

First of Many

FM/COL Marenta Jean/Sin 2-2/Wing II/ISDII Warrior/Battlegroup II

COL Marenta slowly walked around the debris that was once a First Order TIE, the parts being meticulously dismantled and categorized for further examination. She reached out to touch some coupling-looking pieces before her hand was batted away by an angry Nix. She jumped back as the droid extended his arms toward her and gesticulated wildly, making very aggressive and loud whistling beeps.

Nix chirped and chittered, rolling toward her menacingly, saying something like, “keep your filthy, fleshy hands away,” or something like that.

Mix walked up beside her, wiping off a part that she suspected was from the destroyed TIE, using the part as a pointer. “He’s a touch angry about people inspecting his work. Has it all cataloged, and you pilots keep on messing it up.”

“Silly little droid.” She commented after Nix chirruped one last time to go back to the stacks of parts. “How long till you guys have this thing taken apart and analyzed?”

“Right now, it looks like maybe th– YEOW!” Mix jumped aside as Nix rolled by, slapping at his leg where some fresh scorch holes appeared in his coveralls. Nix beeped angrily on his way back to the pile after retrieving the spanner from the cart nearby.

“Always so angry, that one.” Mix scowled in Nix’s direction, his voice in a low, dark tone. He turned back to Marenta and gestured carelessly, “as I was saying, about three days. As long as the hunk of bolts keeps on his best behavior.”

Marenta smiled as Nix turned and spouted a stream of viscous liquid toward Mix. “That sounds like a tall order, but I have faith you guys can get it figured out before the other Battlegroups sort through their captured vessels,” she said with a smile.

“Aye, we will do our best, gotta have the headstart to all the fun!” Mix responded with a matching smile.

Nix beeped quickly, with the volume increasing to an excited pitch. Mix rolled his eyes and turned toward the droid, “FINE! I’ll get back to work, you undersized trash compactor!” He signed and left Marenta watching on.

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“Sin Squadron, report to briefing room Cresh Four. Sin Squadron, report to briefing room Cresh Four.” The words barely had time to filter into her brain before she was shaken by a pair of hands.

Marenta mumbled, “Five murh ticksss..” and rolled over. Another set of hands landed on her body and started vigorously shaking her, causing her teeth to chomp down on her tongue. “Ow! Gods, Immawake, whudduwarnnn...?” She queried, ending in a yawn.

“Colonel, get your ass out of bed, now. We have an emergency briefing, we have to go!” Jayden spoke into her face, patting her cheek none too lightly.

“We just came off patrol. Fine, getting up! No promises to fly like I care!” she chirped at her XO’s back as he was leaving the bunk room. Rubbing her hands up and down her face she glared at SkyShadow since he was smirking at her, finishing putting on his boots. “You were the other pair of hands, weren’t you?” SkyShadow’s smirk turned into a devilish grin, as he put his hands in the air before grabbing his helmet and leaving the bunk room.

"I hate today," she sighed as she climbed out of bed and dressed for the impromptu briefing.

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By the time she made it to the briefing room, CAM-9 was just making his way through the door, dressed as his "normal" self, or about as "normal" as CAM could be.

"You're late, Colonel." CAM delivered in a deadpan voice, but with amusement sparking in his eyes.

"Nah, there's still open seats!" She breezed by him to sit next to Commander Newt and smiled satisfactorily at CAM as Vice Admiral Wietu, Fr0Zen to his wingmates, entered the room. CAM sighed and rolled his eyes before touching the holopad and projecting design documentation up on the holoprojector above the table.

"Focus Sin, we need you all to get this information down so we can gather the intel we need on the First Order." Fr0Zen turned toward the projection and pointed to a cluster of asteroids. "We have pieced together the flight data from all the ships we've recovered thus far. It appears that there is a minor installation in this area," his finger poked into one of the floating blobs. "We need Sin to go in, scout the area, isolate assets, and bring them back to the main fleet. Without. Raising. Suspicion." He emphasized his words using that same finger to jab into the surface of the table.

"Sir, what other intel do you have about this installation?" Colonel Honsou inquired, leaning back in his chair. Marenta smiled inwardly at his constant shifting, since Honsou was almost too big to sit comfortably for briefings in these standard chairs.

"What we have been able to ascertain, so far, is that this installation is a minor stop for their vessels. It appears to be a supply depot, or maybe an outpost used for pit stops." The Admiral tucked his hands behind his back, and stood erect before carrying on, "not all the vessels we have recovered and are analyzing stop at this location. We are, of course, hoping that we can gain some intel with your recon but also that you will recover whatever assets you happen to come across."

He motioned toward CAM-9, "Cam has your assignments from General Frown, as requested from the Fleet Commander. However, I would like to have you bring back something that will give us more about the First Order, and what their plans are for this region." He nodded at everyone, then at CAM, "Cam, work with the squadron to iron out the finer points." He paused briefly, looking around the room once more, "Good hunting, pilots."

Marenta watched the Admiral stride out the door, obviously off to put out another fire or rush to another issue.

"Pilots, I don't like the orders that were relayed from the Fleet Commander, I'm sure you all have something more imaginative worked out?"

"Let's smuggle ourselves in." Major Jaxx "Hijacker" Nassin chimed in.

"Explain." Honsou barked out.

"Well, let's put four of our pilots in the cargo areas, we've got sealed and pressurized suits, so it won't be too uncomfortable." Jaxx replied.

Colonel SkyShadow scoffed loudly, "TOO uncomfortable."

"Yeah, we can do this. This will work." Captain Jayden said, leaning forward.

"Let's have flight three ride in flight one." Marenta offered up.

"Wait, wait, wait. Let's come up with our plan before we stow any of our squadmates in an uncomfortable situation"

"We smuggle some pilots into the area, give them hugs and kisses, let them steal whatever they want, provide cover, and then zip away. Mission done." Hijacker said animatedly while clapping and rubbing his hands like a fiend.

"Cam, what resources do we have available for this?" Honsou asked, looking like a weary parent resigned with watching excited kids.

"You will have STRCK Mithras at your disposal for this mission." CAM replied smoothly, tapping at the holopad.

"So, we use the Strike Cruiser as a diversion?" Marenta asked, shrugging her shoulders.

"Not a good use for the Mithras, we could park it some distance away and have it prepared to jump to hyperspace, treat it as a small base to take the equipment back to?" SkyShadow offered.

Jayden squinted at the layout of the area in the projection, following some imaginary lines in his head. "They would have a few blind spots here," he pointed to an area above and toward the Emperor's Hammer fleet, "and here," he moved his finger to a smudgy area to the rear of the installation.

"So, use flight one as the distraction in the dust clouds to scramble ships while flight three rides with flight two to drop them off to infiltrate some assets." Earnim grumbled out. "It'll be like I'm smuggling again!" Hijacker exclaimed, obviously excited to drop into unknown circumstances.

"Alright then, here's the plan," Honsou stood up and used his finger to indicate an area behind a large asteroid, "we will leave flight three's TIEs here on the Warrior, moving flight one and two to the Mithras, which will hyper in to this location." He moved his finger to the cloudy portion of the projection, "Flight one will come around and plink away at the sensors they have, causing them to scramble." He moved his finger to the area above the installation, "Flight two will come in slow and quiet to drop Flight three on the surface of the asteroid." Honsou looked toward the Flight three pilots. "You'll have to be quick, and be smart, get in and get out with whatever vessels and information you can."

"Got it, boss." Gian nodded.

Honsou pointed at Jayden, "You, and your flight will go the opposite direction of the Mithras and you will take shots at their sensors, ions only. We don't want to destroy them."

"Yup, we'll give 'em something to chase." Jayden smiled like he was getting the best gift in the world.

Marenta also found herself smiling and excited for the mission, new toys meant new upgrades.

"Once Flight three gets what they can from the installation, they'll rendezvous with the Mithras in whatever they can. Make. Sure. You. Disable. Tracking." Honsou knocked on the table with his knuckles to emphasize his words. "We don't need these wieners chasing us back to the fleet."

After a pause, Cam tapped his holopad again and smiled. "Sounds good, I'll let the General know that you're prepared for your mission. Good flying, Sin!"

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Honsou checked his radar, verifying that the rest of Flight one were with him as they slowly navigated the asteroid field to launch their sneak attack and draw the base's attention away from the rest of the squadron. He hoped that the murky area provided enough cover for them to dip into and out of while they were engaging with the First Order.

Flight two should be nearing the asteroid in its other blind spot to drop off Flight three, he was just waiting for the signal from Jayden so he could start his own flight's mission. *Click-click-click. Click. Click.* Three short, two long breaks in the coms alerted him that Flight two was approaching the drop point, and it was their time to start the party.

"Sin One Three, on me; Sin One Two and One Four, split to the installation and take a few shots at their sensors. Let's see if we can draw these people out."

"Roger."

"On it."

"Right behind you, sir."

Honsou pulled back on the yoke, pulling to his right to dip into the weird clouds surrounding the asteroids in this part of the field. He noted that one of his flight followed him into the strange substance while the other two pulled the other direction, toward the station. He saw the blue laser fire hit a few objects before his viewport was obscured by the strange orange dust. He heard small tings and pings off his craft as he slowly maneuvered toward the other side of the mass.

"Sin One Three, do you have visual?" Honsou chuffed into the com.

"Neg-," static, "ir. Repe-," more static.

"Shit." Honsou cursed to himself, then keyed up coms again. "Follow." He pulled back on the controls to slow his speed down so that his squadmate could see his craft. After about 400 meters or so, he ducked back toward the station, exiting the orange grainy cloud. His viewport cleared of the gritty material and his sensors gave him a view of the rest of Flight one drawing the scrambled fighters toward the cloud he just exited.

His sensors pinged as Sin 1-3 left the obstruction field. "Flight one, only use the debris cloud for duck and cover runs, it prevents visuals and scatters coms and sensors."

*Click. Click.* He heard the acknowledgements over the coms, since they were busy engaging with the oncoming sortie of ships.

"Got it, One One!"

"Then let's harass these First Order punks, show them how the real Empire flies," he said a little maniacally. Honsou dived toward the sea of red dots on the radar, noting that there were about 20 dots scattered after the other two Sin pilots. "Man, they scrambled fast. Let's hope Flight two drops soon and can engage"

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Marenta's eyes bounced back and forth between her viewport and her radar. There was a small sliver of space that they could fly in that was not covered by any sensor arrays that they hoped they could slip into and out of to drop Flight three. It left them about 1500 meters away from the base, but that was nothing that they couldn't handle. The surface of the asteroid was very rocky and uneven, she just hoped it was traversable.

"Landing zone coming up, Flight two." Jayden spoke into her ear.

Marenta pulled back on the throttle to slow down to a crawl, following Jayden into the area where they were going to hover and drop their squadmates off.

"Are we almost there?" Hijacker whined from the cramped storage area.

Marenta chuckled as she pulled next to Jayden, watching her other flight mates do the same maneuver to begin hovering a meter or so off the surface. "Out you go," she pushed the button to open up the storage area, hearing him grunt as he thumped onto the ground. She closed the storage area by pressing the button again as the other Flight three pilots made their way to the front of the hovering Sinisters. Lieutenant Bob raised his arms and gave a thumbs up, indicating that everyone was safe and sound and ready to depart on the fun portion of this mission.

"Copy that, they're clear." Jayden's voice came through the coms again.

"Yup, let's go cause some mischief, we can't let Flight one have all the fun!" Marenta replied.

SkyShadow said in a bored voice, "Yeah, fun, so exciting."

"It is fun! I get to pew pew and zoom zoom!" She chirped back.

"Quiet! They're good, let's go cause a distraction so they can do their jobs." Jayden barked out.

"On you, sir!" Obiwan said, in his sedate manner.

Marenta gave the four pilots dusting off their backsides a salute and pulled back on the yoke to elevate higher and follow Jayden back out the same path. She watched her displays as they registered where sensor arrays were, ensuring that she matched speed until they could get to the other blind spot further away.

Once the distance turned over to 10,000 meters from the station, Jayden broke through the coms again. "Coming up on target, put a few shots on it, Sin Two Four."

"Aye, Captain." Colonel SkyShadow replied smoothly.

Marenta watched the blue bolts shoot toward the slowly blinking dot. Sparks shot out in all directions as the blue streaks reached the blinking dot.

"Good shot, Sky." Jayden said. "Let's hope we get some customers soon. Obiwan, Sky peel off closer to Flight one. Marenta, on my tail."

Marenta tilted her sticks to fall in behind Jayden and watched as Obiwan and Sky curved toward the mysterious cloud that four Sinisters were being harried by a large swarm of mysterious TIEs. About half of them broke off the chase and started toward their direction, ducking into the asteroid field.

Marenta smiled, saying, "Time for some fun!"

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Major Jaxx "Hijacker" Nassin rubbed his backside vigorously after landing in a heap on the surface. The low gravity should have cushioned his fall, but it seems as if the material he landed on were personally trying to assault his posterior. He glanced at Lieutenant Dave who pulled out his holopad and pointed in the direction of the installation.

"About 1500 meters in that direction. Light enough gravity we should be able to run and jump, but hopefully the surface remains passable." Dave said, shutting off his holopad to store it in the jumpsuit pockets on his thigh.

"Ugh, so much running. I don't remember doing this much moving as a smuggler." Hijacker said, giving his bottom again another rub.

"Oh, shut it, it's not that far." Captain Gian replied.

Hijacker fell into the line of flightmates making their way toward the unknown station. After about 10 minutes, they approached a leveled area with no cover and an unobstructed view of the installation.

The area was flat, with a large landing pad with about 50 craft sitting in variable states of readiness. Pilots and mechanic crews ran around trying to scramble and ready ships to engage with their squadmates. The large landing pad led to a radio tower but was connected to a dull metal base with large hangar doors, showing even more ships in different states of disrepair. There were groups of stormtrooper equivalents marching around, preparing weapons for a ground assault that was never going to happen.

Hijacker started to worry about the size of the base, and the fact that their Imperial flight suits and gear were so different from the First Order.

"We're going to have to wait for everyone to deploy before we can capture whatever is left over. Or, find a way to get whatever they're wearing so we can walk around and take whatever they have." Hijacker said.

"Good point. Thoughts from anyone else?" Dave chimed in.

Gian pointed to some grates off to their left, "What about trying to get in that way?"

"That's out in the open, how are we going to get there?" Bob said in his guttural voice.

"If we crawl along that little ridge, it'll mostly hide us as long as people aren't looking down." Hijacker indicated by extending his arm out to show the slight dip in the ground that he thought they could use to get to the grates.

"It'll be interesting, but we can try." Dave said.

Hijacker plopped on his belly behind the boulder they were using as cover and slid himself into the slight depression, making sure to drag his body along. "Careful with your chestbox, we don't want to cause ourselves death." He grunted with the effort of keeping his body low enough but not crushing his life support. After a gruelling 20something meters of dragging across sharp rock with fingertips and toes, he reached the grate. "One second guys, let me look and see what I can do to get this open."

Hijacker felt around the grate lip and found a sliding metal bar without a lock. He yanked on the bar and felt the tension keeping the grate down release, slipping his fingers under the heavy plate. Lifting it just enough to slip his head and helmet under, he looked around and saw underground ductwork, but enough room to crawl through, much like a maintenance shaft.

"We're clear, make sure you stay low but protect your packs." He slid under the grate and moved down the shaft toward the station, eyeing the lines and ducts to see what kind of access they had. Eventually, Gian, Dave, and Bob were in the maintenance tunnel with Hijacker, and they made their way closer to the station.

The tube ended abruptly with a porthole and a panel. "Don't worry, I always bring additional support for this." He dug around in his pockets and brought out a skimmer card and hooked it into the ports on the side of the panel. The lights turned green and the porthole opened up into a machine room with mechanical systems for life support, water, and fuel.

A technician jumped back from a console next to the porthole and gawped at him. He jumped out and hit the technician in the temple to knock her out. "Hurry, we need to put her in the maintenance tube and shut it up before anybody else comes in." The rest of his flightmates scrambled out and grabbed her. "Wait, let's take her uniform so one of us can go out and gather

the rest of us some uniforms. Here," he walked over to the lockers and searched through them, finding a tool bag, "let's use this to gather what we need."

Everyone turned to Bob, as he was the smallest and would most easily fit into the technician uniform.

"Wait, me? Why me?" Bob exclaimed.

"Because you're the smallest, of course." Dave said.

"Fine! Fine! Help me get her suit off." Bob sighed.

Hijacker went back to the lockers and continued looking and found a spare suit. "Wait, here's a spare one, Bob. You can put this one on." They stuffed the technician into the tube, and sent Bob out into the station. Hijacker and Gian searched through the gear and lockers while Dave looked at the consoles.

Dave gasped. "Jaxx, gimme your port skimmer, now. This console has all the data access to the entire station, I just need to jack the permissions."

He pulled his port skimmer from his thigh pocket and handed it over along with a blank disk. Dave grabbed them both and plugged them into the console, letting the skimmer brute force entry. "You gotta know that it will alert them that we are here, so let's hope that Bob gets back before they send troopers to investigate."

Bob burst back into the room, carrying the overful toolbag. "Got another technician, trooper and a flight suit," Bob huffed air in and out like a bellows, as if he had just run 1000 meters.

Hijacker took the flight suit and started stripping down, dodging elbows and knees as Dave and Gian also started changing. They stuffed their flight suits and chestboxes and helmets into the now bursting toolbag.

Just then, the console beeped an angry warning, and Bob said, "Time to go!"

Gian yanked the skimmer and disk out of the console and threw them to Hijacker, since he had the pockets to store them. Dave opened the door into the hallway, looking both ways and stepping out, gesturing with his fingers to wait as a group of technicians passed on the other side of the passage.

"Okay, clear," Dave said.

They filed out of the room, leaving spacing between each but letting Bob take the lead, since he had gone out scouting for new uniforms and had a slight idea about where the hangar was. After a few minutes, the lights turned red and the klaxon started blaring.

"Let's hustle," Dave called out.

Hijacker picked up the pace behind Bob, hoping they were making their way to an exit soon. The team had already spent too much time on the surface and they didn't know how many ships were scrambled against the rest of Sin Squadron. His anxiety was starting to pick up and his regret was starting to overtake his excitement for the mission.

The group reached a T-junction and Bob led them to the right and a large opening where they could see some of the maintenance hangar.

"YOU THERE!" Four stormtroopers ran toward them from the way they had just come, shouting and brandishing their blasters.

"Run time!" Hijacker muttered.

Bob lumbered ahead of them with the overfull toolbag, but Hijacker wiggled his head into the tight helmet as his flightmates urged Bob on toward the opening. Gian grabbed the back of the bag and tossed Dave his helmet.

Running while trying to put on gear was Hijacker's least favorite part of the job, but he still managed to run by a workbench and snag a holopad to take along. He glanced behind him and saw Dave fit his helmet over his head, leaving Bob as the remaining person without a helmet.

A red blaster bolt shot the stantion above their heads, causing them all to duck involuntarily.

"I got the bag, get your helmet on," Gian yelled, wresting control of the bag from Bob and exchanging it for his helmet.

Hijacker looked around and saw a dozen or so ships left on the platform; a red TIE Interceptor looking one, a flat and squat TIEish ship, and a black and red standard TIE fighter. "Those, let's get those! One of them has to have two seats!" They all ran full speed across the lightly-atmosphered surface of the flight deck toward the waiting craft. Gian having put the bag across his back to make it easier to run with.

Hijacker ran toward the flat, wide ship and climbed the stanchion to hop into the cockpit. He was blown away by the controls, they were so much more detailed than some of the fighters the Emperor's Hammer flew, but a TIE is a TIE is a TIE. He started to throw the switches to start it up, seeing Dave and Bob climb into the fighter one and Gian take the interceptor looking one. He didn't know if there were fuel lines hooked up to any of the craft, but he'd have to take that chance, as would they all.

Hijacker pulled back on the stick and shot forward faster than he had intended, but he leveled out the craft and hoped that the rest of his squadmates were behind him. This ship, whatever it was, handled similarly to a Sinister, but was a bit more bulky, so he got into the same groove that Flight two took to drop them off. He pulled around toward the Mithras, leaving the flashes of green, the orange clump, and the rest of his squadron. He landed in the hangar bay and saw the other two commandeered craft land in the empty space.

Unbelting from the seat, he opened up the hatch and yelled toward Mix and Nix, "ENGAGE THE IONIC DAMPENER!" Hopefully it would disguise all tracking devices and thermal signatures, same as it did for older Imperial tech. A blue glow encapsulated the hangar bay before the door slammed shut and a feeling of jumping to hyperspace overtook him, making him a little dizzy. Mix, on the coms, had obviously relayed that they had landed safely. He just hoped the rest of the squadron got out.

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Sweat rolled down Honsou's face as he made his five thousandth maneuver into and out of the dust to escape a barrage of laser fire. "These pilots aren't half bad, it's a shame that we can't steal some of the people to take back with us." He jerked his toke to the right to roll and dive around an asteroid and come up behind the craft that was shooting at Lieutenant Kevin. "Kevin, roll toward me!" He watched the Sinister pull toward him and let off a volley into the craft coming dangerously close to hitting the EH craft.

"Thanks boss!" Kevin gusted out over the coms.

*Click-click-click. Click. Click.*



"They're clear! Calculate hyperspace routes back to the fleet! Now!" Honsou shouted out, making another dive into the orange goop to escape another incoming set of laser fire. Disabling the craft instead of destroying them made the gambit even more hectic than it should've been, but he understood that destroying the group of First Order ships would be a way to invite more scrutiny in their direction. He pulled up around the surface of a slowly rotating asteroid to line himself back up with the direction of the fleet, punched in the last few coordinates before hypering out of the field.

Honsou breathed heavily as he was surrounded by the hyper tube back to the Warrior, trying to catch his breath. His ship had suffered a glancing shot, but it was minor damage, he only hoped that the rest of the squadron fared similarly. Jerking forward as the ship left hyperspace, he counted the dots on the display, "One, two, three..." mouthing the remaining count. STRCK Mithras floated in front of them like a shining beacon to light their way home.

"Sin Squadron, sound off." He rumbled out over the coms.

"Newt, good." Commander Newt said.

Lieutenant Kevin chimed in, "In tact."

General Earnim Branet grunted out a "here" before going silent.

"Captain Halcorr accounted for."

Marenta said, "Yay, fun!" and gave a short squee before clicking off.

"Obiwan, all clear."

SkyShadow clicked on, "All good, Colonel."

"Okay, the rest should be on the Mithras. Strike Cruiser Mithras, is Sin Flight Three secured?" Honsou broadcast.

"Affirmative. All four pilots from Sin Squadron, Flight Three are present and accounted for. No medical attention required." The tinny voice from the bridge of the Mithras responded.

"Fantastic. How about we get back to the fleet?"

"Sounds Good Sin Squadron, appreciate the escort. See you back home."