

Marike's parents were bureaucrats within the Imperial Remnant – rather well placed, but only on a planetary scale. They were also long-time friends with the Imperial governor, so Marike grew up surrounded by humans who had a pretty good attitude about the status quo.

Marike was an intelligent and lively little girl – sometimes a bit *too* lively, her mother would complain – and her life was uneventful until she was ten years old. The planetary governor was hosting a gala dinner for the sector Moff who was on Progress - touring all the planets in the system, doing the grip and grin routine, making sure everyone's toeing the line, etc. Marike's family were invited both in their political and social capacity and, since the Moff was reputed to be a family man, Marike's parent's were asked to bring her along to the banquet.

The dinner went off well – a social triumph – but Marike's parents were rather worried by the fact that a member of the Moff's party – one Arbaaz Trijayn – showed rather a lot of interest in Marike. He seemed enchanted by her chatter, and asked her parents many – too many – questions about 'this little angel'. Marike's parents were happy to see the end of the party and the departure of what they suspected to be a pedophile.

Two weeks later, Marike's parents receive news that Marike has been selected for a special academic program for prodigal students, and that she was to be shipped off planet post-haste, so sorry Mama and Papa can't join her. Marike was smart but not a *genius*, and her parents smelled a rat. They suspected that Arbaaz Trijayn had cooked up these orders as a way to get his hands on Marike, and they weren't going to tolerate that. Alas, the "good news" was signed by the Moff himself, so the planetary governor could do nothing to belay those orders.

So Marike's family reluctantly decided to leave the sector. They hoped that if they got out of Trijayn's jurisdiction, Marike would be beyond his grasp – out of sight, out of mind and all that. Of course, Marike didn't understand this – she just knew they were moving for some reason. Mama said it was about her job, but all little kids know when their parents are lying – regardless of Force sensitivity!

Marike's parents settle on a new planet, still within Imperial Space, and things are quiet for nearly a year. This time, someone comes banging on the door, looking for Marike. The parents freak, but not nearly so much as when the searching "peacekeepers" totally overlook Marike, even though she is in plain sight in her bedroom. The parents again make the mistake of assuming that this Arbaaz fellow must have totally obsessed on their daughter, so they pull up stakes, this time heading to the far end of Imperial Space.

The third time, they couldn't even get clearance to land – unless they provided proof that their daughter was with them. The parents tried to blur the issue by saying she had died in transit, but that only ensured that they would *not* get permission to reside in this Sector. Marike's parents starting worrying that it was the *Moff* who is hankering for little girls, not the adjutant...

At this point, Marike's parents leave Imperial Space entirely, heading for the Rim and doing a lot of planet-hopping. Marike knew *something* was wrong, but her parents wouldn't talk about it. During all this time, they maintain the stance that the Empire, in general, is a good thing, but

there are some bad people in it – so it's not like Marike is going to blame the Empire in toto for all this.

Unfortunately, after two years' running around, someone shops Marike's parents to the Empire. Her parents weren't experienced at this covert lifestyle thing, and a few unsavory somebodies noticed that this family was on the run, and there's a likelihood of a reward from *someone* for their capture...

During the chaos surrounding Marike's situation (which will be explained as soon as I can be bothered to figure it out), Marike's parents are killed. Marike, not knowing what else to do blindly boards a ship that is heading back into the territory she knows as home. After making planetfall, Marike is at a *very* loose end. There's not much a bookish 14-yr old can do for a living – well nothing *nice* – so she simply turns herself in at the local office of the imperial bureaucracy and says “Hi, I'm an orphan. Help?”

Marike is put into an orphanage – not a joyless place, but it isn't Club Med, either – and merry hell ensues in the background. In the process of identifying Marike, the local bureaucracy discover that she was wanted by some agent of Palpatine's clone for some hush-hush purpose – but that ugly business is over, the agent is nowhere to be found and, oh dear, what do you mean she's Force sensitive?

The discussion and inquires drag on for another year, reaching successively higher levels of Imperial bureaucracy. Finally, someone with a half-ounce of sense and foresight realizes what they've got on their hands. They've also heard about this “Jedi Academy” that Skywalker has put together...

And a tough choice arises. Which is worse? An untrained wielder of the Force? Or one who has been trained in that hotbed of Republican sentiment? It's a toughie, and the final decision (from a high level) is this: Marike is packed off for a year's intensive “re-education” – she's told it's to make up for all the schooling she missed whilst on the run. During that time, her loyalty to the Empire will be fully confirmed, and then it's believed she will be stable enough to send off for training.

When Marike demands to know *why* her family was on the run for nearly three years, she's given the story she expected – that the Moff from Paragraph Three was indeed a pedophile with just a *slightly* obsessive nature. Fortunately, that Moff is dead, so there's no one to contradict the story. Very fortunate indeed.

So, we've got one well-adjusted (adjusted with a crescent wrench but still well-adjusted) young lady who is packed off to the Jedi Academy shortly after her 17th birthday.

Marike enjoys the Academy –although she didn't appreciate the suspicion that she was regarded with when she first arrived at the Academy, but things have since calmed down. Marike has noticed that she has been assigned a few more classes in morality and history than her fellows – even after she caused rather a stir by pointing out some blatant omissions in the history curriculum. You know, that blatant disregard for the inherent corruption of the old Republic, the

fact that the Empire *did* bring order and peace to a thousand uncivilized planets that would have been far worse off without them, etc. She spends an awful lot of time talking to counselors, whether she likes it or not. And so the next four years unfolded.

And of course, there's Arbaaz – who, at this point, is off formulating some rather dark plans of his own right now. Of *course* he's not dead! ;)