**A Practical Guide to Galactic Domination**

**Chapter 3**

**The Niima Monologue**

“*Note: my opponents keep fleeing into the Wasteland and recruiting armies there. Must recruit mercenaries to rally them and execute a great betrayal the moment I give the order*.” Dread Emperor Malignant II, the Particularly Petty

**Twenty-three years after the Battle of Yavin**

**Western Marches of the Inner Rim**

**Jakku System**

**Jakku**

Of course, by the time we were able to transport our small group of heroic resistance fighters to the approaches of Niima Outpost, the battle was long over.

Truth to tell, I wasn’t surprised. First, because transporting three persons, a droid, the possessions I wasn’t going to leave behind on Jakku, and enough food and water for us not to starve was a supply nightmare when the only vehicle at my disposal was my speeder.

Then there was the minor problem of evading all the TIE starfighters’ patrols circling around in the desert, which forced us to take quite a number of detours in the dunes.

And last but not least, Niima Outpost had nothing to defend itself against such an attack coming out of the blue.

Jakku was a planet full of scavengers and smugglers dabbling in old Imperial and Republican technology. It was not a fortress waiting for enemies to come break themselves on its walls. As teeth-grinding it was to admit, there were plenty of Callowan towns in my former life which could have provided greater resistance despite having no fortifications and little siege engines.

And when the number of attackers was certainly equal if not superior to the permanent residents of the greatest settlement of this planet, the outcome had been decided before the first blaster was fired in anger.

There had been some people who had tried to resist nonetheless; I supposed that when the enemy shot first and asked questions later, if you had weapons using them was not a great moral dilemma.

There were a couple of fallen red armours transported to the First Order’s transports which testified the guns of Niima had not been entirely useless.

Unfortunately, these few dead weren’t comparing to the fifty or sixty corpses I could count from our hidden observation post in the dunes. And there was also the minor issue of the two blasted areas where two freighters had tried to power their engines and escape.

Poor bastards. Most likely, they didn’t even hard the time to realise they were screwed before the TIE starfighters opened fire.

So that let us where we were now. We were hidden behind a dune, watching the parade of red armours of the First Order surrounding the survivors of the ‘battle’. I had not failed to notice that the half dozen humans living here had been separated from the other species. The former were in far better health than the latter too.

“Which ship do you think?” murmured Poe, his eyes hidden by the binoculars I had loaned him.

“You see the tent riddled with holes surrounded by three corpses? I think the ship beyond that is our best bet. It’s the *Rude Awakening*, my computers identified it as a model of Corellian medium freighter.”

And yes, before you asked, I was aware of the considerable irony of this name being involved in these desperate circumstances.

“It is.” The Resistance pilot agreed. “I think it was an YT-2550 before whichever parties interested in buying one modified it. That’s not a bad choice, assuming we can get to it and power engines and shields. Is it in good condition?”

I shrugged.

“It is regularly coming to Niima, at least twice a year. And it’s never staying long on Jakku, so the sand storms shouldn’t have damaged it too badly. But I was never invited inside by the owner.” I grimaced, finding what I searched. “I suppose the ship’s command data-key is with Lilmit’s corpse, he’s one of the three left for dead around the burning tent.”

“So you take it and we run to the *Rude Awakening*.”

“Excellent idea,” despite the military accent of the Basic that Finn used, his sarcasm was impossible to miss. “What are we going to do about the four hundred-plus First Order Stormtroopers between us and this freighter? Not to mention the six TIE Silencers on the ground which will no doubt want some target practise in and around the spaceport if there is trouble?”

Poe Dameron bit his lower lip and gave me back the binoculars without a word. It was quite obvious that the moment we stopped hiding and went on the offensive, the First Order Stormtroopers were going to try to kill us. And since there was somewhere between five hundred and six hundred metres between us and the *Rude Awakening*, unless they didn’t know how to shoot properly, we would be joining the other dead of the Outpost in a few seconds.

There were a few other starships closer to us, but given their derelict or damaged state, I would certainly not trust these hulls to lead us on the other side of Jakku, and the immensities outside it were out of the question.

“There are a lot of jokes about the legendary shooting skills of the Stormtroopers.”

Finn growled.

“We aren’t speaking about Core Worlds’ conscripts who never received formal weaponry training before being thrown on the frontlines like they were after the Yavin Disaster,” the ‘deserter’ of the First Order explained. “All these soldiers have received around two hundred hours of blaster training, and they’re using an improved version of the old E-11. They will shoot better, and I can guarantee you that without armour, one good hit will be all it takes to injure you severely.”

“You must really have angered whoever’s in charge of this operation,” I spoke absently trying to find an opening, but as long as you left the dunes, the terrain was so flat only the smoke and the debris caused by the one-sided carnage were worth something, and it wasn’t enough to provide a good defence.

I had no doubt I was worth easily ten of these ‘First Order Stormtroopers’. Between my ability to Speak and the weak Aspects I commanded, I could command a few to fire against their comrades, kill plenty with my quarterstaff and other weapons picked up on the battlefield.

But I could kill ten or twenty, it would still leave more than three hundred, and I doubted that for all the military training Finn and Poe had ever received, they could kill the same number of enemies without being expedited wherever dead went in this galaxy.

“Imperial Shuttle in approach from the north,” Poe was the first to see it. Fortunately, we were west of the Outpost, and as such we didn’t have to run to another dune in a hurry. “I think it’s *him*.”

Unlike his normal roguish voice, there was a non-negligible amount of venom in the last word.

I frowned and opened my mouth to ask who he was speaking about when I felt it. It was like a ripple of darkness upon this world. It was not pleasant, I could say that much. It was like a festering of hate and anger.

Whoever was inside this shuttle – a new class derived of the Lambda-class used by Imperial officers two decades ago – was the equivalent of Villain Named and didn’t try hard to make himself discreet.

The boarding ramp was opened on the rear mere seconds after the shuttle landed, and a black-clad man emerged, walking in a manner which could have been quite comical if I could not feel his hatred from here.

He was young, that much was evident. He was brown-haired and fair skin, and in my opinion if he hadn’t such a stern expression, he could be able to seduce quite a few Ladies.

But his blacker-than-night clothes, his unnatural yellow eyes, and the sheer amount of ‘Named aura’ he was unleashing on those nearby revealed him for what he was: a murderer, and not exactly a controlled one.

This guy was young, but I was ready to bet a few Druggats here and now that he had participated in the slaughter of Tuanu Outpost, and he had not been the last one to murder defenceless scavengers.

“Jacen Solo.” Poe Dameron murmured.

Finn clicked his tongue.

“In the First Order, he is known as Darth Caedus. He’s one of the Apprentices of the One True Sith.” The red-clad agent of the Pentastar Intelligence services breathed out. “This guy is very bad news. We can’t make our attempt to seize a ship for as long as he’s here.”

Before Finn had the opportunity to develop on the skills and the lethality of the newcomer, the red-clad stormtroopers dragged a familiar female Hutt in chains. Amusingly, they had to use ten pair of hands otherwise it would have been an insurmountable chore.

We were too far away to hear what Niima the Hutt said to the commander of the First Order.

The reaction was thunderous, however. One of the First Order’s soldiers shot her in the back.

And then the voice of Jacen Solo, also known as Darth Caedus, became louder and darker.

“**Peace is a lie**.”

His hand stopped in mid-air, and the enormous red body of the Hutt began to rise above the sand-covered ground.

“Oh by the stars...”

“**Your miserable slugs crawling in your swamps want peace. Pirates and smugglers, I all recognise you for all you are. I have always hated your kind. You are parasites**.”

“Guys, I think we have been granted a priceless opportunity.”

All eyes, be they of stormtroopers, TIE pilots, or prisoners of Niima Outpost, were completely focused on the ‘demonstration’ of their leader.

Said psychopath had decided to offer himself a monologue, and like a good little heroine, I wasn’t going to interrupt him when he was making the worst mistake of his life.

We began running in direction of the starship we had designated as our salvation, using as much as the debris and the few natural obstacles to try to stay unobserved as long as possible.

“**The Great Emperor Palpatine understood this. He knew only by the force of arms could this galaxy be kept in order, under the twin suns of Order and Prosperity. Our beloved Supreme Leader had long realised a nation can only exist if the strong are ready to rise and lead! For it is the strong which are the heart, the head, and the true blood of the Empire! Peace is a lie, there is only passion. Through passion, I gain strength**!”

Niima’s huge body was levitated higher, and despite having no love for her, I couldn’t help but wince as the bones began loudly to crack and the former ruler of Jakku shrieked in pain, shouting something unintelligible in Huttese.

“**Through strength, I gain power**!”

The dark aura washed over the camp, and a few prisoners clapped their hands unenthusiastically.

“**Through power, I gain victory**!”

Finding the data-key of the Rude Awakening on its owner’s corpse was child’s play.

I threw it to Poe, and our pilot sprinted to the freighter in an impressive sprint, Finn and I on his heels.

“**Through victory, my chains are broken! The Force shall set me free**!”

There was an atrocious sound and the familiar sound of dozens of blasters opening fire. When I turned back while still running, I saw the Huttese form be released from its invisible strings and fall lifelessly on the sand. There were also dozens of new corpses, as the non-humans kept prisoners had been eliminated by the red-armoured stormtroopers.

The more I watched them, the more I believed the First Order and the ancient Dread Emperors of Praes would have established beautiful friendships with each other.

Interestingly, there was a sort of dark current raised from this insane speech. By believing in these words, Jacen Solo was clearly playing a Role. There was power and a story supporting him.

Poe was on the boarding ramp when finally the author of the nice monologue realised some of the targets he had come for were about to escape him.

“The rebels are here! What are you waiting for? STOP THEM!”

I was thinking about how a lot of villains loved blaming their unfortunate subordinates for their own mistakes, but the taunts or ironic remarks I wanted to make were instantly dismissed as I saw the dark-clad villain *move*.

I had been a Named a lifetime ago. I had seen Named fight. I knew what they were capable of in terms of speed.

The First Order’s psychopath was nearly as fast as the best of them. In mere seconds, he had left most of his soldiers far behind him – their parade positions had left them out of blaster’s range - and he was accelerating. I was hearing something strangely similar to the whisper of the Gods Below. Finn sprinted to enter the *Rude Awakening*. I did not imitate him. I stayed on the boarding ramp and saw the murderer of Niima the Hutt make a sign with his right hand.

Someone with no Named experience would have been unable to feel it, but I knew what was attempted.

Everything was a matter of timing.

And as he was clearly going to act against our transport, I struck.

“**Stop and let us go**.” I Spoke, pushing as much command in my voice as I had ever done since I began experimenting on Jakku.

The brown-haired young man shook his head, stopped running, and lowered his arm.

Our eyes met for a moment, and I saw incomprehension in his gaze, soon replaced by panic.

“**MOVE**!” The Aspect was not really the hammer I wanted, but I had not the powers of the Night, and I had no alternative.

What surprised me that instead of forcing him back on a few metres, a terrible blast exploded from my hands and in mere seconds the warrior of the First Order was thrown halfway the distance it had ran in the first seconds. Normally I don’t rejoice too much at the discomfiture of an enemy, but the noise when he slammed into several of his own stormtroopers was very satisfying.

Judging by the groans of pain, the surprise had come as unexpectedly for them as it had for me.

I ran into the *Rude Awakening*, and didn’t look back.

The boarding ramp closed loudly, and by the time I arrived to the pilot and co-pilot seats, Poe had already the freighter in the air, and as we passed over the immobile TIE starfighters, Finn inflicted heavy damage on them with the ventral turret. Maybe some would be repaired, but they weren’t going to be in pursuit in the next minutes.

More explosions rocked Niima Outpost, and as some stormtroopers fired blindly in search of saboteurs and rebels which weren’t there. I saw that my early prediction wasn’t wrong. There was a lot of fire today. The future would tell if I was blamed for it or no.

“Your plan worked,” Poe told me as I took the co-pilot’s seat and diverted as much power as I could to the shields while keeping the engines and the laser turret at peak efficiency.

“The first part of the plan always works,” I replied as our newly acquired YT-2550 medium freighter soared higher and higher. “Let’s see if we can do as well on the second part.”

**Author’s note**: Next step, if you wonder, is evading the blockade in orbit of Jakku. What could go wrong?