**Mimosa-Inahj Homestead**

**Aliso**

Andrelious hated waking up. He still felt very alone without Kooki’s arms wrapped possessively around his body, and without the prospect of being awoken with demands to give the Alderaanian her ‘marital right’ in the small hours of the morning. These days even Mostynn slept through the night, the baby seeming to be getting used to the fact he had been involuntarily weaned.

As usual the Sith was the first to wake. He lay quietly for a few minutes, once again wrestling with the Force in a vain attempt to find out the fate of his spouse, and once again finding absolutely nothing.

In what had been the guest bedroom, Parck and Licon Inahj awoke together, as they had for many years.

“He’s awake, Parck. I can feel him reaching out. Like he does every morning. And afternoon. And evening,” Licon said worriedly.

“I don’t know how best to help. It’s times like this that make me glad that I can’t feel the Force,” Parck replied.

“Just be there for the children. Andrelious will get through this. Just like he got through what *SHE* did to him..” the ageing female commented, Parck’s face indicating that he knew exactly who his wife was referring to.

**-x-**

As ever, Poppy and Etty insisted on an identical breakfast in identical bowls. They sat next to each other in their identical purple and black pyjamas, chattering away to each other quietly. Mostynn cooed happily in a highchair as his grandmother fed him his cereal.

Andrelious tended to eat a big breakfast, and Kooki’s disappearance had only caused him to increase his intake. Even with his parents now living with him permanently, the Plagueian didn’t seem to care about the health risks.

“You know, you’ve been out of the Imperial military for quite a while now. You can’t really claim that you’re making up for the rations anymore…” Parck commented.

“I’m in my forties. I have a child who is herself old enough to have children. I think the time to lecture me has long since passed,” Andrelious answered between mouthfuls. “Besides, I don’t see you complaining,”

The elder Inahj was about to answer when the homestead’s holocommunicator indicated an incoming call. Andrelious activated the device and was presented with a hologram of Ronovi Tavisaen, the current Dread Lord.

“To what do we owe this pleasure?” Licon asked before her son could even begin to talk.

“Andrelious. I really wish you’d consider taking these calls in private,” Ronovi stated.

“You contact me in my home, it’s by my rules. Besides, it’s not like you’ll tell me anything sensitive over the holonet. Just say where you need me, and I’ll get to you. Assuming that it’s important enough to warrant my attention,” Andrelious replied, lighting up a cigarra and taking a long drag.

The Dread Lord smirked. “I think you’ll be interested in this one. We caught a Collective operative trying to steal a ship,”

“Why would a shipjacker interest me?” Mimosa-Inahj asked.

“Because the ship we caught him on was *YOUR* ship,” Ronovi responded.

Andrelious relatively calm demeanour started to vanish.

“I’ll be right there,” the Seeker announced.

**Interrogation Cell Besh-6**

**Level 25**

**The Pinnacle**

Mant Krafin was cursing his luck. He certainly hadn’t been expecting the Escort Shuttle to have such an advanced security system, nor for the Plagueians to react in such large numbers. As it was, the Mon Calamari was now a prisoner of the so-called Ascendant Clan, and the Technocratic Guild didn’t seem to care for the fate of their captured operative.

Mant suspected that he’d eventually be forced to join the ranks of Plagueis’ ‘assets’, but nobody had bothered to speak to him since placing him in the interrogation chair. Six hours had passed and he was started to feel rather dehydrated.

*Every time I come across that frakking ship, something bad happens. I should have just left alone*…

**Dread Lord’s Office**

**Level 195**

“So tell me about this would-be shipjacker,” Andrelious began, but only after Ronovi poured out two large glasses of Whyren’s Reserve.

“All I can tell you is that he’s a Mon Calamari. And that he has some kind of multi-tool attachment on his left arm. We’ve not bothered to talk to him yet. I thought I’d leave that honour to you,” the Dread Lord explained.

“So you don’t have any ideas as to why he wanted my ship?” Mimosa-Inahj asked between long sips of drink.

“As I said, that’s up to you to find out,” Ronovi answered, hoping she could get Andrelious into the interrogation cell before he the two of them resumed their usual attempt to outdrink one another.

“Very well. I shall do as you ask,” Andrelious stated, grabbing his glass. He downed the last of its contents before climbing to his feet.

It was time to go to work.

**-x-**

“My Lord, are you sure that you’ll be able to find anything out? We’ve had a lot of trouble with even the lower ranked Collective agents that we’ve captured. We know absolutely nothing about this man,” Lieutenant Grapik stated.

“Watch and learn, Lieutenant. I’d have thought you’d have more respect for the Force after all your time serving with the Plagueian military. Aren’t you taught to treat us like gods?” Andrelious demanded.

“Well maybe not gods, My Lord, but…”

“Quiet. Just get ready to take notes of everything he’s going to tell us. Because I will find out everything he knows,” the Sith explained.

Grapik operated the door controls and led Andrelious into the room.

“I’m not going to tell you anything!” the Mon Calamari prisoner hissed.

“Speech will *NOT* be necessary. I have my own ways of finding out who you are,” Andrelious replied, moving a couple of feet away from the restrained alien. He reached out with his right hand, holding it above Krafin’s head.

Mimosa-Inahj paused for a few moments, as if conferring with someone else, before Mant felt a sensation unlike any he’d ever felt. It was as though something was trying to rip knowledge from within his mind. To his horror, he realised that Andrelious was probing his thoughts, his feelings, even his memories.

“You weren’t interested in my ship, were you? That was all a plan to get my attention. You were hoping I’d follow you back to wherever Oligard’s pathetic remnants are hiding. But why?” Andrelious questioned as he processed everything he was gaining from his prisoner.

“Twins.” Krafin stated simply. “They want them. Twins make great test subjects..”

Anger began to boil inside Andrelious. He wanted to tear the Mon Calamari’s head from his shoulders at the mere mention of the twins. For his part, Krafin was finding the Sith’s invasion of his mind to be increasingly uncomfortable.

“Now THAT is a little more interesting!” Mimosa-Inahj announced, seemingly having found something important. He stepped back from the groaning alien.

“Lieutenant Grapik. The Collective are planning on infiltrating the Pinnacle. They’re going to do this with the Aleena Demolition Squad. Arrest *ALL* Aleena found in Aliso City,” Andrelious ordered.

“What’s an Aleena?” Grapik queried.

“Tiny little lizard people. The Demolition Squad are very fast and very slippery. Just let the Pinnacle know what’s happening!” the Sith continued.

Grapik saluted and moved off to relay the news. Andrelious turned back to Mant Krafin.

“Someone will come for you, soon. You’re going to learn just what happens to enemies of the Ascendant Clan,” he taunted, before leaving the room.