

## Homeward Bound

\*Author's Note: This work of fiction is speculative in the nature of Star Wars canon. Very little has been described about the direction of the galaxy after "Rise of Skywalker."

Alaris Jinn di Plagia  
9426

*Home.*

The massive ring of shipyards surrounding what had once been her home gave Mira a combination of emotions that ranged from nostalgia to anxiety. The Ring, as it had been called by many, was at its busiest it had been in decades, to the point that a new ring was now in construction. Thousands of planetary systems around the galaxy were now independent of the First Order and what was once the Republic and piracy was at an all time high. Regional affiliations and federations were springing up all over the galaxy for mutual defense & trade; usually based on star charts or cultural affinities, but there were still corporate entities, conglomerates, and other factions that found member systems all over the galaxy.

This required small-time naval development on a massive scale. The galaxy had seen enough of galaxy spanning political dynasties. This was to such a degree that after Lando Calrissian somehow built a citizen's fleet of over 14 000 ships, much of the fleet that survived opted to disband at the conclusion of the battle of Exegol. This worked in the favour of the Core worlds, most of which were dominated by the Centrists prior to the war, but the mid-rim and outer-rim were left largely undefended. Skirmishes and border disputes were bound to break out, and war was inevitable.

Thus, Kuat was once again going to be a major financial hub of the galaxy. The Shipyards, which had been producing for the First Order, suddenly saw the demand for massive Star Destroyers dwindle, but the volume of orders for mid-sized capital ships and picket vessels had grown exponentially, as these smaller affiliations felt the sudden need to defend themselves.

What Mira Dantavi's benefactor had seen, was essentially that the politics of the galaxy remained unchanged. The Core worlds had favoured an ordered society and saw the fascist First Order as the best way to secure that. Their sentiments hadn't changed just because Snoke, Ren, and Palpatine were dead. The powerful families and companies weren't going to stop being powerful just because some Sith were killed.

Kuat-Entralla Engineering was still the largest and most profitable single entity in the galaxy, other than the massive food engineering companies from the mid-rim's agricultural planets, but Alaris Jinn di Plagia already owned a significant stake in several of those companies. Now, Mira had to return to the one place she knew Alaris would eventually send her.

*Home.*

She looked the part of the daughter of a rich mogul, mostly because she had grown up that way. It didn't take her long to get her way into a stockholder meeting with and hob-nob with the most powerful beings in the business. It was mostly a lot of hand shaking, pompous laughter, and suggestive comments placed in the right ears at the right time, but eventually the large sum of credits she had access to ended up in the right pockets, and several million shares had been split amongst a bunch of shell companies that were then owned by other shell companies.

Kuat-Entralla, like most other companies at the top of the First Order food chain, was no longer traded on the public markets. The First Order had ensured that was the case. The Order perpetuated its fascist command structure into the very fibre of the holdings it wielded.

"Impressively done."

Mira didn't recognize the voice. She turned toward the sound and found she didn't recognize the man, either. Human, slim, tall; he seemed like a typical rich kid whose daddy got him out of all the trouble.

"You have me at a disadvantage," she smiled coyly, putting on all her charm. Daddy's boys were the easiest to manipulate.

"That's intentional," he replied. "Drop the act, Dantavi."

*Panic.*

"Excuse me?" She hid the anxiety well, but she also knew full well that it wasn't going to work. She had been found.

"You have a lot of names these days, so I'm not surprised if you get them confused from time to time." The mysterious man smiled a full faced spread, as if he was greeting an old friend. "You can relax. I'm not here for you."

She turned and walked toward the open bar. The strange man followed in kind. "What are you here for then?"

"That should be obvious, but since we're playing the game: your benefactor."

"He's not here, obviously." She was panicking, regardless. Her life essentially belonged to Alaris Jinn and if something brought him down, it would bring her down, too. Nobody shows their hand or even makes themselves known against Alaris unless what they had planned had already sprung into motion.

There was no response. Mira turned to see where he had gone.

*Disappeared.*

She spent a few minutes asking around, but so many people fit his description she got no hints. The return to the ship fared her no better. Alaris had lent her his shuttle and she was scanning as many databases as she could. She paid for the security footage access (bribes always work), and was at least able to put together a holo of his likeness. She sent it out to the typical contacts, those who owed Alaris their favours. Now, she had to wait.

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Aliso kept Alaris busy enough that he needed people he could trust. Mira Dantavi was one of those.

By the time Alaris had been informed of the mysterious stranger, all the feelers had been extended, the new droids had been uploaded with the holo of the individual and basic information had been relayed back to him. A series of aliases, but nothing definitive. He wasn't one of the usual players. Alaris thought maybe a First Order bureaucrat who fanagled his way into a new power structure somewhere.

He sat in one of his recliners looking at the holo, the sunset of Aliso piercing in through his massive bay windows.

"Where are you?"