

Tipoca Under Fire

A Submission to the Competition:
[Excursion] Short Fiction



Written by
Reiden Karr (10106)

35 ABY

Aboard the *IMS Tipoca II*

Reiden stood by one of the viewports on the medical station and gazed out into space, fuming.

While his clan mates were out scouring the galaxy for potential new worlds for the clan to inhabit, he was stuck on their temporary home playing house keeper. He wanted to be out there with them, part of the adventure. However at the same time, he realized that someone needed to stay aboard the medical station and keep watch over the possessions that Scholae still had after the attack on their home in the Cocytus system. It had been a randomly assigned post, and Reiden happened to have drawn the short end of the stick, whether he liked it or not.

He let out a sigh and turned from the viewport, returning to the matter at hand. With most of the clan gone, defense of the station fell upon his shoulders. It was a job that somebody had to do, and Reiden was prepared to do it to the best of his ability. He rubbed the bridge of his nose lightly before spinning on his heel and making his way toward where the command center was located.

Reiden stepped into the room and found a scene unfolding before him that was not what he had expected. He had thought that it would just be another routine moment with nothing of note going on. What he discovered was the opposite. The technicians there were talking to each other frantically, going over information on their screens.

"What's going on, gentlemen?" he questioned the men.

"Well, sir, it appears that we've picked up a contact on the long-range sensors. It's closing in on our location, fast," the commander in charge replied. He was a man that had an air of professionalism about him, likely due to years spent in one sort of military service or another. He appeared to be in his late forties, his dark hair graying at the temples. Reiden knew his name at one point, he thought it was Vale.

"What? Are you sure about that?" Reiden asked. He thought for a moment, "The other members of the clan aren't scheduled to be back for a while longer. Have we received any kind of communication from the contact?"

"No sir, the comms have been silent. The vessel should be in range by now, but we haven't heard anything as of yet."

The Warrior chewed over the information, carefully considering the implications before responding. "Commander...Vale, is it?" The man nodded and Reiden continued, "Keep a close eye on the situation, and notify me the moment anything changes or seems wrong. I know that you've served the clan well through the years and I trust in your judgment. I'll be rounding up what remaining troops we have and inform them that they may be called into service to help

defend the station if necessary.” Commander Vale simply nodded and turned his attention back to the monitoring screens.

Reiden approached the communications terminal and reached down to punch the intercom and stopped himself short. *The situation may not be a big threat, there’s no need to cause a panic. Choose your words carefully*, he told himself. His finger pressed the button and he spoke clearly and with authority. “Attention all troops. This is Reiden Karr. I want to inform you of the situation at hand. There is a vessel approaching the station on our sensors. It is in range and has not sent out any communications. It may be damaged, or it may be something more serious. Gather in the hangar and I’ll give you your assignments. Thank you. That is all.”

He wasn’t sure what was heading toward their position, but he wanted to be ready for anything. Reiden was glad that Xen’Mordin had left behind the clan’s DP20 Corellian Gunship and the *Sidious* as a defense for the unarmed medical station in case they were needed. The *Sidious* was currently making a patrol sweep a short hyperspace jump away and was due back shortly. He activated the terminal and contacted the ships, filling in the crew of each as to what was going on and that they should be on high alert. The *Sidious* replied and said that it would return immediately.

A *Marauder*-class corvette suddenly appeared in the black void of space. Alarm klaxons went off aboard the medical station, and Reiden swore under his breath. Things had just gotten real very quickly.

“Okay people, this is it!” Reiden called out to the crew around him. “Just remember your training and try to stay calm. We’ll get through this just fine.”

The corvette made no move to open fire on the station. However, it was quick to launch its squadron of fighters. The readout on the computer station before Reiden told him that they were old ARC-170s, most likely found around the time of the Clone Wars. Reiden quickly assessed the situation at hand. The *Sidious* had not returned yet, and the DP20 was no match for the enemy corvette. However, there was something that it would be good for.

Reiden punched the comm. button once more, contacting the gunship. “Gunship, target all enemy fighters, now! Don’t let a single one through!”

“Roger that, sir,” the voice on the other end replied. “Please be advised, however, that a small shuttle has been spotted taking off from the craft. I regret to inform you that it slipped by us. I’m sorry, sir.”

“Don’t worry. I’ll take some troops with me and take care of any enemies that manage to board the station. Just focus on those fighters. Karr, out,” Reiden said in return. He had let a bit more anger slip into his voice than he had intended. But it wasn’t directed at the men aboard the gunship. No, it was because of the precarious situation he found himself in. The clan was weakened and stretched thin at the moment, and he didn’t like that feeling.

The *Sidious* jumped out of hyperspace and opened a line of communication with the medical station. Reiden couldn’t help but breathe a sigh of relief at its return. He had faith in all of the men that were fighting to protect this station, but the gunship could only hold out against the fighters and the enemy corvette for so long.

“*Sidious*, this is Reiden Karr. I want you to launch all fighters immediately and then open fire on the enemy. Show them what happens when people dare to cross the forces of Scholae Palatinae,” Reiden ordered. He ended the communication and opened a new line, contacting Xen’Mordin aboard the *Vader*.

A blue-hued image of the Consul of Scholae Palatinae shimmered to life before him. The Emperor gazed at him and spoke, “Reiden, you know the clan’s forces busy searching for a potential new home for us now. What is it?”

“Yes, I realize that, Xen. I wouldn’t contact you unless I felt that it was necessary,” Reiden replied with a bow. “But something has come up that I believe may require your attention.”

Xen’Mordin sat straighter, “Continue.”

“The medical station is currently under attack. The DP20 and the *Sidious* are engaging the enemy, a *Marauder*-class corvette. For the moment, there is only the one ship and its complement of fighters. However, there may very well be more forces on their way,” the Warrior explained.

“You’re right, that could pose a problem for us. We cannot afford to lose our temporary home, not now or at all. I’ll return with the *Vader* and the small portion of the personal ships that went with me as soon as we can. Just hold out a bit longer, Reiden. Do not let the station fall,” the Emperor ordered.

“Yes, of course. You can count on me, sir,” Reiden said, his gaze hardening. With that, the holoprojection faded from view as the communication ended.

Reiden glanced outside through the viewport at the battle raging outside. He clenched his fists tightly. He was determined to make this enemy regret their decision to attack a Scholae asset. He would make sure that they suffered losses and made them slink away like a dog with its tail between its legs, or simply destroy them outright.

A crewman of the station snapped him out of his thoughts and back to battle.

“What is it?” the Sith questioned the man.

“Sir, we’re detecting a breach in Docking Bay 4!” the man exclaimed, voice filled with worry.

“Ah, frak,” Reiden swore under his breath. “I had a feeling that’s what they would be using that ship for once it got passed the DP20. Keep me apprised of any developments. I’ll go take care of this.”

“Yes, sir!” the man said, snapping a quick salute before returning to his work.

Reiden spun around and stormed out of the room. He activated his comlink, contacting the small group of soldiers that had remained aboard the station. “All troops, head to Docking Bay 4. There’s a breach that requires our attention. If they show their faces before I get there, you’re free to engage at will.” He rested a palm on the hilt of his saber and then on his blaster, more out of an old habit than anything else. It could help to center him just knowing that they were there if needed. The Warrior then made his way to meet with his troops.

Before Reiden even reached the corridor, he could hear the sound of blaster fire filling the air. Normally he would have preferred to have been there when the action started, but there was no time to waste given the situation. He stopped at the corner and peered around it to get a quick grasp of what was going on.

His men flanked either side of the hallway, hugging the walls. They had taken cover in the different branches that led off the main corridor. They poked their heads out and traded fire with the enemy forces, ducking for cover when the enemy fired back.

Reiden walked from around the corner and stood there. He reached deep within himself and summoned the dark tendrils of power of the Force, creating an invisible shield in front of him. He waited for the enemy to notice him. One man trained his blaster on Reiden and opened fire. The blaster bolt stopped short before hitting his target, the energy dissipating. Reiden smiled and pulled his lightsaber from his belt, thumbing the activator. A familiar *snap-hiss* reached his ears as the emerald blade sprang to life. Reiden dropped the shield he had created and began walking down the corridor, deflecting blaster fire as he went. His men took note of his appearance and seemed to rally to him. The volley of shots they fired now becoming more aggressive.

The opposing forces took cover at the sides of the entryway. Now it was their turn to trade fire with the Scholae forces. Reiden and his men advanced on them. He began to charge toward the entrance, the blade of his lightsaber becoming a green blur as he blocked the incoming fire directed at him. He leapt to the nearest man and plunged the saber into his chest. He kicked the man off of the blade and into the man beside him. He took advantage of the surprise that his sudden actions had caused and stabbed downward, skewering both men.

He reached out with the Force and an invisible hand shot forward, taking hold of the blaster of one of the fallen men and summoned it to his hand. He deactivated his saber and clipped it to his belt. Taking hold of the blaster rifle with both hands, he opened fire on the other men before him. His own forces charged as well, blazing blaster fire at the enemies.

Reiden took his stolen blaster and threw it at one man. Caught off guard, the man fumbled for it. The Warrior quickly took hold of his saber once more and activated it, slicing the plasma blade across the man's legs, sending him to the ground. With the man kneeling before him, Reiden sneered and swung the blade at his neck, beheading him. He then carved his way through the others that were closest to him, using their bodies to shield himself from the blaster fire directed his way.

Before long, Reiden and his men had taken care of the pirate forces. He sent the troops to make a final sweep of the docking bay. Once they reported back that there were no other enemies to be found, he congratulated them. He glanced around the corridor, clenching his jaw at the sight of several fallen Scholae troops. *I should have gotten here sooner*, he told himself. But he knew that his men would have fought to the best of their ability no matter

what, and that casualties were inevitable in times of battle. A chirp from his comlink snapped him back to the present.

“What is it?” Reiden asked as he brought the device to his face.

“Sir, it looks like the enemy forces are beginning to falter. Their fighters are all but wiped out, and the DP20 is currently firing on them directly,” reported the voice of Commander Vale.

“That’s excellent news, Commander,” Reiden responded. “The troops and I have finished taking care of the breaching party and the men are beginning to make a sweep of the rest of the station. Have the sensors set to maximum sensitivity and alert them if any non-friendly life signs are detected. I’m on my way to you now.”

The Warrior ended the communication and gave the order to his men to continue searching for any potential enemies that were missed just in case. He turned and left them to their duties. His footfalls echoed throughout the empty hallway as he made his way back to Commander Vale and the rest of the staff in the command center. As he entered the men turned and snapped to attention.

He waved them off, “At ease, men. Just keep your minds focused on the task at hand. We must make sure that there are no other enemies left behind that were missed before.”

Reiden stood by the viewport with his hands clasped behind his back. The DP20 gunship was indeed training its laser fire at the *Marauder*-class corvette. The wreckage of starfighters could be seen drifting aimlessly in space.

He punched a button on the communications terminal, “*Sidious*, this is Reiden Karr again. I want you to fire on that corvette immediately. Use the ion cannons first and then open fire with all batteries. We’re going to take that ship out.”

“Yes sir. Charging up the ion cannons now,” said the man on the other end of the line on the bridge of Scholae’s flagship.

The ion cannons fired at the ship, and following closely behind it was a massive barrage of turbolaser fire. Reiden watched in satisfaction as the DP20 and the Scholae fighters all opened fire as well. The lasers tore through the *Marauder*-class corvette, small explosions visible along its entire hull. The ship suddenly burst apart in one final fiery explosion. The men in the command center cheered. Reiden even heard cheers coming through the still-open comm. channel connecting him to the bridge of the *Sidious* as well. Then the cheering from the *Sidious* stopped and Reiden could hear voices discussing something.

“Sir, we’re detecting another ship coming out of hyperspace!” an officer reported from the ship.

Reiden cursed under his breath, "Power up shields and prime all weapons. I want to be ready when that ship emerges. Prepare for battle once more."

A star destroyer dropped out of hyperspace. Reiden hadn't expected a vessel of such size to appear, and he hoped that the *Sidious* would be a match for it. Then the holoprojector in the command center sparked to life. An image of Emperor Xen'Mordin appeared before Reiden.

The Warrior smiled and spoke into the terminal, "Belay that order. That's a friendly. The *Vader* has returned."

The form of Xen'Mordin looked at Reiden, "It appears that we weren't needed after all. I see the medical station is still in one piece."

"Yes sir, of course. I wouldn't let the station fall, not to an enemy like this," Reiden responded.

"No, I'm sure you wouldn't. Well done, Reiden. I'll have some men sent to the station to help with a final sweep and make sure that all enemy forces are weeded out and dealt with," the Emperor said.

"Thank you, Xen. I'll inform my troops here on the station." Reiden ended the communication and contacted the soldiers, telling them of the Emperor's return and letting them know to expect additional men to aid in their search and securing the station.

He watched as a shuttle departed from the *Vader* and made its way to one of the medical station's docking bays. He turned his gaze to take in the aftermath of the battle that had unfolded in space outside the station. He was sure that his fighters had not escaped unscathed, but he knew that the pilots had performed well. As had the men he had with him aboard the station and on the DP20 and the *Sidious*. He was proud of them all. He had made sure that the invading force got the clear message of what would happen if anyone were to cross Scholae.