

The Subjugation
By
Torrance Darkcrest

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Chapter I
1130 Hours

Admiral TK-2107 shuffled softly down the corridor of the Super Star Destroyer Avenger; en route to a meeting with his ranking officers. He wasn't particularly interested in debating the itinerary for installation of the advanced hyperdrive technology they had just received, and he expected his comrades had similar dispositions...at least the look on their faces said as much when the Admiral stepped into the board room.

"Okay people; let's get this over with," TK-2107 quietly shouted. "We're supposed to rendezvous with the Subjugator at Gerran in 1400 hours, and I don't want to keep Teekay-seven-seven-six-four waiting."

Gerran, as every officer in the room knew well, was a moon orbiting the planet of Carrida II—the home system of the Emperor's Hammer strike fleet. There had been recent reports of a New Republic plot to launch a small assault on an Emperor's Hammer training platform located near the moon, and the ATF Commander had sent his Imperial-class Star Destroyer to investigate...an extremely confident move, considering the nature of the New Republic warnings. However, the Admiral knew well the capabilities of the Subjugator, and did not second-guess his decision.

Lieutenant Commander Andrijas had just stood to address the room, when a small distinguished noise began to emanate from the Admirals left uniform pocket. Within seconds, the sound was overcome by similar noises filling the room as every personal comlink was activated and began receiving an identical message.

Vice Admiral Ky Terrak was the first to get his bearings and re-iterate to each boardroom occupant what they had just heard. "Sir, it's the Subjugator! They've been ambushed!" His words trailed after TK-2107, whose dark figure continued down the corridor leading to the bridge. It was unclear to anyone if he had heard what the Vice Admiral had said.

Within minutes TK-2107's voice burst in on every comlink channel on the ship. "Attention, this is Admiral Teekay-twenty-one-oh-seven. The Imperial Star Destroyer Subjugator has been ambushed by a massive New Republic onslaught in the Carrida Two system. Quickly make way to your stations and prepare for an immediate hyperspace jump to their coordinates. All squadrons get to your fighters. Repeat, the Subjugator is under attack, prepare for an immediate assistance mission."

1100 Hours

"Nothing to report Subjugator," Sub Lieutenant Torrance Darkcrest's voice broke the silence with a concise status report. "I see nothing suspicious on the platform."

"Copy Kraken two; maintain current procedures and wait for further instructions."

The Subjugator loomed like a white crescent masked against an endless void. Torrance had not seen this particular Imperial-class Star Destroyer in solitude before. And here, without the Avenger flying directly beside it, the ship broke free of its almost dwarfish appearance and took on a look of extreme size and grandeur. Memories returned of the first time he had seen it, when he had been fresh off Daedalus and assigned to Wing XX. "It really is incredible looking", Torrance

whispered to himself as a voice simultaneously broke over his communications system."

"Attention all fighters, this is the Subjugator. Return immediately. We're finished here and are preparing to return to the Avenger."

The Subjugator had been sent to investigate a number of rumors concerning a New Republic attack on an outpost near Gerran. At one point there had been important Imperial cargo on board Platform Orianna (O-19L); however, it was transported shortly before the Subjugator arrived, and after patrolling for approximately 24 hours it became clear that no New Republic attack would occur. Rear Admiral TK-7764, however, was not one to sit idle, and acting on his own accord, he decided to make a run in system, to Carrida II itself.

Just as the Subjugator was arriving, their sensors picked up two small starfighters as they hypered out of the area. All the data indicated that they were Z-95 class fighters, a common fighter used by most organizations in the galaxy.

At first suspicious; the fact that these fighters appeared to be leaving, combined with information from the space control center on Carrida II, caused the officers aboard the Subjugator to be unanimous in their decision that there would be no New Republic attack; either here or at the Gerran moon.

Kraken Squadron was just starting to enter the hanger when Commander Conjre noticed a single starfighter entering the area at exactly 18 klicks. "Subjugator, this is Kraken one, I'm picking up a fighter entering the area...your orders?"

"Kraken one, you and Kraken two are to investigate the new craft; but be quick about it. We are running late for our rendezvous with the Avenger! Admiral Teekay-twenty-one-oh-seven will be displeased if we are not back at the moon when he arrives."

"Copy that Subjugator. Torrance, let's check out that fighter."

The two TIE Defenders choked their engines, banked hard to the left and re-engaged almost effortlessly, as if they were living creatures. The black shapes shot through space towards the mysterious fighter as it closed to their position. Both the Commander and the Sub-Lieutenant's eyes strained forward to catch a glimpse of the fighter. They were so static in their gaze that they half didn't notice when their forward sensor lit up red with new data.

"Subjugator; new craft entering the area! Three Calamari Cruisers and various support craft...looks like Rebels to me! They're heading for Carrida Two.... THEY'RE GOING TO ATTACK THE PLANET!"

Chapter II

1120 Hours

"Attention Kraken one, we are sending all fighters to assist and moving to intercept the cruisers! Engage the New Republic forces immediately! Do what you can!"

Torrance boomed over the comm. unit, "They want us to go after the cruisers! Are they insane! Those turrets will rip us apart!"

"I know you're still green kid, but we have to engage. Go after the fighters and try to take out some of the cruisers laser batteries if you can. I'm going in; good luck kid." Conjre's voice cut out as quickly as it had burst in.

The twin fighters broke formation and targeted 2 of the 12 X-wings that were heading straight for them like kamikazes. Both TIE Phantoms dodged, weaved and fired to avoid having their craft missile locked. They burrowed through the X-wing laser screen and past the fighters. Pulling back on their sticks, the remaining Kraken Defenders whipped around and came up behind their opponents. As soon as Torrance's HUD lit up green he tightened his grip equally across his control stick and fired off four shots from his lasers. They all missed.

"Easy kid...loosen up a b..." Conjre cut mid-sentence as he strategically banked to evade a missile heading straight for him. The missile missed by less than 0.02 clicks and slammed into the X-wing he was trailing.

"Nice shot Commander." Torrance jested in his classic mock-serious tone.

"Thanks! Now start hitting something!" He paused, "Subjugator, where is our support?"

"Kraken will be with you soon. Nemesis is scrambling. We've alerted the Avenger; the Admiral will be here as soon as he can. ...I hope...."

Torrance pulled up behind another X-wing and opened fire. This time, he remained loose on the stick and hit it dead on. The once accelerating mass of metal appeared to halt mid-air as it burst into flames with Torrance's TIE Defender emerging unscathed on the other side. "I got him!" He looked up. "...here comes the rest of Kraken...."

Commander Zeke Freeman broke loudly over the comm. unit "Sorry about the wait Kraken one. Let's make some space-dust." It was clear that Zeke wasn't exaggerating. He let off 6 bursts of laser fire and scratched one X-wing almost effortlessly. "We have to start taking out some of those batteries on the cruisers. They're almost in range of the planet!"

"Agreed," Conjre said. "...Kraken squadron, concentrate fire on laser batteries aboard the Cruiser Justice!" He pulled a 180 degree maneuver and started after the cruiser.

The Commander was a skilled pilot. He closed to under 1.5 kilometers fast and took out one of the guns without getting scratched. He knew exactly where to fire without even hesitating to examine the make-up of the ship. It was obvious to Torrance that he had performed surgery on a Calamari Cruiser before. It was also clear that they desperately needed some more firepower.

"Does Kraken need some help?" The question came from nowhere.

Commander Conjre broke in over the comm. unit, "Great to see you Nemesis! Help us go after the cruiser."

Commander Daar Skeloria shot back. "...Which one?"

"This one..." Conjre started his second run against the Justice to illustrate his request. Again, like before, he effortlessly evaded the cruisers lasers and sliced through another one of its batteries.

The vision was awe-inspiring, which caused a stark juxtaposition with what was now filling Torrance's forward view: both Kraken 3 and Kraken 4 were being pursued rapidly by 4 X-wings. "Where did those X's come from," he asked. "...oh no...two additional flights of fighters entering the area!" Before the words had left his lips, he watched as the fresh craft turned 2 members of his flight into burning metal. "We just lost three and four!"

"Cut the chatter Kraken two and engage the new fighters." Commander Conjre's voice burst in again.

Torrance started for the flight of X-wings. So far this battle had been nothing close to the training missions he had grown accustomed to flying. In the simulators,

he always knew exactly what to expect. It's easy to prepare for a battle when it's in the simulator—you know why you're there. But out here, in the real world, you don't always know when and if an attack will occur, and the uncertainty makes it all that much more difficult.

"Okay, I've removed most of the guns on the Cruiser Justice and taken its shields down to seventy percent," Kraken 1 broke in. "Where is the Avenger, command?" He didn't need to complete his sentence. As soon as he had finished giving the report on his target, he saw the massive ship come in slowly on the port side of the Subjugator. The Imperial starship that had moments ago appeared so grand was once again dwarfed by the magnificent Super Star Destroyer. But the only entities who were displeased with its arrival were the New Republic commanders and pilots; and with good cause...their advantage in this battle had been instantly severed.

Chapter III

Torrance watched in amazement as the Avenger moved closer; launching three squadrons of TIE Defenders and TIE Advanced.

"It's great to see you Colonel Hammer!" Commander Conjre directed towards Hunter 1. "Now help us take out the Justice!"

"Copy that Kraken. We're going in." Hunter Squadron broke formation and descended on the Justice like a flock of rabid mynocks, yellow missiles rapidly shooting from the spheres of their TIE Defenders. Within minutes, they had reduced the Cruiser's shields to 0% and had started on the hull. Hunter, unlike Kraken and Nemesis, was a full squadron of 12 fighters; and their arrival, along with Fury Squadron and half of Butcher squadron, handed the space superiority to the TIEs in one swift stroke.

As he was just receiving the report on the Justice's shields, Torrance was firing on another X-wing fighter, attempting to re-enter the hanger of the Cruiser Independence. He took out the fighter, but was clipped repeatedly by the Independence's formidable weapons system.

"Pull out two!" Commander Conjre's voice came in as soon as he noticed what was happening.

The TIE Defender began to actively dodge the Cruiser's lasers while soaring past the girth of the Independence. As soon as he was able, he let off two rounds of fire at one of the turrets and took it out.

"Nice, kid, but you should be more careful."

"Hey, I got it didn't I?" Torrance shot back.

As soon as he had completed his run, Torrance saw first hand the fruits of Hunter Squadron's assistance: the Cruiser Justice erupted into a large fireball of heat and metal. It lit up the entire area and seemed to stun the X-wing pilots who, for an instant, seemed to lose about half of their skill.

"Attention all craft, this is Admiral Teekay-twenty-one-oh-seven. You are doing a commendable job out there. Keep up the good work."

As Torrance was taking out another of the Independence's guns, he noticed as Commander Conjre surgically removed its warhead launcher. "That will open it up a little..." Torrance said under his breath. "Commander...should I fal..." He cut mid-sentence when he realized what was happening. The remaining craft were retreating back to their hyperspace point. He heard Commander Conjre's voice coming loud and confident over the comm. unit.

"Avenger, is there any chance of getting an Interdictor over here to stop them from escaping? I think we could take them all out!"

Torrance was excited by the thought of it...a New Republic ambush on the relatively unguarded home planet of the Emperor's Hammer turning into a supreme victory against the Rebels

"Negative Kraken one. That isn't possible. Be content that you have saved your ship and your planet," answered Admiral TK-2107. "However, feel free to continue destroying the Rebel scum," he continued; using a word that was still his favorite term to describe New Republic forces...even though they technically were not Rebels anymore.

"Copy that Admiral." Conjre's Defender closed on his target and spit out a web of laser fire that grabbed the X-wing by the engines and ripped it into 3 distinct pieces.

The rest of the Emperor's Hammer squadrons continued to exterminate the New Republic fighter screen into shreds until its fleet finally reached their hyperspace jump.

As the fighters were returning to their respective ships, Admiral TK-2107 broke the silence. "Attention all Emperor's Hammer fighters, this is Admiral Teekay-twenty-one-oh-seven. You pilots did a superb job out there. You've protected the Subjugator and more importantly, the citizens of Carrida Two. The Planetary Assembly has learned of the attack and is transmitting their sincerest commendation for our assistance. Subjugator, I see that my trust in your abilities was not misplaced. Good work."

After making a number of quick requests on his comlink, the Admiral twisted around on his heels and stepped off the command bridge of the Avenger. He walked through the ship, quietly admiring the capabilities of the battle-group under his command. As he had done less than 2 hours ago, TK-2107 entered the board room where his ranking staff sat in waiting. After a brief session of unanimous congratulations, the room became silent.

"Okay people; let's get this over with..."