



## Reading Room

*StarWars FanFiction*

### **POV: A War of Attrition - Part I**

**By Jynsama "Jade" Marselles**

Jyn Marselles, rogue refugee from his esteemed home in the Hapes Cluster, Had been aboard the Strike Carrier Wolf's Lair for about a half an hour now, and the only person who knew he was here was probably the traffic control guy.

He was hanging suspended from his port S-foil on his X-wing, his most prized possession, doing some work on the internal components. Above him rolling around on the hull, helping with the adjustments, and making stray comments about the frigate's hospitality, was Jade's R6 unit, Pride. His grandmother, his paternal grandmother, Kiara, had had the droid programmed, at least the personality chip, to act as Jade's friend and conscience, ever reminding him of home, what he fought for.

'Home,' Jade thought, 'A place I will never know again.' The very thought of home shut off his mind, an automatic defense by now, and he again drowned in his work on the X-wing. But it never quite went away. The feeling of ultimate loss, the loss of family and home never would go away, he suspected. It was always right there in the back of his mind shining, waiting to be trigger more painful memories.

A lone female broke up his brooding, striding into the room with the carriage and confidence only an officer could have. As she turned to face him, he noticed the Lt. Colonel pips she wore on her shoulders.

"Sir!" Jyn came to an upside down salute.

A brief smile cracked the face of the officer, at the obviously ridiculous sight. She briefly returned the salute, and Jade dropped to the deck. "Flight Officer Jynsama Marselles, I presume?"

"Yes, Sir," Jyn spoke with all of the respect the officer would have expected for a male officer.

"Tell me, your file is a little vague about this, where are you from?"

"The Hapes Cluster, sir," that explained it.

"Jynsama-"

"-Call me Jade, sir, or at least Jyn, no need for such formality with me."

" Sure, Jade I need you to go on an immediate flight for me, is your X-Wing prepped?"

"Yes, sir, I think she's still hot too."

"Is that an R6?"

"Yes, sir"

" Do your preflight checks, and I'll be right back with a datacard with all the briefing information on it. Do you have a datapad?"

"No sir."

"Then I'll get you one."

"Thank you sir."

With that she walked out, and Jyn jumped the ladder to his cockpit, two rungs at a time.

"Pride, get bolted down, we're goin' for a ride."

The droid whistled a hesitant question. " Don't know where to, just get in." The droid complied with a mechanical grumble. Just as he was finishing his preflight checks, Jade noticed the Lt. Colonel walking back into the hangar carrying a datapad with a card in it.

She strode up to the X-Wing handed it to him, and turned to leave, " By the way, name's Foxfire, and thank you for this, I owe you one," and walked out.

Jade closed his canopy, and began reading from the datapad. "Pride take over the controls, and set a course for the Corellia system."

Again, Jade looked down at the datapad, and opened the file, Squadron Biographies. Here he found a small note, attached to the historical information about all of the current pilots in Wolfshead squadron,

"Thank you," it read, " for going on this mission for me, I know you probably wanted a shower and all that before you went, but this mission requires the utmost security, and you are the only member on board that will not be missed. Not only that, but your craft bears no insignia that could link you to us. Thank you again. Lt. Colonel Foxfire."

After reading all of the biographies, and well into his journey into hyperspace, Jade opened the briefing file. In it, he found gridded diagrams of the system with tactical directions layered over the grid, along with his mission profile. He was to sneak into the system, pull all the visual data he could, and slip out. Simple enough, but this briefing file carried a red flag; probably meaning it was one of grave importance that he not be seen. Okay he could do this. Secondary orders were to intercept any transmissions sloppy enough to be sent out over a broad frequency. Even easier. Still in the file was that red flag, indicating a very dangerous, hostile welcoming committee. This should be fun.

He spent around an hour or two in hyperspace, lost in the datafiles, before Pride chimed a two-minute reversion warning.

"Thanks, buddy," was Jade's half-groggy reply, like he was waking up into the real world, from the information processing part of his mind he had shut himself into.

Those last two minutes rolled past slowly, measured by the digital timer on his control board. As the timer hit zero, Jade pulled back on the X-wing's levers, dropping him into the outer Corellia system. Much too far out so far for sensors, and only visual contacts could be made. So far, not a single thing could be seen, aside from the orb of Corellia, hanging there in space, accompanied by her sister planets, Selonia, Drall, Talus and Tralus. Normal traffic around the system was presumably clogged by the influx of ships carrying those with interests in the Corellian starship expo.

Primary objective, obtain sensory and visual data. Jade began to count his options.

"Pride, can you get me further in system without setting off any sensors?"

The droid calculated a mini jump that would get him into optimal range, considering his restrictions. The droid replied that any closer and he would be in sensor range of the civilian craft.

'Any one of which could be a spy craft looking for X-Wings like me. Too bad I couldn't have gotten a spy ship, I could have gotten a lot closer...but it couldn't be spared without being noticed by someone onboard the Wolf's Lair. Okay, jump out of system, and flank around for a better look.' "Pride next I need you to plot course back out of system, and then back in system, around thirty degrees higher than we are now. Can you handle that?"

Jade inverted his craft, wondering what that Lt. Colonel had thought would be gained by sending one pilot in a slightly modified X-wing looking around for information on some huge war fleet, which carried with it seemingly gigantic political consequences. Upper officers must all be idiots...but no one else was available...they must be desperate. Jade dropped out of his mini jump and pointed his craft's nose in the direction of the next. He again hit the levers sending him into hyperspace, and a few moments of thought.

"Pride, override the emergency transponder broadcaster, and program this message ' Attention New Republic forces, there is a war fleet amassed behind Corellia, repeat a war fleet amassed in Corellia's shadow,' and be prepared to throttle up and get out if I can't do it for you."

That thought evoked a morbid whine from his closest companion. The droid whistled an affirmative, and awaited it's next orders.

Plunging back into his mind's data processing mode. A few minutes later, with even fewer answers, Jade dropped out of hyperspace. On a higher angle now, he could see halfway down the backside of the Corellian planet. Focusing his sensors, a futile exercise, he hoped to pick out something, anything. But nothing. This was pointless.

Unfortunately, he would have to get closer. Then an idea struck him. Perhaps he could jump on the back of a larger craft. It was a classic maneuver, clearly overdone, and damn near to obvious, but it just might work. "Pride, scan the area for ships large freighter class or larger." A few seconds later, a reply came, with a surprising number of possibilities. He tacked the ID on one of the larger freighters. "This looks like it's my best shot, just hypered in. calculate a vector that will bring me in on that crafts sensor shadow."

The droid processed the information with blazing speed, characteristic of the newer model R series droids. Pulling his craft into position to fall into the shadow, Jade became distinctly aware of a pattern to the traffic...

'Oh dear God...what a fool...if they didn't know I was here they do now...there isn't anything behind the planet...most of the war fleet is in the freighters...'

"Pride, plot me a course out of system, back home, and change the message on the beacon, make it read, 'Attention all New Republic forces, there is a major war fleet amassed at the Corellia system, hiding mainly in Heavy Freighters.'"

Pulling his stick all the way to his chest, Jade began an inversion, to carry him out of system, but the freighter beat him. Detracting a hidden turbolaser, the ship opened fire on his X-wing, dumping two shots into his shields, collapsing them, and causing hull damage. He was caught.

"Pride, you still with me?" the droid warbled a frazzled reply, " Good prepare a data stream to the Wolfslair. I want it to say the exact same thing on the emergency beacon, by the way, wipe that, but add my personal pilot serial number, and that I've been captured. Send it through my electromonocle's Holonet transceiver if you have to. "

The droid whistled morbidly, in anticipation of what Jade knew would happen. He would be captured. It was inevitable.

'Okay, now what. Assume I'm caught, what do I do?'

As he was thinking, a warning klaxon blared in his ship, accompanied by a green hexagonal light on his CMD. ' Damn, they've already spotted me. Okay, evasive.'

He tucked and rolled, a cheap move, not really suited to the situation, but it would buy him more time. There

were two heavy freighters, and a medium one. It was also possible that the Sentinel class shuttle was also part of this party. Three cannons fired at him, presumably the only firepower that was on this side of the freighter. He juked all of them, preparing to make this fight count. Then his orders came back to him. He toggled his firing trigger back to lasers, and slowed his speed.

' I can't fight. ' " Attention freighter, please do not fire, I surr-" was all he was able to choke out before his fighter was smashed with three quad laser bursts.

Most of his systems fried, he now did not even have a chance at fighting back...his launcher still worked... but that broke mission parameters. He still could not be identified, there were no markings on his ship, and he simply would not give in to torture. Jade was one of the stubbornest people ever known, and he refused to give in, so he fell silent, slipping into his mind's processing mode, which served as his shelter from pain, as his fighter was sucked up into the freighter that had disabled him.

His ship was brought aboard, and settled in the hangar bay, surrounded by a squad of about twelve men. All were carrying blasters, and all wore a uniform he hadn't seen before, not that that meant much. He didn't move, not a single muscle. If they wanted him, they were going to have to come and break the hatch off his X-wing. One of the men, wearing more gold stripes on his left breast, motioned a crew of people into action; apparently, they were a tech crew, their uniforms being distinct, as well as the fact they didn't carry blasters.

It took the crew a full ten minutes to force his cockpit open, only to find a stone faced pilot, that wouldn't look anywhere but straightforward. 'Screw all of 'em.'

"Get out of your craft and come down with your hands up, I don't want this to get messy, not that I care though."

Jade complied, never looking anywhere but forward, with a look of iron in his eyes. He climbed down the ladder, and came face to face with the squad's commander, as well as a dozen blaster muzzles.

"Who are you?" The commander barked.

Jade didn't answer.

"You deaf? There's treatment fer that you know!"

Still no reply, "You're obviously military, and you're not Imperial, so you're either New Republic, or Paramilitary. Which is SOLDIER?"

"Flight Officer Jynsama Marselles, serial number TY forty odd twenty one." That didn't give away anything, there were thousands of flight officers, expendable all, throughout every military and paramilitary group throughout the galaxy.

"Where you from, soldier," again, Jade gave his ID and serial number, " I ain't gonna ask again. Where you from, kid?" This time no answer.

"Take him into custody, the hard way. We're gonna have to interrogate this one, he almost unveiled our little operation here."

Jade felt the hard rush of a kick in the small of his back, followed by a sickening snap. A scream erupted from him as he hit the ground, suddenly unable to move the lower half of his body, unable to feel that same half...

"Take him away for hard questioning." Was the last thing he heard before losing consciousness.

To Be Continued ...



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