**Elysia**

A single Viper Probe Droid made its way through the heavy blizzard that seemed an almost permanent feature in Elysia’s bitterly cold climate. Though the weather made movement difficult, it also allowed the automaton a great deal more cover against detection.

The droid manoeuvred itself between a pair of mountains, its sensors scanning for any kind of readings in the seemingly desolate area.

**Inahj Homestead**

**Southern Polar Cap**

**Aliso**

For once, the three Mimosa-Inahj children were relatively quiet. Poppy and Etty were studying a datapad that was running some kind of educational software, whilst Mostynn happily stacked some of blocks, only to nudge them over with the Force.

Andrelious was making the most of the peace and calm to catch up on the latest news from the Pinnacle, but he was finding himself to be increasingly disinterested in what was happening outside of his own home. He hadn’t even heard from Taranae, who was apparently his new Quaestor, since her appointment.

Suddenly, the screen of the Sith’s datapad lit up with the word ‘WARNING’ in bright red letters.

*What in the name of Palpatine?* Andrelious thought as he studied the incoming message.

“Girls. Go and tell your grandparents that we need to go on a trip. All of us. Now,” Andrelious ordered in an unusually stern tone.

**Bridge**

**Victory-class Star Destroyer *Sidious***

A technician carefully studied his monitor, unsure exactly what he was looking for. The image appeared to be a seemingly innocuous shot of part of a snowy mountain, but the accompanying readings suggested that there was more than met the eye.

“Sir..” the technician began, alerting his Captain’s attention.

“I hope you actually have something this time,” the Captain responded, annoyed that he’d been disturbed from his musings.

“I’m not quite sure, sir. According to one of our probe droids on the moon Elysia, it’s found some kind of power output, not very much but enough to suggest there’s a small facility nearby. And that’s not all. Moments after the probe detected the power output, a transmission was sent. I’m afraid it’s encrypted, but given the timing I don’t think it’s a coincidence,” the technician explained.

“That’s solid rock we’re looking at. Maybe the extreme cold’s affected the droid and it’s malfunctioning. Still, see what you can do with that transmission, Jom. We can’t afford to let any leads go unchecked,” the Captain commanded.

**Delta-class JV-7 Escort Shuttle *Tseb’si’tsaerb III***

**Hyperspace**

“So are you going to tell us what’s so important that we *ALL* have to come with you? What exactly do you think your father and the children are going to do?” Licon Inahj demanded.

“I needed both of you. Dad’s in the process of contacting an Inahj Intergalactic ship to pick up all of our things from Aliso. I didn’t feel comfortable leaving him and the children there without one of us,” Andrelious replied, briefly checking that his father was indeed in the middle of a holocall.

“About an hour ago I got a warning from my old home’s defence systems. An old Imperial probe droid stumbled across it. As we hid it before we left, it won’t have been fully detected, but because we had to leave certain things running, there’s a chance it was using enough power that someone looking for it now knows roughly where to go digging,” the Sith continued.

Licon shrugged at her son. “Which one? You never did quite stay in one place once she came into your life..”

“There’s only one other. I had the one on Selen destroyed not long after we left. I’m talking about the one on Elysium. Caelus system,”

“Ah yes. Where I helped you in that prison. Why are we suddenly moving back there?” the female queried.

Andrelious sighed as he lit a cigarra. “For some time now I’ve not felt that the arrangement with Ronovi and the rest of Plagueis was no longer satisfactory. Now this Probe Droid turning up? I consider it to be a sign that I need to move back to where I was most comfortable, and that was with Taldryan. Even if my family situation has shifted,”

“Who’s in charge of Taldryan now? Didn’t you tell us that Rian stepped down?” the grandmother questioned.

“That’s all I know myself. I’ve chosen not to make any kind of contact until we actually get to the system. If someone’s trying to look for my old home, we can’t be sure that we’ll be getting a warm welcome.”

The shuttle’s instruments indicated that it was now entering the Caelus system. Andrelious pulled on one of the levers on his control panel, the ship lurching slightly as it exited hyperspace.

**Bridge**

**Imperial-II class Star Destroyer *Axios***

Captain Chella Orsonn was still getting used to the fact that she was now the commanding officer of Taldryan’s flagship, the *Axios*. Having previously served as Executive Officer aboard the *Orthanc* under Captain Herktor Breznak, the female had quickly earned a reputation for being almost completely humourless while on duty, only to appear to have an unusually high capacity for alcohol, at least among Humans.

“Captain Orsonn, we’re tracking a Delta-class JV-7 shuttle that just entered the system. From what I can tell, the ship’s on our database, but it’s not been seen in Caelus space for some time,” a Lieutenant announced.

“Incoming shuttle, this is Captain Orsonn of the Star Destroyer *Axios*. Please identify yourself and state your intentions in this system,” the Captain said, hoping her tone was assertive enough.

“Orsonn eh? Would that be a Chella Orsonn?” came the reply, the voice immediately familiar.

“Lord Mimosa-Inahj? What brings you back here?” Chella asked, unsuccessfully suppressing a smile.

“How about I come aboard this *Axios* of yours and tell you over a glass of Corellian brandy? And it’s just Inahj now. Quite a few things have changed,”

**Captain’s Ready Room**

With the *Tseb’si’tsaerb III* docked and the rest of the Inahj family being taken on a tour of the *Axios*’ least classified areas, Andrelious had immediately headed to the rear of the bridge tower which acted as Captain Orsonn’s ready room.

“I’m really not supposed to drink when I’m on duty. You know that,” the Captain began as she poured two glasses of Corellian brandy.

“And you know it’s been a long time since I’ve paid any heed to regulations like that. I will however respect your request that I do not smoke in your ready room. Now let’s start with you. We’d only just got the *Orthanc* back to full functionality. I thought you’d be perfect with Captain Breznak. I must have been seeing something right because now you’re the Captain of what seems to be the biggest ship in the fleet,” Andrelious stated.

“I learned quite a lot from Herktor, fascinating how he kept the *Orthanc* together at all after what happened. He was actually offered the *Axios*, but he turned it down. He’s determined he’ll die doing his duty aboard his ship. But when Consul Ténama offered it to me I nearly bit her arm off. A brand new Imperial-II class? That’s the kind of thing I signed up for,” Chella responded.

“Well, you are the daughter of two Imperial Navy officers. I’m sure you’d love to take this ship and get some revenge on the Rebel bastards that murdered them. Maybe one day I’ll get something like that sanctioned. For now, though, there’s an issue here in Caelus I need to resolve,” the Sith declared, downing his drink in a single swig.

Orsonn smiled wryly. “We’re having our own problems. I’d have to get permission from Consul Ténama to explain properly, but I’m sure you’d be able to help. Your role in bringing down Drayen Ky’line is still well remembered around here.”

“See if you can get me a meeting with this Consul Ténama. The name isn’t familiar to me, so I’m going to guess quite a few things might have changed around here. Would I know anyone else on the summit?” Andrelious asked.

“I can probably arrange for their dossiers to be delivered to your datapad. Surprised that Saskia or Swil haven’t done that already,” the Captain answered. “Before I contact the Consul, can I ask a more personal question?”

Andrelious knew immediately what Chella wanted to ask. He could see her gazing at the empty chair next to him.

“She disappeared during the Battle of Nancora. No body was ever found nor did I feel her death in the Force, but I’ve felt nothing since leaving. Nothing positive anyway…” the former Imperial said, his tone suddenly full of bitter resentment.

“I’m actually relieved. I’ve met a lot of horrible people over the years, but she was even worse somehow. Every time she was aboard one of our ships I was half expecting to hear that she’d slaughtered the crew. Did you know she once threatened me for flirting with you? All I’d done is call you Andrelious.” the female replied.

“You got off very lightly if that’s all she did. Most people didn’t survive if they managed to become the subject of her ire even slightly. I made sure she never found out about your parents. You know what she was like around anyone who she deemed to be ‘too Imperial’.” Inahj explained.

“That’s something I never quite understood. You’re one of the few around here that ever served with anything CLOSE to the original Empire. Why did she not just kill you on sight?” Chella questioned.

Andrelious turned to gaze out of the window. “Because she was a lot less powerful when I met her. Back then I could have easily taken her if things turned violent, but she quickly showed she was a natural with the Force, especially the dark side. There was also the fact that I was on the Arcona summit at the time. Kooki is many things, but she is not stupid. By the time she was getting powerful to take me on, she’d already fallen pregnant with the twins. She didn’t *NEED* to kill me, because she already had complete control over me. Having me as little more than a slave was always going to be more satisfying than just killing me.”

“Do you think she’s out there somewhere?”

“If the Collective didn’t kill her, it’s possible they’ve fashioned her into a weapon, just like they did to the Deputy Grand Master. That worries me. I have four Force sensitive children, Chella. And three of them are hers. I can’t even comprehend what that might mean.” Andrelious said, his tone genuinely fearful.

Orsonn started to say something, but stopped herself, feeling that she was unable to find the right words. “I’ll get that meeting with Consul Ténama sorted. But I’m afraid I’m going to have to end things here. The *Axios* doesn’t command itself,” she said, rising to her feet.

The Sith simply nodded, glad to have got his foot in the door.

**Taldryan Citadel**

**Chyron**

With everything that had been happening recently, the arrival of a ghost from the past was not something that Taldryan Consul Seraine “Erinyes” Taldrya Ténama was relishing. As she read Andrelious’ intelligence dossier, however, she quickly came round to the idea of the former Taldryan summit member’s re-arrival. The Zeltron had of course heard of Andrelious, and his wife Kooki and the seemingly ever-expanding number of children. She had not previously deemed it prudent to read the dossier of just another former Taldryanite, but now it appeared that Andrelious was once again relevant.

“I’ve gathered the whole summit in on this one. Captain Orsonn of the *Axios* informed me that one Andrelious J. Inahj arrived in the Caelus system an hour ago. I hope you’ve all taken the time to read his dossier?” Seraine began.

“The way the dossier is written feels a bit off, but I’d actually already heard of the man. Some in the military call him a hero, probably because of his role in toppling Drayen Ky’lien. Do we actually know why he’s come back?” Appius, the Quaestor of Ektrosis, asked.

“He spoke to Captain Orsonn but was too busy telling her what happened to his wife. Careful when you read *HER* file, it’s not for the faint hearted!” warned the Consul.

“I had experts analyse the dossier. Appius was spot on. Both Mimosa-Inahj dossiers were altered by an outside source. I’ll wager that Andrelious’ eldest daughter, who we have nothing on but name, age and profession probably edited them on their behalf to make them much harder to profile properly. There’s also very little information on their other three children,” Xolarin explained, gesturing to a stack of datapads on the table in front of him.

“That would be because the safety of my family comes first. I had an arrangement with Rian. My children’s basic information would be all that the SRI would be allowed to retain. In exchange for me continuing to serve the needs of Clan Taldryan,” an Imperial accented voice announced as a short, stumpy man entered the room.

“You are Andrelious J. Mimosa-Inahj?” Appius questioned.

“Just Inahj these days. I may never forget that woman, but at least I can remove her from my name.” Andrelious responded.

“Very well. What brings you back here?” the Consul asked.

Inahj smiled. “Very short and to the point, aren’t you all? I shall return the favour. You may or may not know that my family lived not here on Chyron, but on Elysia.”

“You chose to live on that frozen wasteland?” Xolarin queried in a shocked voice.

“Kooki’s choice, mostly. Not only did it remind her of her early years, but it’s very hard to find someone who lives inside a mountain. Especially a mountain that’s often in the middle of a blizzard,” Andrelious explained.

“I did actually know that. Rian told me about it. Couldn’t find it when I had the area mapped though,” Seraine declared. “He did also tell me a little about you and your family.”

“When we left we activated the concealment features then put the computer onto an indefinite diagnostic mode. You shouldn’t have been able to find it, but I was notified earlier today that it has been detected. Have any of you sent an old Imperial probe droid there?” Inahj questioned, not at all surprised that Rian had embellished his successor with a few details.

The summit members exchanged glances.

“I thought not. The SRI isn’t about using such old models. Justinios would never have allowed it,” Andrelious stated. “Is he back yet? Or is he still playing soldiers with Lord Telaris and the others?”

“He’s still Fist if that’s what you mean. His duties keep him away from here I’m afraid.” Erinyes replied.

“So if you didn’t send that probe droid, who did? From what I can tell it’s a standard issue Imperial probe droid, from the Galactic Civil War period. The Collective wouldn’t use anything like that,”

“We can’t tell you too much. You’re not part of Taldryan anymore. For all we know you might take anything we tell you back to Plagueis. You might even be in league with our enemies.” Xolarin announced.

“Here, let me show you something. Pass me Kooki’s SRI dossier,” Andrelious said.

Xolarin complied and handed it over. He then watched on as the diminutive Sith typed a seemingly random string of numbers and letters. The contents of the dossier immediately changed, revealing a lot more information – and a warning that the Alderaanian female was potentially a great threat.

“That’s her REAL dossier. I may have had her ring on my finger, I may be the father of her children, but I am not a fool. I was never convinced that she wouldn’t turn on the rest of us if it suited her. When I had Saskia manipulate our dossiers, I made sure that she merely concealed Kooki’s, rather than completely remove it.”

“Alright. I think we can give him the basics,” the Consul stated.

The others nodded in agreement.

“A short time ago an unknown enemy attacked the Iosan fuelling station. All we know is that the attack force consisted of a single Victory-class, along with a pair of Raider corvettes. They managed to destroy the facility and leave the area,” the Zeltron explained.

“Hang on. One Victory-class, and two Raider corvettes? Where were the fleet? Even that frakkin’ Secutor Rian insisted on having instead of a proper flagship should have had a tiny force like that on its knees,” Andrelious responded, anger already starting to build.

“This was when the fleet was at Arx. I imagine you were there too?” Erinyes countered.

“You sent EVERYTHING to Arx? That’s tactical lunacy! But then again, I perhaps shouldn’t be surprised, because as a Zeltron your idea of tactics is which drink you’re going to have first!” Inahj snarled, his finger pointing at the bemused Consul.

“Alright, Inahj, you really don’t get to come in here criticising the Consul’s decisions, I suggest you calm down or go away,” Appius interrupted.

Andrelious turned to the Ektrosis Quaestor. “You? You think you’re some kind of Mandalorian do you? How can the Consul be certain you’re not a Viszla spy?”

“I trust Appius with my life. And as he said, you can’t come back to the Caelus system after abandoning the clan and just expect to pick up where you left off. Your family came with you. This isn’t a casual visit. You did a lot of good work for the clan, but you did that Rian. Taldryan’s under my command now,” the Zeltron responded. She still wasn’t sure exactly what Andrelious was planning, but it was clear that the ex-Imperial did not have any intention of harming her or any of her summit.

“Very well. Rian and the rest of the Taldrya would not have installed a complete fool as Consul. I was actually impressed to see that you now have a proper flagship. What a shame the *Resurgent* was lost over Arx,” Inahj said, his annoyance subsiding for now.

“The *Axios* is a very fine ship. And Captain Orsonn is an excellent commander. I believe you know her fairly well?” Xolarin said, having felt a little marginalised in the conversation.

“Chella’s one of the most naturally talented naval officers I’ve met. Not a surprise given her parentage. With the *Axios* under her command you’ll be getting Imperial Navy levels of efficiency from your flagship.”

“This conversation has gone on long enough. Andrelious, I suggest that you head to Elysia and see if you can find that probe droid, or anything else that may help us locate our mysterious enemy,” Erinyes stated.

Andrelious nodded in agreement. That had already been his next port of call.

**Near Inahj Homestead**

**Elysia**

“I don’t understand why we had to come here. It’s so frakking cold.” Drask Verbim complained.

“The orders are clear. We need to find exactly where the power reading that’s been detected is coming from. If Taldryan are hiding something here we need to know what it’s for,” Voss Jom explained.

The two analysts were supervising a team of droids that were attempting to excavate part of a snow-covered mountain. The first task was to clear the thick layer of snow, but this was proving difficult as the whole area was in the middle of an extremely heavy blizzard.

The captain of the *Sidious* had insisted on sending Jom and Verbim, not trusting that droids would be able to complete their task without Human supervision.

“I don’t know how much longer that fake IFF transponder is going to fool the Taldryan navy. Once they realise we’re not part of their fleet I fear that they’ll be able to trace the location of the *Sidious* and that’ll be the end of everything,” Verbim moaned.

“Drask, I’ve been assured that will not happen. Even if it does, we’ve got enough people into their organisation that any kind of investigation will get nowhere. Just so long as they can’t get their hands on one of us, or anyone from the *Sidious*, everything will be fine,” Jom responded as he watched one of the droids get half-buried by a snow flurry.

“Are you gentlemen looking for something?” a thickly Imperial accented voice questioned.

Jom and Verbim regarded the new arrival. He was quite short and stumpy, and his features, half obscured by a cloak, suggested that he was a couple of decades older than the others. As he awaited his answer, he took one final drag on a cigarra and threw the remaining stub end aside, its heat allowing it to burn its way deep into the snow.

“Well? How can I possibly assist you if you won’t tell me why you’re here?” the man continued.

Verbim’s hand started to move towards his sidearm.

“I am no threat to you. You’ll tell me why you’re here,” the stranger said, this time waving his hand through the bitterly cold air.

“You are no threat to me. I’ll tell you why I’m here,” Jom responded robotically.

“We’re trying to find the source of a power reading we found on our probe droid,” he continued.

Andrelious grinned as he reached for a datapad from somewhere inside his cloak. “That’s good. Because I can help with that. And then I’m sure we’ll find a way for you to return the favour,”

The Sith tapped rather furiously at his datapad. At once a series of fans whirred into action and blew snow away from a series of rectangular areas. The two techs watched almost agog as the newly exposed mountainside retracted upwards and revealed several transparisteel windows and a doorway.

“You’d never have found it digging away with those droids. And even if you had..do you think we were so stupid to leave our property undefended?” Andrelious challenged, walking over to the droids that were still trying to dig through the snow, ice and rock. Without hesitation he assaulted the droids with a wave of Force lightning, easily overloading and destroying them.

Jom and Verbim, now fully aware of the threat, reached for their blasters. Andrelious raised his right arm and plucked Jom’s weapon before the analyst could even begin to aim his shot. Verbim, who appeared fortunate enough to keep his sidearm, soon found out that was the last of his blessings as Andrelious charged at him, lightsaber suddenly active. He got a single shot off before the Sith reached him and sliced his arm off with a slash straight through the shoulder.

Jom watched on as Andrelious armed himself with a second, black hilted lightsaber.

“I’m afraid that the price of my services is beyond anything you’d be able to afford on a technician’s salary,” Inahj said stoically, before brutally beheading the defeated Verbim.

“You better stay exactly where you are if you don’t want me to harm you. I would normally have killed both of you, but for once I feel that a prisoner may be valuable. From now on you will do exactly as I say. No more, no less. Do you understand me?” the Sith demanded, his focus now back on Jom.

With his weapon not within reach and his colleague dead, Voss Jom could do little but comply with the instruction. The Sith was clearly dangerous, probably one as powerful as the Taldryanites. A simple technician had no hope of standing alone against such a threat.

“I will grant you the mercy of warmth. Follow me,” Andrelious ordered, walking towards the durasteel door. He tapped something into a small control panel and allowed the two men entry. “Go and sit over there and don’t touch anything. I will shortly be informing the summit of my discoveries here. I am sure they’re going to be very interested in you.”

Jom went and sat on the dining chair that Andrelious had indicated, affording himself a brief glance around. He had been expecting to find some kind of hidden base, but he quickly realised that he was inside a family home that hadn’t been lived in for some time.

Andrelious started working at the home’s control console. He knew exactly what he wanted to do.

*Welcome back*

*Logged in as Mimosa-Inahj, AJ*

“Right, I’ll fix that first,” Andrelious said to himself

*Change acknowledged*

*Operator name now Inahj, AJ*

*Access level: Full access*

Andrelious briefly looked through the commands, seemingly not finding whatever he was looking for. He went instead to the environment controls, the various settings that he’d once used to keep the home warm and well-lit.

*Environment setting 65 confirmed*

*Operator Mimosa-Inahj, K access revoked. Status set to hostile. Name now Mimosa, K.*

Seemingly happy with his efforts, Andrelious moved to the holotable, entering in the frequency that the summit had given him. The Consul appeared in the form of a small blue holographic figurine.

“Consul Ténama, I’ve reactivated my home’s systems. I will resume operating from this location. I trust that you will enter into the same agreement I once had with Rian?” Andrelious asked.

“So long as you don’t start throwing your weight around again. You will have to show me what you can do and that I can trust you. Consider yourself on a blank slate,” Erinyes replied.

“Maybe not a blank slate. I wasn’t the only one trying to find my home. I interrupted a search operation. Two men and a few droids,” Inahj explained.

“Let me guess. Now there’s two bodies and lots of droid debris,” the Consul sighed, aware of Andrelious’ tendency to take the death and destruction to a higher level.

The Sith pulled a face as though he was hurt by the Zeltron’s comment. “Not quite. I thought the SRI might like someone for their interrogation tables. He’s only a low-level tech, but I’m sure that he’ll still be able to tell us something useful.”

“I’ll have SRI agents ready to pick him up. Oh, and Andrelious?”

“Yes?”

“Welcome home,” Erinyes said, smiling warmly.

*FIN*