**“Conflict of the Jedi: Revenge of the Sith Reimagined” / 1,480**

Anakin stared out the window, watching the lights of Coruscant glow brighter as the night fell. His breathing was ragged, and his mind was a hurricane; conflicted, tearing itself apart with every passing second. Palpatine’s voice was in the wind, his words boring holes in Anakin’s skull.

*“Darth Plagueis was a Dark Lord of the Sith, so powerful and wise he could use the Force to influence the midi-chlorians to create life ... He had such a knowledge of the dark side that he could even keep the ones he cared about from dying.”*

*“Is it possible to learn this power?” Anakin’s voice was hushed, a dark sense of foreboding rising in his chest as an unhinged smile crept across Palpatine’s face.*

*“Not from a Jedi.”*

Anakin remembered the Chancellor’s smirk and his sly glance. Palpatine knew exactly what he feared.

The storm in his brain whirled, fog and rain catching glints of red lightsabers and orange eyes. He heard heavy, asthmatic breathing and caught a glimpse of shiny black metal. None of the pictures were coherent, but somehow he knew that they held great danger.

 And in the middle of it all, the eye of the storm was Padmé Amidala. Her beautiful, kind face was twisted in pain. Screams echoed over the din, growing louder and louder as she writhed in agony. Anakin’s stomach clenched and he longed to ease his wife’s cries.

 The empty, silent council chamber grew steadily darker around Anakin. Sirens wailed in the distance as a battalion of troopers closed in on the Chancellor’s wing of the Senate building.

 He jammed his eyes shut, feeling a single tear roll down his numb cheek. Padmé was almost certainly doomed now.

 A voice behind Anakin made him start. “Skywalker. You did well.”

 A hulking silhouette stood in the doorway, his face barely touched by the city lights outside the window. Long robes swirled around the man’s feet. At his side hung a shining lightsaber.

 Mace Windu began to walk toward Anakin, his footsteps soft on the carpeted floor. For the first time, Anakin noticed that Windu’s voice was not laced with suspicion. His normally guarded, glaring expression had shifted into a small smile.

 “Thank you, master,” Anakin returned his eyes to the window. “Is Palpatine dead?”

 “Yes.”

 Anakin wasn’t sure what to feel. It was done now. A Sith Lord had been defeated, but he had lost his only chance of saving Padmé and her child. His child. He fought down a geyser of hot pain and rage building in his chest. It wasn’t fair.

 “What is bothering you?” he could feel Windu’s stare.

 “Nothing, master.”

 “It’s not nothing. I can feel the conflict within you…I take it that betraying Palpatine was difficult.”

 *More than you know.* Anakin stayed silent.

 “Skywalker?”

 Anakin still couldn’t bring himself to speak. It was hard, after years of hiding.

 “Skywalker, was there something else?” Windu demanded, “Did he promise you something?”

 Anakin pulled his gaze away from the darkening sky, making up his mind. He met Windu’s eyes, “Yes.”

 He wouldn’t lie. There was no point in that anymore.

 “Palpatine said he would save Senator Amidala,” Anakin kept his voice level. “He said that the power of the dark side could prevent her death.”

 “Death? She seems perfectly healthy.”

 “She’s… going to die in childbirth,” His words were flat.

 “How do you know this?” Mace stepped forward, eyes narrowed. “Did Palpatine tell you?”

 “No, I saw it in a vision. Weeks ago.”

 “Why were you having visions about Senator Amidala?” Windu’s gaze hardened.

 Anakin sighed and stood up straighter. This moment had been coming for a long time, and it would change the course of his life.

“She is important to me.” He said.

“Are you saying that you are the father?” Windu hissed, “Skywalker, you know the code! Jedi cannot form attachments!”

“I know.” Anakin’s thoughts continued to race, half-formed images rocketing one by one through his mind’s eye.

*Anakin stood helplessly in front of the council as they took his lightsaber.*

*Padmé shuddered with her final breaths, and her agonized expression became frozen.*

*Then finally, the fallen Jedi lingered outside the temple, disgraced, broken, and alone.*

Anakin’s hands shook, and he struggled to maintain eye contact with Mace’s cold stare.

“A Jedi Knight cannot have children,” Windu continued harshly, “Or a partner. Any such bonds are a weakness waiting to be exploited!”

Abruptly, Windu’s commlink beeped, and he broke off his attack. A familiar voice crackled through, fizzing with static, and Anakin listened intently.

“This is Jedi master Obi-Wan Kenobi. I have good news.”

Mace responded, “What is it?”

“Grievous has been defeated. We have control of Utapau.”

“Good. Come back to Coruscant.”

The comm blinked off, and Anakin looked back up at Mace.

“Master.” He said steadily.

“What is it?” Windu turned back to Anakin, his lips twisted into a disapproving scowl once more.

“Am I going to stand trial?”

“I believe so. This is a serious breach of the Jedi code.”

“What will become of Padmé?”

“That remains to be seen,” Windu turned back toward the door. “I must contact the rest of the council. You are dismissed.”

Anakin nodded and cast one last look at the Senate building.

*Padmé, I’m sorry.*

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 Anakin dashed through the brightly lit halls, his feet barely skimming the floor. Everyone around him was relaxed and happy, chatting cheerfully as they stood in the sun, celebrating the end of the war. However, he couldn’t join them; Padmé was close to giving birth. Anakin felt it in the Force, a great dark shadow on an otherwise brightening horizon. He had to be there for her! Fear rose like vomit in his throat as her screams began to echo throughout his head again.

 He sped up, sprinting for the nearest hangar bay. He’d have to borrow a ship to get back to Padmé’s apartment. His heart thudded, and his breathing was fast and ragged. He skidded into a large door, scanning for a ride.

 *There.* A battered silver speeder sat unattended in a shadow, its dented hull glinting tiredly. It looked as if it would barely get off the ground, but he had no other options.

 He turned the ignition, and it began to creep sluggishly toward the hangar door. Anakin floored the pedal, gritting his teeth as the engine coughed and spluttered. He was losing patience and hyperventilating as his wife’s face once more filled his mind. The time was close.

 *I have to get there!* He wanted to scream. *She needs me!*

 *But what could I do? Nothing. Only the dark side can reverse death.* He remembered Palpatine’s offer and immediately felt sick to his stomach. That wasn’t the way to save her. She’d never want it.

 The speeder glided lazily into the sky. He turned it toward the Senate building, and slammed the accelerator again. He hoped fervently that he would arrive in time.

 *She wouldn’t forgive me if I turned to the dark side.* He knew that was true, but there was no other way for him to prevent her death.

 *Maybe she wouldn’t like it,* a voice whispered at the back of his mind, *but she’d be alive. There are other Sith. Find one. They’ll help you.*

“No.” He muttered out loud, tightening his grip on the steering wheel. “I won’t do it. I’m a Jedi, not a Sith.”

 The darkness gathering around Anakin’s heart evaporated a little bit, and he let another tear slide down his nose. “I’m a Jedi. I’m a Jedi.”

 Anakin started at a whisper, his words getting louder with every second until he was screaming. The mantra was comforting, his one constant in a world rapidly changing.

 “*I’m a JEDI!*” His voice, hoarse with emotion, was whipped away by the wind. The conflict in him grew more and more painful until something in him snapped.

Suddenly, everything was freed as if a dam had broken inside him. The harsh breathing, Padmé’s screams, and the howling, wailing storm all quieted. He let them go, releasing the pain and fear he’d held for so long. *I’m a Jedi.*

 For a split second, Anakin was completely filled with peace. All at once, he understood the old Jedi rule: *No attachment.* Love could exist without attachment, he saw that now. Windu and the others could kick him out of the Order if they wanted. He had always been and would always be a Jedi, and nothing could change that.

 Then the tranquility was broken. Anakin suddenly felt something buzz in his pocket. He grabbed the disk, heart pounding once more. Padmé was contacting him.

 Anakin activated the hologram, but the figure standing there was not his wife.

 “C-3PO?” he hissed. “Where’s Padmé? What’s happening?”

 The protocol droid was pacing, waving his stiff arms frantically. “Master Anakin!” he cried. “She has gone into labor. The child is coming!”