

# The Dark Sentinel

**Issue #55**

August 10, 1999

## Emperor's Hammer Strike Fleet

Aurora System, Outer Rim Territories



Ray (Darth Maul) Park visits the line for Episode One at Mann's Chinese Theater. Image courtesy of Odin (OdinAbbott@aol.com) and [www.starwarsline.com](http://www.starwarsline.com).

Edited/authored by Sector Admiral Jahn Compton

XO/SA Compton/CS-2/SSSD Sov

**Emperor's Hammer Strike Fleet**  
**SSSD Sovereign**

2,896 members worldwide

## office of the fleet commander

Grand Admiral Ronin has gathered articles and submissions regarding the development of the Emperor's Hammer. These include Fleet events, overall EH Plotlines, personal anecdotes, etc. The Fleet Commander wishes to emphasize that all development proposals for the Emperor's Hammer **MUST** be approved by the Fleet Commander prior to release to the rest of the Fleet.

New "Imperial Senate" Subgroup to be Formed for Non-Gamer Star Wars Fans  
As Submitted From: Fleet Commander (GA Ronin)

As quoted from [www.lucasfilms.com](http://www.lucasfilms.com):

"A long-respected institution, the Galactic Senate is where the future of the Republic is shaped. Over a thousand senators from member worlds throughout the Republic regularly gather together under the domed ceiling of the massive Main Senate Chamber to share insights, discuss problems, and forge solutions.

In long-standing tradition, disputes are kept within the Senate walls and dealt with in a civilized manner, with words instead of weapons. Every world is represented in the Senate, and even the smallest planet can petition to make its own voice heard. The system has upheld just government and freedom for thousands of years, but the bureaucracy has begun to grow too strong..."



...The Imperial Senate...  
(Photo: LucasArts, 1999)

Recently, the Fleet Commander (GA Ronin) has received several requests to join the Emperor's Hammer, but alas...they're non-gamers. Consequently, in light of the "historical facts" released during Episode I: The Phantom Menace, a new Subgroup will soon be formed. It will initially be simple in command structure so as to allow room for growth. Although the Imperial Senate of the whole Empire was officially dissolved by Emperor Palpatine prior to the destruction of the first Death Star at Yavin IV, Grand Admiral Ronin has allowed the Imperial Citizenry to reform the Senate in the Outer Rim to assist with the management of civilian resources throughout the Territories...

The following initial Positions (in descending order of command) are proposed:

Chancellor of the Senate (CH-S)  
Senatorial Council Member (SCM)



combat operations officer    coo  
lord ambassador                la  
morale officer                    mor

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### **Good little Imperials...**

by SA Compton

I got a REALLY neat present this last month. After years of wanting one, I finally received an XvT patch for my personal fighter, the Dagger Engineering Corporation K-20b, thanks to Science Office Assistant Stalker.

How to use the patch:

- 1.) Put the OPT file in your ivfiles directory
  - 2.) Use TPWin (TIE Patch) to patch your Z\_XvT\_.exe
  - 3.) put all the rest of the files in your CP-640 directory (you can only use the Missile Boat Cockpit in 640x480 res... otherwise it'll default to something else (like the X-Wing cockpit).
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## **Letters of Achievement awarded!**

The CA:XO, VA Tron, hereby presents the latest Fleet members to earn the Letter of achievement for NewsLetter submissions:

CMDR/MAJ Callista/Typhoon/Wing X/ISD Challenge  
WC/MAJ Reesbon/Wing XV/ISD Van. - 2 submissions  
FM/LCM Nazghul/Typhoon 3-4/Wing X/ISD Chal.  
CMDR/CM Iceman/Gamma 1-1/Wing I/SSSD Sov  
FL/LCM Badlands/Tornado 3-1/Wing X/ISD Chal.  
CMDR/CM Shark/Sword/Wing IX/ISD Relentless  
IWC/Marshal Maestro. - Tactics Manual (IW)  
GMF Z'lar Kahn/MC-1/Gondor Base/Aurora Prime. - Diplomacy Manual  
FM/SL Darth Angelus/Vortex 3-3/Wing XIII/ISD Grey Wolf ---  
(laverick@bigfoot.com)  
CPT/CM TopDawg/Scorpion/Wing XV/ISD Van --- (TopDawgWC@aol.com)  
FL/LCM Adams/Stalker 3-1/Wing I/SSD Avenger --- (jedi1111@bellsouth.net)  
WC-TACA/COL Striker/Wing X/ISD Challenge --- (martinez@poly.polytechnique.fr)  
FL/LT Dafner Gelak/Echo 2-1/Wing XV/ISD Vanguard --- (Dapimp220@aol.com)  
CMDR/MAJ Callista/Typhoon/Wing X/ISD Chal --- (muehj007@mail.uni-mainz.de)

--- (x2)  
FM/LCM Brandon/Typhoon 1-2/Wing X/ISD Challenge --- (alan.o@virgin.net)  
FM/SL 007/Echo 2-2/Wing XV/ISD Vanguard --- (PMCMage@aol.com)  
CMDR/CM DS-61-4/Echo 1-1/Wing XV/ISD Vanguard --- (Mortis703@aol.com)  
FM/SL E. Tarkin/Avenger-3-2 --- (erik@e-sjop.nl)  
FM/LT Jace Krips/Scorpion-2-1/Wing XV/ISD Van --- (xglstarwing@yahoo.com)  
FM/SL Thrust/Dagger 3-3/Wing IX/ISD Relentless --- (Thrust\_ak@hotmail.com)  
--- (x2)  
BRAG/LCM Zoltar/INTORG-INTSEC/INT Versk --- (zoltar2@aol.com) --- (x3)  
FM/SL Kircheis "Blond Knight" Tychsen/Thunder-2-3/Wing X/ISD Chal ---  
(destiel@galaxycorp.com)  
FM/SL Julius Calion/Echo 2-3/Wing XV/ISD Vanguard --- (J\_Calion@hotmail.com)  
FM/LT BigWill/Scorpion-2-4/Wing XV/ISD Van --- (BigWillyMC@Earthlink.net)  
FM/SL CrazyR2/Scorpion 3-2/Wing XV/ISD Vanguard --- (smelenchuk@home.com)  
LT Kyle Garm Augustus/Scorpion 3-4/Wing XV/ISD Vanguard --- (U96hydra@aol.com)  
CA:LO/VA Zsinj/CS-11/SSSD Sovereign --- (SLookabill@aol.com) --- (x2)

Note: When an e-mail address is followed by a (x?) the quantity following the x is how many they are to be awarded.

## **squadron ready room**

The Tactical Officer herein presents any special updates and events related to the tactical operations of the Emperor's Hammer Strike Fleet. New Battle Plotlines and missions are also posted herein. This section also provides directions on copying and playing the new EH missions.

The interim Battle Board is online and is linked from the TAC Office: [www.city-net.com/~dev/tac](http://www.city-net.com/~dev/tac). It will be updated with new high scores as they are recieved and will be there until the new version is finished.  
An interim FCHG that will enable us to continue standard day-to-day operations of the FCHG will be posted also in no more than two days.

TAC/FA Dev/CS-3/SSSD Sov

## **the command staff**

Herein are presented sections for the offices of each Command Staff Member. Please use the menu on the right to view each Office's report.

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## officer's deck

The Executive Office periodically releases fiction submitted by Command Officers and Flag Officers of the Emperor's Hammer.

Tattooine or Bust

By Vice Admiral Kessler

Well, it finally happened. Star Wars Episode One: The Phantom Menace hit UK shores this month. I've only been waiting 22 years to see this movie; so, as you can understand, I was a little anxious to actually get to see the damn thing. I don't want to talk about the movie itself; however, if you've already seen it you know what you thought of it, if you haven't already seen it I'm no going to spoil it for you. Rather, what interested me was a show called "Tattooine or Bust" which aired on National TV just before the movie opened. Some of you may be aware of a Group called "Countdown to Star Wars". Basically, these people sat outside movie theatres for months waiting for the movie to open. Now that simply displays a level of dedication to George Lucas' baby that I simply cannot relate to. (Well, okay, I can relate to it, but don't tell my fiancée, she thinks I've got my addiction under control) The thing that made me sit up and take notice was that these people were essentially Mr Joe Normal like anyone else.

You could see the TV crews trying to get some kind of "geek" angle going on these people, and okay, one or two of them were basically what any dictionary would refer to as "prime geek material", but Darth Maul facemasks and lightsabres aside, these people were a lot like anyone else you ever met. One of them summed it up pretty well. When asked if he considered himself a geek for being a Star Wars fan, he replied: "Well I'm what I like to call an "undercover geek". I can talk to normal people in conversation without mentioning Darth Vader, I can go to parties and talk to girls without asking if they want to see my lightsabre. Pretty much everyone thinks I'm just another corporate wage-slave, but when I get home I put on my Darth Maul costume, open up my secret collection of Star Wars toys and walk around the house wearing a strap-on Bantha tail."

Quite.

The range of different nationalities that were patiently queuing up to see the movie was pretty diverse too. One TV crew was asking people where they came from. Amongst the usual "Brooklyn" or "New Jersey" replies, was one guy who'd flown in from Yorkshire, England to

join the rest of the faithful waiting for the movie to open; and he'd made lifelong friends amongst the crowd of people who were lined up with him.

You'd be forgiven for thinking that these people were all jobless losers for being able to sit on a pavement outside a movie theatre for up to a month, but you'd be wrong. One guy told of how when he'd joined his new company, he told his Boss that he had to get leave to watch the new Star Wars movie when it was released. This was FIVE YEARS before the movie was announced. His Boss agreed. Another had told his Boss that he had to pick up friends from the airport and they'd be staying with him all week. He finished by saying, "And now my Boss is watching this and I'm going to get fired, but at least I've seen Star Wars."

There were moments of humour too. I particularly liked the guys dressed in Stormtrooper armour who'd flag down passing cop cars and say "Let me see your identification", to which one cop replied: "You don't need to see my identification". The cops, seemed very amused by it all, I know I was. Then there was the confrontation. This was probably meant to be some kind of statement by the Star Trek community, but it only served to illustrate that there may very well be geeks in the sci-fi world, but most of them don't watch Star Wars. Here's what happened: A bunch of maladjusted Star Trek fans, staged a protest. Now don't misunderstand me, I happen to love Deep Space Nine and I think The Next Generation is pretty cool too (mostly), but you can understand how upset some members of the Star Trek community must get. After all, every Star Trek movie ever made with an odd number in the title has sucked more than a fifteen-horsepower vacuum cleaner. So they were understandably jealous of all the attention that Star Wars had been getting lately. Anyway, a bunch of them show up at the line outside the movie theatre dressed in their costumes and waving imaginatively titled banners, like: "The Force is not Logical, Captain", or the incredibly literate "Yoda sucks ass," or "Star Wars will be assimilated." One guy had a puppet of Yoda on a stick; and his friend, dressed in a Borg costume, is beating the snot out of it. Yoda, much like the Star Wars fans lined up to see the movie, couldn't have cared less.

The police made four arrests. Assimilate that.

Without wanting to provoke too much controversy, there were a bunch of sad losers who also tried to get some prime time TV by showing up waving banners that proclaimed "The Force is a Tool of Satan!" They stood on the sidelines and berated the assembled faithful to "Start praying to Jesus right now!" One comment kind of summed the whole sorry tirade up: "Man, I am praying to Jesus, to give you a life." They thought that George Lucas was the Antichrist and God had put him on earth to test their faith. I thought God had put them on earth to test my faith, but whatever floats your boat I suppose, and at was very funny.

An hour before the movie finally opened, the TV crew started asking people what they'd do if the movie sucked. The replies were pretty much what you'd expect.

"Oh man, don't say that! I'd just slit my wrists right there!"

"I'd have to go see it again."

"Yeah, keep watching it until it didn't suck anymore."

"Get a second opinion. Yeah, definitely the way to go."

“It won’t suck!”

“It could suck, dude. We don’t know.”

“How can you say that? How can it possibly suck?”

“Well have you seen Howard the Duck?”

“Man, that wasn’t George’s doing, he was just the producer!”

“It could still suck.”

“Dude, stop saying that!”

I’m sure you get the general idea.

Shortly before I was due to go in to see the movie for myself at last, I was sitting in Kentucky Fried Chicken eating a Zinger and reflecting on what the movie would be like. You have to realise that I was seven years old when I saw Star Wars in 1977. I wasn’t quite as sophisticated a moviegoer then as I am now, so I was pretty worried that it might fall short of my expectations. KFC is pretty heavily involved in the TPM merchandising process, so as I sat there eating my Jar Jar Burger and drinking my Darth Maul Pepsi, I heard the famous strains of John Williams’ opening credits music burst over the in-store speaker system. A few feet away from me at another table, a small boy, probably not much older than seven, suddenly started shouting excitedly: “Daddy, it’s Star Wars, it’s Star Wars!”

His father, who was about my age, smiled and told him that yes, it was Star Wars. I couldn’t help but smile, myself, and I realised there and then exactly why The Phantom Menace will never fail. We jaded, hardcore fans can argue about Jar Jar Binks and Darth Maul all we like, it doesn’t matter. Star Wars belongs to the innocent, like that little boy in KFC who’d had his eyes opened to a galaxy of wonder he’d never dreamed possible. Like that little seven year old boy in me who saw the original movie 22 years ago, The Phantom Menace is having that same effect on this generation of children. We older fans may like the movie, we may not. But the children will love it.

I caught the eye of the boy’s father as his son chattered away happily about Jar Jar Binks and I like to think we recognised each other as first generation Star Wars fans. This is the truth of the matter: his son is the next generation of Star Wars fans, this movie is for them, not us. And as long as we can enjoy the new movies too, that’s not such a bad thing, is it?

Vice Admiral Kyle Kessler

...Who thought TPM wasn’t bad at all, or he’d have had to slit his wrists on the spot.

## **sovereign cantina**

The Executive Officer herein presents fiction submitted by the Squadron Commanders, Flight Leaders and Flight Members of the Emperor's Hammer.

The Midi-Chlorians Essay

By: Terry Harjanto

Part 1. Simplicity.

The simplicity of the midi-chlorians is a simplicity seen before. A simple strain of singular cells, similar to bacteria and virii but yet with a helpful nature to all that they are inside of.



Simply put, they are a single cell, with a strong connection to the universe, to the Force. And to survive, they need to live in an environment that is our blood and flesh. Co-existence between two species of a living force always requires one of the following: trade, peace, isolation, and understanding.

For example, if the two dominant species on two planets meet. To co-exist, they will need to create a treaty or an alliance. They find it pointless to create war to conquer the other species. The two species will be able to trade resources, technology, and refined materials.

For the two species to co-exist, they need understanding and peace. Understanding the other species culture and way of life can simply suppress curiosity, but it can also put the other species at ease. Peace is also needed, peace as in a lack of violence or hatred.

If the two species are hostile towards each other, the only choice to prevent them from destroying one another is to isolate them. By cutting off communication between the two species they will simply have to live, not being bothered by the other species. The problem with isolation, is that they do co-exist, but they do not usually co-operate.

The co-existence between the midi-chlorians and the creature they reside in is an example of trade. The midi-chlorians need a place to live, they live in our blood, and they give us access to the powers of the Force.

## Part 2. Communication.

People have been debating on whether or not the midi-chlorians are either a strain of bacteria/virus' or more of a procreating, intelligent, sentient species. The reason this has been in debate is because the two have different ways of communicating with their residents.

Bacteria/virii communicate and manipulate the creature they are in by means of chemicals. Most bacteria/virii try to destroy blood cells or create a chemical which the creature they are in respond by creating chemicals of their own. For example, if a bacteria is destroying red blood cells of a human, the human's glands would create white blood cells to fight off the bacteria.

If some how the midi-chlorians create a chemical or in a way affect the cells of the creature's body and procreate by asexual means, they would be classified a bacteria, but with more of a positive effect.

But since there has been no evidence of chemicals being produced by the midi-chlorians there is the theory that the midi-chlorians are more of a sentient, intelligent being that has a psychic or psionic connection to the creature they are in.

If the midi-chlorians communicate with their host mentally through messages of thought, then they would be classified as their own species, not just a strain of bacteria. So far, this theory has been the most probable since the midi-chlorians do not have any traits of a bacteria.

Also because most Jedi or Sith, that utilize the Force seem to have a mental contact when they mind control a weak minded creature. They use their eyes, voices, and hand motions to try and persuade a creature. But then again, those actions only assist in enabling the use of the Force to mind control a creature, when actually the Jedi or Sith is making a connection between their two minds and controlling the other.

If this is how it works, then the Force would be 'refined' by the midi-chlorians, passed along to the Force using creature, and then utilized by the Force using creature to affect his surroundings or people around him.

### Part 3. Procreating.

Procreating of the midi-chlorians are, as of now, unexplained. They can either be similar to bacteria and produce asexually or by consuming and transforming other cells. Or they can produce sexually by physically touching between two midi-chlorians. Midi-chlorians are physical cells in the first place.

There is also a strange theory of how midi-chlorians procreate and reproduce. There is a rumour that Shmi Skywalker, mother of Anakin Skywalker (also known as Darth Vader, a powerful Sith Lord) had been conceived by the midi-chlorians, resulting in a 'virgin birth' of Anakin Skywalker.

It is thought that the midi-chlorians, utilized the Force to have Shmi pregnant, and therefore, create a creature so powerful in the Force, that he would be a prophecy. But then again, it has been recorded and prove, that most Force users have biological mothers and fathers.

Of course, scientifically this is impossible since the Shmi Skywalker and midi-chlorians are two different species and Anakin Skywalker is one hundred percent human. If conceived physically or psionically, then this would be hard to prove since this would be mixing powers of the mind to create a physical cell.

But most people would believe that the midi-chlorians reproduce as most humans do. Sexually, through contact between a male midi-chlorian and a female midi-chlorian. Even as strange as it sounds.

### Part 4. Conclusion.

The relation between midi-chlorians and their hosts is one of trade. A place to live for access to the Force. The midi-chlorians species is not clear as of yet, but they are considered to be sentient beings with a direct link to the universe and the Force. They are most likely to communicate to their hosts and give them access to the Force through physic or psionic means.

Just to note, this document, The Midi-Chlorians Essay, written by Terry Harjanto is all it is. A theory. Thank you for reading.

FM/SL Caster/Falcon 1-3/Wing XI/ISD Immortal

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[Follow this link](#) for a poem by MRC/Khrethlaw/Omega/BHG-H.

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The Return of Andronicus

By LT Andronicus & LCM Brandon

This story covers my (LT Andronicus) entry to Wing X and the Challenge. The first part is LCM Brandon's welcome story, with a follow up part (by me) detailing the two major modifications to my Missile Boat, Fire Dragon.

Enjoy...

Part I - LCM Brandon (with polishing and reformatting by LT Andronicus)

LCM Brandon winced as he lifted his weight up over the bar again, the beads of sweat pouring from his head and running into his eyes, causing them to sting. Ignoring the pain, Brandon slowly lowered himself to the floor before tensing up again and continuing his exercise, exhaling loudly as he did so.

He was never usually this vain but after seeing a recent Jelayne Falonda holovideo, a few Kung-fu lessons from his new wingman, LT Talon Drear, and his annual leave coming up, Brandon wanted to get in shape. The upcoming Mr and Miss EH event was also an incentive to build up his fitness, and you could never be too agile when you're a Dark Jedi Knight.

Dismounting from the gym apparatus, Brandy reached over to his bag and pulled out his lightsaber and a bottle of Chilled Apple Schnapps. Taking a quick swig he let the fruity liquid trickle down his throat and into his belly.

Smiling, Brandy ran his hand through his sweat-laden hair, freshly cut and dyed, and wiped his wet hands on his tunic before twirling his lightsaber around and igniting it. The scarlet blade thrummed with power and intensity as it emerged from the silver cylinder, instantly evaporating some of the sweat that dropped onto the sizzling saber.

Using the Force he focused on the lever in front of him, pushed and activated the training program. The first target popped up to his left and almost immediately disappeared as Brandon's blade sliced through it diagonally. Somersaulting up and twisting in the air, the shining red blade came down and sliced the next target from head to toe into two even halves. Rolling quickly to his right he swung his blade, taking off the feet of the target and causing the rest to topple to the ground.

Rising to his feet Brandon swivelled and executed a roundhouse kick as the next target appeared in front of him, shattering the flimsy durasteel material into millions of shards. The last target appeared in front of him, no more than 9 feet away. Taking a deep breath Brandon hurled his lightsaber at it and leapt forwards. The ruby red saber seemed to glide through the target and do no damage but Brandon's out-stretched foot arrived seconds later and impacted with the head of the dummy, easily taking it off.

"Training program complete" announced a metallic voice as the Imperial pilot picked up his saber and breathed out loudly. But as he stood back up straight, he sensed something was wrong, a signal went off in his brain warning him of danger. Re-igniting his saber he raised it above his head and deflected the blow that would have split open his skull. Turning to face his assailant, Brandon smiled. "What did I do this time, Ma'am?" he jeered.

CMDR Callista deactivated her weapon and strode up to her wingman. "Woo, somebody's working out. Luckily some of us don't have to make any efforts to retain our immaculate, youthful beauty" she replied.

"Hah, don't change the subject, why are you herer?" he chuckled as he ducked the towel which his CMDR threw at him.

"What's with the attempted murder? You're not in my will yet sweetie" Calli blinked innocently. "Can't a CMDR come and train with her dearest, favourite little sweetiemouse?" she said sweetly.

"Liar," Brandon said in a mock-evil fashion. "Have you come to tease me about my spots again?" Brandon joked.

Callista looked hurt.

"Oh, enough already," sighed Brandon as he walked past her, giving her a peck on the cheek and

putting his saber back in his bag. "Have Oldie's hormones broken loose again, or has Estie been hoarding all the drink so you came to pilfer my supply?"

"Actually, I have some good news. Typhoon's full again, we have a new member en route to the Challenge as we speak."

Brandon turned and smiled. "Really, that's great," he said, dabbing at his forehead with the towel and walking over to the refresher station. "Who is it, a newbie? Did you get another girl? Please say it's that hot Twi'lek, Jennifer Lopez, she's signed up and requested to join Typhoon. Please"

"Ha!" exclaimed Cal. "She'd be off to the Sovereign as soon as she caught a whiff of you right now."

"Bah to you, I'm off for a shower. When does this new pilot arrive?"

"5 hours. In fact, I think you might wanna hurry up. You, my dear, are doing the welcome duties again."

Brandon popped his head from around the door to the shower. "Me? Why me? You're the CMDR again now. I've done that. I get to be lazy now."

"Bah, well I'll do it if you want me to, I just thought it would be nice if you welcomed an old friend to the squadron"

This time the LCM draped a towel around himself and came all the way out of the shower. "Who, who, who is it?" he asked excitedly.

"No, no, you don't want the job. I guess I'd better go get ready, you finished in that shower?"

"Oh, stop teasing, tell me" demanded Brandy

"Oh just some guy you used to know, this bloke from your home planet. He transferred to the Phoenix but he's back and he requested specifically to be in our squad. Anyway, if you don't mind I'm a busy bunny." She turned to leave.

Brandon raised an eyebrow for a moment before remembering the person Calli was referring to.

"SCOTTIE!!!!!! Andron, Andy is coming to Typhoon!" he shouted. Jumping back in the shower, Brandon let the hot water envelop him for a moment before rushing out again, drying himself and pulling on his uniform nearby. Straightening out the creases the squad XO walked quickly back into the training chamber where he was tackled to the floor by Calli.

"Hey, I'm busy here, be a sweetheart and get Mell on the comm, I need him to get some stuff for me," said Brandon, trying to get back up but meeting Cal's resistance.

"What's your hurry? You've got 5 hours yet, plenty of time," she said, smiling.

"Yeah, but there's SOOOO much to do, Andron and me go back a long way"

"You ain't going nowhere yet" said Calli smiling

"Don't make me kick your ass, sweetie."

"Ha! I know your weakness, you can't beat me," threatened the female pilot

"You can't seduce me now CMDR, I am giving you 5 seconds to get off, that's an order."

Callista began tickling her wingman, causing Brandon to squirm about uncontrollably, laughing out loud.

"Okay, okay, you win, what do you want" he screamed

"You'll clean up the mess you left in my room while you were Temp CMDR, buy me a new Lambda Shuttle, but me a cute little kitten and go and meet LT Andron. And be nice"

"Okay, alright, anything, anything." Brandon wailed.

Callista stopped tickling him and gave him a quick kiss on the nose. "Thank you my dear, I knew we could co-operate, what have I done to get a wonderful Flight Member like you?"

Brandy got up, exhaled deeply and walked out of the room as his CMDR laughed behind him.

What on Coruscant was Andron thinking when he applied to join Typhoon?  
He was gonna discover it was one hell of a squad.

LCM Brandon smiled as the black-uniformed Lieutenant walked down the ramp into the hanger of the ISD Challenge. Stepping forward from the rest of the pilots assembled in launch bay, he came to attention and saluted. The smart LT did likewise, snapping his hand up to the side of his head and staring forwards.

"LT Talin Andronicus reporting in, sir!" yelled the pilot. "Newly assigned to Typhoon Squadron under the command of Major Callista".

The pilot's accent was strong, stronger than Bran remembered. Still, it was certainly great to hear a familiar sound after flying alongside Imps from all manner of weird and wonderful planets.

"Oh, for Palpatine's sake, Scottie, get that hand down, you look like a Nerf-herder looking into the distance," chuckled Brandon.

The new arrival's eyes met his and a smile surfaced on both their faces. LT Andron took a moment before dropping his possessions and stepping forward to hug his old friend.

"Brandon, you wee scoundrel you, long time no see. I didn't recognise you for a moment, you're a lot..."

"Don't insult a senior officer LT, I'll have you cleaning the cantina toilets for a week" threatened Brandon. His true intention was clear, however, from the intonation in his voice and the smile he bore.

"Hahaha, I was gonna say 'More military' actually, if my memory serves me correctly last time I saw you was sprawled out on the floor of some cantina somewhere, put down by a good slap from a young, vulnerable Corellian girl you were trying to seduce."

"Shh, the other's might hear. Well, we'd better get this official stuff out of the way and we'll catch up on old times" whispered Brandy.

"Ahem, anyway, LT Andronicus, I formally welcome you aboard the ISD Challenge. As a welcome gift, cos I haven't seen you for some time, I've managed to haul in this crate of Tennent's Velvet for our consumption in the cantina later.

"Thank you sir, I appreciate that" replied Andron, a sly grin appearing on his face.

"Well, as you say, MAJ Callista is your CMDR, I am the Squad XO. You can come to either of us or any of the other pilots no doubt, if you would like to ask anything or your having trouble settling in.

"You will occupy position 2-4, the spot recently vacated by CM Laerox. That means you've got that stunning little piece of starfighter over there in which to make things go boom." announced Brandon, pointing to the battered old MIS a few rows up.

"She may not look much but she's got it where it counts, kid. She's all yours, but please, be gentle, I know what you're like" he tormented.

"Aye, aye sir, I'll treat her well."

"Very good. Well, what else is there? I'll give you a guided tour later if you've got the creds or alcohol to spare. You'll get a number of communications soon informing you of your orders and a

list of current sim-battles you need to fly, seeing as you've been out of the cockpit for a few months, and have little combat time in a Missile Boat.

"Until then, welcome to Typhoon Squadron, Lieutenant. Feel free to acquaint yourself with your new squad-mates and join us in the cantina so we can all reminisce and remember all those embarrassing moments which will have everyone laughing at us."

"Sure thing si- umm, Bran, but I'd like to check out my ship first, if I may, I've got some things to do," said Andron.

"Of course mate. May I accompany you? It's either this or cleaning up Cal's room."

Andron laughed. "Of course, lead the way...."

## Part II-LT Andronicus

"This," said Brandon, pointing to the fighter on the rack above, "Is your Missile Boat. Typhoon's a long-range support squadron, so you'll be using the warhead launchers on this little puppy a lot. You were flying with a Strike squadron before you transferred to the Phoenix, weren't you?"

Talin nodded. "Yes, I was flying with Yod Squadron. I went to the reserves about the same time as Captain Marc and General Caddo."

Brandon rubbed his chin. "Caddo and Marc are excellent officers. They were really starting to give Wing IV a real name for itself. I only hope that Major Wet Willy can follow in their footsteps."

"He's a former Wing X Commander, isn't he?"

Brandon nodded. "Yes, and a good one at that. So, what are you calling your fighter?"

"Well, I flew a TIE Defender in Yod, so if I was flying a TIE-class craft I'd call her Howling Banshee. But, seeing as she's a Missile Boat, I'll have to christen her Fire Dragon."

"Good names," Brandon said. "I especially like Howling Banshee as a TIE name. Very suitable."

Talin smiled. "Of course." He reached into the large bag on his shoulder. "Do you think anyone would mind if I opened up one of the access panels on my ship?"

Brandon shrugged. "It's your ship, Scottie."

Talin walked under the Missile Boat's underbelly, running a hand along its smooth hull. "Ah," he said. "Here it is."

Talin pressed a panel on the Missile Boat's hull, causing it to slide back, revealing the internal workings of the Missile Boat's flight computer. From the bag he had produced a black box, studded with scomp-links and wires, which he proceeded to interface with the fighter's computer. "There we go," Talin said, closing the panel.

"What did you just do?" Brandon asked, a frown appearing on his face.

"A little extra something I like to put into whatever ship I'm flying."

Talin reached out to the Force and, with a Dark-Side-enhanced leap, vaulted up to the fighter's canopy. He opened Fire Dragon's canopy using the secondary release controls and dropped into the cockpit.

From the deck, Brandon could hear bleeps and tapping as Talin accessed the fighter's flight computer. He then heard a voice coming from the cockpit:

"Andronicus?"

Whoever it was, it wasn't Andron.

"Good to have you back, Eljay."

"It's good to be back, Lieutenant."

Brandon's face twisted into a look of confusion. "Andron, who are you talking to?"

Talin's head appeared at the side of the cockpit. "Brandon, I'd like you to meet my Droid AI module, Eljay."

"What is it?"

"Eljay is the computer core and RAM modules from the LJ-41 pilot droid I worked with as a courier pilot on Balenarphus IV. I decided to strip him down and bring him with me to the Navy. Ever since, I've had him installed as part of my flight computer."

"What can he do?" Brandon asked.

"He can do pretty much the same stuff an R-model astromech can in an Alphabet Fighter. Except get in the way, of course. And he speaks Basic, as you heard."

Brandon shook his head. "I daren't think what other tricks you have up your sleeve, Talin."

Talin smiled. "Neither do I. C'mon, let's go to the Cantina. You can buy me a drink."

"Hah! You're the new boy, so you're buyin'!"

"It seems I have a lot of stuff to get used to around here...." Andron said.

Talin's reaction to seeing the Challenge's cantina for the first time was not what usually happened with new pilots. Usually, new pilots stationed aboard the Challenge see the Cantina for the first time and get the shock of their lives. Talin just raised an eyebrow in a quizzical fashion and followed Brandon in.

"Reminds me of some of the bars I frequented on Balenarphus IV," Talin said as he approached the bar. "But not as quiet. What you having, Brandy?"

"Spiced Lum, please," Brandon replied.

"Make it two," Talin said.

The two foamy tankards were placed on the bar with a clunk. Brandon and Talin picked up their drinks and swigged deeply from the mugs of frothy beverage.

"Ahh," Talin said, "Been a while since I had one of those. They had synth-lum on the Phoenix, which tasted like ship's fuel mixed with Bantha sweat."

"Hah, got that right," a voice said from behind Talin.

Brandon gestured to the figure standing behind him. "Scottie, I'd like you to meet Captain Vader, one of our Flight Leaders."

Talin turned on his stool and offered Vader his hand. The weathered Imperial officer accepted it, "So you're the new boy," Vader said. "Don't worry, I'm sure you'll do fine here in Typhoon."

"I hope so, Captain," Talin said.

Vader released his hand. "First of all, no ranks in the Cantina. Secondly, I drink Whyren's Reserve, straight."

Talin smiled wryly and gestured to the bartender.

Typhoon's barracks, the next morning. Brandon awoke to the usual low-key activity of early morning.

"Ow! That was my foot!"

"Was it? I thought it was mine! Sorry!"

"Does anyone have toothpaste? I'm all out!"

"Can I borrow your razor, Jenn? I need to shave my legs."

Brandon wasn't sure, as it was so early in the morning, but he could've sworn Oldham said that. But one voice was notable in its absence. Andronicus.

Brandon used his Dark Jedi techniques to bring himself to full awakening and looked around the barracks. He wasn't here.

"Vader," Brandon said, "Have you seen Andron this morning?"

Vader shrugged. "I think he slipped out early today. I heard him get up, but I thought he was going to the bathroom. I ain't heard him since."

Brandon picked up his comlink. "Brandon to Andronicus. Come in."

He heard a bleep from Andronicus' bed. He'd left his comlink behind.

"Whatever he's doing, he obviously doesn't want to be disturbed," Callista said. "Don't worry, he'll be back."

Brandon grimaced. "I'm gonna check the fighter bay. I've got a feeling he could be doing some more modifications to his Missile Boat."

Brandon walked into the hangar bay where Typhoon's fighters were stationed. He looked up towards the fighter rack where Two Flight's Missile Boats were stationed, looking for Talin's fighter-

-His eyes fell onto the Imperial fighter, not quite believing what he was seeing. Both of the fighters flanks had an extremely intricate dragon painted on, sheathed in a purple halo to reflect Talin's Krath affiliation, breathing fire.

"Nice, isn't it?" A voice said from behind Brandon. It was Talin.

"Scottie, that's incredible! How did you do it so quick? Some kind of Krath thing?"

"Nah," said the young Scot, "I just used tech droids with a special program I wrote loaded into them. I wrote the program when I was on the Phoenix. I did paint some of it, tho, so I could have the personal touch."

Brandon's eyebrows raised. "Wow," he said. "I have to say, that is damn cool. Laerox won't recognise it if he sees it again."

Talin smiled. "Good. I want to make it personalised."

"Well, my friend, I think you've succeeded, what with Eljay and now this paint job."

Talin smiled. "Mission accomplished, then. So, what's on the agenda for today?"

Brandon threw an arm around his Scottish friend, leading him to the doorway. "Well, that's what our morning briefing's about. I hear it's something to do with a Vice Admiral in another sector..."

FIN

...By...

FM/LT Andronicus/Typhoon 2-4/Wing X/ISD Challenge

...And...

FM/LCM Brandon/Typhoon 1-2/Wing X/ISD Challenge

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Tired of hearing stories about the proud, brave pilots of the greatest squadrons in the galaxy? Then gather round, children, and listen to my tale about... Alphalpha squadron.

Alphalpha squadron stats

Home: Wing MCMXXIX, Dreadnaught "Rascal"

Sister squad: Spanky squadron



Squad motto: "Survival is optional"  
Mission profile: Draw Enemy Fire  
Nickname: Target Drones

- 1) Baron Fail
- 2) Marek Steletubby
- 3) Aisa Z. Meen
- 4) Wedgie Antilles

Alphalpha squadron were hanging around in the squad barracks. Marek was reading a TIE Fighter player's guide, Aisa was reading the latest EH Newsletter, Wedgie was reading the latest EH Cosmopolitan... and Baron Fail was looking over the INPR's of various Daedalus cadets, looking for new recruits.

"Hey," said Fail, "Look at this... this pilot is bragging about how he was flying one of the TIE Interceptors that chased the Millennium Falcon down the second Death Star at the Battle of Endor."

Wedgie said, "Ha! Join the club, kid! So did I!"

"Me, too!" said Aisa.

Fail chuckled. "Yeah, you can hardly swing a dead cat in this club without hitting a couple of pilots who followed the Millennium Falcon down the Death Star at the Battle of Endor. It's kind of odd..."

Suddenly the intercom sounded: "All members of Alphalpha squadron, report to the briefing room."

They all filed into the briefing room and looked up at the large briefing map screen. The Commodore voice filled the room: "One TIE Fighter from Alpha, Beta, and Gamma squadrons will..."

They all ignored him and read the briefing from their datapads. "Why does he always read the same briefing?" mumbled Wedgie.

"It's the voice file..." Marek began, but Fail glared at them.

Their datapads read: "An unknown star system has been discovered. We will go in and destroy the aliens."

Marek sighed. "Why can't they spend even five kriffing minutes coming up with a good storyline? I can't believe..."

The Commodore asked, "Are there any questions?"

Marek raised his hand. "Yeah, was this mission approved by Project Reno? Because I don't think..."

Baron Fail interrupted him and asked, "What are the mission objectives?"

"To destroy all enemy craft."

Wedgie mumbled, "Oh, thanks for the strategy, Patton."

Fail asked, "What craft will we be flying?"

"Unshielded TIE Fighters with no missiles."

"Of course," said Fail. "What enemy opposition will there be?"

"The aliens are operating a VSD..."

"Hold it, hold it," said Aisa. "If these aliens are in a totally

unexplored sector of space, why do they have access to a warship which is used exclusively by the Galactic Empire?"

"... and a squadron of B-Wings."

"What?" said Aisa again. "B-Wings are exclusive to New Republic forces! How..."

"It's simple," Marek explained. "This game platform doesn't have very much craft variety. There's only a handful of ships that aren't exclusively Rebel or Imperial. Now, if we were an XWA squadron..."

"Hey!" Fail said. "Marek, this is the last time I'm warning you about speaking in a Real-Life context!"

A few minutes later, the squadron was launched and the Rascal hypered away.

In front of them was a VSD, but the B-Wings were nowhere in sight. As they flew toward the VSD and maneuvered into attack position, it began turning sharply in their direction.

"Hey," Aisa said, "that VSD is maneuvering kind of weird..."

Fail checked his instruments. "Oh no, it can't be..!"

Marek gasped: "It is! The VSD has been programmed with a starfighter Attack order! It's maneuvering like a starfighter!"

"Run away!" screeched Aisa.

Their TIEs scattered away from the VSD. It lurched, maneuvering after Wedgie's fighter. Its huge bulk swung out of control and smashed Aisa's fighter to bits.

The squadron of B-Wings launched suddenly, and quickly disabled the TIEs. Next thing they knew, they were captured and being led to the ship's prison facilities.

They were all in the single large prison cell (Aisa had been captured after ejecting), but it wasn't long before they were joined by another prisoner: a young, red-haired woman in a camouflage jumpsuit. She glared at them all suspiciously. "Who are you?" she hissed.

"We're Alpha squadron of the Emperor's Hammer Elite Strike Fleet," Fail said.

"Yeah," said Aisa. "We were voted the Most Mediocre squadron for 4 years running."

Wedgie looked at Aisa and shook his head. "Who are you?" he asked the woman.

She stayed defensive for a moment, then seemed to relax and said, "I'm Mara Jade."

"And what are you in for, Jade?" asked Fail.

"Ehh, these aliens hate the Empire..." she began.

"Are you another Imperial pilot?" asked Aisa.

"Hardly," she snorted. "They must know that I was once a personal agent of the Emperor... I was the Emperor's Hand," she said solemnly.

The pilots laughed. "Who wasn't?" said Fail. "Heck, even Aisa is an

Emperor's Hand. I'm the Emperor's Reach, Marek is the Emperor's Eyes..."  
"Yeah," said Wedgie, "And I'm the Emperor's Nose Hair. Sure, pretty much everyone in the EH was the Emperor's Hand at one time or another. We are all, and we're the crappiest squad there is! When's the last time we had a mission where we weren't all captured, Fail?"  
"Um... have we ever had a successful mission?"  
Mara Jade was giving them all odd looks. She asked, "Uh, if you get captured all the time, how do you escape?"  
"Why, simple," said Marek. "Aisa keeps a standard Imperial Escape Kit in his anal cavity at all times. Okay, whose turn is it to retrieve it?"

After they retrieved the escape kit, they called the guards to clean up the mess Jade had made puking all over the floor. Then it was a routine matter for them to kill the guards, steal their uniforms, make their way to the ship hangar, sabotage a couple of ship systems, engage in a huge firefight in which they could have all been killed, commandeer the B-Wings, and escape, weapons blazing, from the VSD as it exploded into flame behind them.  
Wedgie yawned and said, "Well, another uneventful day. Let's get back." They returned to the fleet. Unfortunately, before they could send their authorization code the ships assumed the B-Wings were Rebels and blasted Aisa's ship to pieces.

Aisa awoke to find in the ship's medical bay, hovering in midair. He saw a giant needle lowering from the ceiling...  
"Oh no," he said. "Not the needle. Can't you just give some bacta or AAAUGGGHRRR!!!"  
The squad finally gathered in the debriefing room. Fail wearily asked the Commodore, "What did we accomplish?"  
"We have captured a freighter containing..."  
Wedge sighed and said, "Okay, screw you guys, I'm outta here."

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FL/LT IQpierce/Sin 2-1/Wing II/SSSD Sovereign

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**Imperial Navy Pilot Record**  
**Personal Background information**  
**(Imperial Security Bureau)**

Name: Kyle Garm Augustus  
Rank: Sub-Lieutenant, Flight Member, ISDII Vanguard  
ScanDoc Transmission Code: U96hydra@aol.com  
Sex [M/F]: Male  
Race: Human

Date of Birth: 12.23.83 ISC

Place of Birth (Please include Homeworld): Zeta Colony, Motan Minor, Orus Sector

Martial Status: Single

Family: Father: Jetnatha, Mother: Narry

Social Status: Imperial Citizen

Significant Events of Childhood and Adolescence: Kyle Garm Augustus was one of the many refugees forced to flee from the Motan Minor system when it was attacked by the Ssi-ruuk Imperium. He escaped the invaders aboard the TL-1800 transport Mithian Star with his parents, sister, and the Mithian family. During their hyperspace jump to G'rho they were captured by the Night Hawk pirates. While he was a prisoner aboard the pirate ship Night Hawk he was almost sold into slavery. While escaping from the pirates, his girlfriend, Asla Tontomery, was shot and recaptured by the pirates. Her status is unknown. The rest of them escaped and safely arrived at G'rho.

Significant Events of Adulthood: Kyle Augustus joined the Imperial Navy shortly before the Battle of Hoth. He was placed in Enforcer Squadron, a TIE inteceptor squadron assigned to the Imperial II-class Star Destroyer Crimson Scimitar. He participated in the removal of the Ssi-ruuk forces from Imperial space. Later, he was involved in the Battle of Endor. Kyle was one of the six Imperial TIEs that followed the rebel fighters into the second Death Star. He and two TIE fighters followed a Y-wing and an A-wing back to the surface. The two other inteceptors continued to pursue the Millenium Falcon and escorting X-wing. Kyle escaped the second Death Star before it was destroyed. After the defeat at Endor, he continued to serve the Empire with distinction.

I hereby confirm that the above information is legitimate and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

FM/LT Kyle Garm Augustus/Scorpion 3-4/Wing XV/ISD Vanguard

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**Imperial Navy Pilot Record**  
**Personal Background information**  
**(Imperial Security Bureau)**

Name: Kircheis "Blond Knight" Tyksen

Position/Rank: Thunder 2-3 - Flight Member / Sub-Lieutenant

Scandoc Transmission Code: destiel@silcon.com

Sex: Male

Race: Human

Date of Birth: 17.03 - 16BSW6

Physical Description: Blond Hair, Green Eyes, 1.93m, 97kg, Age 21

Home Planet: Corellia

Marital Status: Single

Family: Parents retired on Brentaal, Bormea Sector. Sister serves as a Lieutenant in the Corellian

Security Force.

Social Status: The Imperial Navy feeds me and provides the chick magnet uniform.

Past History: Kircheis Tychsen was born on Corellia, a densely populated planet in the Corellian Sector of the proximal outer rim territories over 21 standard years ago. He grew up in a close family with his parents and little sister, whom he doted on and was always there for her whenever she needed the 'big brother'. His parents were first generation traders and did very well with their import of rare and exotic items that the Diktat and his sycophantic lackeys enjoyed.

Kircheis was keenly interested in speed from an early age. If it went fast, it was for him, if it didn't, he'd find a way to make it. His peers still fondly recall the time he modified a landspeeder with the power pack out of an old TIE Interceptor that had been sent for scrap. The look on the faces of the Troopers that tried to catch him on Speeder Bikes was well worth the discipline infringements. His parents encouraged Kircheis' adventurous nature and had given him a second hand T-16 on his 14th birthday. Although it handled like a taun-taun, with a bit of technical and mechanical wizardry, there was nothing that could beat him in a straight sprint (something he capitalized on and made quite a few credits off many a convoy escort visiting dirtside). His prowess as a pilot brought him to the attention of the flight leader of the small Imperial Navy detachment, who took it upon himself to commence Kircheis' indoctrination with a view for service at the Academy.

Kircheis excelled in the theory and practice of spaceflight -- his understanding of Battlezone procedure (tactics, logistics and administration) was unheard of in one so young. He enrolled in several advanced courses including tactical theory, astroengineering, communications, and sublight technical studies. During his classes he was calm, reserved, and attentive, soaking up as much information as he could. After hours and off duty, he was a whole different person.

Kircheis had been lucky enough to be assigned to the 614th Training Squadron of Delta Company, now infamously known as the "Lady Killer Squadron", much to do with the personality of Kircheis and his squadmates. Apart from charming the local females with their looks and uniforms, they had successfully managed to do the impossible: Get a date with untouchable Lt. Commander Jennifer Hewitt. Of the fifteen-man squadron, three of them had been lucky enough to even get close to the knock out Communications Officer for the PLT/Daedalus. The battle for the date was between Cadets Julius Calion, Thadius Maarek, and Kircheis himself. A long story short, Kircheis ended up with two broken ribs, Calion with a busted hand, and Thadius with Hewitt. However, the revenge that Kircheis and Calion had on Thadius more than made up for the defeat.

Kircheis graduated with honors with his squadmates and applied for assignment in Thunder Squadron, Wing X, ISD Challenge...

Alignment & Attitude: It is our duty to serve the Empire to our fullest abilities, as to do less would be to admit defeat.

Former Occupations: Trader, Self-Proclaimed Test Pilot and Engineer

Hobbies: Small Arms, Astroengineering

Combat Specialties: Fighter Sweep, Escort, Heavy Assault, and Capitol Ship Engagement

Educational Specialty: Military History

Side Arms: Blastech DL-1440, BlastTech DL 22 Light Blaster Pistol

Favorite Beverage: Taanab Martini - Shaken not Stirred

Tragedies: None

Allergies: Violent Reaction to Ewok Fur

Personal views of the Empire (and Emperor's Hammer): "The Empire, OUR Empire, is tasked with saving our citizens. We work for the people."

Reason for applying to the Emperor's Hammer Elite Strike Fleet: The unifor...err...

Quote: "See, decide, attack, reverse..."

I hereby confirm that the above information is legitimate and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

*Kircheis Tychsen*

Kircheis Tychsen

Date: 19.06.99

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Fire in the Sky

By Major Fink Cantor, Tornado Squadron

Prologue

Council Chamber on Vosh Plateau, Aliroo Dimensional Alliance

Avensai Dytiri smiled and carefully surveyed the council room in which he been so fortuitously placed. The Lord Ambassador had been wise to choose him as his temporary replacement, this would do well to advance him back home. Being posted as alternate ambassador to the Alliance was indeed an important position.

"Thank you General Pepper for your report on Corneria's agricultural viability. Now Ambassador Fink's attache will present a report on the current status of the Kadith Republic." An audible groan went through the chambers as Dytiri stepped forward. One paw shot up, and Sirris nodded.

"Go ahead Ambassador."

"Pardon me for asking attache Dytiri, but where is Lord Ambassador Fink?" Dytiri smiled and raised his paw in a traditional salute.

"Ambassador Fink appointed me as his temporary replacement, he is apparently on vacation." A chorus of "OH's" went up through the chamber. That all made sense, everybody needs vacations (particularly Fink, after all he had been through of late).

"Very well Mr. Dytiri, begin." Dytiri smiled and opened his arms in expansive gesture. Fink had told him that being an Ambassador to the Alliance was like being an artist on a very large canvas. But then, Fink was also an idealist. Dytiri on the other hand, was an opportunist. And he had found himself subject to some fascinating opportunities indeed.

"Thank you acting president Sirris. I come here to speak of a grave threat to my people..."

\* \* \*

ISD Challenge  
Carrida System

“And I said I was going on vacation, huh.” Fink spat and threw his dagger. It flew a fair distance and embedded itself in the wall. The Kadith was not inclined to rise and retrieve it, the life support gear on his flight suit was weighing him down. Fink went over the simulator run in his mind (his first since returning to Tornado): It had been fairly simple, eliminate the Rebel supply cache. Unfortunately, a fully loaded MC-90 had arrived and launched it’s fighters (lead by Rea, who had the day off and volunteered). The fighting had been serious, but in the end the Rebels had overwhelmed the Flight. Fink took some satisfaction in having taken out Rea, but he still died.

“Damn, I must be losing it.” The Kadith sank lower into the large armchair that he had the foresight to bring along with him to the Challenge (the wonders of the dimensional storage are boundless). Despite having professed to be losing his touch, Fink knew why he had returned to Tornado. He would always be a pilot, it was in his blood. Getting out in his starfighter and vaping whomever was the enemy of the day was like some sort of drug, and Fink couldn’t get enough.

“Keershang: The makings of a Martyr. Hmm..” Fink plucked the said book off the ground and gazed at the cover for a moment. It depicted the great seal of the Republic on the cover, his people were known be remarkably finicky when it came to the written word. Words he was told, carried unspeakable power (a power which is diminished when computerized, formatted and transmitted). The power of the Word would be preserved only if painstakingly handwritten. Such were the quirks of a race he supposed. Fink was just settling into his new-found book when the door chimed, prompting the Kadith to sigh. It was always something..

“Come in.” Fink didn’t look up as the door hissed open, admitting a Human. The Kadith wasn’t entirely sure which particular Human this was, but he had the scent of authority upon him. Then again, most Human had a similar odor (a none too pleasant one at that).

“Is this yours?” A knife blade appeared over the book page, Fink took it without comment. The Human waited for a moment, then slowly raised Fink’s chin so that they’re gazes could meet.

“Oh hello Striker, I didn’t see you come in.” That was true, he HADN’T seen him come in. Striker only snorted, conveying his opinion of THAT little statement in an instant.

“Finished with the simulators?”

“Yeah I am.”

“How did you do?” Fink returned his attention to the book, “We lost.”

“Oh.” Striker began to pace about the room, an action that irritated the Kadith no end, “Striker, is there a reason that you are in my quarters, pacing about and attempting to attach importance to yourself?”

Striker halted , “Your bordering on insubordination mister.” The Kadith didn’t even bother to looked up, “Come on Striker, why are you here? I know it’s not to make small talk.”

The Wing Commander quietly licked his lips, “I received your Intelligence debriefing transcript. They reported you as difficult, unscrupulous, time consuming, uncooperative.. Is there any special reason for this?”

Fink only shrugged and allowed a grin to come to his lips, “I’m ALWAYS like that to Intel types, I don’t like them.” Striker sighed and took a seat next to the Major,

“Look Fink, you’re under enough suspicion as it is at the moment. One moment you’re here, then you retire, and three months later you return. What’s more, you refuse to tell us where

exactly you've been! If Intel decides to trump up charges, I can't stop them" Fink slammed his book shut, allowing his anger to become evident.

"Is that a threat?"

Striker returned Fink's gaze levelly, "I don't know Fink is it?" The Kadith narrowed his eyes, then jumped up, crossing his arms defiantly.

"I can come and go as I please."

"Maybe, but Intel seems to think that you're up to something. And your behavior is only compounding that suspicion Fink."

"Yeah, I suppose. But what I've seen and heard is beyond all of this. It's bigger than you, it's bigger than me. There are people watching us Striker, and we don't know it. If I were to tell you everything, I would compromise their secrecy, and I swore that I would never do that." Striker sighed and threw up his arms in surrender.

"In the end, it's your choice Fink. But don't blame when Intel comes looking for you, I hate being blamed for my pilot's mistakes." Sniffing, the Human made to depart then halted. "Oh by the way, Tornado Squadron has ops in a few hours. You might want to go talk to Kessler about it." Striker departed, leaving Fink to himself. The Kadith gazed uncertain for a time, then in a sudden bout of fury grabbed his book and heaved it as hard as he could against the wall. The book clattered harmlessly and dropped to the floor, leaving Fink to breath heavily.

"He's right of course, damnit."

\* \* \*

## ISD Challenge

Tornado Squadron briefing room, 1432 Hours (standard)

Badlands checked his chronometer and alternately cursed Fink and the universe in general. Everyone had gathered in the briefing room in preparation for the run into Republic space to hit a supply depot. Well, almost everyone.. NiksaVel had abruptly retired a couple weeks prior, there were rumors that he was shell-shocked but Badlands didn't think that was the case. It didn't seem to him that Niksa was an officer that could easily suffer such an affliction. Then there was Fink..

"Thanks for getting here so fast guys, we've got a mission to fly." There was a round of general agreement and nodding of heads, everybody was eager to get underway.

"Right, most of you know the briefing. We will be staging near Carrida for a strike into Republic space, a supply depot. Nothing too difficult.." Badlands allowed himself to zone out for the time being, he had already heard the briefing several times. Kessler was merely reiterating what he had said previously. The Flight Leader was pondering the meaning of life when he was startled by the familiar hiss of an opening hatch. Making sure that nobody saw him, the Flight Leader turned to see the familiar Furry visage of Fink.

"You're late Fink." Badlands muttered, but Fink didn't seem to hear him. The Kadith moved directly to the head of the group and waited patiently for Kessler to finish the briefing.

"Once we have eliminated Gold wing, Transport Omega will capture the containers and we'll be ready to head out. Any questions?" Nobody raised their hands, most of the pilots strewn about the briefing room looked bored out of their mind.

"Very well. Darkness defend you, we launch in a standard hour." Amidst the flood of pilots making their way out of the briefing room to check their gear, Badlands attempted to push his way to the head of the line in an effort to speak with Fink. He wasn't entirely successful, the Kadith was deep in conversation with Kessler.



“Major.. Uh, Major!” Fink nodded, gave Kessler a quick salute and departed before Badlands could speak with him.

“Damn you Fink.” Sighing, the pilot departed the briefing room to check his gear and prep his fighter. After all, it was almost time to launch.

\* \* \*

Greeop System

Rebel Squadrons Supply Depot

“Computer, ETA to Target.” Fink was tired, the trip through Hyperspace had been a long one. :Approximately one minute to exit: The Kadith sighed and stretched, he had slept most of the way. His people possessed the remarkable capacity to drop into a stasis like sleep in an instant, much like a Jedi. Apparently it had something to do with the fact that they had evolved on an ice planet.

:Arrival in 5.. 4... 3... 2...” Fink wrapped his paw around the hyperspace lever, and slowly pulled it back. The long blue tunnel in which they he had been previously ensconced detonated in a brilliant blue haze and resolved itself into stars. The Kadith blinked, then leaned forth.

“What the hell!?” Something was departing the depot, something really big. Fink was only able to catch a quick look at the departing ship’s silhouette before it leapt into Hyperspace. It took but a moment for the Kadith to recover his sense, “Computer, identify the ship that just departed.” The onboard computer whirred for a moment.

:Scan complete: Silhouette unidentifiable: Fink sighed and locked in his helmet, the special built in visual sensors promptly kicked in and the Kadith found that his eyesight had markedly improved (Furries have a problem with depth perception.)

“This is lead, was anybody able to identify the outbound ship?” There was a chorus of “no’s” as Fink charged up his lasers and prepared for battle. He had an idea who the ship belonged to, but he wasn’t quite ready to disclose that just yet.

“Flight 3, this is Badlands. We have our orders, cover Flight One as.. Just a moment, damnit.” Fink saw it a moment later before the flight leader. A Rebel frigate identified as the Cour Prido had slipped out of the cluster of containers in the distance and was moving to engage the squadron.

“This is lead. Flight One will be assaulting the frigate, Flight Two handles the containers and Flight Three covers me. Go now.” Fink nodded and complied, it was typical Kessler. Quick and decisive, the Kadith was certain that the commander’s orders had saved more pilot’s than they had doomed.

“Right, you heard him Flight Three. Fink on me, we’re going for A-wing Blue. The rest of you go for the X-wings. They’re targeting Flight One.” Sucking in a breath, Fink felt the inertial compensators shift as he entered a roll and pulled up on Badland’s flank.

“Okay Fink, we’re going in hot and fast. Lets get those A-wing, you take two.” Fink roundly cursed his fate, he had been equipped with Torpedoes. No good against the agile Rebel A-wing.

“Right, I’m going in.” Fink’s TIE Defender moaned a bit as the Kadith pulled in line with the enemy A-wing. The Rebel pilot didn’t seem to mind, the A-wing continued on a direct line toward Fink’s Furry Fury. His funeral.

“See you in Hell friend.” With the ease borne of a practiced pilot, the Kadith calmly centered the approaching A-wing and spitted it with a quad laser blast. The A-wing immediately blasted upward, prompting Fink to smile. Typical rookie. The Kadith once again pulled the trigger, sending four emerald green blasts direct into the shields of the hapless A-wing. Something on

the enemy fighter detonated, and the A-wing went spinning into space then detonated.

“Hell, the Rebs have advance missiles!” Fink jerked his head up, a Reb fighter was trying for a missile lock on him. Out to his starboard wing, the Kadith could make out Badland’s TIE Defender desperately trying to avoid another A-wing directly to his rear.

“Damn it, I can’t see him!” Fink could feel a bead of sweat forming on his forehead, this was all eerily familiar.

“Badlands, he’s square on your six. Get out of there!”

“I. I can’t!” Fink gaped as the A-wing fired two Advanced concussion missiles. The warheads struck directly aft, igniting the fuel cells on Badland’s TIE Defender’s and ripping apart starboard wing assembly.

“Badlands! Damn it!” The Kadith wished that he could feel anger, remorse or hatred but all he could feel the cold concentration of a skilled pilot. Narrowing his eyes, Fink dropped onto the A-wing’s tail with ease and unloaded a torpedo into it’s six. The Kadith squinted as he swept past the wreckage of Badland’s starfighter. The Human had survived, and was floating in the middle of the debris, waving his arms wildly.

“This is 3-3. Badland’s is EV, he needs a pickup right now.” Without waiting for a response, the Kadith jacked up his engines to full power and rejoined the fray. Flight One’s Missile Boats had obviously put the hurt on the frigate, even as Fink watched it was beginning to break up.

“Transport Omega, this is Kessler. The area is clear, pickup Badland’s as you go out. Flight Two, you fly patrol. The rest of you on me, lets get out of here.” Sighing gratefully, Fink activated his engines and accelerated away.

\* \* \*

Fink looked about and turned the corner, the Tornado Squadron lounge was just ahead. The Kadith figured that he would quick pick up a drink, and find the answer to a mystery that had been eating at him for a time now. Snatching a mug of Lomin Ale from the counter, the Kadith carefully removed his TDT. The small device had been a gift from Saveen Davaderick upon his appointment to the Alliance Council. Unlike the clunky Kadith TDT, the Roo version was very well streamlined and easy to handle.

“Alright TDT, I want you to read something for me..”

:Confirmed:” Reaching into his flight suit pocket, Fink pulled out a small holo chit. It contained the record of the battle near the Rebel supply depot. With a deft movement, the Kadith plugged the chit into the TDT and waited.

:Processing. Enter inquiry:

:Identify the outbound ship at the beginning of the recording:

:Working:

\* \* \*

Pirath 2

Pirath System, Emperor’s Hammer/Kadith space

Nar Vonos Ranvero snorted derisively at the small holo image before him. This one was obviously brave, or stupid.

“I do not believe that I heard you correctly, you wish me to go forward right now? Are you aware that there is a fully operation Victory Class Destroyer currently orbiting Pirath 1?” The Kadith on the other end of the transmission hissed impatiently,

“Fool, you have more then enough firepower to handle a simple VSD. I need Pirath 1 gone now, my “associates” are beginning to lay on the pressure. We must act quickly, decisively. A

victory here, now will serve to distract the Empire long enough for us to achieve our true goals. Go now, serve the Founders with honor.” The Kadith vanished, leaving Ranvero in a bind. It had been strictly mandated that EH bases on the fringes of the Home system be left alone for the time being, but this recently arrived counselor with his “associates” seemed to know what he was doing.. At last, Ranvero had made his decision.

“Helm, prepare for a micro-jump. Precise coordinates.”

“Yes my Lord.”

“Gunnery, ready all weapons. I want the heavy laser ready when we exit Hyperspace.”

“As you command.”

“Starfighter: I want the Mark 2’s out first, then add in Mark 3’s.” There was no response from Starfighter Command, but that was alright. They were busy.

“Enter Hyperspace.. Now.” Vonos braced himself as the Heavy Cruiser leapt into Hyperspace, only to decelerate less then 10 seconds later. It took only a moment for Ranvero to recover, calling up the holo display he caught sight of the Victory Star Destroyer.

“To battle my brothers..”

\* \* \*

:Analysis complete, ship identified: Fink yawned and glanced at the TDT, a small light upon it’s surface announcing the completion of it’s analysis. Righting himself, the Kadith took hold of the TDT and examined it.

“Alright, what was the ship?” The TDT hummed, and a tiny holo of the rear end of ship appeared. A wireframe appeared, followed by a skin then the rest of the ship. Fink gasped, it was a Kadith Rantaro Class Heavy Cruiser.

“What the hell was a Heavy Cruiser doing in a Rebel supply depot?”

:Unknown:

“Where was it going?”

:Ship was on course for outskirts of Pirath system: Fink took a moment to consider that, it could only mean that the Cruiser was on course for Homeworld, but.. that didn’t track. It was on course for the outskirts of Pirath, which meant.. Shit.

“TDT, can you lock into the comm signals from Pirath 1?”

:Working.. Completed.” Fink placed the TDT to his ear, he could a faint buzzing and the occasional scream. One man seemed to be attempting to send a distress call, but then was silenced. Without hesitation, Fink snatched hold of the comm and flipped it to the appropriate channel.

“Torres this is Fink.”

“Yeah, what is it?”

“Set course for Pirath 1, now!”

“Why?”

“There under attack, they don’t have a prayer unless we get out there.”

“I can’t Fink, we’re under orders here..”

“Orders be damned, this is an EH base. Are we just going to leave them?”

“Alright Fink.. But this had better not be a false alarm.” Fink sighed and quickly tugged away his comm unit. Rising, the Kadith made for the bridge.

\* \* \*

“Approaching Pirath system.” Torres glanced at Fink, but the Kadith said nothing, something that made him uneasy. He was half expecting Fink to sit and defend his position the entire three hour jump to Pirath. Instead he merely sat and brooded.

“Drop us out of Hyperspace.” The Rear Admiral watched as the long tunnel faded to starlines, then simply stars. The Challenge had arrived in Pirath.

“Scan the area.” Torres called to the pit, prompting one of the petty officers to leap to a sensory display.

“Nothing in the area, massive amounts of debris though.” The Rear Admiral squinted as the Challenge pulled into debris field. The battle was evident: Everywhere floated the wreckage of TIE’s and Gunboats, the burned out hulk of a Victory Star Destroyer casually orbited the planet.

“I don’t see any enemy wreckage, just Imperial.” Fink nodded, a fully armed Rantaro Heavy Cruiser could make short work of any Imperial base, particularly given the technological advancements borne out of their contact with the Dimensional Alliance.

“Gods, look at the planet..” Torres squinted, where the Imperial base was supposed to be there was nothing but a very large crater. It was as if a giant had taken an ice cream scoop and simply yanked the base out of the ground. There was nothing left.

“Fink.. I believe, I believe that it’s time for some answers..”

“Answers? You want answers? Well I’m sorry Torres, but I have none to give you.” Fink tilted his head back and glared defiantly at the Commodore, prompting his fellow Cantor to spit upon the floor in anger.

“Damn it Fink, how the hell did you know about this, hmm? The distress signals never went out, the comm relay was shattered. Who was it that attacked this outpost, Rebels?” Fink’s features smiles into a Kadith version of smile, and he actually began to laugh.

“Please Torres, you’re a smart man. Look out the window, does this look like the work of the Rebels? No.. It can be the work of only one.” Fink narrowed his eyes and leaned in so close to the Star Destroyer Commodore that Torres could feel the Kadith’s hot breath blasting into his face.

“And who is that Fink?” The Major made to open his mouth, but just quickly snapped it shut again.

“I don’t know yet. Good day David.” Bowing, the Kadith turned and departed the room, his tail held in the position that said that he knew more than he was looking more (the Kadith don’t have control over their tails, it simply goes into a posture that reflects their emotions)

“Yeah you too Fink..”

\* \* \*

With a derisive snort, Fink shoved aside another piece of wreckage and worked his way through the pile that had once been a glimmering Imperial base. The Kadith had quietly signed up with rescue crew, not because he thought that there was someone still alive. Far from it, Fink laid the odds on THAT to be somewhere between a million and the Emperor being resurrected long enough to give the Rebels a full pardon. No, he had not come here to do any actual rescuing, but because he had his agenda to look after.

:Energy signature found: The Kadith halted and tapped a few keys on his TDT. He had been right after all.. Damn it. Something else caught Fink’s attention, a Human skull was jutting out from beneath a piece of wreckage. Careful not to disturb the body, Fink carefully removed the wreckage to reveal a human skeleton (still clad in an Imperial commander uniform) sitting before a command console.

“Well hello, what is this..” A holo chit was jammed into the system, the dead Human had been recording something before he died. Pulling the chit out of the computer bank, the Kadith carefully looked about. Nobody was about. Stuffing the chit into his pocket, the Kadith walked

away to rejoin the search party.

\* \* \*

:Error, data corrupted. Cannot read Holo chit: Fink groaned and smacked his TDT, the alien device responded by flashing a number of curses in his general direction (this should not be surprising, Aliroo tech has an attitude). Sighing, the Kadith did the only thing that he could think of and banged the device upon the table.

:Logs located. Activating holo: Fink smiled and leaned back in his overstuffed armchair. This was more like it. With a light swish, a holo appeared. It was an Imperial Commander, barely in his twenties. Fink shook his head, it just went to show what sort of personnel difficulties the Empire was having these days.

“Imperial log, Commander Peterson reporting. Today we recorded an interesting incursion on the edge of the Pirath system. Apparently, a substantial fleet entered the outskirts of the systems via a dimensional rift but just as quickly vanished. We sent an recon fighter out, but we were able to find no trace of their arrival. We can only conclude that that it was an instrument malfunction, but Science station is keeping an eye on it.” Fink blinked, the Imperial Commander was likely referring to the Battle of Katrees. He had thought that the fleet had been hidden well enough, apparently he had been wrong. The TDT whirred, and a second log activated.

“Imperial log, Commander Peterson reporting. It appears that the dimensional rift that we recorded a week ago was not a fluke, we are recording very unusual readings near the edge of the system. We have launched yet another recon fighter in hopes of ascertaining the precise nature of this rift. Information pending.” Taking a sip of his Lomin Ale, Fink proceeded to the next log.

“Imperial log, Commander Peterson reporting. The recon fighter has returned, the information it brings is fantastic! Apparently this rift was no fluke, but an artificial singularity. Moreover, the Pirath system is far more extensive then we first believed. Recon Alpha recorded 10 planets, the fifth, sixth and seventh appear to be inhabited, we..” The log blanked out.

:Error, data file is corrupted, proceed to next log.”

“Proceed.”

“Imperial log, Commander Peterson reporting. We had our first contact with the aliens today, they do not appear to know that we are watching them. They seem to be an advanced spacefaring race, we are going through history files.. Just a moment... It appears that the Old Republic had contact with this race approximately 1000 years ago, the data does not go into more detail then that...” Fink frowned, he had arrived at the final log entry. The Kadith waited for a moment, then tapped the button to proceed. The commander appeared once again, this time he appeared quite haggard.

“Imperial log, final entry. The aliens seem to have found us, we received a message declaring that if we don’t evacuate the planet, that we will be destroyed within 36 hours. We have elected to stay and fight, the VSD Talon’s Nest has been pulled off station and is currently holding position. Our communications officer is preparing a.. What the hell, get me a reading on that ship! Launch fighters, prepare a distress signal. Hold on, no!” The picture flashed, and there was nothing further. Fink could guess what had happened to the hapless base, the skeleton that he had discovered near the command console was likely Commander Peterson. Fink sighed and settled back into his chair, he knew what he had to do next.

\* \* \*

“Come in Private, you had a report for me?” The Intelligence officer took a moment to paste a smile on to his face, and beckoned the Stormtrooper to sit. The Marine eyed the chair as if it was

a snake, but eventually did as he was told. Even without the traditional white armor, the Stormtrooper had the “look” about him. But then, the training (some say brainwashing) that they receive does that.

“Now report.” The Stormtrooper sat rigid in his chair and pulled out a holo chit.

“Sir. I was assigned to rescue detail upon the planet service. I was told to report anything out of the ordinary or potentially traitorous on the part of Major Fink. I felt that you should see this.” The garrison officer stuffed the holo chit into the recorder, and waited for it to activate.

“I believe that you will find it most revealing sir.” The holo activated, revealing the Kadith to be standing by a heap of wreckage. Fink did a quick look around, then stuffed an unidentifiable object into his pocket and walked off. The garrison officer grinned,

“Well now, contact Imperial Intelligence. I think.. I think that we now have ample evidence, don’t you think Private?”

“Yes sir.”

\* \* \*

IGZ Cluster, RS/Kadith border

Orbison Tapcafe

Something’s never change, Fink thought. Least of all the Orbison Tapcafe in the IGZ Cluster. The little Tapcafe had been opened shortly after The Battle of Seron during the Rebellion, the establishment had been established inside a downed Imperial Strike Cruiser called the Orbison. Like most Tapcafe’s of it’s kind, it was inhabited by the dregs of the Galaxy. Ranging from Smugglers to Bounty Hunters to the odd Rebel pilot on the look for a quick drink. Precisely the kind of place one would come to for information, which was what Fink intended to use it for. Winding his way through the tables, the Kadith ignored the derisive glares and snorts that issued from the myriad of customers and zeroed in on one table in particular.

“Well now Doc, it’s been a long time.” The graying Kadith took a sup from his Hot Ska and made as if he was ignoring the pilot.

“Leave me alone Fink, I already told you that I give no more information to the Obsidian Order. Least of all you, especially after that little incident with the Emperor’s Fury. Or have you forgotten so soon?” Reaching into his pocket, the Kadith pulled out a bag of credits and dropped them before the elder Kadith.

“Relax old one, I’m not with Order anymore. They’re all dead. Or have YOU forgotten so soon?” Fink injected some venom into his voice, he had few doubts that Doc had been the one that had pointed the EF toward their base in the waning days of the war. The gray Kadith licked his lips and stuffed the credits into his shirt.

“What do you want to know.” Leaning forward, Fink spat the other with a glare.

“I know that you’ve been keeping up with events back home.” The gray one unexpectedly broke into a gleeful laugh.

“Please Fink, you underestimate me. I know EVERYTHING that goes on back home.”

“Well then, why don’t you tell me what happened to the Imperial base on Pirath 1?” The other’s eyes widened, and he immediately attempted to leap up, but Fink dragged him back down.

“Please let me go! I don’t know anything.”

Fink was not ready to let go of the oldster yet, “Damnit, I paid you 100 credits from my own pocket. Now you WILL tell me what happened or I kill you here.” Doc sighed mightily and took a seat.

“That’s better, now tell me why the Sherat’Nat would violate it’s own doctrine and assault the Emperor’s Hammer? I know that it’s not because they were discovered by the EH, the EH is of little consequence to us. So why?”

Doc shook his head and looked at Fink as if he was out of his mind, “That’s because it wasn’t the Sherat’Nat who ordered the assault. It was somebody else, a faction within our own government. The same faction that once assisted Dhakath Khaxki. It is said that they have something big backing them up now, something that nobody’s never even SEEN before.” Digging his claws into Doc’s jacket, the Kadith pulled the other up so that they were staring eye to eye.

“And who is the leader of this faction?”

“It’s...” The Kadith abruptly moaned and slumped forward, a sizeable burn in his back.

“Everybody down! Now!” Fink dumped aside the dead Kadith and dove under the table, a squadron of Rebel troopers had entered the Tapcafe, blasters drawn. A few of the customers dove under tables, but others (the smugglers mostly) took cover and began firing wildly at the trained Rebel soldiers. The battle didn’t last long. A moment later, the blaster fire halted.

“The area is secure, spread out and find the one that we’re looking for.” Fink closed his eyes, his breathing had become shallow. He only had one small hand blaster at his disposal, no match for the highly trained Rebel Commandos.

“Ey, there’s somebody under this table.” Somebody ripped aside the table that Fink had taken refuge beneath. In a blink of an eye, the Kadith drew his blaster and drilled a hole through his chest. He was about to take his chances and try to escape when several more blaster rifles were leveled at his head.

“Is this the one?”

“Yeah that’s him.” Fink didn’t have time to react, he was stunned at point blank range. The Kadith slumped forward and was dragged out by the Rebel troopers.

\* \* \*

Fink awoke slowly. He had been placed in a dank cell with four gunmetal grey walls and a bench in the far corner.

“He’s awake sir.” The stun shot had played havoc with the Kadith’s functions, as he tracked toward the source of the voice, all he could see was dark silhouettes against the grey cell walls.

“Very good, step back.” Fink groaned and vomited upon the floor, he knew that voice all too well. The Kadith made to rise, but he was swiftly shoved back to the floor by a strong pair of Human hands.

“Well Fink, it’s been a long time.” The Kadith grimaced,

“Not nearly long enough Yacko..”

“Allow me to convey the personal greetings to you sir. Your presence amongst the fighting men and women of the Rebel Squadrons is most appreciated.” Vonos Ranvero stepped off of his small personal transport and nodded toward the babbling Human captain. The New Republic was really of no consequence, but they did possess the easiest means to jump directly to the heart of the Emperor’s Hammer. Shame that they had never tried to utilize it.

“Yo’re candor is appreciated Captain h’Illic, we h’accept your greetings h’in the spirit h’in which they were given.” The Captain shook his head vigorously, obviously proud of his truly historic diplomatic gesture (add sarcasm here).

“Allow me to introduce my second, Captain Yacko Smemanov Cantor. He was a higher up in the Emperor’s Hammer before defecting to the Republic.” Ranvero nodded and turned his eye to the larger Human at the Captain’s side.

“h’I see... Have we by chance h’ever met? H’ou seem... familiar.” The Human seemed quite unfazed, a fact that impressed Ranvero. This Cantor was quite unlike the swaggering, self-assured Captain to his left. At the same time however.. He could see the terrible anger boiling just beneath the service.

“Perhaps sah, I was at the Battle of Katrees.” Ranvero narrowed his eyes ever so slightly, “Really.. And which banner did h’ou choose to fly? That of the KLO oh h’our glo’rious once-Empire?”

“I don’t think that’s really important sah. It was in the past.” Captain Illic looked as if was about to die (in many ways Ranvero wished that he would, no such luck). Just to spite the Human, Ranvero stepped up and clapped Yacko upon the back in a friendly fashion.

“h’Excellent, not being mired in the past. Take hold h’of the future, h’I admire you Hum’on.” Captain Illic looked suddenly panicked, as if the atmosphere had been abruptly been sucked out of the small hangar bay.

“Uh.. I’m not mired in the past either sir.”

“O’f cose yo’re not Captain, o’f cose not..” Ranvero spoke to the Human as if he was speaking to a child. The Kadith was guessing that he wasn’t far wrong, “What we are doing h’ere my h’esteemed colleagues, h’is building a future fo ALL of our respective peoples. We can only do that by disposing of h’Emperor’s Hammer in a timely manner.”

“Mind if I ask what you need us for?” Ranvero quickly swiveled to meet Yacko’s level gaze.

“We need yo’re glorious forces Captain fo simply this. Yo’re supply depot in Greeop System provides h’an h’excellent launching point for h’our own fleet. Yo’re services will not be needed beyond that point.” Yacko returned Ranvero’s gaze pointedly, unnerving the Kadith. He was used to Human’s being more deferential, like that idiot Captain Illic. This Human obviously had fire in the belly.

“My superiors have told me to inform you that our facilities are available for your use at any time.” Captain Illic again, Ranvero forced a smile onto his face and nodded for the good Captain’s benefit. His good deed for the day complete, the Kadith signaled his entourage and made to depart.

“Wait! What about the prisoner?” The Kadith did not even bother to halt.

“h’I do not care about yo’re prisoners..”

“He may be of interest to you sir, he’s one of yours.” This got Ranvero’s attention. Careful to keep his expression neutral, the Kadith eyed the Human critically.

“Which one? Speak Hum’on.” Excited that he had gotten the Kadith’s attention once again, the Human pointed in the direction of the brig.

“His name is Major Fink Cantor, he’s a pilot in the Emperor’s Hammer.” Fink.. Fink? Ranvero considered the orders that first Khaxki then Dytiri had ordered in regards to that one.

“Would you like to interrogate him?”

“No, kill him.”

? \* \*

“Oh Kess! What’s up man?” Taking care not to hit the myriad Stormtroopers stomping down the corridor, Rea wound his way through the formations and took a place by his Commander’s side.

“Not much Rea, just filing some acquisitions reports, trying to figure out Fink. The usual.” Rea nodded appreciatively. He thought that he had Fink figured out too, but then..

“Is it true that he defected to the Rebs?” Rea almost regretted bringing up that thought, a



shadow seemed to pass over Kessler's face. The Churban wasn't entirely surprised that Kessler would be angered at the idea. After all, Fink wasn't the first in Kessler's care to have defected. There had been Gavin or whatever his name was, and of course Yacko..

Taking a deep breath, Kessler halted and leaned upon the nearest wall, "It isn't confirmed yet that Fink defected. All Intel has so far is that he was sighted on a Rebel planet being taken up by Commando's. It could mean that he's been captured, we don't know yet."

"But there's a Rebel Cruiser in orbit right?" Rea broke into a huge grin, he loved seeing combat. The thought of going up against a fully armed Rebel Cruiser appealed to him.

"Right, we're going up against a Rebel Cruiser, the Rebellion. In fact, we launch as soon as the Challenge arrives in system. Don't tell anybody that, it's supposed to be confidential, but ya know.." Rea smirked, he knew what Kessler meant.

"Oh don't worry.. Time to make another Reb Cruiser go boom."

Kessler shook his head, "No boom. Intel wants it captured intact."

The Churban looked crestfallen, "No boom?"

Grinning in a most un-Imperial way, the Coruscant native clapped Rea upon the back, "No boom today. Boom tomorrow, there's always a boom tomorrow. Now come on, suit up. I'll be there in a bit to brief the squadron." Nodding appreciatively, Rea made for the lockers.

? \* \*

Fink was not feeling well. He had spent roughly two days in the care of the Rebels, and now the Kadith was hungry. Painfully so. Joints aching, the Kadith hauled himself over to the bucket of Rebel protein feed that he had been provided with upon arrival.

"Hmm.. Still good..." That didn't heavily surprise the pilot, he was willing to bet that the feed could go through vacuum followed by a brief turn in a Wookiee's stomach and still be good. The feed bubbled and seemed to mock him, tempting the Kadith to turn away. But Fink knew that he couldn't, he had to eat.. Attempting to keep a measure of dignity, the Kadith dipped a paw into the bucket and carefully licked away the excess.

"Enjoying your Protein feed fuzzbball? Good." Fink halted, Yacko was standing directly outside of his cell, an entourage of Rebel Commandos at his side.

"Well, the firing squadron has arrived hmm? Make it quick." Squeezing shut his eyes, the Kadith readied himself to make his peace with the Gods. It was just as well that he die here, the Rebels had taken away everything, including his TDT which cut flashing to safety out of the picture.

"Company dismissed." Fink opened one eye, the Rebel Commandos had departed. The Kadith was just about to inquire as to what was going on when a small, rounded object struck him upon the head. Blinking, the pilot fell to the hard cell floor, breathing hard.

"Take it easy fuzztail. I'm not going to shoot you, I'm going to let you out." Fink knew what it was that had struck him now, Yacko had returned his TDT.

"Come in here and we'll discuss it." Fink kept his tone measured, he didn't wish to provoke his brother. The Human hesitated, then opened the cell and stepped inward. That was all the Kadith needed. Dipping his paw into the Protein feed once again, the Kadith whipped the goo in his brother's direction, striking the Corellian dead in the eyes. Blinded, Yacko fell back.

"Damn you Yacko!" Crouching low, the Kadith sprang direct onto Yacko's chest and brought his claws hard across the other's face. Yelling loudly, the Corellian instinctively kicked hard, striking Fink in the chest and knocking him to the floor. Winded, the Kadith could only wince as Yacko swiftly removed his blaster and aimed directly at his head.

"Damn the Force Fink, I probably shouldn't be the one to say this, but fucking stop. I came here

to free you because I have to.” Blinking, the Kadith spat hard at Yacko’s boots.

“Go to Hell traitor.” Yacko was fast, before Fink could react, the Corellians fist came around and struck him dead in the center of the muzzle. Clutching a crumpled nose, the Kadith fell back to the far wall.

“You’re going to have to decide Fink, for the good of the Emperor’s Hammer and the family what you want. Revenge or salvation.” Fink considered leaping upon the Rebel once again, but then halted, attempting to override his own anger and hatred. Yacko was obviously trying to get at something.

“Why.. Why are you doing this?”

“Because if I don’t a lot of good friends will die.”

“You already assured the death of a lot of good friends when you came here Yacko, what’s changed?”

“Don’t toy with me Fink, I’ve still got the blaster. Do you want to get out or not?” Sighing heavily, the Kadith pulled himself up and nursed his wounds.

“What do I have to do..” Yacko seemed satisfied, crossing his arms, the Corellian nodded.

“Better. There’s a ventilation duct that runs directly beneath the cell. The entrance is sealed but.. I have the key. The Calamari have never been good at building secure cells, they’re not used to the idea of holding prisoners.” Fink nodded solemnly as he took the pass key.

“Now get out of here. And..” A single tear welled up in the Corellians eye, “Tell the family that I miss em..” Nodding solemnly, Fink stuffed the pass key into his pocket and waited until the time was right.

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It was all a game really. Playing with the life of another, manipulating his future. Agent Maxwell Dyric felt supremely powerful, he was the guiding light they nobody ever saw. With the flick of a finger he could make one rich beyond their wildest dreams.. Or ruin them for life. More often then not he was paid to do his work, paid a good number of credits at that. But then.. He also had his hobbies.

“I said that I would one day get you Fink..” The Intel officer flexed his mechanical hand, he could still recall the incident. Abandoned during a mission gone wrong, ignored.. The Empire had gotten him in the end. He had been molded, reworked.. It was only his drive and desire for revenge that kept him alive. Revenge.

“Oh I see you Fink, don’t think that you can hide.” The Rebel Commandos were trying to look inconspicuous as they dragged an unconscious Kadith toward a captured Lambda shuttle. Nodding, the Officer rewound the recording and set to work.

“Yes.. Yes this will do.” A touch here, a touch there.. Now rather then being dragged into the shuttle, the Kadith was walking up the ramp, chatting casually with the Rebel Commandos who had a moment ago been dragging him. Excellent fodder for a court martial trial. Leaning back in his chair, Maxwell held his finger over the comm switch for an instant (he has a taste for the dramatic you see) before punching it forward.

“This is Lieutenant Jerard, what do you want?”

“Ah yes, this is Colonel Maxwell Dyric, Imperial Intelligence. I was assigned to the task of determining if Fink was indeed a traitor? I have found some evidence most damning.” Leaning over, the Human quickly tapped the transmit switch and watched as reworked video was transmitted to the ignorant naval officer. Oh Fink, by the time I am finished with you.. you will WISH that you died at Hoth.

? \* \*

It would have been completely dark in the tiny ventilation shaft if not for the tiny flashlight that warped the shadows about the wall. Fink had long kept a small flashlight sheathed in his boot for emergencies, it had come in quite handy during his escape from the Rebels over Viridia 2.

“Damn it.. So dark in here..” The Kadith possessed above average night vision, but it was simply too dark in the duct, and the flashlight provided very little illumination. Squinting, Fink continued to pull himself down the shaft. He had gone a fair distance when it became apparent that he was not alone, something was following him. Opening his ears as much as he could, the Kadith turned about, attempting to locate the intruder.

“Who’s there..?” There was no response, prompting Fink to remove a small vibroblade that Yacko had thoughtfully provided for his escape. Something skittered through another nearby shaft, it was coming up directly behind him.. Out of instinct, the Kadith spun, flashlight in paw, prompting the entire duct to groan loudly.

“Shit, only the Force knows what lives in these Rebel Cruisers..” The Kadith had not quite enough time to finish sentence. Weakened by the pressure placed upon it by the beast and Fink itself, the ventilation shaft, sending the Kadith falling into the abyss...

...and into a very large garbage heap. Snorting and coughing for all to hear, Fink quickly emerged from the slime. It was obvious that the Rebels did not eject their garbage often, judging the sheer volume of trash that filled the room (but then, the Rebs don’t follow standard Imperial doctrine). Careful not to disturb whatever life form had chosen to take up residence in the immense Rebel trash heap (true Rebel scum), Fink pulled himself up to a nearby corner and removed his recently liberated TDT.

“TDT, flash me to Katrees, System One, ANYWHERE but here.” Fink closed his eyes and waited for the typical nausea and loss of reference points associated with flashing. It never came.

::All TDT flash functions locked:: Fink blinked in surprise.

“What!?”

::All TDT flash functions locked::

“I heard you the first time damn it! WHO ordered all flashing functions locked?”

::You are not unauthorized...: Wailing in frustration, the Kadith bashed the wayward device upon the wall. The action hurt Fink more than it hurt the TDT, waves of pain jolted Fink as the shock ran up through his paw and into his arms. Worst yet, the violence had disturbed something.. The Kadith watched in horror as a single eyestalk popped above the surface and glared at him, before submerging again. Gasping, Fink glanced at his TDT once again.

“TDT, flash me anywhere. PLEASE.”

::All TDT flash functions locked:: The eye had re-emerged, and it was headed toward Fink’s tiny refuge in the corner.

“Aw hell...”

? \* \*

“What was that Commander? Is something wrong?” Kessler shook his head and tapped his cockpit heads up display, it didn’t do a lot of good.

“No problems Ricaud, it’s just that my chronometer broke.” Which wouldn’t be a problem ordinarily, but they were about to decelerate from Hyperspace. If there was so much as a seconds hesitation in deceleration.. Kessler knew very well that he could up on the other end of the system. Or in the local star.

“Don’t worry about it sir, I’ve got ya covered. Slave your controls to mine real fast, and we’ll decelerate together.”

“Right.” It was the work of an instant for the pilot to link his controls to Ricard’s system. This act was accomplished not a moment too soon, Kessler did not have enough time to settle back in his command couch before being subjected to the familiar flash and burst of stars signaling their abrupt arrival into real space.

“Alright guys, we’re here. Flight leaders report in.” Kessler took a moment to glance out the canopy and into the starscape beyond. To port was the ISD Challenge, surrounded as if by humming insects by Tornado, Cyclone and Typhoon Squadron.

“This is Steele, Flight 2 is ready to go.”

“Badlands here, Flight 3 is a pilot light but ready to go.” Kessler winced, another reminder of Fink’s abrupt departure and possible defection. Somehow, the Commander felt almost exposed without his brother covering his six.

“We’ve got hostiles, X-wings and E-wings launching from the CRS Rebellion.” That had better not be you out there Fink. Kessler knew that his brother was good enough to survive most combat situations, but if he was with the Rebels the Kadith was as good as dead. X-wings were TIE Defender meat.

“Alright, we have our orders. Flight One and Cyclone with handle the Cruiser, the rest of you guys assist Typhoon with the fighters.” There was a chorus of “ayes” as the Imperial fighters moved off to fulfill their specific duties.

“Computer, lock Rockets on the Rebellion.”

::Working...” The Commander sighed, he wished that it had been just that easy to eliminate the real Rebellion, no such luck.

::Locked::

? \* \*

Fink knew that the Rebellion was under attack. It didn’t take a genius to recognize the familiar bumps and jimmies associated with a heavy warhead assault. The Kadith only prayed that the Imps wouldn’t be able to breath the hull and let him suck vacuum. But then.. That was not as great a problem as the one presented him at the moment.

“Okay little Diagnoga.. Don’t hurt me, I’m not all that tasty.. Argh, get away from me!” The eye continued to stare at Fink inquisitively, as if trying to decide what to do. Fink fervently prayed that it wouldn’t decide he was dinner.

“Want a ration bar, come on..” Reaching into the pocket of his flightsuit, Fink pulled out a ration bar and waved it for the eye. A deafening roar emerged from the depths of the garbage heap, and the eye disappeared. Sighing in relief, Fink sat down and stuffed the ration bar back into his pocket.

“Well that was eas.. ahhhhhhhh!!!!” A large multicolored tentacle had emerged from the heap and wrapped itself around Fink’s leg, dragging the Kadith underwater. Struggling wildly, Fink attempted to escape the things vice-like grip, but his large bush of a tail was not helping matters any. Through the sludge, the Kadith could make out the things mouth. Yelling and thrashing, the Kadith yanked out the dagger and jammed it into the Diagnoga’s tentacle. The beast roared and slackened it’s grip, allowing Fink pull away. The Diagnoga was not finished yet however, once again the tentacles reached forth and this time took hold of the Kadith about the stomach. As two tentacles held him still, a third went for the pocket.

It wants the ration bar! Gasping for air, the Kadith reached into his pocket and threw out the ration bar. Seemingly satisfied, the Diagnoga released Fink and allowed the Kadith to surface for air.

“Damn you man, if you wanted my ration bars you should have just asked!” Not wanting to risk

the monster developing a taste for anything more exotic than ration bars (like a Kadith), Fink threw his remaining into the heap.

“Heh, enjoy.. Now to get out here..” There was a ladder leading up to the exit, apparently the Rebels had recalled the lessons of Luke Skywalker and company. Fink was just about to mount the ladder when a loud splort was heard. Turning to investigate, the Kadith was horrified to see the water level rapidly diminishing, sucking garbage down with it. Hell, there ejecting the garbage! Desperate to escape a particularly gruesome fate in the form of vacuum, Fink made a flying leap for the ladder to no avail. The Kadith fell just short of the ladder, and caught his heel on the now slippery floor. Yelling wildly, Fink could not stop himself from being sucked toward the large hole in the center of the once-trash heap...

\* \* \*

Abandoned Rebel Supply Cache, Greeop system

“How long have we been sitting in this cargo container? Damn it! This is unacceptable, we told the Human to be here three hours ago.” Jevra Shiven cursed yet again and checked his chronometer. It was true, they had told the smuggler to arrive three hours ago.

“Be calm Jevra, you know how Humans are. They were likely sidetracked.” Snarling, the younger Kadith kicked at the sides of the armored cargo ship.

“Yes, but sidetracked by what?” Dava took a moment to consider that, then shrugged. He didn’t know really, probably didn’t want to know. Shiven however, was not entirely satisfied by that thought.

“We are playing a very dangerous game Dava. You know how Ranvero views treason.. With each passing minute, we open ourselves to the possibility of detection and DEATH.” Dava held up a paw to halt his compatriots tirade.

“I know Jevra, my mate is aboard the Desta Imperia. I have not only placed myself in danger, but her as well. But we must continue Jevra, we must do what is right.” Dava halted and pricked an ear, the scrape of metal on metal was audible over the humming machinery that provided oxygen within the container.

“Move aside Jevra, our transportation has arrived.” Moving back, Dava listened with interest to the familiar whines and scrapes associated with a docking maneuver. At last, the groans halted, plunging the container into silence. After what seemed to be an eternity, the hatch popped open to reveal a rakishly handsome Human in typical Corellian garb.

“You must be the fuzzballs, heh.” Jevra turned to Dava and smirked, before falling to basic.

“h’Indeed we are Hu’mo. We are in need of h’or services.” The smuggler glanced back and forth between the two Kadith.

“Really? Well I don’t come cheap friend. I need 7000 credits right here and another 10,000 payable upon arrival.”

“We will pay, let h’us depart.” Reaching into his tunic, Dava removed a large chit and handed it to the Smuggler. Nodding, the Corellian turned to descend the ladder.

“Lets get moving then. Where are we going?” Dava shrugged as he mounted the ladder.

“Perhaps h’ou have h’ear’d of the Emperor’s Hammer?”

\* \* \*

CRS Rebellion, IGZ Cluster

“Somebody get this damn A-wing off of me!” Sweeping his Missile Boat crosswise, Kessler attempted to berid himself of the Rebel Fighter that had chosen to try and make friends.

“Not a problem Lead, firing..” A moment later, the A-wing detonated into base components, leaving the Squadron Commander to operate freely.

“Thanks Corran.” The mission had gone relatively well. The Rebellion’s shields were out, and even now Stormtrooper were on final approach to the Rebel Star Cruiser, preparing to capture the ship. They’re hadn’t been a big “boom” as Rea put it, but there had certainly been a good deal of fireworks.

“Sir, a Rebel Shuttle just launched. Shall we intercept?” Kessler considered for a moment. It likely only contained low level crew members, women and children..

“Negative Rea, let them go. We’ve done what we came to do.”

\* \* \*

“Oh crap, ah hell, shit!” Fink gasped and crossed his eyes. By all rights he should’ve been dead right there, but he wasn’t. A fact owed to supreme luck and.. well supreme luck. Not far below Fink’s feet was an open chute, leading directly into space (thank the gods for the containment field). Fink himself was hanging from a large pole that had (thankfully) been sticking out of the wall. Unfortunately, the pole was weakening..

“Oh.. Oh.. Damnit! Keershang, if you can hear me.. I swear to the Force that I’ll be a Light Jedi from now on if you’ll JUST LET ME GET OUT OF THIS! Wargh, whoa hell!” The pole responded by dipping further downward, leaving Fink in a fairly precarious position. As if mocking him, the Diagnoga drifted past the open hatch.. frozen.

“What a way to go.. AIEEEEE!” The pole snapped, plunging Fink toward a fairly gruesome fate in the teeth of a vacuum. Fate however, was with him that day. Just before the Kadith hit vacuum, a compartment slid open, catching the Kadith and carrying him away from his seeming inevitable fate.

“Yes! Thank you Keershang!” The Kadith was in another chute, sliding where Fink had no idea. But it was certainly an enjoyable ride.

“Well this is certainly..” Fink never had a chance to finish his sentence. Gaining speed, the Kadith slid direct through the end of the tunnel and into inky darkness. He flew a fair distance before smashing into a wall and falling to the ground.

“Hehehe, he fell for it..” Turning his head, Fink made to take stock of his surroundings. There wasn’t a lot to see other than a good amount of junk, and four walls. There was something though.. A single sliver of light pierced the darkness, a simple door!

“Well now, this is easy.” Yawning, the Kadith stepped up to the door and deactivated the lock. With a sibilant hiss, the door slid open to reveal.. Stormtroopers?

“What the hell!?” Startled, Fink stumbled backward into a nearby trash heap. The Stormtroopers continued to stare at him with their large, black soulless eyes.

“Is this the one that we’re looking for?” One of the troopers leveled his blaster carbine at Fink’s head, but his companion smacked it downward and away.

“Uh.. Uh, I’m not the one you’re looking for.” Fink shoved all of his will into the words, he had seen it in that Rebel propaganda film a good while ago. What was it called again? Oh yes, Star Wars. What a dumb name for a propaganda piece.

“It’s him, he’s trying the Jedi stuff on us, lets get him.” There went that idea. Taking a menacing step forth, the two Imperial troopers took hold of Fink and dragged him out of the trash heap. The Kadith struggled feebly, but he was already fairly exhausted.

“Wait.. Wait.. Why are you taking.. me?” Fink gasped for breath, one of the Stormtroopers had their arm across his throat.

“You are Major Fink Cantor, you are under arrest for treason.”

“Oh.”

\* \* \*

Neva Himitsu blinked as she stepped into her cabin. It was a smallish room, built into a small square with a bunk and a table. A leather bound copy of "Keershang: The Making of a Martyr" sat in the corner, but none of this grabbed Himitsu's attention. Rather she saw the bottle of Hot Ska, and the note.. Paws trembling, the female took care to make sure that she wasn't being watched before taking the note. It was simple, written in the typical up and down scrawl of the Kadith: My love, contained within this Hot Ska is a data crystal. Listen to it and destroy, goodbye.. – Dava. Neva bit her lip until it bled, she had known that this day would come, but she had never believed that it would be today. Reaching into the bottle, the female carefully removed the cork and tapped it upon the table. It fell neatly in half, revealing an intact data crystal. Sighing, the female stuffed it into the video terminal and waited.

"Hello Neva, by the time you receive this message, I will have already departed for Aurora Prime and the Emperor's Hammer. I have already informed the Sherat'Nat of Ranvero's intentions, but they will not arrive in time. The Humans must be informed.. Please Neva, get off the ship, hurry.. What Vonos is doing is wrong, and you know it. I love you, goodbye." With that, Dava was gone. Neva stood paralyzed for a moment, then removed the data crystal and swallowed it. Stepping over to the viewport, the female placed her paw upon the transparisteel and sniffed, valiantly battling her emotions.

"Goodbye Dava."

\* \* \*

"How much longer until we arrive in Aurora System? We have been in this Human rattle trap for nearly 4 standard hours." The passenger compartment was comfortable, comfortable by Human standards anyhow, and the journey through Hyperspace was smooth, yet Jevra was obviously agitated. Dava could not fault him for that, the other was still young, he had displayed admirable courage by simply accompanying him this far.

"Patience young one, only a standard hour remaining."

"Yeah that's right, only an hour to go, thanks to me Fuzzball. What do you think of the StarRider?" Dava sniffed and leaned back, the Corellian was obviously insufferably pleased with himself. It was true that escaping a Squadron of Mark 2's in a Freighter was no small feat, but...

"It is adequate for a Human ship." The Corellian looked shocked for a moment before his mouth broadened into a wry grin.

"There's nothing adequate about this ship buddy." Chuckling quietly to himself, Dava snatched hold of a book and opened it. Better to be expanding my mind than listening to this rubbish. I've never liked Corellians.

"Hey, who's that? Your Dad?" Dava halted and turned the book over, the Corellian was referring to the visage of Keershang carved upon the cover of the book.

"This is not my Father, this is Keershang. Many thousands of years ago h'e defeated the Kitoth and united h'our warring factions into one cohesive force. He is revered by the Light Guild as the greatest of their number and respected by the Dark Guild as the one who united our race."

"So he's important?"

"h'In a manner of speaking, yes he is." The Corellian lapsed into an uncomfortable silence, then turned and looked Dava in the eye.

"How long have you guys been in space?"

"A good deal longer than h'ou Human.." The Human Captain was about to throw out a retort when the StarRider jolted.

::Drake, get up here, we've got problems:: Captain Drake didn't waste any time. Nodding to his

two Kadith passengers, Drake rose and made for the cockpit, followed by Dava and Jevra. The cockpit was a scene of mass chaos: The two Humans and the Sullustan that comprised Drake's crew were everywhere at once, flipping switches and readying systems. Filling the starscape beyond were two angular Kadith light cruisers and a still smaller Kadith Interdictor Cruiser.

"What the Hell is this? Why do they want you two so badly!?"

"My people are aware of our intentions, they do not wish us to survive to carry out our mission."

"Well, you're getting to Aurora Prime whether they like it or not. Viet, charge up the engines, lets move.." Just as Drake finished his sentence, the first Mark 3 opened fire..

\* \* \*

"You're awfully quiet back there Furry, is there something wrong?" Lieutenant Jynx checked the distance, they were just about ready to hit atmosphere.

"Oh no nothing's wrong, I've just been arrested for a crime I DIDN'T COMMIT."

"Sorry sir, I can't help you there. You've just been pretty quiet been there, can't you talk or something? I don't like silence." Fink stopped and considered.

"Would you like me to sing?"

"Excuse me sir?"

"Would you rather it be completely silent or would you rather I sing?"

"Uh, silent sir.."

"Too bad." Jynx winced as the Kadith in the rear of the ship took a deep breath. Fink remembered a similar trip to a far different destination with a certain Blue Roo....

"We've almost hit planetside sir."

"Why are they doing this? I'm guilty of no crimes, I am a loyal Imperial pilot."

"I'm sorry sir, it's not place to question orders..."

"No of course not. Say, you wouldn't happen to be able to give me a lift somewhere would ya? I'll pay some good money, arrange a little female companionship.." Jynx stirred, it had been a long time.. No! He had to continue with the mission.

"I'm sorry sir, but I have my orders."

"Yeah, I'm sorry too..."

\* \* \*

One week later

Wow, it's been so long since I've performed any real tasks I'd almost forgotten what it feels like. Neva blew a sigh and moved a little further down the ladder. Ranvero had ordered that the weapons couplings onboard the flagship be upgraded before he arrived, and being the qualified mechanic onboard.. Slamming shut the last hatch, Neva wiped her brow, that was the end of that. Secretly she was disappointed, she wanted something, ANYTHING to get her mind off of Dava. She had received his message a standard week ago, and yet she still had no word in regards to his possible success..

::This is Neva, upgrades are complete, I'm off::

::Very well mechanic, your shift is over:: Yawning, she descended the ladder and hit the floor with a light pop. Punching open the door, Neva made to exit for her quarters.

"Who, who are you? Get out of my way." A large red Kadith blocked her way, dressed entirely in a long black robe. Without a word, the stranger shoved Neva back into the compartment and shut the door, plunging the duct into darkness.

"Do you know who I am?" He whispered in her ear, it was a rich bass that reverberated about the room despite it's low volume.



“No.” Neva licked her lips and attempted to find a potential avenue of escape, there was none to be found.

“Good, I would rather my identity be revealed at this time. I bring news of your Husband, listen carefully.” Neva instantly pricked her ears, that would explain the need for secrecy. The entire fleet was in an uproar over Dava’s departure.

“Your Husband is dead, Ranvero ambushed his transport some hours before he was to arrive at Aurora Prime. There were no survivors.” Neva’s heart stopped, she had always dreaded this, but she had never expected to receive it.

“Wha.. What?”

“Your Husband is dead, and you must take his place.” The Kadith who was speaking seemed to be far away, Neva could barely hear him. All she could think of was the rush of memories that she had, and the shock..

“He’s.. He’s dead!” Screaming, Neva ran forth and began pummeling her informant, attempting to bring him down. She was not entirely successful, the Red grabbed her wrists and easily shoved her backward.

“Quiet and listen. Dava died, but his mission is not yet complete. You must leave, you must leave RIGHT now. Ranvero will be departing for Aurora Prime shortly, this is where you must go. The Sherat’Nat has been informed of Ranvero’s actions, but they are slow to act and the Alliance Council is not returning our messages.” The Kadith paused for a moment then dropped a data crystal into her paw.

“Take this to the Grand Admiral Ronin, he will know what to do. Seek out the one known as Fink Cantor. We have provided you transportation, may the Force be with you.” Nodding, the Kadith made to depart the duct, but Neva grabbed hold of his cloak.

“Wait, who are you, really?” The informant turned and smiled.

“If you’re ever on Corneria ask for Kinva, they’ll know who you’re talking about..”

\* \* \*

“Well Fink, it’s good to see you again.” Fink forced himself to look up, it was an effort. He had spent a solid hour in the care of Stormtroopers, being continually bludgeoned for information. He hadn’t given in, but he had come close...

“Who are you?” He choked, Fink’s unseen tormentor replied by whacking the Kadith hard across the jaw. Fink groaned loudly and was silent.

“I will ask the questions. Do you know why you are here?”

“I didn’t do anything.” WHACK. The Kadith moaned loudly, he could feel his jaw buckling. The interrogator didn’t seem interested in his answers.

“I beg to differ Fink, we have recorded incidences of your treachery. Now, you will give me detailed tactical information of the Rebel fleet, or you will suffer greatly.” Fink winced, he knew what was coming next.

“I’m.. I’m not a traitor, I have no knowledge..” WHACK. The Kadith gasped and was silent, the burden of speech getting the better of him.

“Well then, all me to contradict you. Major Tola Cantor Jerel, born on Coruscant six years after the conclusion of the Clone Wars. Joined the Rebellion, fought with distinction until your unfortunate capture by Imperial forces. You were reeducated, or so we thought..”

“I have always been loyal.”

The interrogator ignored Fink’s statement and continued, “You deserted shortly after Endor, joined a Pirate Squadron, then returned to us. Apparently you refused to shoot a Rebel operative who had dared to sabotage the Relentless.”

“I.. I could not..”

“I’m sure. You transferred to Tornado Squadron on board the Challenge, and served in the battles to take Viridia. There was a period of time in which you were unaccounted before, a period of time that you supposedly do not remember.:

“I do not.”

“Silence. You went back to your Rebel masters and received new orders, the evidence is undeniable. Disappearances, messages, sightings.. It’s all here Major, you are a traitor.” The interrogator’s voice fairly dripped with contempt.

“No...”

“Yes. You will die for your crimes Fink, die most terribly, and I will be the one who pulls the trigger. Be most assured of that.”

\* \* \*

“Excellent, this is MOST excellent.” Nar Ranvero stretched and smirked. How long had it taken to procure this ship? Days? Months? Now it was theirs, it would be the instrument of their success. How fitting that their newly acquired Kivetra Super Cruiser be named Desta Imperia, or Forever Imperial. One day that destiny would be fulfilled, and Ranvero’s work would be finished. But for now..

::Arriving at bridge:: Stepping onto the Tactical bridge compartment, Ranvero bowed as the motley array of crew members (ranging from Kadith to Kitoth) saluted and returned to their assigned duties. The bridge was truly a work of art, an embodiment of their newfound technology. The bridge had no viewports, but rather a massive holo display spread across the ceiling, giving the Captain and crew a perfect view of any given battle. In the center, elevated to demonstrate it’s importance was a large, comfortable Captain’s chair. The chair was meant to allow the Captain to feel in control of the situation as all manner of peons dashed back and forth to the crew pit below as well as the Conn, Science and Tactical stations. Surveying this scene, the Captain stepped forth and took a seat in the Chair.

“Show me the fleet.” The ceiling melted away to reveal a breathtaking view of the Greeop Star, and the nearby Fleet. While far smaller than the average Imperial tactical fleet, it did bring forth an impressive array of firepower with a Kivetra Super Cruiser (the Desta Imperia), two Rantaro Heavy Cruisers (the Li Prido and Valerius) and several light cruisers. Each Cruiser was mounted with a rack, on which sat a fair number of fighters for swift launch.

“We’re you successful in procuring the TDT’s for the fleet?” Out of the characteristic shadow produced by the bridge lighting stepped Riven Dray , first officer of the Desta Imperia.

“Unfortunately no my Lord. The secrets of the TDT are carefully guarded by the Sherat’Nat and the Alliance. Only a few, loyal Cruisers have been yet equipped with TDT’s. The Mark 3’s have TDT’s, but they are of a limited capacity Lord.”

“I see. Very well, prepare to set course for Aurora Prime. Best possible speed.” Drayhesitated, then leaned forth to his Captain’s ear.

“Lord.. We’re all with you. But consider this, you are free. We have a fleet, and the means to go where we will. We have ended the machinations of those who would destroy us and humiliated the Sherat’Nat as well as the Alliance. You have proven yourself to Dytiri beyond a doubt, you do not need to do so again.. Is it really necessary to destroy these.. Humans?” Ranvero stared at Dray as if he had just told him that a Death Star had entered the system and was bearing down on them hard.

“Dray, my old friend.. These Humans, these Humans annoy me. They annoy me no end.” Standing up, Ranvero swept apart his arms in a grand gesture of thought,

“One thousand years ago we were humiliated by the Republic and the Sherat’Nat who dared to surrender to them. The memory of that act chafes upon the mind of every LOYAL Kadith. Are we not the Chosen? Are we not the First? It is our destiny to rule this pathetic Dimension, and we cannot do THAT until the Sherat’Nat is DEAD and the Empire restored. We can only accomplish this by eliminating the Emperor’s Hammer.. Once we have captured their home system, we will have a base of operations on which to launch. From their, we move on Katrees itself. Do you all get me?” A loud chorus of “ayes” erupted, followed by raucous cheering. They got him.

“Set course for Aurora Prime, best speed. It is time that we embrace the destiny of our people.”

\* \* \*

K minus 8 Hours

New Imperial City on Aurora Prime did not look half as glamorous as it was made out to be, Neva thought. There were the glimmering skyscrapers characteristic of Human planets, but they paled in comparison to the wondrous cities of Katrees or even Corneria. This was all taken in by Neva as the small hover tram continued on it’s way to the large palace situated in the center of the city. The Imperials truly had a grasp of the grandiose, the palace was a near duplicate of the building found upon Coruscant.

“We are now arriving at the Palace, you may disembark presently.” Ignoring the smarmy humanoid Droid, Neva hastily disembarked the tram. She was heavily cloaked so as to obscure her true identity and race. Extreme Xenophobia still ran rampant amongst the Empire she was told.

“Hi, are you Neva Himitsu? I thought so, the name’s Kyle Cantor Kessler. I’ll be escorting ya over to the Imperial Palace.” Neva appraised the Human, he was of medium build and carried an air of nonchalance about him.

“Out of the goodness of your heart, right?”

“Well, if you want to believe that.” Nodding, the Human beckoned and a dozen white armored Stormtroopers and leveled their blasters menacingly. Neva was unperturbed, ignoring the Stormtroopers she quickly fell into step with Kessler.

“You are a pilot, why are you reduced to such mundane duties?” Neva inquired, the Kadith revered pilots. To give one such a simple task as escorting a delegate to his superiors was unthinkable.

“Well.. It wasn’t exactly my choice. I was called away from the frontlines in Pirath by order of the Command Staff, a promotion I hear. They haven’t said anything yet but..” Neva shook her head quietly.

“That is sad, being called away from the frontlines..” Neva went silent for a moment, had he said that his name was Kyle “Cantor” Kessler? Hardly daring that her task could be so easy, the female turned to the Human,

“Would you happen to know a Fink Cantor?” The pair had arrived at the local turbolift. Waving off the Stormtroopers, Kessler joined Neva in the lift.

“Yeah I do, why?”

“I must find him, will you tell me where he is?” Kessler looked Neva in the eyes for a moment, then turned away sharply.

“He’s my younger brother, I.. I don’t know exactly where he is, but I have a pretty good idea..” Neva decided to let the topic drop. Kessler was obviously in a bad state about Fink, much like she was about her own recently deceased husband. The lift came to a halt and the doors slid open, revealing a long corridor with a singularly large door at the end (naturally, it was lined with Royal Guard.)

“Good luck, I’ll wait for ya around here. Ask me about Fink again soon...”

“Thank you.”

\* \* \*

K minus 4 Hours

“You are saying that we must withdraw our entire fleet to Aurora Prime to stand a chance of stopping this invasion, and we must do it within the next 4 hours?” Acting Flight Officer Horn dismissed the notion with a wave of his hand.

“Do you have any idea of the scale such an operation would require? Really, how powerful can this fleet be? You said yourself that they are merely a renegade arm of your government, Rebels if you will.” Neva eyed the officer contemptuously.

“Humans..” She spat, “You have no idea what you are dealing with do you? We chose to hide our face from you only because we wished no conflict. Contrary to what some will tell you, we do not revel in war. We have simply been pushed to our limits far too many times.”

Grand Admiral Ronin tapped his jaw and considered her words, “Your Rebels seem to enjoy war. Why would they wish to conquer the Emperor’s Hammer, even if we do possess several of your old colonies?”

“Dytiri and Ranvero do not care about the Emperor’s Hammer OR the New Republic, they are interested only in reestablishing the old Kadith Empire. They believe destroying Emperor’s Hammer would be excellent means to that end.” Ronin nodded quietly. How little regard some species held for the Empire..

“Very well. Admiral Horn, recall the Challenge, Relentless, and the ASF. I will be commanding the Sovereign.” The Flight Officer looked somewhat shocked,

“Sir, this is foolish..”

“No, it would be foolish to leave our Capital open to a potential assault by a technologically superior foe, begone with you.” Turning sharply, the Grand Admiral focused his attention upon Neva.

“And you, this had better not be a trick. It would not play well on our future to attempt to deceive us I assure you.” Neva nodded solemnly, she didn’t really care for the alien’s threats, but she had to tolerate them nonetheless.

“Very well, but may I ask you a question?”

“Speak.”

“Might I be able to know the whereabouts of Major Fink Cantor?” The Grand Admiral turned in confusion toward Horn, who eyed Compton who in turn skewered the Director of Imperial Intelligence.

“I am sorry Mr. Himitsu, but Major Fink is quite dead.”

\* \* \*

K minus 30 minutes

Fink was not dead, not yet anyhow. But he may as well have been.

“I’m sorry that I had to administer that Skirtanopl Major, but it was necessary. I know that your genus reacts badly to the drug, but then so do all inferior species I’m afraid.” Fink didn’t feel well enough to react to the jab, he merely slumped in his chair and made a valiant attempt to hold down the contents of his stomach.

“As you may or may not know, Skirtanopl also serves as a very effective truth serum, particularly on you. Now tell me, what did you do while you were in temporary retirement? You were not seen for three months?” The interrogator nodded to the interrogation

droid. With a buzz, the device turned and departed.

“I.. I... I...” Be strong! Don’t betray the Alliance! Fink blinked and desperately tried to hold down the words, but he simply.. wasn’t.... strong enough.

“Tell me Fink, where did you go after you left the Emperor’s Hammer?” That final inquiry was too much, Fink’s mouth began to move without his permission. He began relating everything from the time he was called out from the small bar on Carrida by Auriga to his first meeting with Saveen to the final liberation of Katrees.

“Very good, that wasn’t so hard was it? Now tell me, what did the Rebels do to you in the Viridia system. Tell me.” Fink blinked and fell back, tears welling up in his eyes.

“I.. don’t know!” The interrogator’s smile faded.

“Tell me, tell me right now.”

“I.. don’t.. know!” With that final act of defiance, Fink fell back and gasped. The drug slowly released it’s iron grip on his brain, leaving the Kadith open to more linear thought.

“Who.. Who are you? Why are you doing this? I’m.. Not a traitor.” The interrogator stalked forth and looked Fink directly in the eye.

“You know who I am. Look me in the eye damnit, who am I!” The mask rippled, Fink leaned forth, then gasped.

“It’s.. It’s you!”

\* \* \*

Aurora Prime

The Line

“Hey do you think that this thing is for real?” Lieutenant Jynx adjusted his helmet nervously. He had been recruited from the transport corps because he was supposedly qualified to fly a starfighter. All of the experienced starfighter pilots had told him that he was merely a sacrificial lamb. Jynx believed the pilots, but here he was, strapped into a TIE Advanced with Cyclone Squadron (who happened to be a few pilots lights)

::It had better be, I’m supposed to be on leave right now:: Jynx nodded and adjusted his laser and shield recharge rates, he supposed that his wingman was right.

::This is Lead, the Challenge is picking up peculiar reading from the Southern pole of Eos, go check it out Twelve, Eleven will cover you:: Jynx gulped and checked his designation, confirming his worst fears. He was Cyclone 12.

“Uh, this is Twelve, going in..” Hand trembling just a touch, Jynx redirected his thrust and sped off toward Eos, his wingman in tow. It wasn’t the most interesting moon in the Universe, but it was close to home.. It was but a few moments before the ex shuttle pilot found himself nearing the southern pole.

::This is Eleven, my instruments are going nuts here, what the hell?:: His wingman was right, ever gauge in the cockpit had abruptly developed a mind of their own. Jynx felt his TIE Advanced begin to shake as a beautiful pattern of energy began to develop on the horizon..

::Whoa shit! Evade! Eva..” It was too late for Eleven, the four delta winged fighters came out of nowhere. Panicked, Jynx did a 180 and shot back toward the fleet, desperate to evade the more powerful alien fighters. To the undying dismay of the pilot, several shots struck the engine at a very bad instant. The TIE Advanced began to tumble, it’s engines badly damaged.

“I’m hit!” It was not Jynx’s lucky day.

Steele saw the TIE Advanced get blown out of the sky, but what followed mystified the pilot. Several small, speedy delta winged ships sped through the line, seemingly bent on self destruction when they were abruptly enveloped by blue light and gone.

::Alert! Everybody out of the way!:: Steele did not have much time to consider the sights that he had witnessed previously, a few very large (and some not so large) alien cruisers and jumped direct into the fleet, and were even now laying waste to the Imperial forces situated in the area.

“Flight 2 on me. Rea, you there?”

::Right here lead::

“Alright, you’re with me, lets do some damage::

::Damn straight!:: The enemy fighters seemed to be everywhere at once, waxing a fighter here, then disappearing before they could be hit. It would have been beautiful if it weren’t so blasted lethal.

::Hell yeah, eat that!:: Steele was startled out of his reverie to see the rapidly fading debris of one particular alien fighter, followed by Rea’s TIE Defender.

“Nice shot Rea.”

::Thanks, learn to watch your back man::

“Will do, lets go man.” It was but the work of a moment before the two TIE Defenders powered their engines and leapt back into the fray.

\* \* \*

“Fascinating yes? They do not have a prayer of defeating us, yet they continue to defend their homeworld. Not unlike Corneria..” Dray turned to his Nar in surprise.

“My Lord, if you recall, we were defeated at Corneria. It was the beginning of the end of our old Empire.” Ranvero looked wistful as he watched the intricate battle before him.

“Nar Valkyrie was a brilliant tactician, but he lacked drive. Had he wished victory, Corneria would be in the paws of the Empire and Khaxki would still be alive. Order the Valerius and her escorts to his that Star Destroyer over there, it is getting rather inquisitive.” Dray turned his eyes to where Ranvero had extended his claw. True to his word, a Star Destroyer was attempting to slash inward and get a line on the Desta Imperia.

“Valerius, you are ordered to eliminate that Star Destroyer.”

::We hear and obey:: Dray watched with interested as the Kadith Heavy Cruiser broke off from one of it’s engagements and headed off toward the Imperial Star Destroyer. Shots were exchanged.

“Our victory today will be the first step toward reestablishing the Empire and be-ridding ourselves of the accursed Alliance.” As if to punctuate, the Star Destroyer burst into flame. Wounded, the capital ship veered around and made for the planet.

“Let it go, she is inconsequential.” Dray was just about to nod his acknowledgement when the entire bridge compartment was filled with a bright green light, forcing Ranvero and the others to shield their eyes.

“What was that? Tactical, speak.” The Kitoth manning the tactical station appeared to be in a state of shock.

“My lord.. The Valerius is destroyed.” In a fit of rage, the Nar smashed the recall switch. It was true, the enemy flagship had vaporized a fully outfitted Rantaro Heavy Cruiser with what appeared to be an Axial Super Laser.

“Order our forces to come about, I want the..” Ranvero checked the tactical display, “I want the Sovereign eliminated. Immediately.”

\* \* \*

“Max.. I thought that you were dead.” Dyrlic did not say anything, but then he hadn’t said anything for the last twenty minutes. All Fink could do was sit and wait, and pray.

“No Tola.. Fink. I’m not dead, no thanks to you.” The Kadith shook his head, all of the memories of that ambush near Hoth surfacing to haunt him once again. Max Dyrlic had been a promising pilot, a trainee in Rogue Squadron. Fink had taken them out for a milk run and..

“There was nothing I could do Max.. The TIE Fighters, there were too many.” The ex pilot shook his head, refusing to believe the words of his once-commander.

“No Fink, there was something you could do. Intelligence had said that the Empire was active in that sector, but you chose to ignore their warnings didn’t you? You never cared about the pilots under your charge, you only cared about feathering your own career.” Rising, the Intelligence officer spat upon the floor.

“Tola Jerel, one of the best pilots since Luke Skywalker, commander of Rogue Squadron, earned the Kalidor Crescent. Bah! You betrayed EVERYONE you knew to get that far, starting with your very own father.” The pilot turned Intelligence officer thumped his own chest,

“But me.. You did not think to reckon with me, did you? You thought you had killed everyone didn’t you? But no, the Empire picked me up, rehabilitated me, gave me a second chance.. And now here we are.” Narrowing his eyes, Maxwell leaned up close to the Kadith.

“You my friend are already going to hell of your crimes, I’m here to send you there that much faster.” To accentuate the point, the Intelligence Officer whacked Fink hard across the muzzle, sending the Kadith to the ground (chair and all).

“You’ll never pull it off.. Even if I die, they will learn that I’m not a traitor.” With a shrug and a careless grin, Maxwell removed his blaster.

“Maybe someday.. But you see Fink, right now you’re trying to escape.. Yes, you are quite dangerous. I believe that I may have to shoot you in self defense. Goodbye Fink.” Squeezing his eyes shut, the Kadith readied himself for the expected whine of the killing shot, followed by his own death. What he heard instead was.. a door chime.

“Blast it, I told them that I didn’t want to be disturbed.” Fink opened his eye (his artificial eye had been "removed") to see the Dyrlic’s boots moving away, moving towards the door of the interrogation area. It didn’t matter Fink supposed, he had always escaped death by the skin of his teeth, more often then not at the cost of friends and loved one’s. Now it was his turn to pay for his crimes. It was only fitting, but Dyrlic was sure taking a long time to get back..

“Hey Fink, need a little help?” Fink blinked, hardly daring to believe what he had just heard.

“Kess? Is that you?”

“The same, hold still..” Fink felt a small knife go into his bonds.

“But.. You went to Pirath, with Tornado, to stop those traitors..”

“Do you think that I’d leave my own brother in the lurch? Please.” With an effort, Fink rose to look his brother in the eye.

“What’s happening out there?”

“Well.. Aurora Prime is under attack by some friends of yours.”

“Great, come on.. I need to send a message.”

“Oh yeah, you have somebody who wants to meet ya..”

\* \* \*

Rea winced as the Axial Superlaser on the Sov went up in smoke. Despite their best efforts, the Kadith had broken through and taken out one of their only hopes for victory. Simply put, they were in trouble.

“Scan of Flagship found.” Rea blinked, that had taken a while.

“Show me.” As the Churban maneuvered his TIE Defender through a particularly vicious dogfight, he watched as a holographic display popped up and activated.

“Well..” This was interesting, most interesting..

“Yo Flight 2, this is Rea. Form up on my wing, I’ve got an idea..”

\* \* \*

“This is unacceptable, we are losing too many ships.” Ranvero grimaced and waved a paw at the holo display before him. Imperial blips continued to wink out at a phenomenal rate along with the occasional Kadith blip.

“My Lord, we are outnumbered, this was to be expected. We have eliminated their Axial Superlaser, victory is assured.” Dray was worried, Ranvero was becoming increasingly unstable. The rage he had displayed at the loss of the Valerius had been impressive.

“We should not be losing ANY ships.”

“Lord, that is an unrealistic expectation.”

“Silence! Prepare a Pariah.” Dray gasped, a Pariah!? This was madness, utter madness. A Pariah was quite capable of eliminating life on a planetary scale, using one was insanity unbelievable.

“No sir! We cannot use a Pariah! It is madness!” Angered, the Nar snatched hold of his Lieutenant and dragged him in close. Sharp, dirty claws dug into Dray’s fur, eliciting a moan from the unfortunate.

“Treachery! By the teeth of hell I’ll flay you into mangy dollrags!” With strength borne of madness, Ranvero through Dray to the floor. But before Ranvero could accomplish anymore then that singular act, Dray drew his blaster and made quick to take aim.

“I’m sorry Lord, but I can’t do that.”

“Riven.. This is treason. You know what the price of treason is..”

“No Lord,” Dray waved his blaster about the bridge, “THIS is treason, this entire campaign is treason my Lord. I told you that this was wrong from the very beginning, but I went along with you because you are my friend. Now you are showing me just how right I was.”

\* \* \*

“Whoa, hold tight man, look out!” Taking care to avoid the Mark 2 to his rear, Rea made for the large Kadith Super Cruiser that dominated the center of the battle. It was always all so simple, make the enemy go “boom.” It was what he did for a living, hell it was what he was good at.

::Look out Rea, you’ve got a little bit of company:: Steele was right, a squadron of Mark 3’s were rising up to meet him. That was not a good thing, this wasn’t as easy as it looked.

“I’m going in, cover me.” With practiced ease, Rea cut across the surface of the Super Cruiser before him. It wasn’t really that hard, the bridge tower was before him, perhaps not as conspicuous as the bridge tower on an Imperial Star Destroyer but..

“Check this guys.” Rea armed his Rockets.

The Rockets hit the bridge compartment squarely, annihilating that shielding and eating away much of the heavy armor. Ranvero blinked and swiftly recovered. The Command Center was in ruins, dead Kadith littered the deck.

“No! Riven, please, I’m sorry..” Dray didn’t not respond, he was quite dead, the blaster was still clenched in his paw. Shaking, Ranvero fell to his knees and began to weep for his lost friend.

“You were right..” That realization came a might too late for Ranvero. Seconds after that proclamation, the Command Center was opened to vacuum.



\* \* \*

## Epilogue

The Kadith fleet did not attempt to carry on the fight after the elimination of the Desta Imperia. Rather, a substantial Republican Kadith Fleet arrived, prompting the immediate withdrawal of renegade forces. And it was there that Maven Dray, sister of Riven Dray and commander of the greater Republic armada stood.

“As I said before Grand Admiral Ronin. Our government in no way sanctioned this assault, rest assured that the perpetrators will pay quite dearly.” Ronin nodded silently.

“Indeed. Your arrival was quite timely. Tell me, why have we not heard of your species until now?” Maven chuckled quietly and gathered up her materials.

“Oh trust me Admiral, we have known about you for sometime, we have simply chosen not to make ourselves known.. For the time being.”

“I see, until next time then.”

“Let us see that there is no next time Admiral. Good day.”

\* \* \*

“So you’re leaving Fink?” Nodding, the Kadith took the time to throw in another piece of clothing. His vacation had been so blasted short..

“Really Kess, I’m gonna need a vacation from my vacation. But it was nice to see you all again?” Smiling, Fink closed up his suitcase and stretched.

“Any chance that you’re coming back?” Fink halted.

“Should I?”

“I know that the EH hasn’t been exactly been good to you but.. Hey, there’s always a place for you in my ship.” Smiling, Fink pulled Kessler into a friendly embrace and whacked the Human hard upon the back.

“Thanks for pulling me out back there.”

“Hey, what are brothers for?”

“I have no idea. I’ll see ya round Kessler.” Nodding, the Kadith gathered up his baggage and departed.

\* \* \*

“This is most unfortunate, I had hoped that this assault would end the conflicts decisively.” Dytiri set down his Hot Ska and sighed.

“You are saying that they are all dead?”

“All of them.”

“A pity, very well, begone.” Bowing, the Kadith departed. Yawning, Dytiri turned to the Human seated quietly to his rear.

“Now then Mr..”

“Morden.”

“Yes, Mr. Morden. What did you say that you had to offer?”

“Really, I have only a simple question.”

“And what is that?”

“What do you want?”

FM/Maj Fink/Tornado 3-3/Wing X/ISD Chal

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## 5 Years After Endor...

Kaleraan Traal swatted angrily at the musca fly buzzing near his face. Cursed insects, he thought. Leaning painfully back against a rock, he gently set his legs down onto the grass. He winced as pain jolted through his leg. Closing his eyes, he began to reflect on the events of the past few days that had made him stranded on the remote world of Romalyn. Here, on the Outer Rim, there was no hope of rescue. They would come for him soon. A fighter crash, even in the midst of a battle, was hard to overlook. The image of his wrecked TIE Bomber floated unwanted into his mind. All because of thatshavit traitor... No, it wouldn't be long before they came for him...

"..and the target is expected to have a mix of defense forces, both Pirate and Rebel vessels. Most likely, a T- or Y-wing squadron." Commander Andril spread his hands. "Questions?" Nothing, save an almost inaudible shuffling of feet. "Very well. Strike force prepping begins at 0500. Dismissed." The assembled pilots stood up, saluted, and began to file out of the briefing room. To Flight Officer Kaleraan Traal, the mission didn't seem too difficult. Thoguh Romalyn was a Rebel base of some importance in the Outer Rim, surprise and discipline should overcome resistance easily, as it had many times before. Weaving his way out of the briefing room, he searched the hallway for Slant and the others. He finally spotted them, a small semicircle near the wall.

"Kaleraan."

Traal nodded.

"Slant."

The others chorused their greetings. Traal briefly scanned their faces. Brant Staplin, Vyle Coranan, Dalam Oqsy and Fox Prannel's face were all serious and determined, though a hint of giddy anticipation tugged at the mask Imperial discipline had instilled.

Prannel spoke, "What do you think of the mission?"

"Standard drop and drive. Nothing we haven't done a dozen times before. Still, it's a big target. Sector base for Rebel operations."

"What do you think of the Rebel-Pirate coalition there?"

Slant snorted. "Typical Rebel scum."

The rest of the pilots voices their consent.

"No matter. It still won't help them."

Staplin turned around, then back again.

"Well, I need to go. See you guys tomorrow."

The group schatted for another half hour, then departed to their quarters.

"All squadrons, report in."

"Tau Squadron, standing by."

"Katana Squadron, standing by."

"Phantasm Squad, ready to go."

A brief pause, then, "Launch."

Lightly touching his control stick, Traal nudged his TIE Bomber out of the hangar. He quickly scanned the rest of the strike force. The TIE Bombers of Tau Squadron were being escorted by Katana's Interceptors, and the six Assault Gunboats of Phantasm were two clicks to port. The Fleet Carrier Balatic, the vessel that served as home to the strike force, was back another

klick. Traal switched weapons selection to Thermal Detonators. While fairly useless in space combat, due to their lack of speed and guidance, they could lay waste to a significant amount of planet.

A minute later, a voice crackled over the comm.

“Lead, I’m picking up some signals. Six, no, twenty four, no, wait.”

Prannel broke off, then came back, voice shaky.

“48 fighters, plus three Corellian Corvettes. All hostile.”

“Sithspawn”.

Slant switched frequencies.

“Control, we have trouble...”

Slant’s voice came back on the squad comm.

“Tau’s, we have several options, none of them good. We could turn around and head back to Balatic, but that would be signing our own death warrants, since we don’t have enough time to get to lightspeed. We could dogfight, but in Bombers and against a numerically superior opponent, that would be suicide as well. Our last option is little better than the others. We can get at the target and do as much damage as possible before the Rebels catch up.”

Traal popped his comm. “I’m for the latter.”

“Good, because that’s what we’re doing. Phantasms are going to go for help, as they have hyperdrives. Split up into your flight groups, and let’s make the Rebels pay.”

Traal checked his sensors. The enemy forces were still four klicks away, the planet one klick. Fortunately, Romalyn had no planetary shield. According to the briefing, they should be fairly close to the Rebel base by now.

Prannel, Traal’s flight leader, began to issue orders.

“All right, Two Flight, switch to detonators, a-”

His voice was cut off by a hiss of static. Glancing to the sensor board, he saw the red dote representing Prannel’s Bomber wink out, followed by Coranan’s. On instinct, Kaleraan jinked to starboard, narrowly avoiding the green lasers that cut into the space where he had been half a second ago.

“Staplin! What in Vader’s name do you think you’re doing?”

A cool voice responded. “Isn’t it obvious? You’ve been sold out.”

Rage began to course through his veins.

“Die.”

Staplin was on his tail again. Traal pulled up in a slow corkscrew climb, and Staplin easily followed. He was not so prepared for what happened next. Traal sideslipped right, inverted, and pulled back up, behind Staplin.

With a snarl, he pumped four dual laser bursts into the bomber’s shieldless aft. The first two sliced off the port solar panel. The next blaster into the hull, forcing the engines to rupture, and the fighter soon flared into a brilliant orange fireball. Glancing again at the sensors, Kaleraan saw that the Imperials were being destroyed. Out of the thirty fighters, only eleven remained. Phantasm Squad had been intercepted by a squadron of X-wings, who were followed by a Corvette. One Assault Gunboat managed to escape. Five bombers and seven Interceptors were left. Balatic was under fire, and though it tried to defend itself, the Fleet Carrier simply wasn’t strong enough. Swinging his fighter around, Traal headed back towards the Rebel base. Coming over a forest of trees, he was greeted by laser blasts. Four turrets

encircled the base, all firing at him. Juking left, he aimed towards the nearest laser tower and shot a concussion missile. The fiery warhead slammed into the tower's base, crushing steel and stone, and bringing down the rest of the turret. Traal was jolted as another laser grazed his TIE. He switched to lasers and sent a eight bolts at the offending tower. An explosion briefly gave light to the base, as the bolts struck home on the laser turret itself. Traal switched back to detonators, dropped three, and pulled up as fast as his ship would allow. He narrowly outran the resulting shockwave, as the bombs blasted into the Rebel base. The Imperial force was down to four ships. They had, however, struck back, reducing the Rebel fleet from four squadrons and three Corvettes, to thirty fighters and two capital ships. The remaining Imperial craft, Interceptors, were attempting to escape a group of A-wings and a Corvette. Which left twenty T- and X-wings, plus another Corvette, to chase down Traal. The T-wings were the first to come. Sideslipping right, he twisted around and swept laser fire across their formation. One exploded, and another began spinning wildly out of control. He rolled to catch up with the scattered group, focusing on one T-wing. He sent a burst at it, but the shot went wide. The T-wing twisted and dove, and Traal attempted to bracket the fighter in his heads-up display, but failed. Frustrated, he triggered another burst, expectedly going high. Suddenly, the X-wings were behind him, peppering the space around him with laser blasts. Traal shunted all power to engines, in an attempt to gain distance. Unless he did something quick, he would be dead. Slowly, an idea creapt into his brian. Toggling weapons selection back to thermal detonators, he released the bombs and pulled up. The pursuing Rebels followed the maneuver - straight into the detonators. Four were disintegrated instantly, and two more blew up. Traal swung the TIE to port. Unfortunately, he didn't see the Corvette. The turbolaser blast sliced off the starboard solar panel, and took out one of the engines. Traal struggled to maintain control - and consciousness - as the Bomber plummeted towards the planet's surface. With his remaining strength, he cut off all engines power and attempted to stabilize the craft. The planet grew nearer in his cracked viewport. Traal struggled with the control stick. Then, everything went black.

Then, the second, non-Wars related tale:

Alan Greenspan, Intergalactic Man of Mystery

Battle klaxons sounded throughout the Renegade vessel Pariah's Fury. On the bridge, a mid-sized, red-faced captain shouted out commands. "Guns, open fire, order all Kraits to launch! Sensors, I want an I.D. on that ship!" The sensor officer shook his head. "Type unknown sir, though it does appear to be something of a hybrid, wit-" Realization slammed into the officer like a tidal wave. The captain also was struck by a similar wave of understanding. All color quickly drained from the sensor officer's face. "It's Greenspan." For a moment, the captain as well seemed quite pale, but he began chuckling, then a full-throated roar. "Let him take us on! We're in one of the most heavily-armed and shielded South Tip Renegade vessels! He's flying his...whatever it is." The captain nodded out towards space. A silver vessel was gliding towards the ship, launching Pursuit Missiles as it went. On the front, it had three "points", panels that stuck out straight, making the front end look like a triangle. A small, square body connected the three wings in the middle. A formidable array of weapons placements and launcher protruded from the vessel at odd angles. "Fire blaze cannons and turrets, then punch him with the needle missiles." "Aye, sir" Short, red bursts of energy erupted from the Turncoat, shortly followed by paper-thin missiles.

Aboard the attacking, oddly-shaped vessel, the Valkyrie, Alan Greenspan wrenched his controls around to avoid the oncoming blasts. He touched a button, and his four swivel phase cannons blasted out gold energy towards the Renegade Turncoat. Some light jazz floated across the cockpit/control center from the audioplayer. He muttered "Pirate scum."

Bounty hunting was just one of Greenspan's many trades. He locked his vessel in a weaving pattern, and went over to the pursuit missile launcher, got a lock on the Fury, and programmed it to fire seven missiles. Greenspan then walked to the gunnery station, and punched in the target for the automated neutron cannons. If an observer looked at the firepower bursting from the relatively small vessel, they would have thought it completely absurd, but Alan Greenspan, Intergalactic Man of Mystery was one for surprises. His eyes darted to the shield read-out. Seventy percent. A blast rocked the vessel. Fifty percent. He turned to look at the Krait fighters pummeling his ship. Greenspan cut over to the pilot station, and transferred control of navigation and guns to the stick. Twisting the Valkyrie around, the ship curled down, then pulled straight up. The phase cannons lashed into the nearest Krait. Flames erupted from its aft, and the vessel was soon consumed by the fire. Greenspan quickly checked his sensor board. The Turncoat had sixty percent shields, and was catching up to the dogfight. Greenspan dusted another Krait, and disabled the other. The jazz selection ended, and a new piece began to waft across the chamber. He pulled the Valkyrie up, and headed just below the Fury. The purple neutron blasts and gold phase shots forced the shields down to ten percent, and Pursuit Missile finished the job.

"Sir, shields down!"

The Renegade captain whirled around.

"What!?!"

The Turncoat was rocked by another explosion. The captain turned to the weapons console. "Ready the needle missile reserve. When he comes around to finish us off, we'll hit him with our last burst. That, coupled with our guns, will destroy his ship before his cannons can do the job."

"Yessir"

Krall Naris allowed himself a smile. You almost got me, Greenspan. You tried to take me out. That's gonna be your last mistake.

Inside the Valkyrie, a bluesy saxophone solo wove its way around the notes. Greenspan neared the Fury, weapons blazing. Then, he punched a control.

The sleek, fluid movements of the Valkyrie were slightly interrupted as a silver panel slid back to reveal a rocket launcher. On the Pariah's Fury, it took Captain Naris several moments before realizing it. This time, his face was completely pale.

"He-"

Rockets, while slow, and somewhat inaccurate, and doing little damage to shields, could turn armor into little metal shards. The projectile plowed into the Turncoat, ripping apart armored plates and the ship's structure itself. A minute later, there was nothing left of the Pariah's Fury but small, chewed-up bits of steel.

The Valkyrie twisted into the landing zone, and set down for a smooth landing. The main spaceport of Huron was quite crowded. Rumor had it that there were dissident elements wishing to secede from the UE, and set up their own government. And out here, at the fringe of the spaceport, where virtually no trader would venture, the huge, sealed bunkers seemed proof that

they were serious. Greenspan walked out of the small ramp and sealed off his ship. If anyone tried to touch it, the automated security system wouldn't take it too kindly. Greenspan walked about a mile or so to the security headquarters. The area was marked off as restricted, but anyone who worked there for at least a day would not have tried to stop him. He threaded his way through the halls, until he found the right office. Greenspan punched a key, and the door slid open. A mid-sized, lean man sat behind a desk, surveying several datacards. "Cox." The man looked up. "Ah, Greenspan. I take it you have some business to discuss?" Greenspan dropped the datadisk he'd been carrying. "The Fury's gone." Greenspan pointed to the datadisk "Vidrecording and sensor recordings to back it up." Cox nodded. "Well, it seems we are indebted to you. The bounty on Naris' ship was fairly high. The Pariah's Fury was one of the most notorious raiders in the South Tip." Greenspan gave a slightly annoyed nod. "The credits." Cox sighed, and grabbed a transaction card. He punched a few digits in, and placed it back down. "There. Seven hundred thousand credits transferred to your account." Greenspan consulted his own card, then replaced it in his pocket. He gave a slight nod to Cox, then walked out of the office.

The regions of the Crescent were much more tamed than the UE made it out to be. It would have been a paradise, except for the warring Strands. To the North of the UE was the Miranu, a rather peaceful race with powerful technology. The North Tip and the East had their own Renegades as well, but much more powerful than their Southern counterparts. This threat was countered, however, by the Zacht, the Miranu's defence force. To the west, humanity's bitter enemies, the dreaded Voinians, to the northwest, the Emalgha, a semi-primitive race who were previously enslaved by the Voinians. In the east, however, there were the Strands. No one outside the Strands really knew why they were all at war with each other, and it was likely that few of the Strands really did know why. But they had been at each others throats for as long as anyone could remember. Three races comprised the Strands, the theatrical Zidagar, the somewhat flamboyant and warrior-like Azdgari, and the cunning Igadzra. Save the Zidagar, all had their own versions of the Crescent staple ship, the Arada, specially modified for fighting. The Igadzra had the most powerful ship in their Igadzra, but that ship carried no fighters. The Zidagar had their own Zidagar fighter, and their light Warship, the Zidara, all armed with phased beam technology. The Azdgari fleet was comprised of their fighter, the fast and maneuverable but lightly shielded Azdara, and arguably the best warship in the galaxy, the Azdgari Warship. While solely ship-to-ship fighting with an Igadzra would destroy the Warship, the Azdgari vessel carried six Azdara fighters that proved the difference, enabling that vessel to win most of its encounters. Then, there was the mysterious Council. Absolutely no one knew who they were, or what they did, but when the Council spoke, the Strands obeyed. Alan Greenspan was, at the moment, joining an Azdgari raiding party against the Zidagar's Terapin Station. One warship, three Aradas and five Azdaras, in addition to the Warship's complement of fighters comprised the raiding party, along with the Valkyrie. The green ships screamed out of hyperspace into the middle of the Terapin system. They quickly caught the Zidagar by surprise. Three of the Zidagar's purple-orange-yellow fighters were destroyed in the opening barrage. The remainder sprung into action. The three Zidas went for the Warship, while the fighters headed for the lighter vessels. Greenspan knocked off an oncoming Zidagar fighter with three well-timed pursuit missiles. He jinked to the right and narrowly avoided the sweeping yellow phased beam. The Crescent always had mixed feelings for him. Today, several accordions were the background music of the day. Greenspan dove,

then pulled up and around, coming up behind the fighters. The phased cannons and neutron turrets spewed forth from the Valkyrie, and another fighter bit the dust. The Man o' Mystery swooped down and pumped another fighter full of flame, but this one broke off and came back around. The phased beam and cannons pummeled his shields, and the Man of Mystery spun into a corkscrew dive. The Fighter stayed on his tail throughout the dive, but held his fire, not wishing to expend unnecessary energy on potshots. Greenspan kept the dive, when, in mid circle, he pulled up. That hurt. The strain caused several coolant leaks in the engines, and Greenspan could feel the ship rupturing. The Zidagar pilot attempted to follow, but his ship was not nearly as sturdy as the Valkyrie. The fighter almost broke apart during the maneuver, and it took but a moment to be destroyed by the waiting Valkyrie. He looped up, heading back to the fight, when something jarred the ship. "By the mists of Gand..." Greenspan checked his sensors for any ships on his aft, then saw the Zidara. He managed to break free of the phased beam. This was not going to be easy. While much less heavily defended and armed, the Zidara was the most maneuverable and speedy warship-class vessel in the galaxy. A dispersal rocket slammed into the Valkyrie's aft. Greenspan glanced at the shield report. Sixty percent. The Man of Mystery had twenty pursuit missiles left. Three shot out of the launcher tubes, distracting the Zidara for a moment. He took that moment to use a special modification. Punching a control, the world suddenly turned green... The accordions disappeared in favour of bagpipes. The cloaking device was something of a galactic legend, like the U.E.S Incontrovertible. However, like the fabled warship, it too was a reality. After some work with several scientists who mainly hung out on the rougher edges of space, they had given him this cloak. Unfortunately, it drained fuel from the ship, and shields as well. But it gave him time to slip out from the Zidara's line of fire. The Valkyrie sidled over behind the vessel, then decloaked and pounded the ship mercilessly. When the crew finally managed to react, she was already cloaked. Greenspan decloaked and swept over the Zidara, raking fire across it's hull, slashing it with pursuit missiles. A nearby Azdara raced over and added it's weaponry to the mix. The combined barrage was more than the Zidara could take. It lashed out with all it's weaponry. Phased beams swept across sending both ships spinning, dispersal rockets jolted them back to stillness, and the phase cannons beat them back. The Azdara exploded, showering the Valkyrie with shrapnel. Greenspan checked his shields again. Gone. He gritted his teeth. Nothing left between him and the Zidara but the hull. He was glad now that he had sprung for those two extra layers of Dospect armor. Greenspan looped up in an impossibly fast climb. This was one thing the Zidara couldn't follow him in. Once he was relatively sure that he was off their sensor scopes, he merely tilted the stick forwards, letting the momentum hurdle him downwards. It was an ancient technique, called dive bombing. He felt his head begin to hurt. Even with the advances in technology, gravity still was hard to combat. Fortunately, humans had discovered artificial gravity, but their ancient foe was still present. The stars raced towards him. He'd never really bothered to measure hyperspeed, but this was pretty close. The bagpipes were now vanished, and a monosynth replaced them. Greenspan finally saw the Zidara, rushing towards him at a ridiculous pace. At that moment he let loose with everything he had, cut to the right, and slammed on the reverse thrusters. Pursuit missiles, phase energy, rockets, all slammed into the Zidara. The effect on it was about ten times a barrage at normal speed would have. The momentum was more deadly than the weaponry itself. The Zidara started to buckle. Explosions rocked the vessel. Escape pods shot out all over it, and she blew herself apart. Greenspan finally got the Valkyrie settled down, and swung her over to the rest of the battle just in time to see the last Zidagar destroyers blow up.

The Valkyrie and the Azdgari vessels swept low over the spaceport. The Warship stood ready, prepared to slag anything that attempted to hinder the raiders. Azdgari troops poured out of the landing ships. All present had done this before, and knew exactly where the treasury was. Several Zidagar fired handheld weapons out of an alley at the oncoming Azdgari. Greenspan pivoted and swept stun fire across, bringing all five of them down. It had been a long time since the Azdgari visited Terapin.

Greenspan's share of the treasury spoils was around eight hundred thousand credits. These he transferred to his Crescent account on the Miranu world of Blaga. He was taking the long way to Earth. UE Intelligence had sent him a message telling him to come to the UE Navy headquarters on Knox. The lonely course around the bleak, uninhabited systems caused him to turn on some early 20th century swing. Greenspan jumped into the system of DSN-1109, completely bored. The flashes of light hurt his eyes. Two Voinian Cruisers and four Frigates were attempting to poach on a UE convoy of two Freight-Couriers, two of the gigantic but unarmed Freighters, and a group of Cargo Transporters, protected by a UE Carrier and two Destroyers. Single combat between a Frigate and a Destroyer would usually result in the destroyed Frigate, but the UE ships were outnumbered, and the Cruiser outgunned the Carrier, and it was only the Carrier's complement of fighters that could save it from the Cruiser. But the fighters were always hotly contested by the Voinian's own, either Interceptors or Heavy Fighter, excellent fighters in their own right.

"Valkyrie to Trident. I take it you need some assistance."

"Thanks, Valkyrie. Good to see you."

The Valkyrie twisted into the fight, firing every sort of weapon Greenspan carried in his arsenal. On the trip back to UE space, Greenspan had overhauled his four phase cannons in favor of blaze cannons, and stored the phase in the cargo hull of his ship. Fortunately, the special modifications made to the Valkyrie enabled this to be a quick process. Pursuit missiles ripped into the Frigate's minimal shielding, and soon the Blaze Cannons were working on the armour. Whilst they had barely substantial shielding, the Voinians had the most advanced armour in existence. It provided the main defence against the UE attacks. While phase and neutron cannons did incredible energy damage to shields, they did little to armour. Blaze cannons, next to those carried by the Emalgha, were the most damaging to Voinian vessels. The Frigate responded. Slow but deadly neutron turrets and rockets hurtled out towards him, weaving a web of deadly force. It took precision flying to avoid one rocket, then twist out of the next one's path. So many UE fighters had been caught by this trap, the Voinians obviously didn't think much on abandoning it. Unfortunately for the aliens, Greenspan had encountered this web before. After weaving through it, he pounded on the Frigate's armour. Rockets smashed the metal plates, blaze cannons scorched and burned. Bringing his ship up and around, he skimmed across the Frigate, blaze energy twisting and tearing up the Voinian ship. After reaching the end, Greenspan danced his ship up on his aft, then flipped it around, and fired the last shot. One rocket, slowly making its way towards the Frigate. The bulky vessel twisted madly to get out of its destructive path. It turned and made a slow, clumsy dive to starboard. The maneuver was found to be in vain as the projectile slammed into the Frigate's hull, causing the engines to rupture and explode. Flames slowly swept through and consumed the ship, till there was nothing but dust. Two more Frigate's had been flamed, but at the cost of one of the Destroyers. Fortunately, the UE Fighters had been holding their own, and keeping the powerful Heavy Fighters off of the human capital ships. Greenspan inverted and flew to the



group of Freighter's, who were being blockaded by a Voinian Cruiser. Greenspan opened a comm channel.

"Valkyrie to Freighter Convoy. Form up into an inverted semi-circle. I'm going to go behind that Cruiser, you open fire on it's front end on my mark, try and drive it back to me." He carefully glided over about two clicks from the Cruiser's aft end, where he hoped he would only show up as a small fighter on the Voinian's sensors. "Mark".

Each blasting away with their pair of blaze cannons, the Cargo Transports formed a powerful defensive cordon. Unprepared for the organized resistance, the Cruiser began to back off. Right into the Valkyrie's line of fire. Greenspan pummeled the ship with cannons and projectiles. The Transport's cordon moved forward to provide supporting fire. Caught between two foes, the confused Voinian ship attempted to figure which was the lesser threat. Greenspan hoped that the enemy captain wouldn't decide on the Transport's, whom, while together powerful, could be picked off more easily. Yet it didn't seem to be much of a problem, as the captain still debated it in his mind, allowing Greenspan and the freighters to blast him some more. Finally, he turned towards Valkyrie. But it was too late. Energy raining down on it's unprotected hull, The Cruiser was soon engulfed in a ball of flame, tearing across the ship, and ending in a brilliant, bright explosion.

The remaining Voinian vessels, seeing the fate of their comrades, turned and began to flee into hyperspace, pursued by the angry UE fighters.

Alan Greenspan sat down on the plush, green chair. He was surprised to see representatives from several other races also sitting down at the conference table. 'Round the table, the Intergalactic Man of Mystery recognized Admiral McPherson and Vice Admiral d'Erlon. McPherson was the commander of UE Naval forces, and d'Erlon the hero of the Hinwar uprising. Also there was a Zacha he faintly recognized, an Azdgari, two Zidagar, two Igadzra, three other humans, a Miranu, and...

Greenspan took all of his professional training and experience not to look agog at the Voinian. He knew there had been some defectors, but he didn't recognize this one as having come over. McPherson stood up, Greenspan assumed that the impromptu meeting was in order. The Admiral looked grim. "I'll get straight to the point. We've had something of a trade alliance with the Miranu, and some agreements with the southeastern Strandless. One trader vessel, jumping into the Cade system to escape pirates, saw the remains of Council Station, and a small alien vessel. It immediately hypered out. We sent several scouts to confirm this, and all save one were destroyed. It brought back information that hostile aliens from another galaxy have found a way into ours. We've had no replies from the Council about this, but I think we can be pretty sure this is the, if not one of the reasons that the station in Cade was built. A day after the last scout return, we found Romalyn utterly wasted. All people dead. The Azdgari know as much about this new threat as we do, which leaves us in the same boat. One week ago, we sent a new Cruiser, the U.E.S Liverpool, to Cade. Only a Fighter escaped. The pilot told us that the Cruiser was gone in under two minutes." Greenspan, though he kept it from his face, was shocked. The UE Cruisers were the most powerful warships, with the possible exception of the Igazra, ever made in the galaxy. McPherson leaned forward. "To be frank, the UE can't defeat this by ourselves. We're going to have to face this together. I've already received support from Klayth," He waved a hand towards the Voinian, "and his special task force. The Emalgha have also agreed to have a fleet stand-by, to aid if the aliens have heavily armoured vessels. I

hope for all our sakes that I can count on your governments for support.”

After a moment’s pause, the Azdgari stood up, and nodded. “The Azdgari will support you in any way possible.” Not unexpected, Greenspan thought. They’ll be the first to fall under the alien’s assault. Both the Miranu and Zacha stood and gave their assent. One of the Igadzra whispered something to his colleague, then said “Our government will assist.” Greenspan heard one human say “We will aid you.” He recognized him as a member of the Trader’s Defense Council, a semi-mercenary group. McPherson turned to Greenspan. “Captain, I called you here first for your service and aid to many of the governments and organizations represented here. You are also closely connected with the Mercenaries Guild. We need you to use your ties to get their assistance.”

Greenspan nodded. “It will be done.”

Jumping into the DSN-1109 system again, Greenspan quickly scanned and saw no other vessels. He saw little wreckage from the previous firefight. He emitted a tachyon burst northwards. The tachyon would represent a hyperspace signal, making any follower think he had hypered north. Then, he swiveled around and jumped south again.

At the end of his jumps, Greenspan reached Jax. It was a supposedly-uninhabited system in UE controlled space, with a small moon, also supposedly uninhabited. Greenspan approached the moon, and sent out an encrypted signal. A minute later, it bounced back, with some different coding. Greenspan gently took the ship down and skimmed the moon’s surface, until he reached a series of caves. He turned into one, and gently landed next to a number of other ships. Greenspan opened the cargo bay doors, shut down all systems, put some netting over the Valkyrie and exited the ship. He walked about two hundred meters, then reached a small control panel on a cave wall. He input a code, then waited. A minute passed, then a part of the cave slid open. He walked through, feeling it shut behind him. Below him stood a city. Port Jaxa had been in existence only about five years. A group of mercenaries and shady trader captains had hollowed the city out, and built the structures. In the caves above, there was a large concentration of valasium, which hid electronic signals well. Greenspan headed for the Quicksilver, the most popular bar on the moon. Stepping into the smoky room, he walked to the bar and ordered a Saalian brandy. A minute later, the bartender slid a glass across to Greenspan. He paid the bartender a few credits, then walked off to a table, usually reserved for the mercenaries ruling council. His timing was perfect, most of the members were there. He acknowledged the table with a nod, then sat down on one of the empty chairs. Silence reigned for a moment, as Greenspan sipped his drink, then set it down, and leaned forward. “They need us.”

The man at the head of the table responded, “For...”

“Something big. The barrier’s been broken, the path to our galaxy is clear.”

The inhabitants of the table understood the implied words.

“Why us?”. A woman to Greenspan’s right broke in.

“We have the skill. They need it.”

Silence.

“They already have support from a number of major governments. We’ll not be alone.”

More silence.

“Very well. They’ll have our aid.”

“Be prepared. I’ll send the signal when it’s time.”

Greenspan brought the ship about, and hailed the U.E.S Slattery, the Cruiser commanding the task force he was in.

“Slattery here.”

“Is the task force assembled?”

“All except your mercs.”

“Acknowledged.”

The Man of Mystery swung around and raced past the ships assembled, until he was at the very fringe of the system. He emitted a neutron pulse, so as to momentarily block their sensors to where he was sending the message, then sent a signal through the hyperwaves.

He turned back to the task force, and raised the Slattery again. “Signal sent. How much longer do we have. Two weeks. We assembled close enough to make a preemptive strike, hopefully before they’re organized. The Fighter that survived the first attack reported only something of a scouting force there. You want to dock your ship here and stay? We’ve got a few extra quarters.”

“No. Thanks, though.”

Greenspan had been hoping for a few days outside the confines of his own ship. He had managed to put a living space in the Valkyrie, but it was extremely cramped. Still, he couldn’t compromise himself, not even by going aboard one of his ally’s ships. It was still too dangerous. He set the ship for a locked flight pattern to keep him in-system, set an alert, then went back. He dropped onto the bed and immediately fell asleep.

The mercenary force should have taken around a week and a half to reach the assembly point. Greenspan kept himself busy by heading south and hunting a few pirates in the unprotected and uninhabited systems. He hadn’t had much luck, only finding a Lazira and a couple Aradas. Then he had jumped a convoy in Neslaut. He had plundered a total of about four hundred thousand from the pirate freighters and escorts. Greenspan decided to head back to the task force. McPherson had broke the attack group up into four tasks forces, each with seven capital ships, and a few smaller vessels. Greenspan was temporarily with Task Force Three, until the Mercs arrived, then, with a Voinian Frigate and Miranu Gunship, he would take command of the Mercs and two capital ships, making it Task Force Five. He reverted to realspace, and was stunned by what he saw. Around five heavy Merc capital ships, followed by an entourage of around fifteen smaller attack ships.

“Requiem to Valkyrie. We’re ready.”

“Slattery here. The fleet is prepared.”

“Acknowledged. Jump on my mark.”

He set his face grimly.

“Mark.”

Greenspan, wiped his hands on his pants before the Valkyrie screamed in-system. He sent a preprogrammed signal out to the fleet as soon he entered Cade. Ten seconds later, they split apart, exhaust trails forming a flower. He looked out the viewport. He was staggered by the massive fleet assembled. Around 75 larger ships, and countless smaller fighters, with more coming out of a twisting and swirling portal near the edge of the system. He heard Admiral

McPherson's voice crackling in over the comm.

"All task forces, come in each from a twenty degree angle, with Task Force 1 beginning, on my mark. We're going to try one last attempt at diplomacy."

Greenspan quickly corrected the Valkyrie's course and stopped his ship, and saw his merc ships do the same.

About a minute and a half passed, then the Intergalactic Man of Mystery saw McPherson's ship, the U.E.S Quicksilver accelerate towards the aliens. A signal relayed the rest of the already-understood message. Attack. Greenspan opened a channel to the merc vessels. "Clear a path to the portal. It has to go down."

That was easier said than done, the portal itself was being guarded by five massive vessels, larger than UE Cruisers, with around thirty smaller ones clustered around it.

Then, the aliens began firing. Dark green beams swept over McPherson's fleet, decimating a Destroyer and three Aradas in its first wave. Greenspan let loose all weapons. One of the sleek, black-green alien fighters was shredded, another sent careening out of control. The mercs lent their firepower to the mix, gold phase energy, spiked SADs, pursuit missiles and dispersal rockets. A mid-sized Destroyer was Greenspan's target, and it exploded in a brilliant flash of red and green. The alien fighters began to sweep in, emitting flashing, fluid-blue, tear-shaped bolts. A volley slammed into the Valkyrie, jolting it starboard. The fighters kept coming. Greenspan obliterated three more with two rockets. A modified mercenary Arada swept behind Valkyrie, then settled to his port.

"Calling Dr. Greenspan. Valkyrie, I'm your wing."

The Man of Mystery allowed himself a smile. Good ol' Traal. Greenspan rolled over starboard, then dove. No aliens attempted to follow the two small craft. They ran low, under the fleets, until they came to the edge, where the right flank and last line of aliens met. The vortex was between the middle of the lines and the right flank. The two ships came up, weapons blazing. In their way were a mid-sized vessel, about ten fighters, and one of the huge warships. Greenspan twisted right, and the Traal went left. They both came up on opposite sides of the Destroyer and pummeled it. Greenspan fire off three Dispersal Rockets, and countless turret and gun rounds. Traal blasted it with SADs and rockets. The vessel fired back, ripping Valkyrie with fire. He checked his shields. Fifty percent. He dove under, and let loose a bank of dispersal rockets. They ripped into the underside of the hull, tearing up armored plates, and soon, the entire ship. Traal had flamed two of the fighters, and Greenspan dove over to join him. A group of five came in perfect synchronization at Greenspan. He swept their front with phase cannon and pursuit missiles. Yet nothing happened. He checked the sensor readout. They hadn't been harmed. He fired again. Nothing. An idea struck him. He had seen this trick used once before. He hit the afterburner, and Valkyrie accelerated forward. He came up and twisted around, spraying their afts with fire. Within five seconds, they were all nothing but small, floating piles of dust. Traal rolled over to help with the last ship. It was massive. Greenspan was stunned by the sheer size of it. Even more impressive was its weaponry. As soon as it moved to face the two fighters, it began to let loose with its beams and turrets. Greenspan took a few hits, bringing his shields back down to fifty percent again. Traal and Greenspan returned fire, sweeping cannon energy, missiles and rockets over the alien juggernaut. A Crescent Warship came sweeping through, opening up on the massive ship. Their combined fire began to bring the vessel down, but it struck back. Greenspan was sent spinning as a beam slammed into his ship. Shields down to five percent. He brought Valkyrie limping back into the fight. The Warship had sixty percent of its hull in flames. Yet it fought on, trading blow for blow. Traal

was darting around, then pouring in whatever weapons he could manage. A Starfire-class heavy fighter had joined the fray. The Crescent Warship was dying. The entire ship was engulfed in fire. Then, it jetted forward. As the Warship and massive alien vessel collided, a horrific explosion erupted. When the fireball had faded, there was nothing left of the two ships. A hole in the alien lines had finally opened. What remained of Greenspan's task force poured through, as well as Task Forces Two and Four. The vortex was massive, about five times as large as the biggest alien ship. The alien vessels opened fire, beams wreaking havoc across the task forces.

On board the U.E.S Quicksilver, Admiral McPherson looked grim. The alien forces were beating back the task force's attack, with more aliens coming out of the vortex every minute. He turned to the comm. "Signal the Emalgha. We're going to need all the help we can get." The Emalgha had been poised near the edge, so it would be a short jump. The brown, rustic ships hurtled in-system, and immediately started to fire. Within two minutes, more than half their fleet was decimated. The Emalgha wooden hulls and primitive armaments were ripped to shreds by the advanced alien technology. The task force at the portal were fighting valiantly, but were being driven back.

"All forces, to the portal."

The Quicksilver accelerated forward, as did the rest of the fleet.

"Form a semicircle around the original ships."

The tattered remains of the fleet formed a defensive cordon around the vessels battling to the vortex.

McPherson checked the sensors. All but one of the alien juggernauts had been eliminated, and only ten of the fighters remained, but there was only a Crescent Warship, a UE Destroyer, an Arada, and a craft of unknown type. Valkyrie.

"Helm, about face. We're going to help them."

McPherson winced as the Destroyer blew, raining shards of metal down on the fleet. The Warship was the next to go, burning itself into nothingness.

"Guns, fire."

Batteries opened up against the alien vessel, destructive energy tearing into the shields. But it responded. Greenspan's task force had expended most of the energy destroying the other four, leaving this one relatively untouched. Flames began to sprout up around the Quicksilver's bridge.

"Keep firing."

"Sir, if we stay here, we'll be dead in under two minutes."

"If we don't get rid of this juggernaut, our galaxy will be dead, Lieutenant. Continue firing."

The sustained assaults were beginning to tell on the juggernaut. The Valkyrie and Traal's Arada were making runs on weak points, drawing off some of the fire meant for the Quicksilver.

An explosion flared across the bridge, sending McPherson hurtling through the air, and landing with a painful thud. He managed to pick himself back up, and squinted through the haze. "Do we still have weapons?"

A pained voice responded, "Yes sir. Shields are down, we're on our armor."

McPherson gritted his teeth. "Continue firing."

The Quicksilver did.

"Sir, our engines are rupturing."

"Move us as close to the alien ship as possible, helm."

The Quicksilver limped forward, then stopped abruptly. The backdrop of space was suddenly illuminated by the twin flares of Quicksilver and the alien.

Greenspan couldn't believe the Quicksilver, and Admiral McPherson with it, was gone.

The voice of d'Erlon broke in. "All ships, maintain defensive stance."

They were counting on him. He couldn't let them down.

"Greenspan, what in the name of Saalia do you think you're doing?"

He paid no heed to Traal, as the vortex began to wash over him. He felt somewhat sick, all the colors flashing and waving. Then, he was dropped into something else. A heavy green mist covered what must have been space. It also gave somewhat of a camouflage to the alien fleet. Greenspan twisted and dove to avoid being blasted out of the sky. He spotted the portal immediately. It was being sustained by a small, boxy, floating....thing. It looked like a container in space. Four fighters were on his tail. He dance Valkyrie up and around, and let loose with a barrage of phase energy. Two were immediately destroyed, another stopped cold. The other remained doggedly on his aft. He began a zig-zag course, taking him directly through the alien lines. The vessels fire crisscrossed around, either totally missing our hitting their own ships. He swerved dangerously close to a mid-sized light cruiser, then skillfully cut back in. The alien pilot wasn't as good. The fighter stood no chance as it slammed into the cruiser at an incredibly high velocity. The fighter simply vanished. It took longer for the cruiser to explode. The portal's support craft was ahead, about a thousand meters. Greenspan checked his remaining arsenal. One rocket left. This was going to have to count. At six hundred meters, he opened fire with turrets and cannons. He pointed his nose at the contained and zeroed in on it. He waited. Three hundred meters. Two hundred. This was insane. The closest, "safe" distance to let loose a rocket was at least three hundred. Fifty. He punched a control, and the rocket slid out, he banked hard to port, barely missing the container. The rocket, however, did not. It ripped into the boxy craft's front end, splitting it completely apart. The vortex began to twist madly. Greenspan put everything into his engines, and hit the afterburner. He managed to make it in just as it imploded. Then, darkness.

The fighting continued in Cade, the aliens fiercely battling the combined fleet. Then, the portal began to swirl and fade. The fighting dropped into virtually nothing, all waiting to see the outcome. Then, an explosion. The vortex was gone. Ten seconds later, a small vessel came spinning wildly out of control, and was caught by a Miranu Gunship's tractor beam. The aliens renewed the attack, but the fight had gone out of them. The fleet had won, and, with that victory, saved the entire galaxy. Yippee.

If you hated the ending, like Ford did, he'll rewrite it...

-FM/LCM Ford Prefect/ Psi 2-2/ Wing II/SSSD Sovereign

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Vengeance

I was sitting at my desk, leaning back in my hoverchair, feet on the desk. It was a quiet day today, with the Relentless orbiting the quiet world of Aurora Prime. No patrols were scheduled, and the most of the pilots were in the sims or at the pilot's club. I picked up my datapad and hooked it up to my holonet transceiver, deciding to see what the latest Rebel activity reports said. I located the reports for the Minos Cluster and began to flip through them.

Suddenly, I was stopped cold by a report on a Rebel battle group. My eyes were centered on the terrible name Benge. I began to sweat profusely and remembered that horrible day, so long ago...

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It was my 21st birthday, and my family and I were stopped on Ord Mantell to pick up a new load of supplies for a new Imperial garrison on Kuat. I had just received my navigator's license and my father decided to let me bargain with the Imperial Prefect's assistant over shipping costs. I had just closed the deal with the assistant when an alarm went off over the desk comm. The assistant got up and said to me, "You better get out of here, the Rebels are attacking!" Needless to say, I hopped up and raced out of the building, heading for the spaceport. When I was about three blocks from away from the building, I looked back to see a Y-wing fire a pro torp. I hit the dirt, and felt the explosion blast me at least 2 meters forward. I began to get up, and suddenly blacked out as something jarred my skull.

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When I awoke, I felt my head and figured I'd live for now. I gingerly got up, and hobbled closer to the spaceport. I found a stormtrooper that was missing most of his legs, and decided that I needed his blaster and grenades more than he did. As soon as I reached the outskirts of the spaceport, I could tell something was wrong. There was a lot of smoke and I didn't see any living Imperial forces. Suddenly, the road beside me was blasted into debris by a laser barrage. I hightailed it to the nearest standing hanger, hoping for the best but fearing the worst.

As I closed the door behind me, I noticed several Rebel Y-wings parked throughout the hanger. I ran to the nearest, and slid behind it just as the hanger door opened. An alien stood there looking around, waving his assault rifle. He was obviously not an Imperial soldier. It was a perfect shot. I aimed my blaster and fired. The poor sucker never knew what hit him. I snuck up to him and prodded him with my foot. No response. I then searched him for ID and found a list of names and codes, which I quickly pocketed.

I was about to leave when I remembered the grenades I had. I looked them over quickly and saw that they each had a timer. I looked at the Y-wings and smiled.

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I was halfway across the spaceport, looking for a usable shuttle vehicle that I could use to get to the orbital spacedock when I saw it. My family's freighter had crashed into the docking control building. I ran to it as fast as I could, hoping that my family had gotten to the escape pod in time. I ripped open the airlock door and rushed in...to find my family dead. The shock was too much and I collapsed to the ground and passed out.

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When I awoke, I saw a datapad next to my brother. I read his words with horror.

Rebels attacked. Fought against them but they got on board. We surrendered but they starting shooting us when they saw cargo. Too late for us. Led by officer named Benge. Kill the bastards. Do it fo

I stood up, and heard "Troops, move out and check for survivors." I peered out a porthole and saw a squad of Rebel troopers moving in. I looked at my family once again and vowed revenge for this hateful act. I snuck out the rear airlock and escaped from the Rebel troopers.

I later found an undamaged Imperial shuttle and as I flew away, I detonated the grenades inside the Y-wings. This was only the beginning of my fight.

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I suddenly awoke from the flashback as the comm beeped. "All stormtroopers report to the training room." I stood up, saved the Benge battle group report, and left my room. I stalked down to the lift tube, and took it to the Pilot's Lounge.

There, I ordered a stiff drink from the droid bartender. I sat down in a corner of the lounge and pondered what to do. I decided to take a personal leave and see what I could do about Benge. Suddenly, Captain Marc sat down by me.

"Tough day?" he asked.

I nodded and said, "I'm going to take a personal leave for a while, as I've been having some family troubles I've got to take care of."

"Care to explain?" he asked.

I shook my head and said, "It's really complicated and hard to explain, but it shouldn't take too long to fix." With that, I muttered a good bye and left to fill out the paperwork for the leave.

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I climbed into my Missile Boat and waved to Zoraan. I told him that one of my relatives was dead and that I needed to attend a funeral. Problem was, all my relatives were dead and I was going to make a funeral necessary for Benge. My Missile Boat was launched out of the hanger



and I throttled up, heading toward the hyperspace point. I concentrated, thought up the hyperspace coordinates, punched 'em in, and hypered out.

As I flew through hyperspace toward my destination, the Minos Cluster, I keyed up the sensor, surveillance, and strength information on the fleet and read through it. After a while, the hyperdrive panel beeped, and I disengaged the hyperdrive. I keyed up the long range sensors and saw that I was near the Yridia system. I jinked my fighter toward Yridia IX, where Benge's fleet was believed to be hiding. With a flick of my wrist, the SLAMs were engaged, and in 2 minutes I'd clear the planet and be ready to rock and roll.

I waited, watching my data display show my range to the fleet, checking my armament of Space Bombs and ACMs. 30 seconds, 15 seconds, 5 seconds...Ah, there it is! I sat there dumbfounded...3 Modified Corvettes, 3 Z-95s, and 2 Y-wings. Benge was obviously not one of the Rebellion's favorites to rate this job. I checked my six and saw a flight of Z-95s. I cut the SLAMs and throttle and pulled down. The Z's pilots were obviously trainees and they flew right over me. I pulled out of my dive and switched to my lasers. A quick burst left a Z spiraling out of control into the shields of a 'vette. I snorted. Talent is hard to find these days. I went full throttle, and armed a space bomb. I flew at the closest 'vette, taking shots the whole way in. About .2 Ks out, I fired the space bomb directly into the bridge and corkscrewed away, picking up 2 Y-wings in the process. I turned around, matching speed with the closest Y-wing. I pulled up behind him and armed 2 advanced concussion missiles. I waited until lock-on, fired, and watched his ejection seat misfire as both wings exploded.

I leisurely flew by the next corvette, and fired 2 space bombs at it. A waste, I know, but I had ammo to burn. I began to doubt that Benge was even in the Minos Cluster. I turned, and laser burnt another Z-95 who tried a head-on attack, when my datapad beeped, and saw that the last corvette was heading to the hyperspace point. I fired 4 ACMs at it to slow it down, and went after the last Z-95. He tried to outrun me to the hyperspace point. Big mistake. I decided to have some fun with this guy. I rolled over and sped up until I was right next to his cockpit. I matched speed and targeted a missile on him. Man, the expression on his face was priceless! I fired the missile directly into his cockpit.

The corvette was my next target. I flew into its rear blind spot and blasted a missile into his engines, which put them out of commission. Then I saw the cargo list my sensors had come up with, which included Benge! I suddenly remembered that there were 2 Y-wings out there and that only one was space dust! SHAABOOOM! My helmet cracked right into the plasteel window and my ejection seat went the way of the Jamoorian Cave Arachnid. I jerked my head back, and looked down at my datapad. CRAP! Shields were red, hull was yellow, and the Y-wing was directly behind me! I wove an intricate web of dirty words and rolled my Missile Boat hard right, coming around to see laser bolts dissipating on the front shields. I twisted right after him, trying your typical Tallon Roll. Foiled by a Corellian Slip! Damn, this guy was good! I SLAMed out of the area ASAP and turned around to overwhelm him with missiles. I shot 'em at him as fast as I could, while he disabled them all with a burst of ion cannon fire that drained my shields down to nothing. Inspiration struck, and I cut all power except for missiles. He overshot me, and turned around to finish me off with a missile, obviously thinking that he disabled me

with that last ion burst. As he closed in, I pulled the trigger. The missiles flew straight and true. Good riddance to Rebel rubbish!

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I turned my Missile Boat toward Benge's corvette and switched to lasers, picking off the laser emplacements so I could attempt a boarding. When the lasers were gone, I pulled up next to the corvette and let a missile fly straight into the hull surrounding the crew area. With an unimpressive explosion, a large part of the hull was ripped off the corvette, the resulting vacuum pulling most of the crew into space, where they quickly met their end. I rechecked my life support and opened the cockpit hatch, and floated towards the corvette.

I quickly entered the crew area and oriented myself. I saw that the crew had been working on a warhead, a type of which I had never seen before. I floated over for a closer examination. I gave it a thorough examination, but still didn't understand it. I turned to the computer and downloaded the schematics onto a disk and stuffed it into a pocket. Now I floated over to the blast door to the bridge. I pulled out my lightsaber, switched it on, and began to cut through the blast door like a hot knife through butter. When I finished cutting a small hole, I reached for a thermal detonator, set it for 5 seconds, and tossed it into the bridge area.

When the debris cloud finally cleared, I cut a larger hole and entered the bridge. The thermal detonator had done its work. Bodies lay everywhere and most of the systems were out. I passed three bodies and there he was. He was still alive, but just barely, missing most of an arm. He struggled and tried to reach for a blaster at his side. I grabbed it from him and pointed it at his head, placing it on its most powerful setting. "Why?" he asked. "This is for my family," I replied and shot him between the eyes. I searched his body, and found a list of codes, names, places, and informants. I took his Rebel Academy ring and his code cylinder. The ISB would have a fun time with what I found. I found the self destruct terminal and set it for ten minutes.

Ten minutes later, the corvette exploded, sending debris everywhere. I shook my head and squeezed Benge's ring in my hand. Vengeance was bittersweet.

WC/COL Scoser/Wing IX/ISD Relentless

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The Tie Interceptor rolled into a tight left turn, barely missing the debris that had been, until moments ago, a Y-wing fighter. The Imperial pilot took a brief moment to assess the situation around him, it did not look good, the Emperor was dead. He felt it the instant that it had happened. The sense of loss was almost overwhelming, like a part of him had been ripped out. Had it not been for his intense military training he would have been killed instantly given the situation he was in at the time: two rebel fighters, An X-wing & an A-wing were bracketing him, trying to pin his ship so a third could get a missile lock. Imperial fighter pilots invented this maneuver so there was no way he would fall for it. He looked around to find something in the nearby battle to use to his advantage, there, a badly damaged corvette was trying to make it's way

out of the range of the ten interdictor cruisers that were positioned around the perimeter of the battle. The 'vette was under full sublight speed by the look of its engine trails so he brought his Tie on a course that would fly him right through them, a suicide move for an unshielded craft and the rebels knew it. The Rebellion was always hurting for ordnance so any chance they had to save a missile they would take. Just then the third ship, another X-wing, dropped his shield power to the engines to catch up & run the Interceptor into the engine trails, a fatal mistake. The Imperial Navy had just begun to fit Tie Interceptors with counter-measures just prior to this battle & all pilots had been well taught in their use. Both normal and unorthodox. The Tie pilot activated the flare but disarmed it first letting it go out dead. It tumbled uselessly towards the X-wing; not being activated prevented it from locking on to a heat source, which is precisely what the pilot wanted. The flare flew right into the path of the rebel fighter, more importantly, the engine intake of the fighter. He saw the eruption of flames as he was already hard breaking to position himself behind the A-wing. Two quad shots from the T/I's lasers and it was out of the fight. The second X-wing on the other hand wasn't so easily taken by his tactics having radioed to the corvette to open fire on the Tie Interceptor. The one remaining turbolaser began tracking him with bolts of red fire, one shot caught the tip of the right solar panel, vaporizing the laser cannon mounted there. Just then an agonizing pain ripped through his whole body. He thought he'd been killed. He suddenly lost all focus on where & who he was. It seemed as if some thing inside of him had just vanished, not a presence but more of a feeling of total confidence that whatever he was doing was the right & only thing to do. He almost brought the ship to a complete stop in his confusion, but a trickle of sweat rolled into his eye & brought him back. The pilot twisted his ship out of the corvette's range after a few agonizing seconds & began to look for the third ship. The X-wing, having thought that there was no more danger from the Tie, had turned his back to return to the heat of the battle some distance away. By the time he realized his mistake it was too late. The Imperial fighters' lasers were ripping through the hull before the Rebel pilot had time to even begin any evasive maneuver. The X-wing disintegrated before him and he had to suppress a chuckle as the astromechs' dome bounced off of the transparisteel windshield. Imperial pilots were not supposed to have emotions while in combat. Time enough for that after the battle.

But that was over an hour & a half ago, any glee he felt over that little victory was long gone. The Imperial Fleet at Endor was in ruins. Over two thirds of their Star Destroyers had been lost, the rest either so badly damaged they had to retreat or worse, surrender. At least most of the interdictors had escaped, being on the fringe of the battle. Besides what use were they now? Their gravity well generators prevented the damaged Imperial ships from escaping also.

Now there were only two Star Destroyers remaining, the Relentless & the Chimera, both badly damaged but covering the escape of the remaining fleet. Then over the radio he heard a message: "This is First Officer Palleon, the captain of the Chimera has been killed, I am taking over command of the ship. All remaining fighters listen in... We cannot afford to slow down to let you board; we can't risk losing any more capital ships for a few fighters.

You are ordered to cover the retreat of the Chimera and the Relentless to the last ship. Surrender is not an option. Attention all hands, let no one in the Empire forget the sacrifice that these pilots make today, Chimera out."

The pilot sat there, shocked by the words. Not the order to fight to the death, that was always considered a given whenever he stepped into a flight suit. But it was the tone in the Commander's voice. That hopeless sense of defeat that shrouded every word. He did not want history to remember the Empire this way. His ship had only three lasers operational and his life

support system would not last for much longer, but he was determined to take a few more Rebel ships with him. If only so that their sacrifice would somehow overshadow this terrible defeat.

He brought his ship around in formation with the remaining Imperial attack craft, less than two squads of fighters and three assault shuttles. Without the support of the bigger Imperial capital ships the Rebel cruiser could turn all of their lasers on the fighters. It was a slaughter. The assault shuttles were gone in an instant, vaporized before they even got in range of the Rebel ships. The fighters were able to evade most of the turbolaser bolts but here and there a ship would get hit by a bolt and disintegrate instantly.

Most of the fighter pilots had decided that using their ship as a guided missile was more effective than trying to fight the capital ships, another Tie Interceptor headed straight for the bridge of a corvette that was closing fast on the Relentless. Which was in bad shape. With over half of the ship on fire & exposed points to the inner hull all over, it would be only take a few shots to put her away. So he began rolling his ship while dumping all power to the engines so even if he were hit the remains of the ship would continue on the same path, hopefully causing some damage. Laser bolts began erupting from the 'vette, almost instantly both solar panels were blown off. But the pilot's plan worked better than he had hoped, the cockpit remained intact and continued on its path, right into the bridge of the Rebel ship. The crew of the corvette had been trying desperately to stop the Tie because their shields had been badly damaged in the battle. Stopping laser energy was one thing; being hit with the mass of a Tie Fighters hull was too much for the ships depleted shielding. The forward section of corvette disappeared in a massive explosion, moments later the rest of the ship followed. With no other Rebel ships nearby the Relentless had a clear path to the hyper buoy.

He watched this all happen & thought that if he could be half as successful as the other pilot, whom he knew and considered a close friend, then his death would be worthwhile. So he aimed his craft at the Nebulon frigate that was responsible for taking out most of the rear guard fighters and began his attack. But the frigate was ready for another suicide run & began firing ion cannons at the closing Imperial fighters. His ship was disabled almost instantly and he just sat there, helpless. He began to wonder how he would kill himself before he was captured by one of the Rebel shuttles that were circling the battle area around him. But when he looked out the window he realized the he would have to worry about taking his own life, those rebel scum were going to do it for him. The frigate that he'd been aiming for had changed course and was heading straight for a Tie fighter that had also been disabled trying to ram the Rebel ship. The frigates shielding and hull were more than sufficient to take out a tiny craft like a Tie fighter, & like himself the other brave Imperial pilot had disengaged the auto-eject in order to supply all power (and the extra mass that his seat & body would provide) into his attack run. So when his ship was disabled so was the auto-eject mechanism...

Having dealt with the other ship, the Rebel ship altered its course directly towards the crippled Tie Interceptor. "These ships are so hard for them to hit while there flying I guess they jump at the chance to kill them any way they can", the pilot thought. He sat there helpless, as the frigate loomed closer every second. Out of options, he calmed himself by the knowledge the rest of the fleet would escape. To reinforce this, he saw the Chimera disappear into lightspeed out of the top of his cockpit window. He turned back just in time to see the bow of the Rebel ship filling the entire front window of his ship...

He awoke with a start; beads of sweat were pouring off of him. Looking around he realized that it was just another dream. The Imperials doctors said that the memories of Endor may never fully go away, especially after spending years in a Rebel prison. But he needed to get on with his life,

and the Empire needed all the pilots it could get so he'd better put his personal feelings away and get on with the task of ridding the galaxy of the Rebellion once and for all.

To reinforce this notion a voice came over the intercom: "Sub-lieutenant K'Tehmok, report to the main briefing room at once". He jumped out of his bunk, put on his flight suit and headed down the crew quarter's main corridor towards the briefing room of the Star Destroyer Relentless.

FM/SL\_K'Tehmok/Shield 2-2/Wing IX/ISD Relentless-[tie]-[mis"Jachyra"]

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## **Imperial Navy Pilot Record Personal Background information (Imperial Security Bureau)**

Bio Of SL PeoplesArmy:

Name: Dravis Afyon

Rank: Sub Lieutenant, Flight member, Scorpion Squadron, ISDII Vanguard

ScanDoc Transmission Code: peoplesarmy@edmundcarmel.screaming.net

Sex [M/F]: Male

Race: Human

Date Of Birth: 07.12.83 ISC

Place Of Birth (Please Include Homeworld): Chandrilla

Martial Status: Single

Family: Adopted parents imprisoned by the New Republic

Social Status: Wealthy

Significant Events Of Childhood And Adolescence: Dravis's parents were killed in a mining accident when he was 5. He was adopted by the Afyons owners of a medium sized shipping company which secretly shipped arms to the Rebellion. Dravis never agreed with his parents' political views however as he disliked the chaos brought by the Rebellion and preferred the order brought by the Empire.

Significant Events Of Adulthood: When the Rebellion struck a cowardly blow against the Empire at Endor they set up the New Republic. This New Republic had access to a plentiful supply of arms and ammunition through legitimate sources so the smugglers it had used during the height of the war were no longer needed. furthermore these smugglers only served to remind people of how weak and desperate they had been. With much of its idealism lost in its transition to power the New Republic arrested as many of its former smuggler allies as possible, including Dravis's Parents, and threw them into jail with little hope of release. With his parents in prison and their company in the hands of the New Republic Dravis stole a shuttle and fled to the Outer Rim where he joined the Emperor's Hammer.

Who?

The First Chapter

It would have been a perfect picture of a desert if it weren't for the slight blotch in the landscape. As well as the beautiful sandy scenery and the bright, clear blue sky there was also a wreck of a medium sized starship attracting all of the attention away from the setting. It had attracted the attention of one person in particular, if you could call it a person at all. A tall and lean droid wandered towards the crashed ship to see what was wrong. The droid looked like a stick figure that you could see in any child's drawing and seemed to be very athletic as it started to run at the ship at a remarkable speed.

The droid eventually reached the ship at a speed faster than any other machine could even comprehend never mind match on land. The ship appeared to be a Corellian transport but it was unlike any the droid had ever seen before. Well, it had been several years since it had been stranded on this uncharted desert planet and technology would surely have advanced since then. It had come to the planet a while back when its owner, a Jedi Knight, decided to find an unpopulated planet to find peace. But while the Knight had died years ago, the automated robot had been left to fend for itself on the harsh planet.

The droid looked at the ship and could see that it was called The Denwar. A strange name for a strange ship, it thought. It found a hole in the ship and decided to have a look inside. The lights were off in the ship and the only illumination came from the wide, gaping window and the sparks coming off the damaged equipment. The lean figure easily avoided all of the loose wires and walked over to the front of the ship. There were two seats, both with a crumpled heap of a body sitting upon it. One was a large man who was wearing a long, black cloak and the other was a boy who could not have been older than twelve years old. While the man was obviously dead with his head smashed against a now crimson red display, the boy was just barely breathing. The boy started to move and with a couple of coughs he began to wake.

As the boy's eyes opened, the droid gave a gentle "Hello."

"What happened?" the boy murmured.

"You appear to have crashed your ship into this planet, young sir." came the reply in the usual sharp but polite manner of a droid.

The boy sat up his chair and looked around the ship. His eyes finally = stop on the dead pilot and asked the droid, "Who is he?"

"Well, I was hoping that you would know, sir. This is your ship after = all"

"Is it? I can't really remember. The only thing I can remember is a = small ship appearing behind us and opening fire. I can't remember = anything after that, or before to be perfectly honest."

"What's your name then?"

The boy pondered for a moment and with his face in his hands he replied = "I don't have a clue. I can't remember a thing. I can see a few people = and places in my head but I couldn't even tell you what they were = called. What are you called?"

"Light-body Six, sir. I am built to be able to perform tasks that need = to be completed fast. Most people tend to call me LB though."

"Tell me, are there any other people on his planet?"

"Not anymore, sir"

The confused boy looked at the droid for a moment until he plucked up = the courage to ask, "What do you mean 'Not anymore'?"

"My owner died here a few years ago"

The boy put his hands on the back of this neck and he curled up into a = ball on his chair making a slight whining noise. LB stared at him and = had to jump back when the boy flew out of his chair and stood up.

"Get out!"

"Why, sir?"

"Just do it!"

The pair scrambled to the hole that LB found and when they got out into = the bright sunlight, the boy ran as fast as he could away from the ship. = LB was able to go into a slight jog and keep up with the young man.

"What are we running from, sir? I can't see anything wro..."

"Kaboom." The boy dived to the ground as the ship went up in a bright, = fiery explosion, causing parts of the ship to fly off in different = directions. LB dived a moment later than the boy and was surprised by = the kids fast reactions. Not many things can move as fast as the droid = but it was as if the boy knew that the ship was going to blow up at that = moment.

When everything calmed down, the ship was nothing but a charred frame = with flames rising from it. LB got up and looked at the boy. Only his = old master could react as fast as that but surely this boy was not as = powerful as that already. "How did you know that was going to happen?"

The boy looked as confused as the droid felt, "I didn't. I just had a = feeling that something was going to happen. I don't know what just = happened there and I definitely don't remember about doing anything like = that in the past."

"Perhaps you're a Jedi, sir. My owner was a one you know."

"A what?"

By FM/LT Werdna Elbee/Beth 1-3/Wing III/SSSD Sovereign

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**Imperial Navy Pilot Record**  
**Personal Background information**  
**(Imperial Security Bureau)**

Name: Raith Sienar

Rank: Lieutenant

Scandoc Transmission Code (Screen Name): LT\_Raith

Sex (M/F): Male

Race: Human

Place of Birth (Please include Homeworld): Imperial City, Coruscant

Date of Birth: 20 years prior to the Battle of Endor

Marital Status (Single, Married, Divorced, Separated): Single

Family: Father, Mother, and two sisters

Social Status (Destitute, Poor, Well-to-do, Wealthy, Nobility): Wealthy

Significant Events of Childhood & Adolescence: Born into wealth because of his relation to his Uncle, the CEO of Sienar Fleet Systems. When Raith was old enough, he entered the Imperial Center for Higher Learning (ICHL) and began studying flight tactics. When he graduated (with honors) he went into the Imperial Officer Flight School and graduated into Imperial Navy Service.

Significant Events of Adulthood: After the destruction of the second Death



Star and the death of Emperor Palpatine, the Sienar family fled Coruscant for the Outer Rim, eventually meeting up with the Emperor's Hammer Strike Fleet. Raith left his family to continue serving the Empire.

Alignment & Attitude: Ambitions, very respectful of commanding officers

Former Occupations (if any): None

Hobbies: Collecting miniature models of the craft I pilot, playing Sabacc

Tragedies: Losing a close friend in combat once.

Phobias & Allergies: None known

Personal views of the Empire (and Emperor's Hammer): I believe the Empire to be the rightful rulers of the galaxy, and not even the New Republic can stand in our way to victory!

Reason for applying to the Emperor's Hammer Elite Strike Fleet: To serve the Empire, and to help restore order and rule to the galaxy.

Other comments or information (optional): I serve the Empire above all others.

I hereby confirm that the above information is legitimate and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: Raith Sienar

Date: July 21, 1999

cc: Imperial Security Bureau (ISB) Liaison Officer

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### **Imperial Navy Pilot Record Personal Background information (Imperial Security Bureau)**

Name: Hildar Wytusc

Callsign: PaRaDoX

Rank: Lieutenant

Scandoc Transmission Code (Screen Name):PaRaDoX210@aol.com

Sex: Male

Race: Terran

Date of Birth: January 5, 1983 (Terran Calendar)

Place of Birth: Earth

Family: only child, parents still alive

Social Status: Middle Class (Well to Do)

Past History: Hildar was born on a small blue planet known as Earth. He and his family joined up with a group of revolutionaries that wanted to allign themselves with the Empire. So, calling themselves a "Colonial Expedition Team" the group of revolutionaries departed Earth in hopes of a better life serving the Emperor. Five small personell transports were all that was needed to carry the colonists, Hildar was aboard the personell transport "Hermes." While en route to the rendevous point, they were intercepted by a group of Rebel modified corvettes. Since the personell transports had no defenses, they were eaisly captured, boarded, and taken under tow. The colonists was taken to a base where they were held captive as prisoners of war. Hildar personally witnessed the interrogation and torture of his parents and close friends, then he was

interrogated himself. After getting no valuable information from the colonists, the Rebels offered them the chance to align with the rebellion to spare their lives. The colonists refused, and were sentenced to death. But before the executions could take place, the colonists were liberated by the SSSD Sovereign, the ship they were supposed to rendezvous with. Hildar decided to join the Tie Corps to get revenge for the things he and his family had been put through.

Note: The colonists now own and operate a new Imperial base located near the Outer Rim Territories, and the rebels that held them captive are awaiting trial in that very base.

Alignment and Attitude: Aligned with the Empire after the incidents on the rebel base, holds a deep grudge against the rebels, and believes he owes the Empire his life.

Former Occupations: N/A

Hobbies: Focuses on improving combat skills, enjoys listening to music, and playing his saxophone (Terran wind instrument).

Tragedies: Witnessing the interrogations and tortures on the rebel base.

Phobias and Allergies: N/A

Personal views of the Empire (and the Emperor's Hammer): Devoted to Empire, believes he owes the Empire his life, determined to reach high ranks.

Reason for applying to the Emperor's Hammer Strike Fleet: Wanted to fly alongside the best pilots around.

Other Comments or Information: After witnessing the tortures and interrogations, Hildar has completely turned his focus to the Tie Corps. He no longer answers to his name, just his callsign and rank.

I hereby confirm that the above information is legitimate and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: PaRaDoX

Date: 7/15/99 (Terran Calendar)

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## **Imperial Navy Pilot Record Personal Background information (Imperial Security Bureau)**

Full Name: Cassius Leonidas Lyteraan Arctair

Common Name: Cassius Arctair, aka Vermin

Rank: Lieutenant-Commander

Current Assignment: 2/2 Tempest Squadron, Wing X, ISD Challenge

Scandoc Transmission Code (E-Mail): peter.oliveira2@virgin.net

Sex (M/F): M

Race: Human

Date of Birth: Two years after Supreme Chancellor Palpatine was declared Galactic Emperor.

Place of Birth (Please include Homeworld): Imperial City, Coruscant

Marital Status (Single, Married, Divorced, Separated): Single

Family: Father, Mother, Sister, Two Grandparents, One Aunt, One Cousin

Social Status (Destitute, Poor, Well-to-do, Wealthy, Nobility): Poor

Quote: "I was born to fly, and made to fight"

Significant Events of Childhood & Adolescence:

My early childhood was marked by pomp and grandeur during the early years of Emperor Palpatine's rule. As Coruscant lost its old republic flavour and gained its new Imperial one, life was good. Jobs became abundant, Stormtroopers patrolled the streets, keeping them clear of crime, and most gloriously of all, the starfighters in the sky above, reassuring the populace that the Empire was truly invulnerable.

It was these things which led the newly married Carsten Arctair and Leonora Lyteraan to leave their place of birth, Coronet. These two Corellians, who became my parents, chose Coruscant to begin their new life, claiming it would be a new beginning. When I was born the Empire had already settled down. Parts of the Old Republic remained, but it was clear that this would one day change. My childhood passed pleasantly, I went to school, played sports and got into the odd scrape. Truthfully though, I would spend most of my time watching the new Tie-Fighters flying past from my bedroom window.

My Adolescence was less about fun, and more about excitement. The birth of my sister Kemis, gave my parents something else to occupy their time. This left me to do what I liked best (besides dreaming about starfighters), which was exploring the Imperial City's lower levels. My friends and I would spend hours looking through the deserted rooms and corridors, when the surroundings became familiar we would play tag, or scavenge for old starship parts. These parts would then be sold on to scrap merchants or starship engineers, the credits would then be saved for Carnival Week.

It was on one of these 'excursions' that I earned my nickname. We had travelled further down than ever before, funds were down and carnival week was just round the corner. We decided to split up and I wandered off on my own, intent on finding the biggest haul. In fact, so intent was I on being the main contributor that I became oblivious to my surroundings. I had my head stuck in a pile of scrap metal and it was only when the stench of rust got to my nose that I noticed that I wasn't alone. To this day I still have no clue what the creature was, but it was big and dark, with yellow eyes. We must have stared at each other for ages, and then in a blur of motion, it was gone.

Once I had located my friends the discussions began in earnest. It appeared that I was not the only one to see the strange creature. When I retold my encounter I was greeted with remarks on how fortunate I was. All but one of my friends said I was lucky, Darus, a slightly overweight boy who was known for being useful in a fight, had a different opinion. He claimed that the creature had probably not attacked me because it assumed I was just more of the local vermin. The name stuck, admittedly though, I hated it at the time.

**Significant Events of Adulthood:**

The capture of Coruscant by the Rebels stands out as one of the most significant events of my adulthood. It was this, together with the death of some of my closest friends at the hands of the rebels, which was to shape my future.

I was the youngest of all my friends, so as they reached adulthood, they left for the Imperial service one by one. Some were killed at Endor, the remainder were scattered across the Empire in the desperate rearguard action that was to follow.

Those that stayed on Coruscant, like myself, were drafted into militia, keeping the peace while the stormtroopers left for the front-line. Eventually though, Coruscant became the front-line and all semblance of order vanished into chaos and panic. My family had left a few weeks before the Rebels arrived, and now it was my turn. I escaped on a transport heading for the Corellian System. I had now not only lost my friends, but my home as well.

**Alignment & Attitude:**

Loyalty Absolute.

Former Occupations (if any):

After leaving Coruscant I found work on a freighter plying the Centerpoint Station-Corellia trade Route. After a few months I left my position and found work in Hollowtown working with a Maintenance crew. I quickly realised that I belonged at the helm of a spacecraft, and upon hearing of the Emperor's Hammer Strike Fleet, I left for EH Space.

Hobbies:

Flying.

Tragedies:

The loss of my friends at rebel hands during the battles of Endor and Coruscant, and the fall of Coruscant itself..

Phobias & Allergies:

Bugs, Yuck!

Personal views of the Empire (and Emperor's Hammer):

The Empire was the best thing that ever happened to the galaxy.

Reason for applying to the Emperor's Hammer Elite Strike Fleet:

The opportunity to fulfil a childhood dream, help rebuild the Empire, and gain some revenge.

Other comments or information (optional):

My grandfather Leonidas Arctair was born on Tatooine approximately 75 years ago. During his late teens he left Tatooine for Alderaan, where he met his wife, Reme Phanan, a Merchant's daughter. Reme's Parents were against the marriage, so the young couple were forced to leave.

The first ship that they could board was a liner bound for Corellia.

Leonidas soon found work with CorSec and it wasn't long before they had their first child, Carsten, who would become my father. Two years later, a second child, Gaius Arctair was born. Shortly afterwards Leonidas disappeared without trace and was presumed dead until his reappearance on Coruscant. Rumours abounded of links with the Jedi or Sith, and his unexplained death during the Clone Wars did nothing to dispel those tales.

Following the death of her husband, Reme made peace with her parents and once her two sons has left home, began to make regular trips between Alderaan and Corellia. It was during one of these trips that she was killed, a victim of the first Death-Star, sacrificed for the good of the Empire.

Gaius Arctair married a Corellian named Lara Mayn, they had one child, and ran a freighter company supplying mining colonies. Gaius was executed on Bespin after killing an Imperial Officer in a bar fight, and Lara Actair now lives in Cloud City. Their son, my cousin Severus, became a smuggler.

My grandparents on my mother's side, Kren Lyteraan and Kesan Konnair, were both born on Corellia to political families. They had one child, my mother, and are now retired from political life. They reside, along with my immediate family, in Coronet, on Corellia.

I hereby confirm that the above information is legitimate and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: Vermin.

Date: 28/07/99

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**Imperial Navy Pilot Record**  
**Personal Background information**  
**(Imperial Security Bureau)**

Name: Devlin

Rank: Lieutenant

Current Assignment: Mu Squadron (Rebel Annihilation)

Scandoc Transmission Code: devlin@box43.gnet.pl

Sex: M

Race: Human

Date of Birth: CLASSIFIED

Place of Birth: Borsalis

Marital Status: Widowed

Family: Son

Social Status: Well-to-do

Quote: "Si vis pacem, para bellum"

Significant Events of Childhood & Adolescence:

Born on Borsalis, an icy planet. His parents died shortly after his birth. His aunt took care of him but she did not like him. When he was 15 he ran away to Coruscant with his friend Ecko on board an Imperial Freighter. There, with help of Ecko's family, he started to work as a cargo ferry ships pilot in the Imperial Navy.

Significant Events of Adulthood:

Devlin married a beautiful girl Ashley and soon son Peter was born. Few years later Devlin was selected to be a captain of Modular Conveyor 'Natasha'. The crew consisted of 3 people: Devlin, Ecko and Sarah. This craft was supposed to travel from Coruscant to Bespin, take some cargo and return home. But on it's way back 'Natasha' accidently met a Rebel Strike Cruiser and a squadron of X-Wings. The 'Natasha's' crew together with Devlin thought they were safe - they were too small to pose a threat. But the Rebels attacked though Devlin and his crew weren't soldiers - they were sitting ducks. 'Natasha' sent MAYDAY and a Modified Nebulon B Frigate 'Stalker' answered, but it could get to them in 3 minutes - that was too long for 'Natasha'. The first missile hit the engine room and the Modular Conveyor was on fire. Sarah and Ecko went to the engine room and tried to contain the fire. Then the second missile hit... By the time Devlin got to the engine room the radiation there was so high that his crew was dying and the 'Radiation Alert' doors closed shut. He heard Ecko saying "Open the damn door, Devlin! For God's sake!! Please!!... Oh no... Christ! Nooo....". If he'd opened the door, the radiation would have killed him. It was already too late for his friends, he could only watch them burn... Just after this, 'Stalker' rescued him and brought him to Bespin. He spent 2 months in hospital because of poison air in his lungs. When he came to Coruscant his home was empty. His neighbours told him that his wife committed suicide, because she thought her husband died in 'Natasha' and his son was taken by some cloaked people. He's lost everyone he ever loved. Having nothing to lose, he decided to join the Imperial Navy. But what will he find there? The new beginning... or the end?

Alignment & Attitude:

none

Former Occupations (if any):

Cargo ferry ships pilot

Hobbies:

Computer Games

Soccer

Tragedies:

Death of friends

Phobias & Allergies:

Afraid of spiders

Personal views of the Empire (and Emperor's Hammer):

The only organization that can bring peace to Unverse.

Reason for applying to the Emperor's Hammer Elite Strike Fleet:

To find his son.

Other comments or information (optional):

I hereby confirm that the above information is legitimate and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: Devlin

Date: 25/07/99

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**Imperial Navy Pilot Record**  
**Personal Background information**  
**(Imperial Security Bureau)**

Name: BJ Shups

Rank: LT

Scandoc Transmission Code (Screen Name): Shups

Sex (M/F): M

Race: Human

Date of Birth: Unknown

Place of Birth (Please include Homeworld): Coruscant

Marital Status (Single, Married, Divorced, Separated): Single

Family:Unknown

Social Status (Destitute, Poor, Well-to-do, Wealthy, Nobility): Wealthy

Significant Events of Childhood & Adolescence:Raised to be a Jedi from = the age of 1.

Significant Events of Adulthood: Gained Jedi Knighthood at the age of 21 = and joined the Empire.

Alignment & Attitude: Lawful and Loyal

Former Occupations (if any):pilot

Hobbies:computer related operations

Tragedies: The Death of the Emperor!

Phobias & Allergies:Rebels...it's an allergy not a phobia.

Personal views of the Empire (and Emperor's Hammer):The EH is the best = way to accomplish the goals of the Empire and crush the New Republic.

Reason for applying to the Emperor's Hammer Elite Strike Fleet: To =

further the cause of Law and Order for the galaxy.

Other comments or information (optional):

I hereby confirm that the above information is legitimate and accurate =  
to the best of my knowledge.=20

Signature: FM/LT Shups/Odin 1-2/Wing XIII/ISD Grey Wolf

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Then....

The internal computer network and core of an Imperial Star Destroyer is a vast construct of many millions of chunks of data, hardware, microwave and fiber-optic and even old fashioned wire connections, and many many users. While the bulk of the systems on the mile-long ship are manually controlled, there are many things a sentient being cannot accomplish that a computer needs to do. So, the computer core and it's surrounding network are used by almost every crew member in at least some small way. With unlimited capabilities, it is not uncommon for many things to be lost for a long, long time...

"Hello, what's this?" Freelancer asked himself. He had been finishing up his duties as Wing Commander of the Star destroyer Intrepid, and had taken to wandering through cybernet after that. It seemed to be something familiar, but he'd need a closer look. After a few minutes, it was clear what the object was. "Tiark!" Free said, then stopped himself. No, this wasn't Tiark, but it was a bot, and according to the information, General Horn had constructed it. "Oh-ho, there we go.... 'Bot, eggdrop type XVII, Pre-Alpha model – Tiark' Looks like Tiark's distant ancestor... It must have gotten lost when Horn transferred, and been here ever since" This could be fun, Free thought. He often spent some of his leisure time bugging the bots that liked to hang around. He would pull endless random quotes or definitions of things from them. He has had much fun with SureFire and DeathFyre, but he was still a little miffed that he couldn't get access to Aeon... Now that would be fun, he thought to himself. For now, he'd have to suffice with a pre-alpha model of Tiark. In retrospect, it had been rather careless of Horn to just leave a copy of this on this network, but Freelancer brushed that thought off and dug into the bot.

What luck! A random quote generator! Too bad it didn't have any quotes in it, or didn't work, or didn't go into an infinite loop and crash itself. No wonder it's a pre-alpha, it's pathetic! Free started up an internal scan to see who else might be using this bot, and started up "the party line" as it was named. Something went wrong. The bot stopped responding, but the activity meters went off the chart. Obviously this is not what it was supposed to do. Free did a quick network scan and found the bot was haywire, reaching into and interfering with hundreds of other systems as he watched. To shut it down would have ruined those systems and put the entire ship in danger. Free looked at all the systems affected and noted many important ones like "Reactor Control" and "Life Support" and knew he had to do something. He went back to the bot and set it on 'standby' and rushed to get somebody to help; somebody proficient in the network of the Intrepid; somebody who knew what the heck they were doing.

After gathering help, in the form of the Commodore (who had been glowering at Freelancer ever since) and a team of the best coders and hackers on the ship, Free stayed to watch them work. Occasionally they'd look up from their work and stare at him, shaking their heads, to which he

replied "It's not my fault! It's not!" The bot had indeed gone berserk and was on the way to taking over the entire network when Free had paused it. Some systems were easily fixed, and the bot powered down, but five systems of major importance were still in its grasp. Among these were weapons control, decks 10-50 lighting, and communications. Not being able to do much, Freelancer returned to Hangar Control, a rather spacious room that was above the massive hangar and just below the hull in front of the upper superstructure. Here was the heart of the Wing's fighter operations. Much larger than the bridge, it spanned two floors. The main floor was where most of the work went on, the technicians at their screens, and along the rear wall, there was another floor, where the WC often spent his time overseeing operations. Since the weapons controls had been affected, picket lines needed to be deployed with twice the ships. There would be no defenses for a while, and this meant additional duty for Freelancer. It wasn't until three hours later that all systems were restored, and the responsible bot deleted. Free was on the hangar control command deck when he got a message from the Commodore, Rear Admiral Sarok.

"It seems that while our communications were down," he began.

"It's not my fault!" Freelancer reiterated.

"- the GreyWolf has been repeatedly calling us," Sarok continued, "They've been ambushed by a massive rebel force with heavy warheads and are in need of immediate assistance." Sarok played the transmission back, his own picture jumping to a smaller side screen while Free watched.

"Recall the patrols as fast as you can, and tell those with hyperdrives to jump without us."

"Done and done," Free said, also keying up a hangar communiqué to ready his personal fighter.

"You can jump in five minutes, sir, all will be onboard by then." Sarok's image nodded and then blinked out. Sure enough, five minutes later the Intrepid was positioning for a hyperjump with all hands ready for battle. Freelancer looked up through the viewports built into the ceiling (which happened to also be the exterior hull) and watched as the warping shades of blue that represented hyperspace flashed by. "Rearm all fighters, standby to launch on my mark" he ordered.

Free brought all tactical displays online and initiated the holoprojector with a blank battle map. Once the Intrepid reverted to realspace, these would fill up and he would have a complete image of what was happening. Time seemed to drag on in the hyperjump, but the suspense of what was at the end of it made it seem to be too short. A split second after the blue flashes from the windows stopped, everything hummed to life. The holo-tactical display showed the color coded craft and their location and status (as much status as could be found for the rebels, that is). To one side was the Star Destroyer GreyWolf, which looked like it had withstood ten rounds with Tyson. To the other, and in general just scattered around, were lots of rebel starfighters, and in the very distance straight ahead was a battle frigate, also one of the rebel craft.

Freelancer opened up a voice line to the Commodore of the GreyWolf and said calmly, "Looks like you boys could use some help."

In an excited voice Dave yelled, "The thought had crossed my mind." Dave opened up a vid link as well, his face popping up in a small monitor on a display to Free's right.

The rebel Y-wing starfighters, a whole squadron in total, saw the arrival of the Intrepid and knew they'd never finish their attack in time. In a coordinated effort, they all turned to the battered sister ship, the GreyWolf, and began a last, kamikaze, run on it.

"We can't launch any fighters, the hangar is obstructed with debris" Dave said when he saw this. Freelancer had been busy the second his fighters had launched. He was controlling the battle from here, and with a click of a laser-pen could assign any of his fighters to any target on his



display via the communications system on any fighter. On the holo display, the Y-wings drew nearer and nearer to the GreyWolf. Soon they would collide and explode with the hull, and gouge terrible chunks of the armor while they were at it. Free made a few taps here and there with his laser pen, rotating the view, zooming in.

“Well, do something!” Dave said, his eyes looking off screen, at his own tactical display. His concern was apparent.

“Not to worry,” Free said calmly, as a pair of advanced concussion missiles plowed into the aft of four of the offending Y-wings. A flight of four TIE Advanced fighters, that had hypered ahead of the Intrepid, had received his orders in time. They repositioned themselves behind more fighters, and destroyed those in one shot also. Then they positioned themselves behind the last four. Now there wasn’t enough time to wait for a target lock; the pilots all bore-sighted their warheads into the fighters, destroying them, and pulled away just in time to miss scrapping themselves on the GreyWolf’s hull. Freelancer tapped his laser pen again. ‘Good work, boys.’ Appeared on their individual targeting displays.

Dave sighed heavily on the vid-screen. “We should be able to launch in ten minutes. Looks like you got the bombers, but those A-wings could chew us up some, and there are more X-wings in reserve.” Free made some more light-pen taps and then walked over to his command chair. He sat down and transferred Dave to the big screen in front of it. An officer walked toward him with a status report. “By the way,” Dave, said, his eyes leveling on Freelancer, “what took you so long? We’d been calling for reinforcements for twenty minutes.”

“Oh, that... We had some major systems failures and needed to figure them out and fix them. Communications array was out for three hours.” Free replied, not looking up from the report.

“What was wrong?” Dave asked, curious.

“Oh,” Freelancer replied, with a slight shrug, “Somebody found an ancient version of Tiark Horn left behind and was playing with it to the point of crashing. It went nuts, and threatened to crash our network. We never found out who did it.”

Dave saw the officer that was waiting for Free to return the report turn to him and ask “Hey, Sir, wasn’t that y--” he didn’t see Freelancer move, but it looked as if the deck officer’s feet had been bowled out from under him.

“What was that?” Dave asked.

“Hmm? Oh, that was the wing mascot.” Free replied causally.

“The.. the wing mascot?” Dave asked, incredulously.

“Yes, why, I’m sure I told you about it... About the, uh, the, Ewok we keep for a pet?” Free said, instantly thinking You damn fool, had to pick the first animal that popped into mind, didn’t you???

“No kidding?” Dave asked, skeptically. He studied his friend. “If that’s so, then show me.”

“Sorry, the vid receptors don’t angle down that far.” Free replied.

“Then pick him up”

“No, wouldn’t want to do that... He’d eat my arm off if I did that”

Dave raised an eyebrow. “An Ewok?” Free nodded. “Eat your arm off?” Free nodded. “Ewoks have got to be some of the most docile creatures around, for the most part, you do know that, don’t you?”

“Oh, sure, but not this one. He’s got slavering fangs, and three inch long claws. Why, I have to get stormtroopers to feed it; it’s been carving up my men. It’s one of the most vicious, blood thirsty beasts in the galaxy, and I’ve got him for a mascot” Free smiled.

Dave’s skepticism faded. “Really? Would it be possible to get another?” he asked, casually.

Free shook his head. "Sorry, he seems to be a freak of nature. Only one of his kind."

"Oh," Dave said, dejectedly.

He bought it!, Free thought, I can't believe he bought it! Of course, it was nothing compared to the Wild Dorgallin Dog that Dave kept as ship mascot, but at least Dave thought it was. This reminded Free of something.

"How is Bone Crusher, by the way?" he asked.

"Huh?"

"You know, your mascot? He still around?" Free was a little envious that Dave had a real bona fide mascot and he didn't.

Dave stared blankly for a second, then said "OH! Oh! Yeah, the, the... Wild Dorliggin Dog, yeah, well, he's fine."

"You mean Wild Dorgallin, right?"

"Yeah, slip of the tongue." Dave assured him. He never thought Free would believe it the first time he made it up, but here it is, all this time later, and he's still believing in it! Of course, it's nothing compared to a unique, one of a kind, killer Ewok. Dave wished he could have found such a creature first. That would be a fitting mascot.

To bad we can't trade, they both thought simultaneously. Dave saw the fallen officer drag his way up by Free's arm rest.

"Ooh, you better get a medic to look at that" Free said and the officer limp-hopped away.

All of this had happened in a matter of minutes, and Freelancer had been thinking of the matter of the Rebel frigate for the last two. He brought this up, and Dave shared his thoughts on it. They both eventually came to the decision that since it hadn't moved, it couldn't, and since the rebel fighters had tried so hard to destroy the GreyWolf that it was important. Rebels aren't normally taken to kamikaze style attacks. Free glanced back at his holo tactical and noticed that the battle had eased up a bit, but the distant ship was still there. The conclusion they came to was that the GreyWolf had stumbled across it by accident during routine patrols. Long range sensors show that it life signs, and many of them, but not enough to account for all of the crew of a Nebulon B class frigate. Free listened as Dave received a report announcing that the hangar bays were operational again.

"What do you say we make an inspection of this ship, Dave?" he asked. "My personal fighter is ready, and I can have a troopship ready in minutes."

"Excellent idea. I'll meet you there, we'll do a once-over and cover the troops. Looks like all of the fighters have been dealt with."

Freelancer cut the signal and took an open lift down through the hangar control to the craft docking deck. It was only a matter of a minute before his TIE fighter was out of the ship and flying toward the mysterious ship. As he passed the GreyWolf, a lone X-wing launched and flew over to him. Freelancer would never understand why Dave was on the GreyWolf. Sure, it was a command position, but to have to fly rebel craft? That was almost too much to bear. Free preferred his trusty T/F to any other fighter available, and a WC must have a personal fighter.

"Dave, I'm sorry to be the one to tell you this, but you've gone alphabet on us," he joked.

"Did you rob a museum to get that old relic?" Dave responded in like tones.

The frigate was indeed distant, and it took four minutes at top speed to reach sensor range. The two fighters, plus a few more for good measure, escorted the two transports toward the hangar bay. There was no resistance from the frigate. All defenses remained inert, so it wasn't necessary to disable it and breach the hull. Dave and Freelancer also docked to oversee the boarding personally, while stationing the fighters in a defensive pattern.

The hangar was devoid of craft, but cluttered nonetheless. There was a general disarray of all tools and stations (which were unmanned), and there was no sign of human life. The boarding troops quickly secured the area and sent teams out for the key points of the ship. Being the highest ranking officers, Dave and Freelancer oversaw the entire operation. It wasn't too long before they were called to a certain area to see something.

They arrived to witness an enormous room, which spanned more than three decks, and stretched what seemed the entire width of the ship. It was cluttered along all the walls with hundreds, if not thousands of devices, machines, elaborate setups, or just plain junk.

"Definitely not your standard setup" Dave commented dryly.

Freelancer nodded "I don't think this is a Rebel ship. Looks more civilian to me."

"But what," Dave asked, watching the four troopers with them fan out, "would a civil ship be doing here? And why does it have a starfighter compliment?"

"The experiment of a lifetime!" A voice boomed down from above. All eyes swiveled upward, converging on a lone person. He was about two decks up, on a nearly invisible ledge that nobody had noticed. He walked through a door and it slid shut behind him. The Stormtroopers, not seeing him as a threat, continued to poke around. When the figure saw this his eyes grew wide.

"I would not do that if I were you," he cautioned. The troopers ignored him and continued to examine things, until the new visitor grew anxious and pressed a button on his belt. All four of the Stormtroopers were immediately caught in massive pulses of electricity, arcing off of the items they were rummaging through. They were killed instantly, and the power shut off.

Dave and Free pulled their blasters and cautiously stood clear of any other objects.

The new stranger stepped onto a platform that extended from the ledge, and rode it down to the floor. "I can not afford to have clumsy oafs destroy what I've spent too long to set up." His frown fled, into a congenial smile, "But, let me introduce myself! I am Toliver DeWatersey, and welcome" he lifted his hands, "to my humble abode."

"This is your ship?" Freelancer asked, spreading away from Dave a little, for better fire coverage.

"Oh, without a doubt, yes."

"Why did you send those fighters to attack us?" Dave asked.

"You got in my way" the smile faltered, then resumed.

"Oh," Free said, with a tinge of sarcasm, "so now Imperial space is 'your way'. Silly me, I thought it was the Emperor's..."

Toliver turned his gaze to Freelancer. "You were in the way of evolution. I can not let anything stop me from achieving this," he eyed them, and changed what he was about to say, "this that I have worked for." He walked over to the first set of machinery that a trooper had been examining. "But, allow me to give you the full story." He spoke as he did what looked like a computer calibration at the built-in console. "What is the one thing you've always wanted?" he asked Freelancer.

Free thought about it, and finally replied "Some cake? I missed breakfast"

"No!" Toliver said, "Aside from that, in the long run"

"Well, nobody doesn't like Sara Lee" Free replied, "ummm galactic peace?"

Toliver hung his head, "Say immortality."

"Immortality?"

"Exactly!" Toliver continued where he left off, "The next step in evolution; the final perfection; unlimited life. Well, if you don't get killed." He added. "Those pilots out there, and the crew of this ship, and I all believe that I can do it. I've become almost a religious leader to them, but the

fools went and got themselves killed out there. Nobody's bringing them back. The secret was unlocked twenty years ago by yours truly, and I have been working on implementing it since then." He finished tinkering with the first set of equipment and moved to the second trooper's body. He started a diagnostic on that, and continued. "The lure of everlasting life is very strong. It pulled at all of those that are with me -- of their own free will I might add. I'm not a leader. I'm a scientist. But they needed leadership, so I took the job. Imagine," he looked at Dave and Freelancer individually, "cells in your body that never deteriorate, that never degenerate or die. Isn't that worth a little time and energy?"

His audience didn't reply.

"It's not just time. It's part of the space-time continuum. To make a long story short: I must unlock this now, here, at this one point in time -- or at least in ten hours, or nobody ever again will be able to accomplish this. Once I've unlocked it, the process may be repeated, but until then it's a race against, of all things, time." He smiled. He looked at the console, and frowned. "You fool!" he said to the body at his feet, "You've set me back two hours." He fiddled with it a bit, then turned back to his guests. "Think of it, everlasting youth. No getting old, feeble, losing what dignity you had to the ravages of time. No sentient should be put through that. And I intend to correct it. All of this you see here --" he gestured around "—this it not junk." Toliver spotted a Beta VCR along with some of the other stuff. "Well, not all of it. This laboratory has cost me more time and effort than you could ever imagine. Not only will this unlock the method for immortality, but it will protect my craft from the effects, too."

"Effects?" Free and Dave asked.

"Oh, did I leave that out? When I open the portal to another dimension, one of power and supernatural abilities, the effects on this realm of existence will be devastating. Without all of this properly set up, it will feel like being at ground zero of a solar collapse; being next to a star going nova. It will devastate anything for two parsecs around, and anything near enough will be atomized. Luckily, I have all this properly set up. Rest assured, we'll be safe."

"No, you won't," Dave said, aiming his blaster and firing at the nearest contraption. The bolt ricocheted off of some sort of ray shielding and embedded itself into the ceiling.

"That," Toliver said, with an angry face, "was very foolish." He reached down and quickly touched a second button on his belt. Massive magnetic waves, tuned to blaster power packs, pulled Dave's blaster out of his hand and secured it to Toliver's belt. He turned to Freelancer, but he was already moving. He ran past a large hunk of electronic equipment, and Toliver's belt locked on to it, pulling him toward it against his will. Toliver immediately turned off the belt and grabbed his new blaster. Dave took a flying dive behind a large pile of scrap metal as several shots flew around him.

Free popped up on top of a large stack of pipes and fired three shots at Toliver. Toliver tumbled backward, evading them, and came up shooting. The shots hit the pipes, knocking them loose. Free couldn't keep his footing and fell along with them. He rolled over the back of the pile, and was partially buried.

A squad of Stromtroopers, who had heard the shots, came rushing in. Toliver dispatched them with four quick shots, one to each chest. "You see," he called out to Free and Dave, "I am an excellent marksman. You can not escape."

Free climbed back up the considerably shorter pile of pipes in time to see Dave circling around back of Toliver. He fired one shot to get Toliver's attention. "You're a fool, Toliver!" he called out, "You seek the impossible, at the cost of thousands of lives. You're a madman!"

Toliver fired four shots at Free, who retained his footing this time. "I wish," he said "people

would stop saying that!”

Dave was directly behind him, and made a charge across a small clearing. Toliver heard him too late, and as he swung around, Dave knocked the weapon from his hands. Toliver gave Dave a chop to the neck, followed by an over-the-shoulder flip. Free stood up to get a shot but slipped and skidded down the front of the pile, losing his weapon also. At the bottom of the pile he used his momentum to catapult himself at Toliver.

“NyaAAAAHHHHhhhhhh!” Toliver said as he was tackled. Bracing his back against the floor, he used both legs to kick Freelancer over him. Free went soaring into a pile of equipment, and Toliver cursed. Dave came up from behind and delivered a two fistful blow to Toliver’s back. Toliver turned around and smiled.

“Oh crud” Dave said before receiving an uppercut that stunned him for a second. A second was all it took for a flying kick to send him across the floor into yet another pile of equipment. Toliver cursed yet again.

“STOP WRECKING MY EXPERIMENT!” he yelled, enraged.

“New strategy,” Free told Dave as they extracted themselves, “Don’t piss the strong man off” Dave nodded and they made a double rush at Toliver. Free was flung into a pile of junk, and as Toliver sighed in relief, Dave lifted him off the ground by the knees. Dave spun around and around, trying to get Toliver dizzy and disoriented, but only accomplishing it in himself.

“Whoa” Dave said, dropping Toliver on his head, and then falling onto him. They both got up and slugged it out until Free came up behind with some piece of expensive-looking equipment. He smashed it on Toliver’s head. While Toliver turned around and gasped at the wrecked piece, Dave grabbed one also, and hit Toliver over the shoulder with it. Toliver turned, in shock, not at the impact but at the loss of machinery. Free grabbed a long four-foot pole and trashed the nearest setup, after seeing this. Toliver shrieked.

“NOOO!!!!!!!!!! You imbeciles! Do you know what you’ve done?!?!?”

“I know exactly what I’ve done” Free replied, “But I’m not sure Dave does. Why, look at what he’s done to those three thing-a-ma-bobs over there.”

Toliver turned and rushed over to three shattered, and to him essential, pieces of material. Unbeknownst to Dave, these pieces of equipment had taken ten years to assemble and get running. Toliver lifted Dave and tossed him bodily to Freelancer. After a brief examination, Toliver knew they were totally destroyed. He turned back to the two advancing antagonists. “You have tried my patience to the limit! This ends now!” As the two men rushed forward, Toliver pulled his own pole from the wreckage and at four feet swung it before either Free or Dave could react. The pole caught Free on the chin, swinging his head into Dave’s with an audible crack, then it continued on to hit Dave’s chin. Both sprawled on the floor, unconscious. Toliver collected one or two copies of his data, grabbed his personal items and boarded a shuttle in the hangar bay. The shuttle was totally hidden by the rubble and trash in one corner. He started the engines, gunned the thrusters, and blindly accelerated out into space. In the process, he winged the transport and rammed through Freelancer’s TIE Fighter, which exploded in the process. The instant he was out of the Frigate’s way, he jumped to hyperspace.

Now...

<Message>

>

>Dave, Freelancer, it will be good to be back! I'm scheduled  
>to return to active duty in 8 days. Of course, I could use a lift  
>back to the Sovereign, if either of you were passing by. Can't  
>pass up forming a new squadron with you? Rho's worth coming  
>out of retirement for.  
>  
>See you soon,  
> "Mad Vlad" Harkonnen  
>  
<End Message>

Dave and Freelancer pulled up to the grand buffet table on the "Jewel of Azaria Prime," one of the most luxurious star liners in service. They selected their choice of food, and returned to a booth with a view of the nearby planets.

"Does the WC know that when he signed the voucher to pick up Harks, it would be on a luxury ship?" Freelancer asked.

Dave waved his hand in the air, "What he doesn't know won't hurt him."

"But it might hurt you," Free pointed out.

"We'll see" Dave said, eating his food.

The two officers spent two days relaxing and enjoying the trip, and finally arrived at a stopover point where Harkonnen was to meet them. They disembarked onto the station the liner had docked with, and met Harks in the local watering hole. After taking him back to the ship, Harks was surprised.

"You actually dished out credits for a ride like this? That must have cost you a lot." He said.

"Yeah, um, well, yeah." Dave said, leaving it at that.

"You should see hyperspace with ultraviolet enhancement. They put it on all viewports." Free added, sipping a martini. "Looks like you're still retired until the ride is over." he said, "Or at least you can act like it."

Harks looked at his hand and saw a similar drink in it. "Where did this come from?" he asked.

"We're not actually sure," Dave said, drinking his, which hadn't been there a second ago. "Part of the service is somehow keeping you stocked up with refreshments, whenever you're on board. Harkonnen's eyes teared up. "Drinks.... Round the clock.... I'm in heaven!"

"That's just the half of it..." Dave went on to explain some of the luxuries provided, to which Harkonnen didn't believe until he experienced them first hand.

Harks was receiving an 8-armed massage from a rather odd being he'd never seen before, and enjoying every minute of it. The other two tables in the room were taken up by his companions. They had all spent a day using every service the star liner had to offer, and were going to be nice and relaxed when they returned to the SSSD Sovereign and active duty.

"Time's up, I have more customers," the 8-armed spider-like being said in huttese and left.

"I know where I'm going on my next leave" Freelancer said, for conversation.

"Not if I get here first" Dave commented. They walked slowly out of the room five minutes later, and were wondering what to do next when the entire ship lurched. The hyperspace streaks faded from all viewports and the black of realspace returned. All three hurried to the nearest viewing area. There were several large ships, and one modified strike cruiser. They were being tractored toward the cruiser.

“Rebels!” Harkonnen said, “and here I am without a fighter.”

“Hrm...” Dave said.

“Yes, no fighters” Free agreed, “and the other ships don’t look very Rebel-ish to me.”

“Surely something is not right here.” Harkonnen added. “Luckily, I never leave home unprepared.” He smiled. The others followed him to his suite and watched as he pulled out a large duffel bag. Inside were assorted small arms – and some not so small. Harkonnen pulled out his pride and joy, his BlasTech concussion rifle. He tossed some blasters to Freelancer and Dave. “There, all set. Now let’s go meet the boarding party, shall we?”

The others nodded and led the way to the main airlock. They didn’t have to wait long until docking clamps took hold of the star liner, but the hatch never opened. Instead, they heard several dull explosions elsewhere.

“Transports!” Harkonnen said.

“Split up, Harks, you go to the bridge, Free, you take the main forward lounge areas, and I’ll check the engines and aft.” Dave ordered. The three split up and went their respective ways.

Harkonnen headed up, using stairs to prevent being trapped in the lifts. Oddly enough, there were no passengers in his way, trying to get past him. Either they were all in their rooms or they were all in the lounges watching events unfold. He made his way up to the bridge deck, and was stopped by the bridge blast doors. He peered through the window and saw armed men coming through the roof. Some had rebel uniforms, others had various clothing, and one was even wearing CorSec colors. Harkonnen studied the door. It would take a long time to get through it if he only used his c-rifle. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a supercharger. He connected it to the barrel and stood back. It only took one blast to totally shatter the blast door. One intruder, standing too close to it, was disintegrated along with it. The others turned, guns rising, but had no chance. Harkonnen disintegrated them one by one, except for the last two. By then the supercharger had drained, and they were hit with a normal blast. Still enough to kill the two men, it had not atomized them. Harkonnen ran to the hole in the ceiling and fired a couple shots into it. There followed some cursing and then silence. He was about to turn around when he heard a noise. He bent over one body and removed the comm unit.

“Bridge crew, report. I say again, bridge crew, report...” the comm unit said.

Harkonnen held the unit to his ear and said in a nasal voice, “I’m sorry. If you’d like to make a call, please hang up and try again.” and shut the unit off. He turned to the bridge crew and asked the captain, “How far were we pulled out of hyperspace?”

“About five hours” the shaken man said.

Harkonnen said “Hrrmmm,” trying to think of something. “If we can somehow disable the gravity wells of that cruiser, can we hyper out?”

“Yes,” the captain said, thinking it over, “Supposing they haven’t reached the engine room by then.”

“Not to worry, somebody’s on the way to prevent that.” Harkonnen said, “I think I’ll stay here, in case any more come through.” He fingered his drained supercharger, and said “Got a power socket?”

Dave walked aft, passed only by some of the crew going to see what happened. He made his way past all of the staterooms and dining areas into the more closed-off areas. He climbed up one floor to the main engineering doors that blocked the rest of the ship off from the innards and guts of the engines. He bypassed the lock and entered. In here was the reactor, past that the forward

portions of the six engines, and various other systems. If one took control of a ship, it would be here that would prove most useful.

He walked in further, not being able to see anything yet. Finally he entered into the reactor control deck, to find the crew lying about all over the deck, dead or stunned. All of a sudden, four armed men stepped out of nowhere and surrounded him, pointing their weapons at him. "And just who are you?" one of them asked.

Dave pulled a freeze-dried dehydrated pizza packet, the size of his palm, out of his pocket. He'd been saving it for lunch. "Somebody order a pizza? Extra cheese, anchovies?"

The men looked at each other questioningly, and that was all Dave needed. He moved forward, stuffed the pizza in one man's mouth, and it activated, expanding and choking him, his cheeks bulging and reeking of anchovies. This caught the man by surprise, and Dave grabbed his outstretched arm, blaster and all, and shouldler-flipped him into the nearest guy. He fired at Dave, but hit the incoming man instead, and both tumbled down. Dave dived for the floor, and rolled over, like a log, until he had knocked the other two from their feet. When the first came up, Dave had his blaster out and shot him. The second, however, came up faster and kicked the weapon out of his hands. It went sailing down onto the reactor floor. Dave likewise kicked the attacker's weapon away, and the two started pounding each other. Dave formed a quick plan in his mind; he would flip the man, then turn around and quickly jump up and down on him. He grabbed the other guy's arm and without looking flipped him, then opened his eyes and saw no figure on the floor.

Dave looked over the floor edge, to the reactor room below, and saw the figure there. They had strayed quite close to the edge in their fighting. "That works too," he said to himself. He turned around and found the remaining person, who had by this time extricated himself from his dead companion, smiling and brandishing his blaster rifle. He walked up to Dave, clearly savoring victory.

"This is where the winner walks away happy," he commented.

Dave kicked him in the groin-area.

He collapsed, and said in a high pitch, "You win" and remained silent.

Dave climbed down the ladder rungs to the reactor floor. He recovered his blaster and removed a manual override that was attached to the computer systems. He moved to the back of the deck, where the first of the engines could be seen, and found the entrance point of the boarding party. There were three more men standing guard, and not doing a very good job of it. Dave walked up and drilled each with a shot. He walked into the hole in the hull and shot out the transport's controls and computer, then exited it. He made a double check of the area, then headed forward again.

Freelancer had no trouble finding the nearest lounge; all he had to do was be pushed forward by the crowd. It seemed almost every passenger, and many crew, of the ship were here or on the port side of the lounge, which was as wide as the ship. Here the panoramic views on both sides showed close up views of the surrounding mixture of ships, and if one strained to look upwards, the modified strike cruiser that had them clamped down. Free moved closer to the windows, just in time to see an airlock lowering from the cruiser, and suctioning itself to the outer hull. A ring of sparks flew as a section of hull went flying inward. Armed troops poured out, cover all the exits of the lounge. They then systematically rounded up all of the spectators and headed them through the airlock. Free ducked into the nearby lounge bar, sat down and had a drink. The place was empty, so he didn't bother paying.



Freelancer was looking across the bar, tapping his foot to the jukebox, which was playing Bob Seger. Suddenly there was a shot, and the music stopped.

“Everybody out, that means you” came a voice.

Free turned around, angry. “I was listening to that!”

“So? Seger sucks, anyway,” the first guard said. His friend nodded. Free shot him dead in a split second. Then turned and shot the other.

By the time this had happened, all but a few had been removed via the airlock. A few guards saw him and came rushing over, weapons drawn. Free dove behind a sofa and opened fire. He nailed one, winged another, and ran for cover just in time as his couch disintegrated. He dashed behind a huge 3-meter television screen, and one of the guards called out, “NO!”

When the rest looked at him, he said “I want that for my room,” and shrugged. Free leaned out and shot him.

“That solves that, OPEN FIRE!” another guard said.

What I need, thought Freelancer, is a distraction... He reached down, found the manual controls, and turned the screen on. An enormous, large, purple dinosaur appeared, singing and dancing.

“AAAAARRRRRRGGGGHHH!!!!!!” the guards shouted. “KILL IT!!!! AAIIIIIEEEEE!!!!”

The guards either tried to shoot the screen to pieces or were incapacitated, covering their ears.

Free circled around and dispatched most of them. By this time the others had destroyed the screen and were gunning for him. They opened up a withering hail of blaster fire.

Free ducked, dug in his pocket and found a large quantity of freeze-dried, dehydrated pizzas. He popped his head up, threw five of them, and ducked. The packets each slid directly under or nearby the guards. Each stopped it with his foot, examining it and laughing, then they opened fire again, not bothering to take their feet off of it. Free looked up, took aim, and shot a fire sprinkler system nozzle. All of them opened up, spraying water. The entire floor was drenched.

The pizzas all exploded into being and flung the guards onto their respective duffs. Free jumped out of cover, shot two of them, and just as he got a third, Dave arrived and got the other two.

“Quit playing with them!” Dave said, over the sound of raining water.

“You’re no fun!” Free replied. Suddenly, the water shut off.

The sound of clapping came from the airlock. “Bravo, bravo. But you simply must show an encore.” Came a voice that stirred memories for both of them.

“DeWatersey!” Free said.

“Toliver!” Dave said.

“In the flesh” Toliver said, walking into the lounge. “I simply love what you’ve done to the place. Gives it that Mon Calamari touch, no?”

They both raised their blasters.

“Ah-ah, that simply won’t do...” Toliver warned. A levitating bot came from the airlock and sent a single shot into each blaster, melting it. “I’ve taken precautions this time.”

“Still up to your old games, Toliver?” Dave asked.

“Time has not been kind.. My God! Is that a grey hair?” Freelancer chimed in.

“What???” Toliver reached for his hair, then stopped. He fixed his smile in place and continued.

“Now, now, lets be adults”

“You first” Free glared.

“What do you think you’re doing here Toliver?” Dave asked.

“Why, my dear friends, the same thing you prevented me from doing almost a year ago.

Although this time I can’t unlock the secrets... Much like a bank robber I must blast my way in.” He noticed the two getting nearer “That’ll be close enough, thank you. Search your memories.

Do you remember about a year ago, when I mentioned the effects of unlocking the other dimension? Well, after much study, I discovered they were not so much effects as triggers. If I could recreate them, then I'd be able to open it at my leisure. Much better than being a slave to space-time, right?" Freelancer and Dave eyed the assassin bot that hovered between them and Toliver.

"Well, anyway, the key is to get a large enough nova to rip open the foundations of this universe and allow access to the next. Once that is done, I will have achieved my goals. You're welcome to watch."

"No." Dave said, "I meant, what are you doing here, on this ship."

"You see, it's all part of my ingenious plan. I need the reactors of hundreds of ships, and I'll have to place them in a precise point of space for the detonation, in a precise position, and it's all very mathematical. Of course, after I've modified them, so the total force will be approximately a thousand times that of a nova star. This, I might add, is the last ship that I require."

"You can't do that!" Freelancer interjected, "You'll kill millions in the gravitational waves! Billions! No star will be stable after that! You really are mad!"

Toliver sighed. "There's that word again.... Please, stop calling me that. And I assure you, in the galactic time span, these things are but a trifle, that will smooth out in a million, or two million years. And we'll all be around then thanks to my efforts. You'll see."

Toliver turned toward the viewports, gesturing to his small fleet of mixed ships, "Of course, none of these ships can be used. These followers are to be the first test subjects until I get the process into a reliable system." Free reached to his belt and removed his lightsaber. Dave nodded toward the airlock, signifying he'd go through there. "You see, they're afraid that it will be an isolated event, and only the first will become truly immortal," Toliver continued, turning back around. Freelancer ignited his lightsaber and sliced the assassin bot before it could move.

"Oh-ho, so you play that way, do you?" Toliver said, opening his jacket. From it he pulled his own lightsaber. He saw Dave going into the airlock, and called after him "I'll come for you after I deal with your friend here"

"This," Toliver said, igniting the blade, "belonged to a Jedi friend of mine. Or, it did until a man with bad asthma and poor taste in helmet style cut him down. I'm quite the expert, some say, Force or no Force." He moved in closer, splashing in the inch of water on the deck.

Harkonnen stayed on the bridge for fifteen minutes before deciding no other intruders would come. He noticed a blinking display and asked what it was for.

"That? That's the fire control system," the officer replied, "Odd, the sprinklers are on, but there are no signs of fire."

"Turn them off then," Harkonnen told him, "Don't want to sink while in space. If anybody come through there, shoot them. I'll be investigating that fire warning."

"Quite the expert, my ass," Freelancer said, as they exchanged blow after blow.

"I'm keeping up with you, aren't I?" Toliver smiled back. That smile was starting to annoy Free.

"That's because I suck, you nitwit,"

"Oh, is that so?"

"Yes, really, really suck." Free said as he jumped over the buffet. "Damn! They were serving shrimp tonight!" he cursed, feeling hungry and wet.

Toliver sliced the table in half and walked through the gap. "Come, come, you can do better than that"

Free attempted to slice from above, left, right, and finally below, and each time was blocked. Toliver then tried his hand at attack, and fared just as poorly. On the last swing, he over-extended himself, and Free gave him a swift kick to the ribs. Toliver took a step back, regaining his footing.

“You,” he said, “are a very aggravating man.”

Free rushed forward, as if to make an attack, but at the last second jumped down and slid on the water underneath Toliver’s legs. Toliver, fearing a slash while in that position, jumped out of the way. Free came up first, swung, and was blocked. He stepped back, used the force to fling a shrimp platter at Toliver, then came in while he ducked.

“Ah, resourcefulness. Two can play at that,” Toliver said. He blocked Free’s blows, then activated his magnetic belt. Free had to strain to keep a grip on his lightsaber, and even then could only move it a little. Toliver laughed. All he would need to do is get the saber and the fight would be as good as over. Freelancer pulled over toward the airlock entrance, straining with the Force, he lifted the section of hull that had been blown in and ran behind it.

Toliver laughed, “Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-h---AAAHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!” the section of hull went flying toward him. It hit with sufficient force to knock him backwards. Free walked over to the large section of durasteel, with Toliver pinned under it. He was planning on delivering the final blow when Toliver reversed the polarity of his magneto-belt-thingy and the hull plate flew at him, knocking and pinning him down.

“Now the tables are turned,” Toliver commented, re-igniting his saber, raising it and preparing to bring it down.

“I think not,” a voice Toliver had never heard before said. He looked up and saw a man with a rather large and rather bulky gun take aim and fire.

The super-charged concussion blast flung Toliver further than the hull plating had, and he ended up skidding over to the airlock. His lightsaber shattered, his nose bleeding, Toliver got up and ran through the airlock. “This isn’t the last time we’ll meet” he called.

Harkonnen was amazed. Not only was the man still moving and talking, but he had withstood the most powerful setting of his rifle. “He must have a personal defense shield in place” he remarked.

Free floundered under the weight of the durasteel, looked over at Harks and said “Well don’t just do something, stand there.” Harkonnen smiled, blew the smoke from his rifle, and helped Freelancer up.

“You know that guy?” Harkonnen asked.

“We go back.” Free replied. “I’ll make him pay, one of these days.”

“What did he do to you?”

“Well, first off, he threatened to destroy thousands of lives, two ISDs, two wings, all for his crazy dreams. But worse than any of that, he trashed my TIE Fighter.” Free explained, bitterly.

“Dave’s already up there” Free said, after retrieving his saber.

“Mustn’t let him have all the fun” Harks agreed.

“Quite right,” Free replied, as he entered the airlock

“Don’t move, or the scientist gets it!” Dave called. The incoming fire stopped. His “scientist” was really a coat rack with a hat on top and a white scientist’s coat over it. He had been returning fire for five minutes, and was running out of options, so he grabbed the coat rack and stuck his blast into it.

“Drop the weapons, and step forward, or you’ll never get immortality!” he called. They did, and

he fired a wide-dispersal stun shot at them, catching them all. He stepped forward, quite proud of his little achievement. Just then, an assassin bot popped in front of him. He smiled, aimed and fired.

Click.

He fired.

Click.

He dropped the expended blaster and dived back to his “scientist.” The bot came close, and Dave pulled the hat off the coat rack and used it as a spear, which sent the bot falling to the floor.

Toliver was quite frantic at this point. He would not let his plans be stopped once again. That would mean too much to bear. He would stop these pestering fools once and for all. He had all the required reactors, and it would only take a few weeks to install his (soon to be patented) Inferno Inserter 2000 onto all of the reactors. Then it would be an easy matter to arrange them all in a specific dimension-ripping pattern. But only if his equipment survived that long. He initiated the security lockdown in his lab via comm system. He grabbed his PulseTech A-53 Pulse cannon, like a portable E-web, and set out for the intruders.

He set himself up in the center of the main engineering, preventing anybody from approaching. He didn't have to wait long. Soon he saw Freelancer approaching in the distance. He was walking casually with an even stride. He was met on the left by Dave and on the right by his other friend, whoever that was.

He's pulling them out of the woodworks, Toliver thought, too bad I can't do that. He watched as they approached, his weapon never wavering. As they moved even closer, their weapons drawn but not quite aimed at him, Toliver kept his aim on Free. Toliver smiled, seeing that Free was unarmed.

“Now we can finally end this and I can get back to work,” Toliver told them.

Free promptly raised his hand, extended a finger, and stuck it in Toliver's blaster barrel.

Flustered, Toliver's smile dropped. “What the heck are you doing? Can't you at least let me kill you in peace?”

While Toliver's attention was on his finger stuck in the barrel, Free had reached behind his belt and pulled his lightsaber off. With a flash, it was flying through the air and cut the weapon in half.

Toliver dropped the useless metal and saw Harkonnen raising his weapon. His shield had shorted out in the last hit, and he could not take another. He extended his leg and kicked it away, at the same time moving his head out of the way of Free's saber arc. Toliver reached behind his back, slid a knife out of its sheath and threw it at Dave. Dave lunged sideways as the knife cut through his clothes but not his flesh. Free chose that moment to kick Toliver off balance, and Harks tackled him headlong.

Toliver produced his second, and backup knife, and threw it at Free. Either Jedi reflexes or luck, it didn't hit, but was blocked by the saber handle. The saber sizzled and hissed, then sparked out.

“You'll pay for that!” Free said.

Toliver tossed Harks off. “Sure, I'll just add it to the bill your fighter's on.” He commented.

“Do you have ANY IDEA how hard it is to find one of those in WORKING CONDITION?!?!?” Freelancer said, throwing the dead saber at Toliver.

“Ow,” he said, “about as hard as setting up ten years of work and having you two goons destroying it – Oh-ho, looks like one of you's chickened out.” He said after not finding Dave in the fight. Toliver picked up an arm-sized wrench and brandished it. “You've got a screw loose.

Just let me tighten your neck a little.” He said.

Harkonnen’s eyes darted from Free to the two chunks of sliced blaster on the floor. Free immediately used the force to fling one to Harkonnen and the other in Toliver’s face. Toliver batted it away with the wrench, and Free dove for him. He was immediately thrown away, too, but in that time, Harkonnen took aim and launched his hunk of metal at Toliver’s head. It struck with a loud clang. This stunned him. He dropped the wrench.

“Come on, guys, we can’t beat him. He’s too strong,” Dave said, appearing from nowhere.

“Wha... what?” Toliver asked, still shaking off some of the dizzying effects.

“Yeah, you win, DeWatersey,” Free said, shrugging, “We’ll let you go on your merry way.”

“Yes, best of luck in your endeavors,” Harks added, as they all turned their backs and walked away.

Toliver stood stunned, and still recovering from the blow to his head. It was only after a minute that he heard the computer voice saying “Power redirection overflow, reactor unstable, failure imminent.”

“No!” Toliver cried, “I’m so close! This can’t be happening!!” He picked up the wrench, trying to stop the computer’s voice, and smashed the control panels nearby. “No!! This is not happening! I am immortal! I cannot die! No!! This was not supposed to happen!!”

Free, Dave, and Harkonnen, returned to the starliner, ushering most of the displaced passengers with them, and sealed off the lounge. The star liner wrenched free from the docking clamps, and ripped away from the airlock, exposing the lounge to vacuum. On the bridge, the sensors indicated that the gravity wells were no longer preventing their departure. The various other ships attempted to stop it, but the Jewel of Azaria Prime leapt into hyperspace, into safety.

“I’ll get my revenge!” cried Toliver DeWatersey, mad scientist extraordinaire, aboard the Modified Strike Cruiser “The Immortal”. “They haven’t seen the last of me!” He had succeeded in silencing the main computer warnings, but could not stop the massive power surge from the gravity wells to the reactor. He sank to his knees in the middle of his wrecked engineering section, tears of impotent rage flowing down his face.

“This galaxy has not seen that last of my genius! I will have ALL of them as my SLAVES! They will die miserable, pitiful, painful deaths, by my hand! Because I AM IN-VIN-CI-BLE!!!” He was shouting until his voice was sore by the end.

The reactor went critical, sparks of rampant energy skittered over the hull of “The Immortal” shortly before it exploded in a cataclysmic eruption. The shockwave washed pure radiation and destruction over the various smaller craft, crushing what shields they had and imploding them. Space all around was lit up by the very small, and not to scale, replica of a solar collapse.

FL/Major Freelancer/Rho-3-1/Wing II/SSSD Sovereign

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**Imperial Navy Pilot Record**  
**Personal Background information**  
**(Imperial Security Bureau)**

Name: Ged Astin

Rank: Sub-Lieutenant

Current Assignment: Aleth Squadron position 3-3

Scandoc Transmission Code (E-Mail): astin@usa.com

Sex (M/F): M

Race: Human

Date of Birth: unknown

Place of Birth (Please include Homeworld): Corellia

Marital Status (Single, Married, Divorced, Separated): Single

Family: 1 sister, 1 brother, several cousins

Social Status (Destitute, Poor, Well-to-do, Wealthy, Nobility): Poor

Quote: Hmm.. never thought of one.

Significant Events of Childhood & Adolescence:

Grew up on a crop farm in Correlia. I never did know my age(never really cared), so I'll estimate: When I was 16 I joined CorSec. At 17, I traveled off to Coruscant, looking for greater challenges.

I later learned that my brother had taken up piloting freighters for the Rebels. During a common run, he and his

escort ran into three Imperial Star Destroyers. My brother learned that his hyperdrive was out. His escort ran. I never

heard from my brother again. I am not mad at the Empire for this, I'm mad at the Rebellion for not helping him...

Significant Events of Adulthood:

At 18, I joined the Imperial Navy. Never really got anywhere in it. Mostly patrol duty, and maybe a few

full fledged strikes. At the final battle of Endor, all of the wing I was in was called to be put in the

giant blockade they had. Apparently, they already had a ton of ships on the Death Star, they wanted more.

After the DS blew, I boarded an Imperial Star Destroyer. Some time later, we met up with the Sovereign.

The entire ship then joined the Emperor's Hammer.

Alignment & Attitude: The Empire....the Emperor's Hammer...all great!

Former Occupations (if any): Crop farmer, member of CorSec, pilot for the Imperial Navy.

Hobbies: Tinkering with Computer systems....maybe cause a station to blow up, or drain its life support....

Tragedies: My brother's death.

Phobias & Allergies: Allergic to Ewoks.

Personal views of the Empire (and Emperor's Hammer): The Emperor's Hammer is the best thing that happened to me, and I'm

sure to hundreds of other pilots!

Reason for applying to the Emperor's Hammer Elite Strike Fleet: To kill some Rebels....and to be an Imperial fighter pilot once more.

I hereby confirm that the above information is legitimate and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: Lieutenant Ged Astin  
Date: 369.88.39 Corellian Northern Standard

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## Triple-E

He sat huddled with the other troopers, eyes fixed on the feet of the man sitting across from him. They were only an hour out now. Hell lay before them, its gaping maw welcoming them into its hot embrace. At least, that's what that grizzled trooper had said in the Ture cantina, having just come off an outbound shuttle from this hell these fresh troopers were approaching. Of course, the man had been exaggerating. All troopers do to ones who are less experienced. All the same, the senior man's words still echoed.

"Ares."

The trooper looked up from the feet. "Mmm?"

The man across from him leaned forward, then looked up. The shuttle began to vibrate slightly. There was a click from the intercom and a clipped voice said: "Girls, we have company. Two fleas just hopped on the dog. We're entering the atmosphere of your new home in five."

Ares imagined the "fleas" on either side of the transport; TIE Fighters taking up their escort positions. He'd never want to pilot one of those things. One good shot, and they were so much space dust. No – being on the ground, feeling the earth beneath his feet; that was natural. He was his own man then. With rifle in hand, it was just him and the Rebel. He looked over his fellow's face. The man was grinning.

"Tell me again why the hell you're here."

Ares leaned back, knowing why the question was asked. He was ready for it.

"Why, I volunteered for it."

The man across from him guffawed. "Told you Mikes! This guy's mad. He eats wookies for breakfast, breathes sulfur, and farts out worse!"

Mikes – just a boy, really – snorted. "Cor! No one volunteers for the Triple-E Saber, you're having me on." Mikes turned to Ares. "Tell me you're kidding."

Ares just smiled broadly and closed his eyes. It'd be fun watching Mikes over the next four weeks. The thought wasn't comforting, all the same; a month of hell on an acid-belching tarball that was Grishek. Lovely.

\* \* \*

Nobus maneuvered his fighter a meter closer to the troop transport on his left with a touch on the stick. The planet below roiled near the dawn terminator. The brown-yellow clouds formed large tight weather cells in the conductive heat currents the sunlight and planet-shadow caused. "Rookie! Stay with me."

The admonition stung his ears. His superior and wingman was on the other side of the transport, monitoring his student's movements. Nobus did a once-over of his instruments and found his error. Quickly, he righted his flightstick, veering sharply away from the "dog" they were "riding" before swinging back into position. A raspy sigh filtered over his headset.

"Rookie, if you can't cut flying tight formation with a tub, then don't come down with us. That planet down there...she ain't gentle."

“I can handle it.”

“The hell you can.”

I said I’m fine!”

Futz was shaking him up, and getting the proper result. The rookie’s resolve firmed up, and he nudged closer to the transport again, mirroring his superior. The planet loomed large beneath them, its horizon becoming ever-straighter as the group descended. The black void of space began to lighten as Grisek’s thick atmosphere took them into its embrace. Nobus switched to instruments on his superior’s command. The clouds were too thick to peer through.

“That’s right,” the voice in his headset muttered. “Keep it steady. Watch for a hard starboard crosswind.”

The young pilot barely had time to acknowledge when his light fighter surged hard to port toward the transport. The transport’s gray hull grew alarmingly in the window, and Nobus jerked the nimble TIE away. In his zeal, he pulled over too hard, and the lower section of his port wing panel glanced the transport. Inside, the troopers could hear none of this; the wind grating on the hull was too loud, but the transport pilots felt the brush.

“Keep your nose outta my ear!” shouted an angry pilot over the TIE’s channel. “It’s hard enough fighting the winds without some sailor trying to breach my hull!”

At the same time, Futz shouted over the comm: “Rookie, keep your wings straight! That can you call a fighter will crumple before you know it!”

Nobus tensed on the stick. Response was sluggish, and the craft wanted to pull to the left. A rough vibration started in the stick, and soon in a panel to his left. Another crosswind pushed him toward the transport. He hauled his fighter over, avoiding the transport this time. He was starting to look bad.

“Sir,” he said, “the controls are sticky. She wants to pull to port bad.”

The reply was instant. “Keep her steady. Just keep your nose parallel to the tub and gently get some distance.

The copilot on the transport was still listening in on the TIE channel. He held his tongue at being called “tub.” After all, he was fond of calling the fighters “fleas,” as was the pilot. He knew the fighter pilots hated that.

Nobus began to ease his stick to the right when a loud BANG! sounded from behind the cockpit. His fighter pitched to port, and he caught a glimpse of tattered wing panel disappearing into the clouds. He screamed in panic as he lost all stick response. “Nose up!” was all he heard before the transport filled his cockpit.

The transport copilot didn’t have time to warn his pilot. Their ship lurched to port as the TIE impacted her starboard side. The other fighter jumped up to avoid the larger vessel, but not fast enough. It’s starboard wing panel shattered, and the TIE spiraled into the transport’s nose.

\* \* \*

Mikes was still eyeing Ares with distrust, when the ship shuddered and listed sickeningly to the left. The few troopers not already strapped in were thrown from their seats. A helmet rolled and bounced down the causeway. Ares was pressed forward against his harness, and the g-force increased alarmingly. Then the transport bucked again and the world seemed to twist on its side. The loose helmet came soaring back; a deadly white missile. There was a crunch of bone as it passed beyond vision. Ares found himself pinned against his seat.

The wall behind him began to grow hot as the port engine was pushed to its limit. Its scream



was added to that of the air racing over the hull. The heat told him this wasn't a mad stunt to shake up the troops. They were fighting for their lives. The highly trained soldier liked soil under his feet, but not rammed through his teeth. A bead of sweat stung his left eye. His helmet was still secured above him. With effort, he slid his arms above his head and unlatched the gear. Pulling against the g-force, he slid the helmet over his head and sealed the suit. He looked across and saw Mikes scared motionless.

"Kid, get your helmet on!" Ares shouted through his speaker. Mikes just looked at him dumbly. He was panicking.

Ares felt the sense of "down" shift again. Indeed, it had been constantly shifting, and he guessed they were in a lazy barrel roll. Between the roll's twisting g-forces and the planet's gravity, he had no idea which way was truly up. He tightened his harness and locked eyes with the frightened recruit.

"Mikes! Reach up and get your helmet. Now!"

The young man's hands began to move upward when the ship gave a hard jolt and metal screamed. A line broke aft and a cold mist filled the back of the transport. Mikes woke up and he fumbled with his helmet. No sooner did he get it over his head than the ship struck something else and pitched hard to another side. It vibrated as it plowed into Grishek's rocky surface. Darkness clawed at the edges of Ares' vision, then he knew nothing.

\* \* \*

The sound of hissing air slowly came to him as from a great distance. His head swam, and "up" and "down" were slow to sort themselves out. He found that he had vomited and the smell was overpowering. His eyes streamed, but he kept his breathing controlled. He looked ahead and saw Mikes hanging in his harness. The transport was on her side but leaning toward her nose.

"Down" finally asserted itself, and Ares found himself lying on his back looking up.

He could not move at first. Bodies lay on him, and an arm lay across his throat. He struggled for several minutes, breathing as little as possible as he move aside troopers with leaden limbs. At last he could reach his harness buckle. It disengaged with a dull click and he slid it off. Half the harness had torn away in the crash. Those men who had lain on top of him had not been so lucky. When the soldier looked aft toward the back of the transport, he saw nothing but twisted metal and escaping gases from torn pipes. His mind froze for a long moment.

A warbling beeping started, and the two working lights flashed red. Hull breach! Ares couldn't begin to guess where the hole might be. The aft section was obscured from view, and since the pilots had not contacted the trooper hold, he assumed a similar situation up front. His immediate problem was survival. He carefully moved all his limbs. Other than a very stiff left shoulder and neck, he had suffered little injury. No bones broken. A look at his environmental display in his helmet told him his suit was intact.

He had seen the vital statistics of this forbidding world. The atmosphere was highly poisonous and corrosive, but so was the vomit plastered about his helmet. The trooper climbed his way over his fallen comrades, checking them as he went. None responded to his checks, and those without helmets were obviously dead, faces pinched from the high atmospheric pressure, and burned and blistering from the fumes. The air in the transport was still more oxygen than sulfuric acid though. Some time must have passed for the burns to be so extensive.

Ares reached a spare helmet locker and broke the seal. He grabbed a helmet and took three deep breaths and shut his eyes against the tears. He steeled himself and quickly unsealed his helmet.

The air pressure hit him. His skin immediately began to itch and burn, and he imagined two thumbs pressing hard against his eyes. He had the new helmet over his head and sealed by touch. The life support system pumped out the toxic gases. Even though the smell of vomit lingered, it was bearable now, and would fade into the background. The itch of his skin would also fade, but he knew his skin would start peeling as from a mild sunburn. Still, he felt it was preferable to keeping his soiled helmet.

Now the survivor made a more thorough search for other survivors. He found he couldn't move much farther aft because of the wreckage, so he turned and made his slow painful way back forward. He now saw that some of those who had lain on top of him were indeed still strapped to their benches, but the benches themselves had torn free of the wall. While the harnesses had saved them from flying from their seats, they held them in place to be smashed against the bulkheads. He would find no living there.

He clambered forward and looked up at Mikes. The recruit's arm suddenly twitched. He was alive! Ares quickly unfastened his harness and caught the man as he fell forward. The trooper set him down on the crumpled floor and his inability to take off the boy's helmet for a better look filled him with frustration. The time it would take for any kind of examination might kill him as the air burned his skin and lungs. Instead, Ares clicked on his comlink.

"Mikes, kid! Can you hear me?"

A moment later, Mikes' moaned over the speaker.

"Mikes, listen to me. Anything broken? Can you move your limbs?" Though he had remained strapped in and his seat anchored, his flailing limbs could have been damaged by flying debris.

The boy moved his arms experimentally, but only one leg.

"I – I can't move my leg." There was an small edge of panic in his voice, but he strove to hide it. He was clinging to his training. Ares wondered if his voice would have been as steady had he lost the use of a leg.

"Okay. You're in better shape than most of us then. The crash was a hard one."

Mikes started to look around, but stopped at the sight of five troopers crumpled in the nearest corner. He could guess the rest. He closed his eyes against panic. They couldn't be the only ones. Please, let there be others. He vaguely heard the older trooper saying something about staying put.

Ares headed forward, checking bodies as he passed them. He was crawling through a grim scene, placing his feet between white bodies and twisted metal. He thought he heard a faint breath over his speaker. He stopped and looked about. He found only Mikes pulling himself to a sitting position. He clicked on his radio.

"Mikes, you still have your channel open?"

The boy looked up and the speaker clicked on. No, thought Ares, it wasn't him if he had to activate his link.

"No sir," said Mikes. His voice was more strained. His leg was started to hurt. That was a good thing; no nerves were damaged.

Ares strained his ears. There it was again. A faint breathing not his own. Someone had their channel open but couldn't speak. The trooper pushed forward and reached the cockpit hatch. The ship bulkhead was twisted and several holes had been punched through it, although too much debris blocked any clear view. Ares didn't try to open the hatch. The door would surely be immovable.

He moved back to a weapons locker and unclipped a rifle. Ironically, most of the weapons had remained tight in their clips while the troopers had been tossed about the ship like so many white

dolls. He inserted an ammo clip, and took aim at the door. He fired steady bursts into the edges of the portal. Walking up, he grabbed one side and heaved it open. It fell outward, and for a long moment, Ares didn't recognize what he saw.

A spiderwork of blackened metal occupied the space beyond the hatch opening. His eye caught a dark arm, bent where there shouldn't be any joints. A charred TIE Corps insignia was on the shoulder. Ares was looking into the cockpit of a TIE fighter! Its symmetry intersected that of the transport at a crazy angle. Peering in, the trooper could see a partial flight chair – this one the transport's – rammed through the fighter's canopy. Of the transport pilot, there was no sign. There was altogether too much of the copilot to be found.

Ares saw a patch of white. He inched forward through the joined cockpits and found the white was part of a trooper's suit.

How did a trooper get in here? he thought.

The answer wasn't far. One of the holes in the bulkhead had been opened by a seat punching through the metal. The piece of armor moved. Ares looked down in surprise. This man was alive after being pushed through a bulkhead? The only thing Ares could think of was the seat had absorbed most of the impact. He reached down and started hauling debris off the fallen man. The work was strenuous and took some time. Between the heat of the planet and his own efforts, his suit could hardly keep him cool enough. At last he uncovered the man's head and shoulders. He noticed he had lieutenant stripes.

"Sir," cried Ares, "can you hear me?"

The breathing went on a few painful breaths more, then a weary voice filtered through the trooper's speaker.

"Yes, Sergeant. I can hardly breathe."

Ares cursed the poisonous atmosphere. He couldn't take off the man's helmet. Carefully, he turned his superior over and checked his survival pack. There; the readout said the air filters were damaged. The suit was restricting airflow to try to preserve the man inside.

"What's it say?"

Ares suddenly recognized the voice. Vradin! What was he doing on this transport? No matter. That question would be asked later. Right now, it was plain Vradin's life support would fail before long. He wouldn't lie.

"Your air filters are damaged, sir. There are also breaches in the hull."

Vradin nodded. "So we can't replace them."

With Ares' help, he struggled to his feet. Every joint was stiff. His back ached. For a moment, the world dimmed and swam around him.

"No, let me stand, Ares. Was just dizzy for a moment. How many made it?"

If Vradin could have seen the Sergeant's face, he would have known without asking.

"Only one other has survived, sir. His name is Lance Corporal Mikes. His leg is broken. It is impossible to make a more thorough search without a scanning crew."

The lieutenant was silent for a moment. "Okay then. Sergeant, survey the hull and surrounding land. I will see if anything is still working on this dog."

Ares saluted and clambered out of the cockpit. He gave a thumbs-up to Mikes as he passed to the outer portal. With a firm kick, it clanged open and he stepped outside.

The landscape was washed in a dim brown light. It was day, but the miles-thick cloud cover made it impossible to see the sun. The dark valley walls rose high on either side. The transport had crashed into a narrow valley. Looking behind, Ares could see the trail of debris from the transport. Twisted metal and black scarred rock littered the valley floor as far as could be seen.

White could be seen here and there; troopers who had been sucked out the back when the tail sheered off in the spiraling crash.

Ares turned to look over the ship. It was immediately clear why he was spared. The scoring on the hull told of a hard impact on the vessel's top. The ship continued to corkscrew as it pushed into the earth, continually presenting fresh metal to the rending rock. Only the port side had been spared much damage. The ship now lay on that side. He returned to the cockpit.

"Sir, she's a total loss. Back end has been torn off. It's not much prettier out there than in here. We've crashed into a deep ravine. If the Black Box were still aboard and not lost with the tail section, it would still be useless. Any distress signal will be bounced straight up into space."

Vradin looked up from the dimly lit console he had been studying. He had jury-rigged his blaster rifle to provide the computer with minimal power through a frayed patch cable. It wouldn't last long.

"Sergeant, just use my name for now. No one else is listening." He let out a slow breath. "I take it we can't stay here then for rescue. See if that Corporal can travel. I'm trying to find our position in relation to the Guardis Complex. That is where we were headed."

Ares nodded. He ducked back into the main cabin and got Mikes to his feet. The boy didn't want to move; his leg had begun to hurt in earnest and his breaths were irregular.

"C'mon Corporal. It's time to move."

Mikes resisted. "I...can stay here and...wait for the rescue party. They must...be on their way."

"There is no rescue party, mister! If you stay, you're dead."

Ares hauled his subordinate to his feet and maneuvered him to the hatch. Vradin popped his head out of the cockpit. He looked hard at the horror before him. Bodies, metal, rock, and seats littered the cabin.

"Gentlemen," he said, "the complex is north-northeast of us. If we make good time, we may reach it in two days." He glanced over Mikes. No, we won't be making good time with a broken leg. Ares' thought the same; he had seen the landscape.

The three of them moved out into the Grishek wilderness. Lifeless rock greeted them on all sides. Grim walls stared down on them. The valley was pitted with erosion and corrosion, making the rock look ancient. The rocks could have been young for all they knew; the air ate at everything. Mikes nearly cried.

There was no easy way out of the valley. Mikes hung between the two superiors, hopping to keep up as best he could. The high gravity did not help their progress either. Each step took effort. To put off climbing the valley walls, the men moved along the floor. Luckily, the ravine ran nearly along the path they needed.

After some hours of weary trudging, the valley began narrowing and the floor slowly rose and steepened. Pebbles became rocks, which gave way to boulders as they neared the valley head. They had rested briefly but once and soon Mikes could go no further.

"Stop. I need to rest."

The group stumbled to the nearest boulder and set Mikes down. All three men sat with their backs against it. The heat of day assaulted their armor, making their cooling systems work hard. Ares was sweating. He was sure the others were too.

"I think we may make the top by the end of the day," breathed Vradin. It was a white lie. The topomap he had called up on the ship's computer showed the land to be treacherous and hard.

Ares was the first to his feet. The lieutenant pushed himself to his feet as well, and together they got Mikes moving again. The pain in the boy's leg had become nearly intolerable, and he sighed on every breath. No, they wouldn't make it to the top by nightfall.

The moved on. Slowly, the daylight dwindled into a heavy dusk. It was a gradual darkening, not like the evenings on Carrida where the sun set fast and it was dark in half an hour. Thus they had little idea when night actually arrived. After negotiating a difficult cleft in the rock, Vradin suddenly noticed he could hardly see in front of him. No one had noticed how dark it had become. Still they trudged. Vradin and Ares both wanted to reach the top of the valley before they rested for the night.

The ground was uneven and they had all fallen at least once before the slope quickly flattened. They took a few steps more, then fell to the ground as one. Mikes was already asleep.

“Vradin, you okay?” asked Ares. He was of course asking about the air filters.

The lieutenant nodded in the dark. “Yeah. Get some sleep, soldier. I’ll wake you up soon enough.”

\* \* \*

Ares awakened to the sound of labored breathing. A hand clutched at his arm. He turned on his side and saw Vradin inches from him. He was trying to say something, but couldn’t. Ares scrambled to his knees and quickly checked over his superior’s life support. He only needed a glance to know what was happening. The air filters were entirely corroded and the bottled air had been expended sometime during the night. The sergeant wasn’t a technician, but he knew which wires to cross.

He broke off the outer cover, already half corroded, and forced the suit to use its catalytic converters as rudimentary air filters. Normally used to recycle air within the suit, they would burn out in half the time when exposed to Grishek’s acidic atmosphere. The effect was immediate. Vradin breathed easier and gave a thumbs-up.

The three started moving again. The sky was dim, but time was impossible to guess. They descended into another shallower valley and soon reached its opposite side. Their progress became easier as they moved from the wrinkled mountains to a rolling plain of browns and yellows. The sky slowly brightened with the hours. A stroke of lightning stabbed down on the horizon, brilliant purple against the muddy sky. A growl sounded over the speakers.

“Who was that?” demanded Vradin.

“It was me, sir.”

“Well tell your stomach to keep quiet, Mikes. None of us have eaten either.”

Mikes mumbled something and continued to hop along. Another rumble.

“Mikes...”

“It wasn’t me,” the boy cried.

The ground gave way beneath them. Darkness swallowed them as the sky receded to a small circular patch above. The troopers landed with a sickening crunch and Mikes screamed. Ares had the wind knocked from him, but he forced himself to his knees. His ankle shouted with pain. Broken. He bit back a cry and tears stung his eyes.

“Everyone still with me?” asked Vradin.

Ares laughed; a short barking sound as he bit back pain. “Where would I go?”

“Mikes!” Vradin’s voice was strained as well.

The boy gave no coherent response, but just a whimper. His pain was overpowering. Ares sat down and slid over to the lieutenant.

“Let me see your suit again, Vradin. You don’t sound too good.”

Vradin leaned forward and Ares peered at his back in the pale light from above. The converters, weakened in the hours before, had broken in the fall. Vradin was going to suffocate. Ares swallowed before reporting.

“Okay, uh, you’re up to your eyeballs right now sir. Your life support is gone. You probably have five minutes of air left, so listen to me.”

Vradin hid his terror. He didn’t want to suffocate. He nodded.

“I need you to open my support system and remove one filter and a converter. Close the valves first, or I’ll be breathing acid.”

Ares turned away and Vradin opened up the man’s back. He blinked to clear his vision and hoped he was turning the correct valves. It seemed to take ages to pull the tiny cylinders out. Ares turned when his superior tapped him, and he replaced the lieutenant’s filters and converters.

“There,” said Ares, “now we’re both breathing on one lung. Now where are we?”

Vradin got to his feet – unsteadily – and walked out of the pool of light. After a few minutes, he returned.

“We’re in a mining tunnel! We can’t be far from the complex! At any rate, there will be a crew sent to investigate the ceiling we collapsed. I don’t know which way we need to go, so we should wait here.”

Ares nodded. “I can’t walk, so that suits me fine, and I’m sure Mikes doesn’t mind not moving.”

There was stained laughter. At least the kid saw the humor in it. They waited for over an hour, breathing lightly. All suits had now started to blister, and their life support systems were breaking down. Vradin’s suit had again utterly failed, and so had Ares’.

A bright light flooded the tunnel. Voices! Ares struggled to sit up. Vradin stood on weak legs and waved his arms as the light came closer. Mikes had lost consciousness half an hour before.

Triple-E, thought Ares. If this doesn’t count as extended extreme endurance training, then no one has seen me mad yet.

PC/LT Ares/Vindictive-Vendetta/Carrida II =SS=, HC/LoSx3/CoO

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## **Imperial Navy Pilot Record Personal Background information (Imperial Security Bureau)**

Name: Talon Drear

Rank: Sub-Lieutenant

Scandoc Transmission Code (Screen Name): FM/SL Talon Drear/Typhoon 1-4/Wing X/ISD Challenge

Sex (M/F): M

Race: Human

Date of Birth: January 11th 1981

Place of Birth: Nom Sh'a, Alderaan

Marital Status: Single

Family: Father, Egan Drear (Deceased)

Mother, Marissa Est (Deceased)

Uncle, Dengar Est, whereabouts unknown

Adopted Brother, Kell Dobs (KIA)

Sister, information currently not available, whereabouts N/A

Social Status: between poor and well-to-do

Significant events of childhood: Parents killed with the destruction of Alderaan while Drear was still a baby, sister

was also believed to have been killed by the first Death Star. Mother and father were both council members of the board

of Alderaan. When the destruction of Alderaan took place, Drear and his (adopted) brother Dobs were on a trip with their

Uncle Est, a smuggler with an impressive (imperial) criminal record, Est has been running shipments for the Rebel Alliance

since the declaration of rebellion by Ex. Sen. Mon Mothma and is still believed to be in the service of the New Republic.

When Est found out about the destruction of their homeworld he took it upon himself to take care of the children, he taught them the way of the smugglers and gave them both pilot training in tugs, soon after that he allowed them to assist with smuggling operations, both boys turned out to be fine pilots and were hauling about in CUV's and experiencing some minor combat situations a few months later. Est is also believed to have been active in the supply of Hoth.

Significant events of adulthood: with the defeat of the Rebel forces at the hands of the Empire on Hoth and their coming of age, both Drear and Dobs, brothers and best of friends, signed up with the Rebellion to be put into active service.

Dobs was stationed as a fighterpilot, while Drear was sent to work for the Bothan Spynet. A few years later, LT. Kell Dobs of red squadron was killed during a rebel raid on an Imperial Space Platform in Correllian space, a supposed "Cakewalk", what Rebel Intel. was unaware of at the time was the fact that the platform was just receiving a surprise Imperial

Inspection by the ISD Nemesis and it's infamous 128th TIE-Interceptor Wing. Years later, after the destruction of the second Death Star and the building of the New Republic, the Bothan Spynet was greatly reduced and Drear was removed from active duty, after being in the reserves for a while, Drear requested a transfer as a fighterpilot, he served as an LT.

in an E-Wing Squadron stationed with the Fifth Fleet, drear fought actively and was sighted at an impressive amount of battles which included the battle of Bothawuii. Several months after that battle, Drear was informed by an old contact

in the Bothan SpyNet, that the 128th TIE-Interceptor squadron, responsible for his brothers death, included his sister, whom Drear thought to be dead. He immediately set out to find information about his sister in the archives of the New

Republic, he found nothing concrete, with the chaos that reigned after the destruction of the second Death Star and the splintering of the Imperial Forces, it was unknown to New Republic Intel. where and if the crew of the 128th TIE Wing

was stationed. Therefore, Drear quit his career with the Fleet, which was currently stationed in the core systems, being used as a defensive tool, from where Drear would have but a slim chance of finding his sister. After months of

searching, Drear located a strong Imperial presence in the outerrim, and joined up with the Emperor's Hammer Strike Fleet in the hopes of one day finding his sister.....

Alignment and attitude: Drear has seemed to put maximum effort in his Imperial career, he



appears to have no grudges  
from his Rebel days and it looks like he's even becoming a fanatic Rebel hater.  
Former Occupations(if any): Smuggler, TUG pilot, CUV pilot, Reb. Int. Officer, Reb. E-Wing Pilot, Saberist.  
Hobbies: Saber dueling (NF), Earth Martial Arts (Ving Tsun Kung Fu), Snowboarding (A habbit Drear appeared to have picked up since his smuggling trips with his uncle to Hoth)  
Tragedies: Death of his parents, death of his brother and best friend Kell Dobs, death of goldfish (According to surveillance camera's Drear still has nightmares about that particularly traumatic event)  
Fears and Allergies: \*note to ship's Cook\* Drear has spastic attacks when confronted with Correlian Cheese  
Personal Views of the empire (and emperor's hammer): At first Drear couldn't seem to care less about the Emperor and the EH, but after a few months of indoctrination he has become a most fanatic Imperial.  
Reason for applying to the Emperor's Hammer Elite: To find his long lost sister(name and whereabouts currently not available)  
Other comments/information (optional): we have extracted a quote from Drear while he was in a pretty drunk mood, it contains the following sentence(s): "Any Imperial doesn't have to bother watching his six, I'll be watching it!  
And any Rebel, well....They'd better start watching their \*\*\*\*ing six 'cuz I'm coming after their \*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*"  
(sentence interrupted due to heavy use of words not permitted or to be repeated in the EH)

I hereby confirm that the above information is legitimate and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: Talon Drear

Date: June 15th 1999

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**Imperial Navy Pilot Record**  
**Personal Background information**  
**(Imperial Security Bureau)**

Name: Ryoko Jennifer (formerly Lady Basillia Jennifer Ramos)

Rank: Lieutenant

Current Assignment: Typhoon Squadron, Flight 2

Scandoc Transmission Code (E-Mail): ryokoj@xoommail.com

Sex (M/F): Female

Race: Human

Date of Birth: 10th day of the 10th month, in 8th year PR

Place of Birth (Please include Homeworld): The planet R'kan, in the city of Jarden

Marital Status (Single, Married, Divorced, Separated): Single

Family: None (presumed dead, may not be)

Social Status (Destitute, Poor, Well-to-do, Wealthy, Nobility): Poor (formerly Nobility)

Quote: "How'd you like to say that to my katana?"

Significant Events of Childhood & Adolescence: Born 3rd daughter of Duke Ramos of R'kan, she was trained from age 6 by the Ryoko Tamara to be the next Ryoko of the Noble House, as her older siblings were already in line for the title of Duchess. At 16, the Chancellor of R'kan betrayed the former Imperial Duchy to the just-formed New Republic--Ryoko Tamara aided in Jennifer's escape to a shuttle, then returned to aid the rest of the family.

Significant Events of Adulthood: Captured by Slavers at age 17, she used her training to slay her guards and escape the ship before she could be sold-off. Fled without focus for six months, finding and subsequently joining the EH 3 months after her 18th birthday.

Alignment & Attitude: While focused on her goals, Jennifer maintains a jovial exterior, gregarious around fellow pilots, but shy and quiet when her emotions get the better of her. However, she is truly a very focused young woman dedicated to destroying those who betrayed her and her family.

Former Occupations (if any): Ryoko in training to the Noble House of the Duchy of R'kan (The 'Ryoko' is the Noble Protector of the Ramos family)

Hobbies: Meditation, martial arts, hand to hand weapons training, flying, playing music, and Ice Cream! Lots of Ice Cream!

Tragedies: Entire family likely executed, including Father, Mother, and two older sisters in a coup on homeworld of R'kan--dearest friend Tamara assumed dead along with family.

Phobias & Allergies: none--former training eliminated any potential fears

Personal views of the Empire (and Emperor's Hammer): While indifferent to the former Empire, grateful to the Emperor's Hammer for providing her the opportunity to hone her skills in combat. Now a sworn enemy of the New Republic generally, and the new Chancellor of R'kan in particular.

Reason for applying to the Emperor's Hammer Elite Strike Fleet: To perhaps one day, retake R'kan for the Empire, and take her rightful place as Duchess.

Other comments or information (optional):

I hereby confirm that the above information is legitimate and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: Ryoko Jennifer

Date: Tuesday, May 11, 1999

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LT Oldham had slept like a baby this last night, after a good load of Chalquila the evening before. Typhoon pilots had quite a lot of occasions to celebrate victories or other successes, but if they happened to have no special occasion, they just made one up. Last night they were all jeerful and happy when Vexan had incidentally noticed that it was her name day. Drinks had been poured out in masses, and eventually a lot of other Challenge pilots had joined the party. Now, this morning, in spite of having had a baby's sleep, Oldham was severely bugged by some kind of a hangover, which was rather unusual for him. He decided to get up a bit earlier than the others and have his shower before they woke up, so he could sober up a little under the cold water. He wouldn't have them see that he couldn't handle the standard Typhoon amount of alcohol.

Silently, barefoot, he made his way to the shower. It was rather peaceful now on the Challenge, with only a couple of technicians and officers going about their business. Not surprisingly, the Lieutenant was all alone in the shower room. After getting undressed, Oldham took a towel and stepped under the shower.

Instantly, the almost icecold water made him wake up completely. His headache started to fade, and he finally turned on the hot water. It didn't take long and the entire room was filled with steam. His tense muscles relaxed and he started to feel alive again....

“Neil!!! NEIL!! Get out of the shower NOW! We've got rebels on the ship!!! They're heading our way!!! Get your blaster and give Lae cover!!!“ He heard Callista's voice ringing through the steamy air. His first reflex was to cover his 'manliness', until he eventually thought about what she had said.

'Rebels! Geezuz!!' His heart started to pound like crazy. The sudden rush of adrenaline in his blood made him act without considering the consequences. 'My friends are in danger! I've got to help them!' was all his loyal mind could muster just now.

He grabbed his towel, swung it around his waist, stormed to the door and flung it open with a war cry.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!“ he addressed the enemy.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!“ replied 9 Typhoon pilots and 1 Typhoon Commander.

CM Blackbird just ducked in time to evade a zestful punch from Oldham. LCM Brandon and CPT Ice eventually got hold of the wriggling Lieutenant in his towel and got him to face the bunch of familiar pilots. Just now he finally realized that there was no danger at all and his comrades had played a prank on him. After this bit of excitement, everyone started giggling when they saw Oldham's outfit.

'They better have a good excuse for that!' Oldham thought, it wasn't THAT nice to be laughed at, especially not with only a towel around your waist. Especially not by the women.

Commander Callista made a gesture to quieten down the bunch. Apparently she was the wirepuller of this whole business. At first still chuckling a bit, she said:

“Lieutenant Neil Oldham, once more you have proven to be a loyal Typhoon pilot, worried about the safety of your comrades and to always be at hand in every ticklish situation. This laudable characteristic plus your excellent skill in piloting can only have one consequence. FO Kawolski has approved my request for your promotion. From now on, you shall be addressed with LCM Oldham. Wear your new rank with pride, Lieutenant Commander, and continue your outstanding service to the squadron, the Tie Corps and the Emperor. Congratulations. And now do me a favour Neil and put on some clothes before I start getting saucy images in my head.“

Seeing Calli's broad smile, Oldham blushed a bit, more with pride than with embarrassment cause of this last statement. Everyone rushed to pat his shoulders and shake hands with him.

“Oh, before I forget Neil... drinks tonight are on you!“ Calli grinned.

“Um... wasn't it like that... drinks are on the Commander usually?“ Oldham grinned back.

“Err..... dammit.“

Congratulations again Oldham on this well-deserved promotion.

CMDR/CPT Callista/Typhoon/Wing X/ISD Challenge

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CPT Callista was filled with utmost pride when reading the message from her husband, FO Kawolski, on her datapad. With her excitement almost conquering her composure, she covered the short way from her quarters to the pilots' lounge, probably setting up a new record for this distance. While trying not to stumble cause of her speed, she was thinking of how to address her pilots in this matter. She had waited for so long, especially after her own promotion to the rank of Captain, to award at least a part of her pilots for their continuous dedication for Typhoon, and now that there was reason to be happy, she was fumbling for words.

Naturally, she found them at the bar. Typhoon pilots apparently always had a reason to party and be merry, even if she didn't seem to figure it out. They were all laughing over a joke LCM Mell had just cracked and nobody seemed to care about the upcoming mission in the Minos Cluster. Callista was wondering why she hadn't been asked to join them, but then, that was of no consequence. This was not HER day.

CPT Vader was the first to notice her approach. "Commander on de... umm... in lounge!" he shouted and in some neat unison all Typhoon pilots stood at the salute, some with their Chalquillas still in their hands. "At ease, pilots." she replied, making an effort in hiding the smile that was beaming inside her. Suddenly she noticed the presence of most of the Challenge's CMDRs and even WC Tad and COMM Torres were sipping on their drinks at a near table, now peeking to the bar in interest.

"LT Nazghul, LT Brandon, step forward. This might not be an appropriate place for this, but then, who cares. For your exemplary service for the Emperor's Hammer, I am honored to promote you hereby to the rank of Lieutenant Commander. LCM Nazghul, LCM Brandon, wear your new ranks with pride, keep up the good work and keep on serving the Emperor above all. You have made me extremely proud and have paid tribute to the squadron, the Wing and the whole Fleet. Congratulations."

After a short startling moment, everybody rushed to shake hands and slap backs, and the already good mood spread around the lounge. Drinks were handed out, and Callista found herself holding a Caipirinha in her hands.

From somewhere across the room, CM Blackbird shouted "Drink are on the Commander!" which would normally would have been somewhat impudent, but he knew as well as his Commander that Callista couldn't care less - she had been promoted only 2 days before, thus all the drinks she ordered were paid by anyone else but her.

CMDR/MAJ Callista/Typhoon/Wing X/ISD Challenge

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It was kinda hot on the ISD Challenge that night, an effect that was due to the relative close position of the battle ship in the orbit around Xpebah, the third sun of Etn'yal. None of the pilots really knew what they were doing in the Etn system, but they believed their superiors did and didn't bother at all. After all, the heat gave them a good excuse to make off for the cantina bar, the only real home of a starfighter pilot.

MAJ Callista had changed clothes for the third time that day, not that she was vain or anything -

least that was not the primary reason - but simply cause even several cold showers wouldn't help her avoid the sweat, not hers and not the others'. Her sleeves had got gradually shorter, as well as her trouser legs, and although she didn't intend to have that effect, her comrades of the male gender actually found a good thing in the heat when they saw her pass by. Callista had long ago stopped to bother their gazes, after all, they were men and subjective to these matters.

Callista usually tried to be mysterious and unpredictable, but at that moment even someone who didn't know her could've seen where she was heading. The roguish grin on her face indicated her anticipation of getting majorily pissed that night, she'd made a plan of what she was gonna drink in advance, so she wouldn't be all too surprised when she finally puked. Not that this happened very often, of course.

Her list looked about like this:

Chalquila

Corellian Ale

Tatooine Whiskey

Chalquila

Pydr Lime Juice 25%

Caipirinha

Chalquila

Devaronian Gin

Thyferran Bourbon (the best liquid off her homeplanet for last)

Calli figured she'd puke after the third Chalquila, or turn blind for that matter - she didn't really know the percentage of the alcohol it had, but she preferred to be ignorant there.

Typhoon pilots didn't need a reason for intoxicating themselves, although this happened quite often after promotions, the fact that they weren't on duty merely... encouraged them even more to drink.

She was maybe 200 feet away from the cantina when she heard the singing and the bawling of her pilots. Any other CMDR would probably be worried when faced with this drinking orgy, but Calli just smiled and hurried to join them. Clearly, she was late for the first \*cheers\* and would have to catch up.

"Cal, wait!" a familiar voice shouted after her. When she turned, she saw CM Nightwolf's eyes sparkle and his smile beam at her. Apparently, he as well couldn't wait to drown his pilot's worries in alcohol.

"Hey Nighty, you gonna 'ex' some Chalquilas with us tonight?"

"How could I ever turn down an offer like this made by the most beautiful CMDR in the fleet... ah well I would've come anyway, even if you hadn't asked." His grin grew broader.

Callista blushed at the compliment, even though it wasn't new to her.

Night loved being in Inferno Squad, but he spent most of his free time with the Typhooners of Flight I, seeing how they were all his friends. Calli figured he'd be quite amazed when he met the rest of the Squad. All three Flights seemed to be in continuous competitions about being weirdest, but funniest.

Brandon and Blackbird first noticed the two approaching their table and cheered. The glassy look of their eyes made Callista estimate that they'd both had their first Chalquila some time ago.

Now, whereas it was rather common that she as CMDR was greeted with a hug and a kiss on the cheek, it startled her a bit when her two wing mates kissed Nighty as well. Judging from the expression on the latter's face, he was 'a bit' surprised, too.

Calli chuckled.

“Ah well Nighty, we really do have to hurry up. First one to puke or pass out gets an ISM!” she shouted the last bit out loud for the others to hear too and to announce her presence. Faces looked up and heads turned, then all of them said their hello and Esti jumped on the table, spilling his greenish-yellow drink all over his uniform, but he was too tipsy to care.

“You are soooo beautifuuuullll.... toniiiiight!” he sang and made everyone laugh. Vexie almost fell off her chair, apparently losing her balance.

Brandon exploded some curry sauce on Nighty as a welcome and Oldie kept saying: “Aye, wicked man.” all the time. Domi was telling dirty jokes and stories about his meeting with Jarla, Mairin, Lannie, Bubbs and Blibbles. Ehart listened intently, with a Chalquila in his hand, ready to down.

Talon had one too, staring at it with utmost concentration, preparing for the heat it would cause in his stomach. He still had to get used to the Challenge’s finest alcohol. Andron was trying to build a card house, but seeing how he sat next to Vexie, this was a difficult task. She was just staggering back from the bar, with a new drink her left hand, spilling a bit on Andron and using his shoulder to maintain her balance, causing his card house to collapse. He looked honestly depressed after that, but just a few seconds later he was merry again. Alcohol certainly had a weird effect on people sometimes.

Calli would have bet that Vexie was in for the ISM, when Vader, who was still dancing on the table to everyone’s entertainment, suddenly lost the control over his legs and almost fell off, but Domi and Oldie saved him and everyone’s drinks.

When Nighty went to the bar to get Calli and himself the first Chalquila, Jenn bent over to her and whispered:

“Hey, who’s your buddy, Cal? I’ve noticed him around... I find him very attractive....”

Cal chuckled.

“His name’s Nightwolf, he’s in Inferno, so far.”

“Cute.”

When Nighty came back and Calli walked over to Brandon with her drink, Jenn almost instantly occupied the chair next to Nighty. Ah, romance.

Esti’s control of his limbs seemed to return, for he was now playing songs with his guitar, and Blackbird sang, a very rare thing for him to do, since he usually just snipped his fingers. Andron was trying to dance with Vexie, but was more like he was dancing and she hanging in his arms, almost asleep. Calli wondered who had managed to persuade Vexie to drink other stuff than her beloved root beer.

After the Caipirinha, she was close to doze off, but the guys’ topics made her laugh so hard that she automatically stayed awake so as to hear everything. Brandon was a ver welcome pillar. She wondered how they still managed to speak and listen, Esti had had 5 Chalquilas and was now livelier than after his first one.

Something beeped in her pocket. Her mini notepad.

She took it out and tried to read the blinking letters.

‘Y..ou...ha..v...e....a..m..as....sa....ge.’ A message? Calli hadn’t noticed.

“It says you have a message, dear.” Brandon helped out.

“I knew tha’! Thing I can’t ree o’ wha’?!“

Brandon smiled understandingly. Maybe she had caught up with the others a bit too fast.

She clicked on the message symbol and it popped up on the screen. It was from Horny. AD Horn she corrected herself, he was a respectable person now. She read with great effort.

“Aye Nighty, it’s a shame Inferno didn’t make it into the SL finals. If only the other had as much

flown as you.“ Oldie said.

“We could so much use your skills now, especially with 3 of our best pilots on leave.“ Talon added.

“Too bad you can’t go into the finals with us.“ Jenn uttered with honest regret.

“Oh, but he can“ Calli said. Everyone looked at her questioningly. “His transfer to Typhoon has been approved!“

After a split-second of surprise, the Phooners cheered and clinked glasses. Typhoon was a fully squadron again. Nighty was grinning like a nerf. He felt he was gonna like to fly with these guys and gals, who now rushed to shake hands and pat shoulders. Blackbird cried with joy.

Jenn approached Nighty.

“Hey, come along, I’ll show you your new quarters...“

Nighty looked puzzled, but didn’t object.

The rest of them had another round of Chalquilas to celebrate, and someone had placed one in front of her too.

‘Oh dear...’ Calli thought.

As a CMDR, she had to down first. Everyone looked at her expectantly, glasses raised.

“Cheers.“ she said and ex’d the stuff.

When she opened her eyes again, Brandon was leaning over her. He smiled.

“Well Commander, you just earned yourself an ISM.“

CMDR/MAJ Callista/Typhoon/Wing X/ISD Challenge

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## file archives

The Executive Officer herein posts descriptions of files attached to this newsletter.

**pibanner.gif** - An updated banner for Pi Squadron presented by FM/LT EH Member/Pi 2-3/ISD Col.

**K20B.zip** - A new patch for SA Compton's Dagger Engineering Corporation K-20b, sliced by SCOA/LT Stalker/COA-10/SSSD Sov. Instructions for use can be found on the XO's page of this NewsLetter.

**EHSI v1.1.exe** - The Emperor's Hammer Information Link - a useful source of information concerning the Emperor's Hammer, designed by FL/CM Badlands/Tornado 3-1/Wing X/ISD Challenge.

**VB40032.dll** - The Visual Basic 4 runtime mode whatever thang. This is needed to view the EHSI.

**tied4.gif** - A HIGHLY detailed picture of a TIE Defender by LT Kircheis Tychsen.

**TIECon.zip** - A conversion of the TIE Fighter Combat chamber missions to XvT Standard (allows playing the missions in alternate ships and with the better graphics) by FM/LT Kermee/Vortex 2-3/Wing XIII/ISD Grey Wolf.

**eh.jpg** - A banner for the EH by CMDR/CM Corran Horn/Tornado 1-1/Wing X/ISD Challenge.

**NL Submissions.zip** - A group of various images by Sub-Zero69@juno.com, ASST/JediJawa/Daichi/BHG -H, SM/CZ JediJawa/Pirath System, JH JediJawa(Sith)/Galthain of CSK.

**Animation1.gif** - A brief animated gif by FL/CM Badlands/Tornado 3-1/Wing X/ISD Challenge.

**banners.zip** - Three images by Act. CMDR/CM Wedge/Hunter 3-1/Wing I/SSD Avenger.

**MAJMarc.jpg** - The uniform of WC/MAJ Marc/Wing XV/ISD Vanguard.

**image.jpg** - An image by FM/LT spaceboy/Tornado3-4/Wing X/ISD Challenge.

**xwing.jpg** - An edited image by cmdr dwx-jio/enforcer -1-1/wing-2/mc-90 bismark/IW.

**wings.jpg** - Display and uniform versions of the Imperial Navy flight wings by FL-OA/COL EmpReach/Omega-3/Wing-6/SSSD Sov (ret.).

**nl.zip, nl2.zip, nl3.zip** - A proliferation of new and edited images by MO/CZ Alex 'Viper' Foley/MC-4/Gondor Base/Aurora Prime. Check 'em out.

**LCMSarriss.zip** - Three images by FL/LCM Sarriss/Alpha 3-1/Wing I/SSSD Sovereign.

**grads.zip** - An Excel file of all IWATS graduates, listed by TO/FA Astatine/CS-6/SSSD Sov.

**wingiv.jpg** - The new banner of Wing IV by LT Kircheis Tychsen.

**banners2.zip** - Banners by FM/LCM Nazghul/Tempest 1-3/Wing X/ISD Challenge.

**flight2.zip** - 4 banners by FM/LT Andronicus/Typhoon 2-4/Wing X/ISD Challenge.

**Typhoon.JPG** - A graphic made by FM/LCM Vexan/Typhoon 2-2/Wing X/ISD Challenge.

**typhoonban.gif** - Another image by FM/LT Andronicus/Typhoon 2-4/Wing X/ISD Challenge.

**typhoon1.jpg** - An image by FM/LCM Kaneda Pellail/Tempest 1-2/Wing X/ISD Challenge.

**typhoon2.jpg** - A banner designed by FM/CM Nightwolf/Typhoon 1-4/Wing X/ISD Challenge.

**Axis Diagram.jpg** - A useful graphic for editing waypoints in the various Star Wars flight sim games, presented by FL/LCM Syn/Kaph 3-1/Wing IV/SSSD Sovereign, who had this to say about it:

<SALUTE>

I have noticed your posting about NL submissions. I have a graphic which I find an excellent tool for making T/F missions with TFW. I feel it would benefit the fleet if they had access to it.

The picture contains a picture of a 3dimensional cube, an axis graph and three columns of a table.

The Cube, is a representation of the TIE Fighter game arena. On three sides of the cube, three different axis' are set. These axis are the relevant views on the arena, compared to the set axis in the mission map. For example, when the mission map axis is set to X/Y, you are looking down on the arena, and when the axis is set to X/Z, you are looking at the arena from front to back.

use: the user looks at the mission map, compares the axis to the cube, and can better lay out the battle, with capital ships looking and moving in the direction they want.

The axis diagram is a set of three lines, each insinuating the three dimensions of the TIE Fighter arena. X which is the horizontal axis, Y being the distance axis and Z being the height axis (not mathematically correct I know, but this is how it works in TIE Fighter).

Use: designed for use with the table

Table: the three columns found on the navigation tab when editing a flight group. The three



columns can now be compared to the axis diagram, so that these columns can now become 'usable'.

I find these tools essential and they aid me incredibly with creating complex missions, and formations of capital ships, eg. a vic of Star Destroyers.

Thankyou for considering my submission.

yours,  
Syn

## **fleet order of battle**

### FLEET COMMANDER'S NOTES:

Herein are presented the Capital Ships of the Fleet as recognized by the Fleet Commander. Only those Capital Ships presented below in **boldface** are assigned Emperor's Hammer Members as crew, pilots, etc. (i.e. TIE Corps pilots). Other Capital Ships in the Fleet are assumed to have 'standard Imperial crews' (i.e. non-players).

The SubGroup vessels presented below are also manned with their respective SubGroup Members. Emperor's Hammer Members desiring more specific information on the capabilities of each of the Emperor's Hammer capital ships should review the EH Fleet Manual...

### **Flagship/Escort**

**SSSD Sovereign** (SSSD Sov)

### **Aggressor Strike Force**

**ISD Grey Wolf** (ISD GWlf)

**ISD Intrepid** (ISD Int)

**VSD Aggressor** (VSD Agg)

VSD Gilded Claw

M/FRG Implacable

M/FRG Rage

M/INT Vertex

ESC Corrupter

TFC Virulence

4 Strike Cruisers

12 Carrack Light Cruisers

6 Corvettes

22 Assault Transports

dozens of dedicated transports, tugs & freighters

## **BattleGroup I**

### **ISD Colossus (ISD Col)**

VSD Formidable

VSD Monitor

M/FRG Imperator

M/FRG Ardent

M/FRG Onamo

ESC Iron Fist

3 Strike Cruisers

7 Carrack Light Cruisers

10 Corvettes

20 Assault Transports

dozens of dedicated transports, tugs & freighters

## **BattleGroup II**

### **ISD Relentless (ISD Rel)**

VSD Ravager

VSD Stalwart

M/FRG Invader

M/FRG Fogger

M/INT Harpax II

TFC Roxanna

M/CRV Phantom (Deep Recon)

4 Strike Cruisers

12 Carrack Light Cruisers

6 Corvettes

18 Assault Transports

dozens of dedicated transports, tugs & freighters

## **Auroran Home Guard Battlegroup**

The majority of the Auroran Home Guard ships can be found either in the Aurora System (see the EH Systems Manual) or on extended patrol nearby...The Homeworld of the Emperor's Hammer Strike Fleet is always defended in these uncertain times...

Torpedo Sphere, Empress Teta (TS Emp Teta)

**ISD Challenge (ISD Chal)**

ISD Hammer (ISD Hamr)

ISD Warrior (ISD Warr)

VSD Bombard

VSD Rapier

VSD Crusader

VSD Shield

M/INT Fairchild  
3 Modified Frigates (hospital/tender M/FRGs)  
5 Strike Cruisers  
5 Escort Carriers (TIE Fighter shuttles)  
5 Modular Taskforce Cruisers (one w/each module type)  
8 Dreadnaught Cruisers  
13 Carrack Light Cruisers  
17 Corvettes  
25 System Patrol Craft  
60 Skipray Blastboats  
120 Assault Transports  
hundreds of dedicated transports, tugs & freighters

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### **Auxiliary (SubGroup) Vessels**

#### **Dark Brotherhood**

SSD Avenger (SSD Avr)  
ISD Subjugator (ISD Sub)

#### **Hammer's Fist Stormtrooper Legion**

DREAD Retribution (DREAD Ret)  
LCF Excelsior (LCF Exc)  
LCF Friggia (LCF Frig)  
LCF Falcon's Eye (LCF Falc)

#### **The Guild**

Star Galleon IvanHoe (SGAL Ivan)

#### **EH Directorate BattleFleet**

M/ISD Tiger's Claw  
INT\*2  
VSD\*4  
DREAD\*2  
ESC\*2  
M/VSD-II Firebat

#### **Aurora System**

AHG already commissioned

### **Phare system**

VSD Rampart  
FRG Raging Bull  
FRG Hornet's Nest  
4 Carrack Cruisers

### **Lyarna System**

VSD Concorde  
FRG Veneerable  
FRG Assault  
4 Carrack Cruisers

### **Carrida System**

VSD Hood  
FRG Pompous  
FRG Arrogant  
4 Carrack Cruisers

### **Heir System**

VSD Conquest  
FRG Conquistador  
FRG Cortes  
4 Carrack Cruisers

### **Karana System**

VSD Ronin  
FRG Balboa  
FRG Snake  
4 Carrack Cruisers

### **Setii System**

VSD Raptor  
FRG Rex  
FRG Galimimus  
4 Carrack Cruisers

### **Pirath System**

VSD Patriot  
FRG Rebellion-Crusher

FRG PoliceMan  
4 Carrack Cruisers

### **Minos Cluster Battle Fleet**

ISD Crimson Blade  
ISD Crimson Dagger  
VSD Crimson Sword  
VSD Crimson Knife  
VSD Crimson Knight  
VSD Crimson Guard  
16 Carrack Cruisers

### **Infiltrator Wing**

#### **Task Force I**

**MC90 Bismarck**  
Assault FRG Alemene  
FRG Exeter  
Gunship Centurion  
Gunship Scorpion  
Gunship Bellum  
Corvette Vanquish

#### **Task Force II**

**MC80b Saratoga**  
FRG Repulse  
FRG Vindictive  
Corvette Meteor  
Corvette Daring

#### **Task Force III**

**MC60 Warhammer**  
Assault FRG Leander  
Gunship Conquestor  
Gunship Scimitar  
Corvette Harlow

#### **Task Force IV (Stationary Defense)**

**M/PLT Destrier**  
Corvette Scythe

Corvette Akron  
Corvette Kraken

### **Intelligence Division**

**Imperial Dungeon Ship Lichtor V** (DGN LichV)  
**FRG Stormwind** (FRG Storm)  
**Corvette Grau** (Heimlichkeit Strike Team)  
**Corvette Guren** (Nazgul Strike Team)  
**Corvette Rune** (Jaeger Strike Team)  
**Corvette Ietra** (Moerder Strike Team)

### **Corporate Division Picket Fleet Flagships**

**VSD Rhadamanthus** (Corporate Division Flagship)

### **EH Advanced Guard**

**Core Galaxy Systems Dreadnaught Tranquility**

### **Bases of Operations**

#### **Aurora System**

The FAC Triad (Support PLTs for the SSSD Sovereign)  
Dark Hall on Eos (Dark Brotherhood HQ/Homeworld)  
PLT Stiletto (Headquarters of the Intelligence Division)  
PLT Dagger (Project Reno Central Command)  
PLT Destrier (IW Command Platform)

#### **Phare System**

M/PLT Daedalus (Assault Platform/Pilot Training Center)  
M/PLT Haven (IW Command Platform/EH Recreation Center)  
PLT Revenge (Headquarters of the Corporate Division)

#### **Lyarna System**

Lyarna Station - M/PLT (Guild Station/Outpost)

#### **Heir System**

PLT Cerlun - M/PLT - FAC (Guild HQ)

#### **Carrida System**

PLT Declaration (Hammer's Fist HQ)

## **pilot manuals**

This document contains the current list of EH related files.

### **The Emperor's Hammer Training Manual**

version 4.0

By GA Ronin, HA Paladin and SA Havok (ret.)

This is the most important manual for all the EH members. It contains all general information about the Emperor's Hammer ranks, positions, medals, ID lines, everything. It's a must for every EH member!

Sites:

<http://to.dotau.net/manual/index.htm>

### **The Emperor's Hammer Fleet Manual**

version 3.0

By GA Ronin and SA Havok (ret.)

Contains detailed descriptions of all the Emperor's Hammer's starships and starfighters. Also a good manual to read. Especially valuable information to the fiction writers.

Sites:

<http://www.pangea.ca/~zoraan/flt-man/>

### **IWATS Help file**

Sites:

<ftp://narsissi.tky.hut.fi/hammer/other/iwats.hlp>

### **Uniform Template Help file**

Sites:

<ftp://narsissi.tky.hut.fi/hammer/other/uniform.hlp>

### **The Map of the Empire and Emperor's Hammer Territories**

Sites:

<ftp://narsissi.tky.hut.fi/hammer/other/eh-camp1.zip>

## **Emperor's Hammer AVI Logo**

Sites:

<ftp://narsissi.tky.hut.fi/hammer/other/emplogo.zip>

## **Emperor Palpatine & Lords of the Sith WAV files**

Sites:

<ftp://narsissi.tky.hut.fi/hammer/other/imp-sds.zip>

## **The Emperor's Hammer Operations Manual**

version 2.0

By FA Dev

Another essential manual for everyone interested in uniforms (practically almost everyone). It also contains information about medals.

Sites:

<http://www.inil.com/users/hireme/ops/manual/manual.htm>

## **The Emperor's Hammer Systems Manual**

version 3.0

By GA Ronin and SA Havok (ret.)

The Systems Manual has very detailed information about all the Emperor's Hammer star systems. Very essential to the fiction writers.

Sites:

<http://members.xoom.com/Directorate/sysman.htm>

## **TIE Fighter CD Bonus Goal Help file**

By SA Compton

Sites:

<ftp://narsissi.tky.hut.fi/hammer/other/tiecd.hlp>

## **The Fleet Commander's Dark Brotherhood Grant of Arms**

Sites:

<ftp://narsissi.tky.hut.fi/hammer/other/ga-grant.zip>



## Poster Art

Sites:

<ftp://narsissi.tky.hut.fi/hammer/other/eh-postr.zip>

## Tie Fighter Missing Man Formation AVI

Sites:

<ftp://narsissi.tky.hut.fi/hammer/other/missing.zip>

## The Emperor's Hammer Tactics Manual

Sites:

<http://members.aol.com/dragon128/tacmanual.html>

## The Emperor's Hammer Recruiting Manual

by FA Darth Vader

Sites:

<http://members.aol.com/Clanofgunn/Rec-Man/main.htm>

If you have any questions please contact the Logistics Officer.

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