

**Seeking Truth: Critical Decision**  
**Anima - 11708**



Minutes had passed since he had received the message from his superior and the warning lights were already blinking on the dashboard of the Sprint-class Rescue Craft. The most notable of these lights, a large red diode, sat almost dead center on the dashboard. Cautiously, a pair of eyes rose over the edge of the dash before resting upon the furiously blinking light.

"Don't you dare..." The freighter pilot muttered as he knelt before the dash. "Stop it!"

More lights began blinking in tandem, a symphony of warnings accompanied by klaxons. Anima rose his arms reflexively as he spun and leaned back in alarm. "No! No, no... No-no-no-no-no!" He kept jumping from console to console, pushing buttons seemingly at random in the hopes that his ship would comply.

"Yes, I know there is turbulence. But, could you please not drop out of hyperspace? You know, for me? Just this once?" He spoke quietly, like an adult would speak to a child while softly caressing the corner of the dash.

As if in answer, the ship's yellow warning lights flared to life throughout the cockpit, adding another layer to the disheartening symphony. "Oh come on!" Anima bellowed in anger, straightening to his full height quickly before stomping his foot against the dash. The pilot had little time to pull any sense of satisfaction from his vicious assault on the inanimate object before the sickening sound of the hyperdrive disengaging filled the cockpit. Immediately, the lights of battle flickered in from the viewport and painted the cockpit in an explosion of color.

The suddenness of the drop from lightspeed rocked the unarmed ship violently, sending Anima to the ground and unceremoniously bruising his tailbone. He grunted in kind, squinting in pain and reaching behind to rub the tender area. Another explosion cascaded against his shields, the open comm channels roaring to life in a mixture of excited and fearful voices.

"This is **not** where I want to be!" Anima declared with finality as he hopped back into the pilot chair. His hands worked quickly over the dash, redistributing power through the conduits to his shields. Without a weapon system on board, the freighter pilot didn't have to worry too much about the power distribution. The important thing now was to maintain shield strength long enough to make it out of the conflict zone and make the jump to lightspeed. He would not be the cat who falls victim to his own curiosity. The secrets of the *Diathim* would have to wait for another time.

You know, a time with less open hostility and chance of immediate death. Anima firmly believed he may be allergic to death, and didn't want to find out.

The radar readings before him were chaotic and unclear, for all intents and purposes the blinking lights might as well have been an asteroid field - with lasers. Since he had no affiliation with the system, nor the pilots, his system wasn't equipped with a friend-or-foe system and everything was washed in the red light of hostility. It wasn't important though, all Anima was concerned with was the staying in one piece thing he had going on.

He *liked* staying in one piece.

Blaster fire roared over his view, coming from directly behind. The pilot clasped his hand firmly over the flight stick and pulled it hard to the left, forcing his craft into a spin while he simultaneously pushed the right rudder. Anima had to grit his teeth together hard, lest he lose his lunch from the suddenness of the maneuver. He was still in the middle of evasive actions, searching for an opening, when a metallic clang from within the cockpit caught his attention. His eyes snapped to the right, focusing on the glinting alloy in the light, his lightsaber. It must have become unclasped from his side when he dropped from lightspeed.

"You shush! Unless you come equipped with turbolasers - which you don't - you can just roll back into the corner or something!" Anima continued muttering about antiquated weapons as he worked the throttle and flight stick in tandem to navigate the hazardous space he found himself in.

Klaxons began blaring once more, signalling the impending loss of his shielding system. Cursing under his breath, Anima's hand released the throttle and flew across the dashboard. His power systems once more realigned themselves, pushing all shield strength to his aft while putting what excess power remained toward his thrusters. The rescue craft lurched forward with renewed haste, roaring towards open space. Blaster fire washed over his shields once more, causing Anima to growl angrily.

"Excuse me, but I don't even own this ship... **Stop shooting it!**"

Once more he rocked the flightstick to the left and hit the right rudder. His craft put itself into a wide swinging barrel roll, sliding around one final ship before nothing but stars stood within Anima's viewport. Well, stars and ominous laser fire.

"Punch it!" He bellowed at no one in particular, grabbing the activator switch for the hyperspace drive and grinning as the stars streaked from specks into solid lines within his field of view. He let out a long, low breath before slumping down in the chair, glaring at the dash in front of him.

"Yeah... Can we **not** do that again? That would be great..."