

(**Warning:** This story contains female muscle, female muscle growth, male muscle, male muscle growth, muscle worship, and graphic sexual content)

The empire loved to present an image of strength; propaganda centers were constantly enforcing the belief that they were this colossal edifice of efficiency and power. That their reach was vast, their riches vaster, that the galaxy was under their complete and absolute control. There were no cracks in their flawless system, no faulty gear in their well-oiled machine.

Ever since joining the rebels, Ezra began to know better.

Hera had taught him that the empire's size was its biggest weakness. It allowed the rebellion to operate in the shadows within the imperial machine, infiltrating at a very great risk to their lives to steal information and sabotage the empire from within. Try as they might, the Imperial Security Bureau could not keep an eye on everything. The rebellion might not have the military might to stand in an open battle against the empire yet, but they had the expertise and tenacity to sneak into the belly of the beast.

There was plenty of corruption at multiple levels of imperial bureaucracy, lots of embezzlement, lots of people who looked the other way when you slipped a credit chip on their palms. The 'national pride and devotion' the empire tried to drill into its citizens only went as far as someone's own interests were involved. It's how the rebels often managed to get their intelligence and conduct their sabotage operations. Find the chinks in the empire's armor.

The empire's greatest military asset was its large fleet of frigates, corvettes, and dreadnoughts. The Star Destroyer was essentially the symbol of imperial strength along with their legions of stormtroopers. Though Ezra wasn't so sure about the latter. Not to discount the bucketheads; they were a threat in numbers, but Ezra had fought them long enough to understand where the empire cut corners. Their plastoid armor, in theory an improved version of the armor the clones wore back in the day, but mass production like that meant poorer quality. The same went with their blasters; the mass-produced model could be very inaccurate due to its faulty calibration. Caleb always said the modern stormtrooper recruit lacked the sheer training and tactical acumen of the clone troopers.

Their numbers and armored support made up for their overall quality. Only the more accomplished and specialized troopers would be given better gear and training. But recent intel showed the empire was aware that their grand forces were lacking, and began taking *steps*.

Ezra looked through the ventilation grille at the group of scientists going over their projects; holographic data displayed a DNA strand undergoing some kind of... mutation when introduced to an unknown agent. He frowned, his mind racing as he tried to figure out what they were doing.

"Almost time," Sabine's filtered voice came through her helmet as she crouched behind him on the ventilation shaft, looking at her wrist. "The team should be making a mess right about... now."

As if on cue, there was a shudder going through the base, and the distant sound of explosions reached them. Ezra grinned as the scientists all ceased their work, looking around in fright as exclamations rang out.

"What's going on?!" One panicked while another reached out to the communication console.

"Security, what's happening?!"

"Explosions have been detected near the hangar base! Suspected rebel presence! Doctor Trevou, take your team to the panic room until we know what's going on!"

"But our research-!"

"You can retrieve it later, now move it! That's an order!"

The scientist growled, throwing his head in frustration and impotence as he waved at his team to follow him. "We'll secure the data later, go go go go!"

The scientists all hurried outside the room. The automatic doors closed behind them as holographic interfaces came to life, the red symbols indicating a complete lockdown, keeping anyone from getting inside.

Good thing they already were inside.

His lightsaber snapped into life, cutting through the ventilation shaft like a hot knife through butter. Ezra cut a large enough hole through the material and pushed it out with the Force,

keeping it floating in the air as Sabine did her job. She tapped a few buttons into the underside of her wrist armor, "Scrambling their sensors now."

She peeked out from the hole Ezra made; her helmet scanned through the corners of the room before aiming her right arm and firing tiny projectiles at several targets. "Cameras are out. Move it."

He let the piece of metal fall to the floor, and the two landed with a dual heavy thud, scanning around the room. The chamber was brightly lit with white surfaces everywhere, giving it a very clinical look; the whole place smelled of disinfectant; they clearly kept this place very clean to avoid any contamination. There were multiple chemistry sets and machines whose purpose eluded him, but what truly caught his attention was the four-foot-tall cylindrical container suspended in the air inside a force field.

"Think that's what we're looking for?"

"Bet you my left blaster it is," Sabine said, taking off her helmet and placing it on the nearest table. "Is that... bacta?"

"Doesn't look like any bacta I've seen," He shrugged.

"Intel said the empire was working on a secret project to enhance their ground troopers." She muttered, going over to one of the computers and going through the data logs. "I thought this place would be a testing facility for weapons and armor, but this research..." She narrowed her eyes. "It's all biochemistry."

"What, like gene-editing?" That sort of thing was expensive. Not the type of process anybody could pay for. And it required plenty of time and resources.

She hummed as she kept reading. "Sort of, it seems they're working on a mutagen that can improve the physical capabilities of baseline human and humanoid species."

So it WAS a mutagen what those holographic projections showed. That sort of thing was *dangerous*. It lacked the dedicated process and finesse gene-editing required. "Stars, I don't want to imagine what their test subjects went through."

“They’ve been testing it on flash-cloned flesh so far, and... Oh damn,” Her eyes widened.
“They’ve been making a lot of progress too.”

“What do we do?”

“Well, first I’m taking the data here and wiping their records. Then we’ll take that vat with us.”