few unsalvageable unidentifiable bones.

No one was brave enough to speak.

A brave sub-ordinate whispered to her colleague.

“Shall we get a sample back to the lab to formally identify it?”

“NO!” yelled Poppy. “NO NEED!”

She turned to her very pale and shaking mother.

Kooki fainted.

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The monitors beeped. The wires fed into the female’s arm. Her eyelids flickered open. The voices around her started to clarify and the blurry figures came into view.

“Quick! She’s waking up!” called a familiar voice.

Another female rushed to the bedside.

“Mum…are you alright?” she said in a fretful tone.

Kooki looked around a bit dazed and confused.

“Where…where…am I? W…what h…happened?” she stammered.

“You fainted at the lake, Mum.” Poppy explained, rather coolly.

“We couldn’t revive you and to be on the safe side, we called for medics who brought you to this med centre to run a few tests. There’s talk of a possible heart attack.” Etty continued, trying not to show her fearful concerns for her mother’s wellbeing.

“Don’t worry her!” Poppy urged.

Kooki smiled.

“My girls. I knew you’d look out for me.” She hushed.

“We are Mimosa-Inahjs. It’s what we do. No one gets left behind, remember?” both girls chorused at their mother in the same way they had many times over the years.

“Besides, it will take more than a bit of shock to get rid of our Mum. She’s a tough Kooki.” Poppy giggled.

Amidst the giggles, a medic popped her head round the door.

“More visitors for you Miss Mimosa-Inahj,” she said with a friendly smile.

In through the door burst four excitable children and the twins’ spouses.

“Grandma! Grandma!” the children squealed excitedly, whilst throwing two cards onto their recovering grandmother.

“Gently you four!” called the twins.

“What’s all this about?” Poppy asked.

“Haven’t you heard the news?” her husband replied, whilst putting some colourful flowers in a vase by the window.

“News?” Kooki managed to feebly speak.

The door swung open again.

“QUIETTT!” came a familiar voice, with an index finger on his lips to hush everyone.

“Uncle Mostynnnnnn!” The four children gleefully exclaimed.

“Shushhh!” he repeated.

“Hi everyone,” he whispered, going over to his mother for a cuddle.

“Are you alright?” he asked, slightly worried.

Kooki smiled.

“Of course, love. So what’s the news?” she replied sluggishly.

The door swung open again.

Gatrazia was wheeled in and stopped beside the bed. Everyone was stunned into silence, almost agog with excitement, yet unable to speak. This day had been expected for several months, but now it was finally here. It was like fate had brought everyone and everything together.

“Here we go, Mum,” Mostynn cooed, as he scooped the tiny baby from his wife’s arms and held it near Kooki in bed.

Sadly, Kooki was a bit too frail to hold the newborn, but she delicately kissed the baby’s head and held her finger inside its hand. The tiny fingers wrapped tightly around Kooki’s bony finger and the grandmother beamed with happiness.

“Meet your new granddaughter,” Kooki’s son declared, proudly.

“It’s thanks to your amazing genetics research and insemination that she was successfully created.” He continued.

“We are truly grateful,” Gatrazia stated. “We never thought it was actually ever going to happen. It’s a miracle. She’s a miracle.”

“Does she have a name yet?” Kooki asked, peacefully.

The new parents shook their heads.

“Not yet,” Mostynn said, with a glowing smile, as he passed the helpless, little infant back to her mother, as she had started rooting about for a feed. Everyone starting cooing over the new baby.

Surrounded by all eleven of her surviving family members, Kooki felt so blessed, but inside a hidden sadness began taking over.

There was just one thing missing.

Kooki closed her eyes.

“Andrelious,” her voice barely a whisper.

The green wavy line slowly began getting straighter as it moved along the monitor, and it began to beep rapidly.

A medic rushed in.

“EVERYBODY OUT NOW! GO GO GO!”

The door swung shut and the adults looked on anxiously.

The children continued cooing over the newborn in her mother’s arms, almost oblivious to their surroundings.

Mostynn and his twin sisters held hands tightly and watched through the viewing window. Their spouses held back, but watched on close by.

Minutes later the green line on the monitor was now completely straight, but the beeping was muted.

Kookimarissia Mimosa-Inahj’s chest moved up and down for the final time.

The medic looked round, mouthed “I’m sorry” and closed her eyes as her head sunk into her chest.

The Mimosa-Inahj children hugged tightly and wiped their eyes.

“Mummy. Where’s grandma gone?” asked Licon.

Etty crouched down and managed to hold back more tears and ushered the two sets of four-year-old twins together.

Everyone held hands.

“She’s…she’s gone to be with Grandpa.” She stuttered.

The children seemed to take the news well.

As all the descendants of Kooki continued holding hands near to the newborn baby and new mother. The baby started to cry, and brought up her wind.

Gatrazia smiled and shushed her new baby back to sleep.

“Hush! Baby Kooki. Mummy’s here.”