



Reading Room

StarWars FanFiction

POV: The Seizure

By Daniel Sutherland

The man known as Drake slumped comfortably in his chair and sighed noisily. "Ah, Ledner," he said, seemingly to nobody. "Do me a favor and plot the next jump, would you?" A sharp electronic bleep from behind quickly followed this comment. "Sorry." Drake smiled. "Nice work in getting us out of there, Ledner. I appreciate it." A different beep, a satisfied one, accompanied this comment and Drake grinned. "Well, that was certainly close. I never thought I'd actually get the chance to be the guy running away." The R2 astromech droid housed behind Drake chittered a reply. "Yeah, you're damn right I wanted to be. Now I'm finally gonna fight the Imps on my own terms, not just pirates and mercs scratching for a buck."

Drake stopped and frowned. "How long does it take you to compute a hyperspace course, anyway?" An indignant outburst of beeps and whistles blasted Drake's ears. "Okay, okay, of course you completed it ages ago and was just waiting for me to stop rambling...." Drake muttered something under his breath. "Well, Ledner, sit back and enjoy the ride, because we are shortly going to be part of the Rebel Alliance. Let's enjoy our last few moments as Arrebnac Security Officers before we go to being outlawed by that very same organisation, shall we?" Ledner beeped his laconic reply and Drake pulled the hyperspace lever. The stars around the cockpit elongated into streaks as the small X-Wing fighter burst into hyperspace.

Drake sat back humming to himself, flexing his gloved fingers in anticipation. "Just think, Ledner! We're finally going to be in the Alliance!" He laughed. "I feel like Corran Horn. You know, that Alliance Rogue Squadron hero. Ex-security officer, joins the Alliance, gets the fame, the money, and the girl he loves!" Ledner whistled doubtfully. "Okay, so he didn't get the money..." Drake conceded. "Honestly, Ledner, you...." Ledner continued with a series of short intermittent beeps. "And I'm not likely to get fame or the girl... oh, shut up, Ledner," Drake finished good naturedly. "A man has to dream. Besides, that's not why I'm joining. I want to get back at the Empire, not just for my sake but for everyone else's as well. You know...."

Drake was interrupted by Ledner's hooting. "What?" he asked irritably, just before the X-Wing started to shake and move erratically. The white tunnel of light that it sped through started to fragment in spots, then with an abrupt jerk and a shriek from Ledner, it crashed through back into realspace. "Okay, what's happened?" Drake demanded, all traces of either irritation or excitement gone, replaced by the cool calmness of combat. Ledner rattled off a hurried reply. "Sithspawn! I knew it. The Imps wouldn't let us get away that easy...." Ledner interrupted him. "They're what?? Pirates and mercs? Where in the Empire would THEY get their hands on an Interdictor?" Ledner blatted out a sharp reply but Drake ignored him.



"Starfighter contacts - two flight groups, one of dupes, one of squints, bearing three one zero mark four zero. Coming around to intercept." Drake's oratory was largely unnecessary since no friendly craft were in the area, a fact that Ledner quickly reminded him of. "If you can't make yourself useful, then shut up or shut down," Drake snapped in reply. Now where had he heard that before? At five kilometres from the enemy

fighters Drake redirected energy from his engines to his lasers. The ship slowed a little and Drake smiled grimly. "If I'm going down, then I'm going to take them with me."

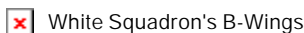
The first wave of TIEs came into range a few moments later. Drake lined his targeting reticle up on the lead dupe and stabbed the trigger twice as it went green, then threw the X-Wing into a dive. The message scrolled across his screen informing him that the lead TIE had been destroyed and Ledner bleeped his congratulations dutifully. Drake quickly selected the next TIE, pulling his X-Wing hard up and to the left, then rolled out onto the tail of the TIE. This one, smarter than the first, juked, making it tougher to hit. Drake fired once, but only one of the four laser shots hit the target, burning off part of its starboard panel but leaving it largely intact.

Drake jumped involuntarily as the ship shuddered and the shield display in his cockpit began to flash and go red. At the same instant he yanked the stick back into his stomach and flattened the right rudder pedal, forcing the X-Wing to pull up and skid to the right at the same time. Ledner hooted a warning. "Yeah, I see them." Swinging up and around behind him was the TIE Interceptor flight that Drake had spotted earlier. "This is where things get tricky."

Drake stabbed the button, shunting laser energy into his ailing shields, as he whipped the X-Wing into a half-roll, then banked down and out of the squint's fire. He had killed two of the Bombers, but the two surviving Interceptors were on his tail. He levelled the craft, even as Ledner shrieked a warning. "Gunboats! Great - they want to capture me, do they? We'll see if those flying pigs have bitten off more than they can chew!" Curling his lip into a snarl, Drake flung the X-Wing at the remaining TIEs, fired three quad volleys of shots at them, then thrust the stick forward as the green energy beams streaked above the cockpit or splashed against his forward shields. Drake's shots burned the wing panels from one TIE Interceptor, and blew the cockpit ball off the second. Only the Interceptor stayed on, but the computer reported he had hull damage.

Just then nine new red dots appeared on Drake's radar. Lednar shrieked harshly. "I see 'em, I see 'em," Drake shouted. "Three corvettes, six gunboats.... Imperial system patrol squadron!" Drake glanced down at his controls. Fortunately, the display he was looking for had two number 3's on it. "Good, we've got a full load of torpedoes," Drake muttered. "I'll take down one of those Imp orvettes before I die..."

Rapidly shunting energy to his shields, Drake swung around and angled at the lead Corvette. Just inside six kilometers the targeter began to beep as Lednar started to acquire a target lock. The reticle went from yellow to red and a steady whine filled the cockpit as Drake sent a pair of torpedoes streaking out on jets of blue flame. He held his course and repeated this twice until six torpedoes sped towards the helpless Imperial Corvette, then he pulled the X-Wing around in a snap-roll, cutting the throttle as he pivoted, and accelerating out of the turn.

	<p>Drake curled his lips in a mirthless grin as he stared at the oncoming Assault Gunboats on his radar. "Come on, then!" he roared, but then several things happened all at once. Lednar whistled triumphantly, there was a dull whoosh and roar behind him as the Corvette snapped in half and exploded, and four B-Wings zoomed into existence off Drake's starboard side. To his surprise, Drake heard a voice over the commlink: "Newly arrived B-Wing craft, this is the Interdictor Free Enterprise. If you surrender your craft now you will be spared from harm." Drake arched an eyebrow. They hadn't communicated with him! Presumably they hadn't considered him enough of a threat and therefore were simply going to kill or</p>
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capture him. The B-Wings, on the other hand, they were apparently wanting to take without a fight - a fight that could spell bad news for the mercenaries.

Even as Drake felt his face go red with anger, the answer came back loud and clear: "Interdictor Free Enterprise this is Shok'wave, Commander of White Squadron. We have no intention of surrender and order ***you*** to surrender or leave immediately. Reinforcements are on their way."

Inside her cockpit, Shok'wave bit her lip nervously. There were of course no reinforcements - her patrol detail had been caught in the Interdictor's artificial gravity well. There was a loud guffaw from the Interdictor captain. "Surrender?! Surrender??!!" he roared. "I gave you the chance to live! Die instead!" Several

seconds later a fresh wave of Interceptors, dupes and gunboats poured from the Interdictor's hull or burst in from hyperspace, respectively. Shok'wave switched channels.

"Unidentified X-Wing, this is Shok'wave, Commander of White Squadron of the Rebel Alliance. Identify yourself."

"Roger, White Leader. I'm called Drake, Commander, and I've come to join your squadron."

"Have you indeed? We'll see about that - once we get out of here! Form up, then we'll head in closer to those Imperial Corvettes."

"Closer?!" Drake asked in disbelief, and Lednar chirped indignantly.

"Yes, closer! The turbolasers on those ships will give the mercs a hard time - the Imps will shoot at their gunboats and TIEs. Don't shoot the Corvettes! Let the mercs take them down. Concentrate on the gunboats - whether merc or Imperial. Whites, lock S-foils in attack positions!" The four Whites complied and their ships blossomed into the familiar upside down sword as they hurtled past Drake, who promptly swung his ship around and trailed in their formation.

"Watch it Drake! You've got one on your tail!"

"Thanks for the advice, White," Drake snarled as his aft shield display darkened and turned red. "I'm on him," said another voice, calm and controlled. "Drake, break hard right on my mark....three..two..one..mark!"

Drake furiously pumped laser energy into shields and flung his X-Wing onto its starboard foil, dimly aware of a blurred shape racing over his cockpit and dropping behind him, going in the opposite direction. Abruptly the laserfire from behind him ceased as the gunboat was forced to deal with a new enemy.



"Lead, how are we..." Drake started to ask, but was interrupted by loud cheers on the radio. Lednar shrilled urgently and Drake looked behind him at the Interdictor, now dwarfed by the hulking mass of a Mon Calamari cruiser. Reports began to scroll down his screen; three A-Wings and three Y-Wings..." Ahh, this ought to even things out." Drake grinned to himself.

"Alliance craft, this is Captain Norska of the Cruiser Reliant," he began. "If necessary, cover the Y-Wings as they make torpedo runs on the Interdictor and Corvettes...the A-Wings will provide some relief."

"Thank you, Captain," came Shok'wave's reply. "Eight, Nine, cover those Y-Wings. Three, Drake, you're with me."

"I copy, Lead."

"As ordered, Lead."

Two B-Wings peeled off from White Squadron and streaked back toward the Interdictor, the remaining TIE Interceptors hot on their tails. Drake turned his attention back to the swarm of gunboats in front of him. "I count ten, Lead," he found himself saying. "I've got Rho 2 tagged and ready to go." Shok'wave acknowledged him and Drake dove after the gunboat.

The Calamari cruiser Reliant continued to pour red turbolaser and heavy turbolaser bolts into the Interdictor cruiser, which was beginning to roll to minimize shield damage and spread it across the entire shields. Lednar beeped urgently at Drake. "Lead, the Free Enterprise is powering down her gravity well projectors! She's leaving!"

Shok'wave switched to the Alliance tactical frequency. "Blue Leader, this is White Leader. The Interdictor is preparing to hyperspace! See if you can disable it immediately!"

"Copy, White Leader. Blue group, use your ion cannons - disable that ship!"

Drake glanced quickly back at the Interdictor, which was starting to turn slowly and move forward. "Ledner," he snapped, rolling his X-Wing to avoid a burst of fire, "see if you can plot any holes in the Interdictor's shields. Relay the data to those Y-Wings!" Ledner beeped his compliance and Drake concentrated again on the gunboat which sailed in front of him.

He pulled the X-Wing hard over behind it, but started indignantly as an A-Wing soared in from his starboard quarter and sat right in front of him, then began firing at the gunboat.

"Unbelievable!" Drake thundered, and furiously brought his X-Wing to bear on a new target.

"Reliant, this is Blue Leader... target disabled!" There were several cheers over the commlink as the Interdictor slowed to a halt and sat dead in space. "Whites, attack those Corvettes!" Shok'wave ordered, and before Drake could respond twelve bright blue dots streaked towards the remaining Imperial ships. "White Squadron, your efforts are greatly appreciated," Captain Norska said over the radio. "You may return to base at any time - we have transports already dispatched to capture the Interdictor, and I believe that the Assault Gunboats are leaving."

Drake glanced at his monitor. It was true. The range between his and the enemy's ship was increasing at an impossible rate as it streaked away into hyperspace. Likewise, the remaining mercenary gunboats followed suit, the Imperial ones still locked in combat with the A-Wings.

Shok'wave's cool voice came over the comm: "Thank you again, Captain, for your help. We have a patrol to finish, and a visitor to escort. Whites, let's get on with this patrol. Drake, if you really wish to join us, then follow us....the nav data's being downloaded to your computer now."

"As ordered, Lead," Drake answered coolly. This had worked out fine! He had found White Squadron at last and had helped the Alliance capture an Interdictor at the same time. He grinned hugely as he pulled the lever and they burst into hyperspace together.

THE END



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