

The blue and white lines of hyperspace stretch out in front of me. The cockpit of my A-wing interceptor closes in around me, giving just enough room for someone with such a thin frame. Lights and buttons splay across my dash, nearly as numerous as the lines outside, but these hold a little more sentimental value than those lines. I'd seen hyperspace dozens of times. I had spent my days before I joined the Alliance flying freighters on short ferry runs on the Rim, which begs the question why I could fly snub fighters. But through months of training, I got the hang of it. This A-wing was almost completely alien to me, as I had spent the first months of my career training with X-wings, flying patrols around the *Faith*. But after Tesseract broke her ankle on a mission, I was given the opportunity to fly one of these things. I like it, and it's quite the change from flying slower ships, but damn, it is *fast*. I spent some time in the simulators with it just to get a sense of the controls, but I still don't feel ready. But now I've heard rumors that we're rendezvousing with the fleet at Sullust, and then Endor; So I guess you could say nobody's ready to face a Death Star.

The beeps coming from my ship pull me out of my reverie, and I proceed to exit hyperspace. Along with me is another A-wing, Bracer Seven, and our transport, carrying a high-value Imperial prisoner. The mission report said that she was picked up in the Jenovah System, after she was captured leading a strike team to destroy a rebel outpost planetside. I guess her armor was quite the tell.

We make for the hangar onboard the *Invincible Faith*, my home for the last year, the light of a nebula stretching out like a protective blanket. As the nose of my ship edges through the magnetic field, I deploy my landing gear and push my ship into the hangar, until I finally set her down on the deck with a soft jolt. I pull the switch to my left to open the canopy, and the sounds and smells of hangar hit me like a left hook. Engine grease and paint mingled with sparks, astromech beeps and chatter.

I smile. This is what the Alliance is about. Freedom, the messiness of real life. *People*: In stark contrast to the machine that is the Empire, where everyone's just another replaceable cog. Here we all have a *voice*. *A family*. *A choice*.

I make my way out of the hangar to the briefing room, with a big stupid grin on my face, telling myself *this is why we fly*.