Poppy and Etty eagerly ran off at their grandparents' house, parking their identical purple wheeled suitcases near the entrance, and went to locate their grandfather at the back of the house. However, Mostynn didn't seem to want to seperate as easily. Kooki handed the tearful infant to his grandmother, who immediately began shushing him and stroking his soft face. Once he was relatively peaceful, Licon promptly wrapped him up in a carrier upon her own chest. The baby nestled in and soon recognised the familiar scent. His little eyelids flickered and started to close.   
  
"Wow! I didn't know you still had that!" Exclaimed a surprised Andrelious.   
  
"Why would I get rid. This was the only way I ever got anything done. You were such a clingy little thing." Licon explained to her son.   
  
"This red carrier has kept well. You loved it. As you got older and more alert it supported your little body well. You were always beading your eyes about and looking around. It was if you were looking for..." His mother trailed off into silence and wiped a tear from her eye.   
  
Hoping no one had noticed she quickly sniffed.   
  
"Blimey! I must of forgot to dust the hallway when I cleaned the other day." The aged female commented.   
  
Andrelious smiled. He knew his mother too well. He also noticed the glistening sideboard beside his children's luggage. Licon Inahj was always meticulously clean.   
  
Kooki brought the cool box full of expressed milk into the Inahj homestead and after feeling a bit dettached, she managed to say goodbye to her children.   
  
Andrelious turned to his spouse.  
  
"I guess you'll be making the most of being child-free?" He bravely asked Kooki, but instantly began regretting it as he was greeted by an icy death stare.   
  
The mother's mouth turned up at the corners and it broke into a big grin.   
  
"You bet I am!" She gleefully exclaimed.   
  
Kooki clambered onto the Mimosa-Inahj family ship, swiftly followed by Andrelious.   
  
Before heading into his usual place in the pilot seat, the Warlord looked round and spotted Kooki.   
  
She was curled up in the back of the ship, wrapped up in a duvet and was already starting to drift off to sleep.  
  
Andrelious got into the pilot seat and launched the ship into hyperspace.   
  
"Well, she did say she was going to make the most of the child-free time." He chuckled to himself.  
  
The tiny silvery stars turned into white streaks of light.   
  
The mission had begun...  
  
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The family ship came into land on an Escort Carrier in deepest space. As it landed, the bumpy arrival awoke the sleeping Sith.   
  
"Ah! Welcome back." Andrelious said coyly.

Kooki stretched and wasted no time in heading off the family ship. She scanned the area to look for familiar faces or any clues to find reason behind this unusually large area. Before long, she noticed a dark blue almost-marble like figure. The colourful Chiss simultaneously spotted Kooki.

“Ah you’ve arrived.” Aldaric commented.

Since he was new on the scene, Kooki had to fight the overwhelming urge to be sarcastic. She also wasn’t very keen on him being an Arconan, which made her even more wary of him and angry towards her spouse. There were all now on the same side, but hiding her reservations weren’t going to be easy.

Andrelious thought it best top swiftly follow his spouse. He wanted to be part of the action, and secretly didn’t trust Kooki not to lose her temper with Aldaric and end up harming him in some way.

“Wait up!” the Sith called out after Kooki.

Before long the three of them were staring at each other and trying to concoct a plan. Aldaric had a very complicated idea involving all sorts of riddles and enigmas, but Kooki wasn’t impressed.

“Look sometimes simplicity is the best way!” Kooki yelled in annoyance, as she started looking around at this unusual location.

“Sometimes it’s just easier to do as SHE says,” Andrelious whispered to his Aedile, who silently nodded, as he sensed his co-worker’s fear of his spouse.

The two males were quick to notice that Kooki was already encircling the perimeter of the hangar to look for clues.

“Quick over here!” she called out.

The others rushed over to see what the female had discovered. She was surrounded by parts of metal.

“I am no expert, but these look like ship parts. And it’s looks like it’s been tampered with deliberately.” Kooki suggested.

“Really?!” Aldaric teased.

“There was me thinking someone had just crashed it into the UNDAMAGED hangar!” he continued.

Andrelious knew that his spouse would not take well to the sarcasm.

“Look I don’t even have to pretend to like you. I don’t even get why you’re here! Arconans aren’t welcome!” Kooki retorted.

“That’s EX-Arconan, actually.” The Chiss replied.

“Well, sor-ree!!” Kooki apologised sarcastically.

“ENOUGH!” Andrelious shouted, unusually assertively.

“Look we haven’t got time for this.”

YOU'RE the ship expert!" Kooki exclaimed, looking in Andrelious' direction.   
  
"Tell us what it is!" She continued, in a familiar demonstrative tone.   
  
"And YOU be quiet!" The bossy female ordered, staring icily at Aldaric.   
  
Andrelious glanced at a few scrap metal parts.  
  
Before Kooki could hurry him up, Andrelious looked rather pleased with himself.   
  
"It's a Star Fighter. Taken quite a bashing that's for sure. Not quite sure who or what caused this mess. And there's clearly about a dozen of them strewn about in pieces here." The Warlord explained.   
  
"More to the point, we don't know WHY!" Piped up the Archanis Aedile.   
  
"Oh! Well that's obvious!" Teased Kooki.   
  
She was rather smug at the idea of getting her own back on her fellow sarcastic workmate.   
  
"Those responsible were hangry!" She smirked.   
  
Andrelious and Aldaric looked at each other, then at Kooki very confused.   
  
"Hangry?" They quizzed the Alderaanian, almost simultaneously.   
  
"Hangry- it means hungry and angry at the same time!" Kooki explained with a frustrated sigh.

"Okay. And what makes you so sure?" Aldaric teased.  
  
"Oh for goodness sake!" Kooki hissed.   
  
"I haven't worked that minor detail out yet, 'detective'. Have you?" Kooki stated crossly whilst wiggling her fingers above her head, implying Aldaric was anything but a man in the know.  
  
"Will you two calm down?" Andrelious said angrily. "We haven't got time!"  
  
"Urgh!" Sulked Kooki as she threw a tin of long-life food she had found across on the floor in anger and walked off.  
  
"Great! Now she's in a mood!" Andrelious tried to explain to the Chiss that Kooki was rather hot-tempered.   
  
Meanwhile, in the distance, the metallic echo of the rolling tin caused a stranger's ears to prick up. He overlooked the rim of his cracked spectacles and put down his tiny spoon beside the scales. The little display read the correct number of grams. He moved the peculiar substance to the side, rose to his feet and stealthily went to discover the source of the noise.   
  
Him and his little team were no longer alone.   
  
"Right! Let's go great our company!" He sniggered in a sinister way, before heading across the bridge.  
  
Kooki spotted the tin she had thrown out the corner of her eye. It was now open and empty...or so it seemed.

Something didn't seem right. Even Kooki wasn't strong enough to throw a metal tin of long-life food and it open. The inquisitive female bent down to investigate. As she got closer to the tin, she noticed that a lid had been removed and bodged back on, yet the original label remained in place. The lid was now out of Kooki's sight, but the main body of the tin was still intact. The mystery thickened. There appeared to be nothing in the tin aside a mysterious rolled up piece of material that rolled out. Kooki removed it and noticed it was tightly sealed at both ends. Upon even closer inspection, she removed one end. Inside the material was a powder. The well-travelled female had seen this before. It was spice. And a generous portion too. It would be easily enough for five people at least. Footsteps began sounding like they were fast approaching. She hastily tried to return it to the tin. It was then she spotted the rolled-up piece of material was one of several that had been squashed in, presumably so that none fell out until they had been delivered. Just as Kooki managed to get it back inside the tin, a shadow was cast over her.   
  
"And who might you be?" The stranger queried, looking over the rim of his spectacles.   
  
"Your new recruit!" Replied the quick-thinking female, slightly waving her hand.   
  
"My new recruit. I see. Follow me!" He barked.

He scanned the area and could just about make out a couple of shadowed figures in the distance. He couldn’t have anyone messing this entire operation up now, he was so close.  
  
Kooki followed behind the mysterious male, who she had quickly assumed was behind this whole secret spice operation. The duo disappeared onto the bridge and vanished from sight.  
  
Andrelious had just spotted Kooki disappear. He knew she could handle herself.

“What now?” Aldaric questioned.

“Now, we wait.” Andrelious replied, calmly.

Elsewhere, Kooki was led to the stranger’s lair on the other side of the bridge. She couldn’t believe her eyes. Upon his desk was a vast quantity of spice, a set of scales and lots of scraps of material with bands for fastening. Not too far away was another large quantity, but of tins. Kooki spotted a few people working on a very long table. Some removed the lids of the tins, whilst others removed the tin contents into bags. On the other side of the ship there was another equally long table, where people where tightly packing the completed spice wraps into the tins and re-sealing them.

“Right, Miss. I sit here behind this desk measuring the goods. No one talks to me, unless an emergency. The crew on this side empty the tins. The crew on this side, re-fill and re-seal. Got it?” the stranger boomed.

“Err..yeah I think so.” Kooki muttered.

“You will be on this side. Re-filling and re-sealing.” Her new ‘boss’ ordered.

“So, what happens once the ‘cargo’ is ready?” Kooki asked, shyly.

“This is our final shipment! We load it into the final Star Fighter. Then go and collect our monies we are owed. But we won’t destroy this one…well not the same way we did the others. I have a far more effective way to discard the evidence this time.” He explained.

“Which is?” Kooki asked.

“You ask a lot of questions. You sure you ain’t a spy?” The male teased.

“Err…” Kooki stuttered.

“I’m just messin’!” the unusual man started to laugh.

“Over there on my desk! See that little pile of logs bound together? There’s enough explosives there to destroy this whole ship and discard any evidence of our little drugs ring. It will be like we were never here!” he explained.

“Right, get to work. The sooner we get this final order in, we can go and collect our three-quarters of a million credits from the big guy…well gal!” he ordered.

Kooki was almost lost for words, but went to take to her work station.

Grabbing her arm, the stranger hissed in Kooki’s ear. “Do a good job and you join me in the Star Fighter when we’re done. Fuck this up and you’ll go up with the ship! Got it?”

Kooki nodded silently and put on her protective clothing that was sat on the workbench.

A worker ran up to the boss.

“Kigu Shi, I cut myself!” he quivered.

“And?” the boss replied, stoically.

“Since the death of your cousin, you’ve been so awful to us!” the worker shouted.

The boss went red in the face, removed his spectacles and grabbed the male by the throat, squeezing hard.

“No one says his name! Kagu Shi is DEAD! It is MY job to regain control of his drugs ring. I AM the kingpin NOW!” he yelled, dropping the worker to the floor.

Kooki was almost stunned into silence, but tried her best to start the job she had been assigned.

Master Shi put his spectacles back on and turned to head towards the bridge. Before leaving he called out.

“Let that be a lesson to the rest of you! I AM the kingpin NOW! Now to go and deal with two little spy ‘friends’ that have stumbled upon our little ring here!”

With that, he turned and disappeared.

Kooki swallowed hard, but she felt frozen to the spot, unable to speak or move.

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Meanwhile, Aldaric tapped Andrelious on the shoulder as he noticed a shadowed figure approaching them.

Andrelious gulped.

“Just don’t do anything stupid!” he warned his Aedile.

“Hello there!” Kigu Shi said in a surprisingly welcoming tone.

“Let’s skip the introductions and show you two to your workstations, shall we?” he continued.

Without waiting for the go-ahead, Aldaric breezed in.

“Yeah alright, let’s go!” the eager Chiss exclaimed.

Andrelious had no choice, but to follow.

The trio headed across the bridge. Before they entered the main body of the ship, Shi stopped and got some rope from his pocket.

“Right! Sit!” he boomed.

“I’ll show you guys a little thing we have here for spies!”

“But…we’re not…” Aldaric stuttered.

“QUIET!” hissed Andrelious. “You’ve done enough!”

Within a few minutes Kigu Shi had tied both males’ hands and ankles up and ensured they were sat on the bridge unable to move.

He headed to his main work area.

“Maybe it was trap?” Aldaric whispered.

“Whatever gave you that idea?” Andrelious replied in a sarcastic hush.

“Well…” started his colleague.

“Don’t…just don’t! Just next time maybe work that out BEFORE we get tied up!” The Warlord whispered, crossly.

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Elsewhere, Kooki had managed to find her inner confidence and stealth. She had ushered all the workmates in the direction of the Mimosa-Inahj family ship.

Shi entered the main area of the ship and stood there open-mouthed.

“Where’s my frakkin’ workers?” he boomed, searching all around the main area.

“Safe.” Said Kooki, calmly.

“But…” Shi stuttered.

“Unlike you!” she yelled.

“What?” The drugs kingpin asked, very confused.

The Alderaanian retrieved her lightsaber hilt from her side and swiftly ignited the blade and held it out.

Kigu looked terrified.

“Oh! You’re one of THEM!” he cried out.

Kooki smirked.

“Ah! I see it now.” She teased.

“Huh? See what?” the male asked.

“The resemblance.” She said calmly.

Still confused, Shi removed his spectacles and turned his head, his face was starting to go very red with a mixture of annoyance and confusion.

“Even more so without you wearing those.” She mused, whilst holding out her amethyst blade to keep her new enemy a safe distance away.

“You look just like your cousin did…before I killed him.” Kooki hissed, with a sadistic smile.

Shi was totally fuming and charged for Kooki.

“YOU!” he yelled, as he ran towards her.

With a clean sweep of her saber, Kooki spun her blade and took off one of Kigu Shi’s legs at the knee.

As, he fell to the floor in agony she grabbed the pile of logs on Shi’s desk and headed for the bridge. Upon noticing her teammates tied up she carefully used her lightsaber blade to slice through the rope around their wrists and ankles.

Without waiting to exchange pleasantries, Kooki yelled, “RUN!”

The three Archanis members headed towards their vessel. Kooki quickly attached the pile of logs to one of the remaining Star Fighter’s wings with the rope and joined the others on her familiar vessel.

“Who are all these people?” Aldaric asked.

“Safe.” Replied Kooki, as she started setting up a tractor beam to capture this new ship.

Meanwhile, Shi had limped to the final Star Fighter and prepared to escape the scary female.

He got inside and set some co-ordinates, launched his ship and prepared to escape.

Andrelious began setting the co-ordinates for home, yet he noticed Kooki had set a stop-off along the way. He knew better than to question his spouse.

As they prepared to enter hyperspace, Aldaric noticed Shi was hot on their tail and wasn’t going to give up.

Kooki opened her ‘just in case’ cupboard and grabbed a flare. With a sharp snap and hiss, the flare was now alight and glowing red. She opened a window and threw it in the direction of the kingpin’s Star Fighter wing. Luckily just as Kooki closed the window, Andrelious entered hyperspace and they vanished, complete with their newly acquired ship via tractor beam. The ignited flare was caught on the Star Fighter wing, unbeknown to Shi and it caught the explosive logs. Seconds later it obliterated the Star Fighter and the nasty male within it.

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Andrelious noticed the co-ordinates were set for an unknown planet before they were to head home.

“What’s going on? Why do I need to land here?” he bravely asked Kooki.

“Just a little stop off before we go home.” Kooki explained calmly.

The workers she had saved were already getting the tins ready to deliver.

The ships came out of hyperspace and landed on the mysterious planet.

“Back in a bit.” Kooki called out and ushered the workers out, with the strange cargo.

“Ah! My delivery!” exclaimed a female excitedly.

“But you’re not…?” she began.

“Kugu Shi,” Kooki said, as she waved her hand slightly.

“The female cousin in the Shi family,” she carried on explaining.

“Welcome Miss Shi!” the female smiled.

“Best to leave things to us women, eh?” a disguised Kooki smirked.

“Indeed!” said the female spice expert.

Kooki handed over the workers and the cargo.

“Perfect! A tonne of spice! Ready to distribute!” she continued.

“And a highly skilled workforce!” Kooki teased.

“And here we go, Miss Shi. The card and access number. This can be redeemed at any bank. Three-quarters of a million credits await the Shi family.” She explained.

“Perfect! We can retire in peace! Many thanks!” Kooki mused.

Once back on the ship, and the tractor beam at the ready once again, Andrelious checked the home co-ordinates.

“Are you going to tell me what that was all about?” he asked Kooki.

The ships once again entered hyperspace and they all headed in the direction of home.

“Just a little souvenir,” Kooki smiled.

And without another word, the female curled up under her duvet and went off to sleep.

“Someone got tired,” Aldaric commented.

“Well…she does like to make the most of being child-free,” Andrelious mentioned.

The End

(for now)