

**Aliso City**  
Financial District

Aliso, unlike many other terrestrial planets, didn't have an active "summer" getaway due to the climate that was still recovering from the volcanic winter that plagued the entire surface only a few thousand years earlier. There was great skiing in some of the mountains if that was your thing, but if you enjoyed safari, you'd never find it here. Maybe in seventy million years, if the planet had never otherwise been colonized, but the alien life that now lived on the planet was more than likely to stifle any other significant fauna growth. Geonosians had a way of caring for little outside their own hives.

Alaris shuddered as he thought of the insectoid creatures. The twi'lek never considered himself to be particularly racist. He worked with the Inquisition to burn away undesirables under Darth Pravus, but he didn't have resentment toward those he killed. It wasn't necessarily that they were insectoids, it was just that their wings and skinny, stick-like appendages were rather disgusting. Their faces were vile. Their society was backward and oppressive, even for a Sith's taste.

Alaris shook his head to bring himself out of his thoughts.

*Maybe I am racist.*

He pondered that briefly before returning to his novel on the terrace that overlooked Aliso City. *Lust on Sullust*. He hadn't really been into trashy romance novels when he was younger, but one of his associates, Mira, had left one at his suite. Alaris wasn't sure if it was by accident or as a joke, but either way he read it and became enamored by them.

He had a whole slew of them now: *One More Alderaanian Night*, *Twin Suns Rising*, *The Twi'lek Temptation*. His favourite remained *The Volpai Who Loved Me*. The shelf in his study had a new growing section right next to the law texts of Coruscant.

He was just getting to a particularly steamy scene where the young, naive Togruta was allowing herself to be overtaken by the charms of the Sullustian ruffian when the door chime rang. Alaris placed the datapad down on the table in front of him, took a deep drink from the Whyren's Reserve in its tumbler, and stood up to cross the room to the door. He opened it to an empty hallway.

He smirked, allowing his amusement to get the better of him. He stifled it quickly and then let out an exhale. He turned around as if to let the automatic door close itself and then quickly spun

back, igniting his lightsaber and making contact with another saber from a crimson Togruta who had just swung down from her hiding spot above the door.

She let out an annoyed screech. "Not fair! How did you know?"

The twi'lek pushed against his apprentice's blade and she stumbled a few steps. They both extinguished their blades.

"If you spent more time meditating on the Force instead of fighting every gangster and fraking every woman you saw, maybe you'd figure it out your damn self." Alaris turned and walked back into his suite.

"Hey, you never do, so someone's gotta do the life living around here." She followed him in. Did she have a new piercing? Alaris could never be sure. "What are we doing today, Master?"

"Well, Kahlora, if you *are* to one day kill me you are going to have to outsmart me, so let's start with your chess game."