

## *The Last Take-Off*

\*THUNK\*

Mark Schueler, (who had led Theta with distinction for over 30 months and yet was inexplicably still a Colonel) silenced the blaring alarms with a sideswipe of his muscular and manly arm.

“Report, Emrys”

Michael “Mickk” Emrys (a mere Lieutenant Colonel but in a way that really kind of made sense due to his relatively junior standing in Theta) replied from the rear lounge of *The Bus* “I was in the middle of a really good holovid when it was interrupted by system diagnostic warnings! Weapons are out, sublight engines down to 50% efficacy. Hyperdrive’s gone too”

“Roger that. Check in with the Squadron and get up here” commanded Not-Yet-A-General Schueler

“We can’t use the drive anyway” noted Pellaeon, in an Fleet Admiralish way.. “Not with that Interdictor out there.”

“You might think so” countered the promotable leader of Theta Squadron. “But I’ve heard stories of a Rebel transport fleeing Jedha City by jumping from within the moon’s atmosphere, a smuggler’s freighter jumping from within a hangar with no coordinates plotted and that same freighter jumping underneath a planetary shield. Clearly, hyperspace has no rules at all!”

Pellaeon was silent, for who could logically make any sense of these three events?

The sinister voice returned.

*“Admiral Pellaeon...”*

“Fleet Admiral.” interjected Mark, who seemed to have strong feelings about rank.

“All the worse.” continued the rasping voice, with perceptible vexation at the interjection from the only man who had twice led the TCCOM’s Escort Squadron *without* the rank of General. “I would expect more law-abiding behaviour from such a distinguished officer...”

Mickk entered the cockpit, announcing as he went that “We lost Five, the ion blasts must have got his life support. Everyone else will have some movement after a full system reboot. I’ve patched all of our comms together”

Mark - who admittedly could write reports more regularly, but they do get a little boring - motioned for him to be silent. “Quiet, we’re about to get some more exposition.”

The transmission continued. “On Canto Bight we take parking infringements *very* seriously, and you must pay for your crimes. We accept New Republic credits only”

Jarek La'an - one of the several Thetan Generals (what harm would one more be?) - broke in over the comms, incredulous.

"You mean I've been pulled out of hyperspace - and a nice nap, might I add - because of an unpaid parking ticket?"

Pellaeon was slightly sheepish. "I mean, obviously I couldn't pay in New Republic credits..."

Mark could do more reports.

"I have an idea" put in Also-A-General Gilad Pellaeon (no relation). "Why don't we just fly away? Those ion mines won't recharge for about another five minutes, and even damaged our sublights should outpace the Interdictor."

"That sounds like an unconvincing premise for intergalactic conflict" meta-referentially replied Pickled Yoda (also a General, despite his implausible name).

And so it was that a bunch of damaged star fighters were able to keep a safe distance from the avaricious Cantonian Blightans until the ISD Hammer arrived in response to the distress call, whereupon they bartered Commodore Miles Prower's Starfleet uniforms and Alpha Squadron to pay for the parking fines.

Theta Squadron continued to escort Pellaeon to Fleet Commander Rapier, agreeing to never again speak of such a silly episode.