*Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*

The mercenary known as Mauro Wynter began his career in the most nontraditional manner possible; as a banker and commodities broker working for the Intergalactic Banking Clan within the Corporate Sector. By the age of twenty, while well read and cultured to the standards of the relative backwater of the Corporate Sector, Wynter had never ventured to the galaxy abroad. This all changed due to a client in arrears of payment and a routine site survey for loan appraisals.

Mauro was finishing his second year as an associate banker and trader and had just turned 20 in 26 ABY. Calen Droxos, a local merchant of some repute had lost a large sum of credits on risky stock futures and refused to pay commissions to Wynter. Not wanting to upset the creditors within the Intergalactic Banking Clan and the punitive enforcement officials of the Corporate Sector, Droxos gave as an odd payment a relic shuttle, Republic vintage that could still make orbit and go to hyper drive. Wynter christened the derelict craft the *Resolute Trader*.

Fresh with the newfound wanderlust that only a young man, a starship, and hundreds of hours annually behind a desk can understand. Mauro was ordered to appraise a potential mining site near the outskirts of Hutt Space for a potential loan to developers from Muunilist. Taking the opportunity, Wynter provisioned his shuttle and learned the rudimentary skills of keeping her in space lanes and navigating to hyper drive, trusting in the onboard computer systems to get him to his destination.

Not long after venturing off of the major trade lanes and missing his scheduled security detail, the young Human continued undaunted and continued to follow the slight flow of traffic towards his objective. Within a parsec of the mining site, a small freighter and a flight of equally ancient fighters approached him at high speed, taking up a flanking position fanning around him while the larger vessel came directly at the *Resolute Trader*.

Wynter, barely able to manually pilot the small craft, keyed on the gunnery control and took aim with the two chin and two wing mounted laser cannons. Luckily for the human, the would-be pirates were equally ill equipped. The first salvo from the nearest Z-wing glanced far off to starboard as the snub fighter came in at a 45-degree angle. The shuttle’s autopilot now re-engaged looking for a hyperspace jump, Mauro concentrated on the closing fighter and squeezed the firing nobs and watched as the green laser burst engulfed the aft end of the fighter.

The seemingly easy prey proving otherwise, the two remaining fighters veered wide, attempting to take up parallel stations while the sluggish freighter attempted in vain to lock onto the small shuttle. Wynter was lucky with the gunnery controls, and he knew it. The autopilot, while adequate for its day, was showing its age and struggled to compute a jump. Despite this, he needed only 30 more seconds to escape. Those 30 seconds were the longest of Wynter’s young life as he clenched the guns and hoped to make it to light-speed. Soon, the distant glow of stars grew brighter and longer as the shuttle burst from the system. Mauro was going home. He smiled with the wonder of a young man who was happy to be alive, embracing the thrill and sickening feeling of a first brush with death.