

## Final Hours

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“Log entry one, Nathan Peters reporting. It has been an hour since the destruction of the Freedom...”, he paused searching for the proper words, “I am uncertain how many people survived. I have yet to see other pods...,” it came suddenly to him, “...I may be the only one left. NO... no, there must be more...there has to be!”

Hastily he switched off the recording. The longer he sat in the cramped pod the smaller and smaller it became. His legs ached to be exercised. The rations the GTA called food discussed him. His only comfort was the sole window mounted in front of him. He hoped that through it he would see a rescue ship or at least another pod.

He looked out the window again. Nothing. Hope was quickly dwindling that he would ever see another pod. By this point they would be far way, most likely disguised as stars. For the moment he was alone. No way to communicate with the outside. Time, an eternity it seemed, passed as he stared out the small opening.

He did not know where he was or where he was going, or even how fast. He might be heading home... or into enemy space. He chose not to think about that, only rescue. That was the priority getting home. Once home he was sure what he would do... he could join another ship...or quit the GTA altogether and go home... home to his wife.

What am I doing out here in the first place...I should be at home with my wife. If it was not for the Shivans I would be at her side now. His thoughts turned toward hatred for the Shivans. Thoughts of leaving his wife surfaced as well. She had begged him not to go. Now he wished he would have listened to her. But it was too late for any of that.

“Nathan, why does it have to be you? The GTA has plenty of good pilots.”

“Mary, I know you want me to stay but we’re at war and they need as many good pilot as they can get.”

“But how much do you think you can do by yourself.”

“If every pilot thought that they wouldn’t make a difference, no one would fight and we would lose.”

“What if you don’t come back?”

“Worry about that later, it’s time for me to be going.”

Those words echoed through his head over and over again. He was now faced with that possibility of not going home. Had his wife heard that his ship had been destroyed? Did she think that he was dead? I must return to her.

Must keep my mind on task. He turned back to his computer console. He fixed his gaze onto a flashing icon. Upon pressing it the computer responded, “Resuming log.”

“Log entry two. It has now been nearly twelve hours since the destruction of the Freedom. Still to sign of other survivors. This will be my record of the final hours of the Freedom...”

“First time on board an Orion class cruiser?”

“Uh,...yes sir,” he hesitantly admitted.

“You’ll have plenty of time to look around later, right now we’ve got a war to fight. We need to get you up to speed. Let me show you to your fighter.”

They walked across the hanger to where the fighters were parked. Never had he seen such a large assortment of craft. A sleek one caught his eye. It was a beauty to him. He fell in love with it instantly. His heart pounded with hope as they walked toward it.

“This will be your ship. Spend the next couple of hours learning her. Report back to me in two hours.”

“Aye sir.”

The officer turn away from him and proceeded back the way that they had came.

He looked in awe at this new ship. She was perfect. He mounted the cockpit ladder to have a look at the insides of it.

It was like a dream to him. He had never had the opportunity to fly such an advanced craft before. Those were the only thoughts in his head as he walked down the corridor. He caught site of the commanding officer and quickened his pace. Just as he was about to reach him. A deafening alarm began to wail.

“Sir, what’s going on,” Nathan asked.

“Enemy fleet,” he quickly replied “, we’ve been looking form them for a week. Report to you quarters while we take care of them.”

Confusion filled him. “Shouldn’t I go to my fighter?”

“Not this time. You haven’t even flown in it yet, let alone fight. Maybe next time.”

Disappointment flooded to this face, he managed a slow, “Yes Sir”.

He found the quarters assigned to him. He signaled the door and stepped through as they opened. He paused just after entering and let the door slide close behind him. There was nothing to do but sit and wait.

He began to look around his new home. It was located on the interior of the ship, so there wasn’t a viewport. The only real furniture provided was a desk, a chair, and a bed set into the wall. It was dimly lit by a single light hanging from the ceiling.

He laid himself onto the bed. This was going to be a long wait he thought to himself. I wonder how long it will take to defeat this enemy fleet? What was the size of it?

An eternity passed as the battle lasted hour after hour. He could not see the battle, but he could feel the ship shudder every time that it was hit. Suddenly the ship began a violent shuddering. From the comm system several messages blared all at once. “SHIELDS DOWN”, “HULL BREACH”, “REACTOR CRITICAL”, “ABANDON SHIP”,.

Fear suddenly gripped him. The ship was on the verge of exploding! How do I get to the escape pods? He bolted out the door in hope that he could escape.

A minute later he crammed himself in a small pod. As soon as he had secured the door the computer came online. After quickly looking over the display, he pressed the large launch icon. He was thrown back into his seat as the g-forces pulled at him.

The pod began to slowly spin around. Through the small window on the side of the pod, the Freedom came into view. Just as it centered itself in the window the aft section was torn to pieces by a violent explosion. Tongues of fire licked out from the wreckage. The forward section soon followed in the same fiery ball. His pod was hit by a shockwave that tossed him about. When he looked back out, all that remained was a large cloud of hot glowing debris.

Horror gripped him. All those people. The enemy had succeeded in destroying one of our greatest warships. Was there any way to stop them? Now that his was destroyed would there be anyone to rescue him?

His dreams of flying in that fighter in battle against the enemy were all but gone now, replaced with the uncertainty of survival...

“That is all I know of the events leading up to the destruction of the Freedom. Nathan Peters signing off.”

He switched off the recorder again. All his dreams were gone now. His hope for rescue was quickly diminishing. He was alone now. He looked once more out the window...