

The *Hope*, even stuffed as it was with our starfighters, a few transports, and the *Brick*, had plenty of room for Luke and his team. Hell, we didn't even need to fully rack our starfighters, though we did just to make sure that they had a bay of their own. While technically stationing people outside of the hangar bays, under the opening doors that ran along the centerline of the dorsal hull, was perfectly safe, keeping them in a bay was even safer.

Once the hangar space was ready, we settled in to wait for our passengers. It took a few hours for Luke to reach out to us and warn us they were incoming, and Ahsoka, Tatnia, and myself had plenty of time to make our way to the hangar to greet them.

I had to admit, watching the squadron of [X-wings](#) slowly make their way into the hangar, passing through the magcon field, before being directed by a droid with glowing wands to a side hangar, certainly stirred something in my chest. I loved what Miru had created with the MA-wings and Heavy ARCs, but there was just something about the X-wing.

Admittedly, it was probably my nostalgia screaming at me, but I was hard-pressed to think of a more quintessential starfighter design. In a straight fight, I would honestly put either of my starfighters ahead of it, simply because the Heavy ARC was too much of a tank, with too many weapons to be taken down easily, and because the MA-wings were just too fast, especially in my people's hands.

But even then, it was hard to deny that [Incom](#) had designed an incredible multipurpose starfighter. One that defined the Rebellion, despite their tendency to field anything they could get their hands on.

When the twelve starfighters had landed and begun shutting down, I stepped out into the hangar bay, spotting Luke as he dropped out of his X-wing, his fellow pilots doing the same. As we approached, Tatnia shook his hand, while Ahsoka and I both hugged the younger pilot. R2, who was sitting in the astromech socket, whistled and chirped, prompting Luke to chuckle.

"Any way we could let him down?" The once farmboy asked. "Most of the others will power down and wait, but he wouldn't like that."

"I'll get a technician to help him out," I said, my expression shifting to a wince. "Though, keep in mind any droid will be restricted to what they can see, or submit to a partial memory wipe. I can't have recordings of anything that could help establish where Nirn is getting out."

Luke frowned and looked up at R2, and the droid let out a mournful whistle before a series of chirps.

"He would be willing to stay in the hangar, so he can work on the ship," Luke translated. "Assuming that's okay."

"That's fine. Racer can even keep him company," I said with a smile, knowing Racer was more than capable of keeping up with the excitable droid, unless plot/force shenanigans happened.

If that happened, there was really nothing I could really do anyway.

By the time I was assuring R2 he could work around the hangar, the rest of Rogue Squadron had climbed out of their ships and were making their way to us. When I spotted a few familiar faces, I smiled again.

"Wedge, Hobbies, Tycho, good to see you all again," I said, reaching out to shake their hands. "I'm glad this time is under better circumstances."

"I am as well, though it was impressive to watch you and your team work," Wedge said, moving on to shake Ahsoka and Tatnia's hands.

"Did you really negotiate with Mon Mothma to get us some time off?" One of the squadron members asked, his face familiar, but not clicking into any of the names I could think of

"Well, I'd be lying if I said my focus hadn't been Luke, but essentially, yes," I admitted. "Though I will say, my flyers would appreciate any hints or advice you could give us about Imperial forces."

"You've fought them before, though," Luke pointed out. "

"Oh, we have fought them plenty," I responded with a nod. "But engagements have been small, and we've never taken on anything as big as a Star Destroyer. At least not directly. And besides, even if we do have some experience, there's nothing wrong with trading tips."

As we left the hangar, Luke introduced me to the rest of his people. The man whom I partially recognized and asked if we had negotiated for them to take a vacation turned out to be [Wes Janson](#), who I knew well, at least his story counterpart, from the [X-Wing series](#), my favorite books from the entirety of the franchise, a sentiment quite a few people agreed with.

Ahsoka peeled off eventually, heading to our quarters to meditate and rest, while Tatnia and I led the group to their quarters. They weren't far from where our own pilots stayed, in some of the thousands of bedrooms that the *Hope* had in its living quarters.

"Whoa... did we get a suite or something?" Hobbie asked as I showed them their rooms, the pilots picking doors along the hall. "That's a lot of space..."

"The *Hope* is modified to run with a significantly smaller crew than normal, and we are *far* from maxing out its hangar capacity," I explained. "So rather than cramming everyone together in small rooms, we tore out the multiple beds from a lot of the quarters, making each one a single room. Considering the ship is built to carry some two thousand troops... we still have plenty of room."

The rooms were pretty nice, a benefit of my determination to keep my people happy and satisfied with where they were. I was asking them to fight and face death, after all. The least I could do was give them a comfortable place to sleep and enough room to live comfortably.

Considering how most starships packed their crew in like sardines, I was not surprised the Rogues found the rooms impressive.

Once the pilots were settled in, Tatnia and I guided them to one of the many ship cafeterias, where I knew plenty of the pilots hung out during our hyperspace downtime. The ship had already made the jump to lightspeed, the shift in reverberations through the hull a dead giveaway. My second in command on the *Hope* had thankfully made the jump so that I could focus on escorting our guests.

Sure enough, as we entered, as the ship had already made the jump, the cafeteria was full of pilots technically on light duty. I got a few cheers and waves as we entered, a few pilots even offering to buy me a drink. I had found that, out of all my people, my pilots tended to be the happiest to see me, with the ground teams a close second. I couldn't exactly tell them not to think so highly of me, especially when I was pretty sure Tatnia was encouraging it.

After a moment, I spotted Toggle, the clone pilot who was no head of my starfighter corps. He didn't fly as much now that he was in charge of so many people, but rather manned the starfighter operations center that tracked our deployed forces. When we weren't on missions, he was in charge of all our starfighters.

"Sir, it's good to see you," He said, standing to greet me, scoping out the Rebels behind me. "I recognize you, Luke, but the rest are new. You finally join up and bring some friends?"

"No, not exactly," Luke responded, chuckling at something that was likely one of the Rebellion's worst nightmares. "This is Rogue Squadron, the X-wing squadron I lead."

"With our new partial focus on Imperial targets, I negotiated for one of the best Rebel starfighter squadrons to come and share their wisdom," I explained. "We have some experience, but we could always have more. Plus, Luke needed some time off, so I stepped in."

"Wisdom, huh? I see," Toggle said, nodding in agreement. "Well, I won't turn down any help for my pilots, any advantage I can give them is a good thing."

"Oh, right, sorry," I said with a wince. "Toggle here is the head of our starfighter corps, he's been with us since we cleared Omega Station."

"Ah, right, I remember that one," Luke said with a shiver. "That whole mission had me on edge."

"I haven't heard this story, actually," Wedge admitted, a few of his compatriots nodding. "I knew the Skyforged helped secure the station, and that you basically used to own it, but I didn't know Luke was involved with clearing it out."

"In that case, why don't we find a seat and get something to eat?" I suggested, gesturing to some free tables. "I believe exaggerating missions is a pilot tradition, right?"

People chuckled at the light-hearted dig, and we quickly settled down around the table, a few droids bringing out what essentially boiled down to bar snacks. Meanwhile, Tatnia and I did

our best, with Luke chiming in occasionally, usually to defend his pride, to tell the story of clearing Omega Station.

He maintained that the robot amalgamations we fought in hordes were creepy, as was the station itself. To be honest, he wasn't wrong, they had been on the eerie side. The damaged droid brain of the Munificent-class that had welded itself to the side of the station had basically taken anything with robotic parts and affixed them haphazardly together. While that made them unwieldy and ineffective, they made up for it with numbers.

Not to mention that an astromach crawling towards you on several B1 droid legs, armed with B2 mounted arms, was off-putting, to say the least.

We spent a while sitting around the cafeteria, sharing mission stories, which were usually followed by bragging about them. After a few hours had passed, Wes Janson looked over at me, a curious look on his face.

"Any way we could take a look at these ships your boys are describing?" he asked with a raised eyebrow. "I've flown an A-wing, but I've only seen an ARC from across a hangar."

"Yeah, that's fine. When we get back home, you can even fly a few," I said with a shrug. "We can even run some dogfights with our flight sims."

All of the Rogues looked excited at the prospect of giving our ships a try, and I could see my pilots grin at the idea of challenging the Rebellion's best starfighters. In all honesty, I was excited to see how they stacked up. My pilots were well trained, well practiced, and with the addition of my dexterity enhancements, incredibly quick. Combined with what I thought were superior starfighters, I was pretty sure they would come out on top.

I would give Rogue Squadron the dexterity enhancers I promised them *after* my people won a few rounds.

Though there was a bit of consideration involved with that choice. While the Skyforged was no doubt stirring up the canon timeline, between poaching Ahsoka, getting Luke better help, and just messing around with the pirates and Empire in general, we only directly intervened with a few things. The fact that our advice to use battle droids had apparently allowed [Jan Dodonna](#) to escape Yavin, where he would have normally ended up in [Lusankya](#), was another big one. But there was no way that could compare to giving one of the most pivotal starfighter groups in the Rebellion enchanted enhancements. I mean, just the fact that it would up their survival rate, meaning people who would have normally filled in the gaps would end up elsewhere, would be enough to send canon spinning.

The potential to send things spiralling into unknown territory was massive, far beyond anything I could predict. The fact that they would no doubt tear through most of their challenges was another entirely.

Granted, it did seem like I had already butterflied away the battle of Hoth, a low point in the Rebellion's history. Not only was Alpha Base significantly more remote, but it was also much

better defended. Between the fleets of CIS droid starfighters and the heavy weapons built around the reinforced mountain, both new and old, the Empire would likely need a significantly larger force to take it. The Rebellion would bleed them dry in the process, and likely escape with minimal losses.

Basically, the changes were beginning to stack up, and what I was about to do would be a massive weight on an already tired camel's back. It made me nervous, but I had already committed to changing the status quo, and that meant doing my best and not getting scared of messing with canon. Worrying about it now would only drive me insane.

As we led the group to the hangars, Toggle and a few of his people came with us. The two groups had easily meshed, bonding over their love of flying. As we approached, I had both a Heavy ARC and a MA-Wing brought out, so they would be easier to examine.

"I gotta say, they are impressive starfighters on [flimsi](#)," Wedge admitted, a few of his friends nodding in agreement. "I prefer a more multipurpose snubfighter, but the numbers you're saying are impressive.

"Not the hyperdrive," Hobbie pointed out. "I don't know about the original ARC, but I *know* A-wings don't have a class four."

"That's because for my pilots, the onboard hyperdrive is an emergency system," I explained with a frown. "I dislike the idea of sending my pilots in without a supporting carrier, someone with the equipment to recover EVA ejections or disabled fighters. I know the Rebellion is stretched thin, but sending out my starfighters without backup is an unnecessary risk. Their hyperdrives exist in case, god forbid, their carrier is destroyed, or they are forced to retreat before it can recover them."

"We also sometimes make mass jumps when the mission is over, just short enough that we end up in deep space where we can't be followed," Toggle explained. "It's faster than getting everyone on board so we can jump as one."

"And to be clear, I'm not looking down on Rebellion tactics," I assured them. "You don't have the luxury of choosing your targets or holding back. My people know that someday we may find a target we cannot simply walk away from because the conditions aren't right. I'm not looking forward to that day, but stepping up and fighting more directly against the Empire has definitely pulled it a bit closer."

The group was quiet for a moment, both the Rogues and my own pilots looking grim but determined. The Rogue's new from experience what that sort of mission was like, and my pilots knew what I was talking about. Rather than letting the mood dip, I clapped my hands, breaking everyone free from their heavy thoughts.

"Let's head back to somewhere we can be more relaxed," I said with a nod. "We've gotten into the hangar master's way for long enough."

We made our way out of the hangar amid nods and words of agreement, heading to the closest exit. Once we were in a break room, Tatnia and I ended up spending another hour with the group before finally splitting off, leaving them in Toggle's capable hands. I would join up with them again later, but for now, I needed to check in with my crew.

I ended up spending the majority of the trip home switching between my crew and the Rogues. I knew that once I landed back home, I would likely not be able to spend as much time with them as I would have liked, so I would do my best when I could.