All Have Vanished Under the Ashes

Posted originally on the fanfiction.lol at https://fanfiction.lol/works/1030.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Category:	General (non relationship-focused)
Fandoms:	Star Wars - All Media Types, Star Wars: Rebels (Cartoon), Star Wars: The Thrawn Trilogy - Timothy Zahn
Relationship:	Ezra Bridger & Thrawn | Mitth'raw'nuruodo
Characters:	Ezra Bridger, Thrawn | Mitth'raw'nuruodo
Additional Tags:	Post-Canon, Alternate Universe - Modified Canon, Dead Dove: Do Not Eat, Whump, Angst, Hurt/Comfort, Angst and Hurt/Comfort, PTSD | Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Horror, Body Horror, Parasitic entity, Parasitism, Survivor's Guilt, Suicidal Thoughts, Suicide Attempt, nuclear winter, Post-Apocalypse, The Dark Side of the Force, Manipulation, Grief/Mourning, enemy to ally, Forced Proximity, Partial Mind Control
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of Star Wars: Ad Astra
Stats:	Published: 2026-11-02 Words: 2,824 Chapters: 1/30

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by Pyama

Summary

Only Ezra and Thrawn survived the forced jumps made by the Purrgil and the destruction of the Chimaera. Despite their lingering resentment and anger, they managed to survive by cooperating, allowing them to endure longer on a planet gripped by a nuclear winter, all while a new threat looms over this distant galaxy.

Notes

Hello over here! I am happy to have discovered this archive and to join your community! I therefore offer you a fanfiction that can also be found on Ao3 but which, for the occasion, will be rewritten; Indeed, I have improved my writing style a lot so much so that the first five chapters needed a little sprucing up.

I thank you in advance to those who read me, leave me a kudo and, perhaps, a comment!

Besides, I would like to warn you: English is not my native language and because of a learning disorder, I have a lot of trouble learning languages. I use a translator and wordreference, but there may still be quite a few errors in my texts. I am open to corrections and thank you in advance for your help!

My tumblr: @pyamaao3

Chapter 1: Everyone here and elsewhere was going to die

Music : EXIMIA – First Contact | Ruptured World - VES 007 - IC 1101

And so comes chaos.

The screaming alarm twists through his skull and swallows up all coherent thought, as the Chimaera and the rest of the Seventh Fleet are propelled through hyperspace. The Purrgils reassert their hold on him as they gain speed, pulling a grimace from him that betrays his pain: the tentacles compress his ribs, preventing him from breathing properly. The bridge is seen drowned in a red glow softened by the white and blue streaks of hyperspace which twists into a tunnel around them.

And he, in the middle of this chaos, stands there helpless.

Wide-eyed, Thrawn watches everything he has built and sacrificed being reduced to ashes; years of effort and careful planning are wiped away in less than a second. His shoulders sag under the weight of despondency, while a bitter taste rises to his throat. Disgusted, Thrawn is disgusted. All this for nothing. The realization hits him like a blaster shot to the heart and the admiral finds himself letting loose a long moan of rage. This failure is intolerable to him and not without consequences, not only for him, for his crew, but especially for the Chiss Ascendancy. As best he can, Thrawn takes a deep breath, thinking of his people and the familiar faces he hasn't seen in so many years. A handful of them counted on him, still believed in him and now he had just failed.

Everyone here and elsewhere was going to die because of one kid.

Thrawn looks around the bridge and his eyes land on his blaster fallen not far from him. He licks his lips, thinks, before turning as best he can in the direction of Ezra Bridger. With a cold, calculating eye, the Grand Admiral gauges the boy's condition: in places, shards of glass have cut into his skin. The deepest wounds are on his trembling arms and his sweat-soaked face. The human's breathing is labored, his legs threaten to give way at any moment and are only held back by the extreme tension in his muscles. In Thrawn's eyes, the kid wasn't going to last long at this rate; he just has to wait. His fingers are already tingling with eagerness to grab the blaster. One second, two at most, and it will be over for this insolent person who, moreover, ends up giving in; a thin trickle of blood flows from his nose, his eye turns, his body staggers and the grip of the Purrgils weakens, offering Thrawn this awaited opportunity.

Thrawn immediately slips away from the tentacles and lunges for his blaster, while it takes Ezra half a second to react in response, giving in to panic. A “no” escapes his trembling lips and, in a vain attempt, Ezra deploys the Force towards Thrawn. The latter feels resistance, like a hand that tries to grab him, but which considerably lacks grip, in no way preventing him from retrieving his weapon and firing it in a second. Unfortunately for him, Ezra manages to deflect the shot, as well as the burst that follows, with his left hand, while the right raises a small piece of debris which he throws towards the Admiral. Thrawn narrowly

dodges it, however taking a shard of glass which cuts his cheek, but it's not only that which draws a weak complaint from him; his body aches, his ribs compress around his lungs and he too begins to become exhausted. However, Thrawn resumes his assault, to the great dismay of Ezra who draws on his last strength to face it.

With each of his shots, Thrawn manages to take a few steps forward, his face contorted with fury and annoyance. He wonders how this young insolent still manages to stand, he who in all probability should have already been dead. As for Ezra, he knows he won't last much longer; maintaining his connection with the Purrgils consumes him and responding to Thrawn's every shot doesn't help him. He is on the verge of collapse, he feels unconsciousness caressing his mind, increasing his panic, while Thrawn only approaches. A cold fear creeps through his veins. Every step Thrawn takes is a condemnation. He can't stop it.

Die.

He was going to die.

Another shot whistles. It burns the tip of his ear. He barely hears the Purrgils singing their worries to him. His muscles scream as he tries to stand upright against the Grand Admiral who is dangerously too close. Ezra tries once again to tap into the Force, but his fingers tense in the void, incapable of reaching this energy which, until now, had sustained him. His mind is failing. All ties with the Purrgils are cut the moment Thrawn hits him in the face with his rifle butt. Ezra takes several steps back as he brings his hands to his bloody nose. He sees blurry for a moment, then everything in his field of vision flickers as he falls backwards; Thrawn has just delivered a brutal elbow to his sternum. The air leaves his lungs in a painful gasp. He coughs and spits blood after turning around. Ezra tries to get up, but again, Thrawn brings the butt of his blaster down against his shoulder blade with incredible violence, so that the bone emits a disturbing cracking sound. The pain that the padawan feels makes him cry out loudly. He collapses, his breathing is labored, his body shaken by a few spasms and sobs.

Die.

He was going to die.

The silhouette of Thrawn looms above him, menacing. He aims his blaster at him. Ezra doesn't want to die, not like this, not without the certainty that Thrawn, too, is dead. He grimaces, tries to move, but his body falls back heavily. Thrawn slides his finger on the trigger and savors the satisfaction of finally taking down his enemy. Only, a brutal jolt makes the Chimaera tremble, forcing Thrawn to grab a railing to avoid losing his balance, but unfortunately for him, his blaster slips from his hands and falls several meters from him. In the next second, a low growl filled the tension-saturated air, deep and guttural, a warning song that makes Thrawn feel nauseous. Suddenly, the Purrgil-powered ship is yanked from the relative safety of hyperspace. For a brief moment, the void of space invades the bridge; all noise is silenced, the air becomes rarefied, cutting off Thrawn's breath, who is frozen with cold; a cold never felt before, not even on Rentor and even less on Csilla. With all his strength, he clings to this railing, feeling gravity slipping away from him, while Ezra – now unconscious – owes his survival to a control panel which holds his body long enough.

Everything lasts no more than a second before the emergency shields take over and protect the bridge which immediately oxygenates, offering Thrawn a breath of breathable air.

He releases the railing and lets himself fall, his nerves on edge. His attention falls on Ezra who is lying on the ground, inert. The idea of ending this now is more than pleasant, but no longer a threat, Thrawn prefers to prioritize his survival and that of his crew. He gets up and the effort makes him grimace and he curses his body which is shaking. He staggers to a thankfully functional computer and after entering various commands, Thrawn launches a full scan of the Chimaera. It doesn't take long for the results to scroll across the screen, and each line Thrawn reads confirms a new failure: primary system out of order; failing life support system; inactive propulsion; one engine out of service; weakened shields and it continues like this. Thrawn closes his eyes and pinches the top of his nose, exhaling a long breath, before turning towards what remains of the large window. The silhouette of a planet is silhouetted in the darkness and its gravitational pull grabs the drifting ship. The Chimaera is lost, there is nothing more to do. A strange feeling comes over him at the thought and it twists his stomach. His fingers tremble as he takes a comlink from his pocket and he issues the following order in a firm voice:

"Attention crew, head to the escape pods immediately, I repeat, head to the escape pods." Only silence answers him. No sign of life behind the constant crackle of the comlink. His jaw tenses as he reiterates with more fervor. "Let the survivors head to the escape pods immediately."

But this silence, which makes him sick, persists and Thrawn dares to hope that there are indeed survivors and the lack of response is due to damaged communication systems; there must be survivors, there must be. He slips his comlink into his pocket and moves towards taking it out without further delay, deliberately ignoring Ezra who deserves nothing but death. However, when he reaches the threshold of the door, a treacherous doubt creeps into him. He hesitates and dares to look in spite of himself, while a sudden thought arises: he could be useful, right? His eyebrows furrow in disbelief and a wrinkle creases his forehead. *How could it be useful?* He scoffs internally, already ready to brush the idea aside and continue on his way.

Ascendancy.

His mind analyzes the idea and sees so many possibilities he would never have dared to imagine, while a vivid image burns into his retinas; Ezra, with the navigators, teaching his knowledge. This short vision leaves him feverish, he holds his breath for a few seconds. Could Ezra be their solution? Very quickly, caution catches up with him: Ezra is far too unstable a variable and alone carries far too much risk and unknown that Thrawn cannot afford. Yet... Yet... He is devoured by what logic dictates to him and a visceral presentiment that he cannot stifle. Not agreeing to further reflections, Thrawn turns suddenly, approaches Ezra, grabs him with a sharp gesture and hoists him onto his shoulders, before leaving the bridge once and for all.

He thus progresses through the rubble and discovers inert bodies at each turn of the corridor which he mentally counts: Enock; Iresalk; Hammerly; Verthr. At each door he comes across, Thrawn flings them open, hoping to find survivors, but only names are added to the list of

losses. Some have been with him since day one and others have only just joined the crew. A palette of names, personalities and dreams that had sworn allegiance to him and those for better and for worse. The Chimaera swayed dangerously and Thrawn had to grab onto the wall to keep his balance. The ship groans in agony, its sinister song adding to the din of alarms. Finally, Thrawn manages to reach the section reserved for the escape pods and drops Ezra into one of the four pods. He allows himself to waste a little time exploring the area, getting his hands on three crates which reach Ezra. Then, he waits, before grabbing his comlink. Thrawn moistens his lips, closes his eyes and repeats the following command for the third time:

"Attention crew, head to the escape pods immediately, I repeat, head to the escape pods."

Nothing.

Obviously.

Thrawn resigns himself, activates the launch system and climbs aboard the capsule. At the same time, the lights come on, the motors whir, then the SAS closes, while it settles behind the control panel. He straps himself in, presses a series of buttons and hesitates for a few seconds, before pulling a lever. Immediately, the capsule detaches from the Chimaera with a dull rumble. Very quickly, Thrawn guides the small ship away from the Destroyer, but above all away from the gravitational pull of the planet. Once safe, the Admiral faces the horrible vision: before him, the Chimaera is drifting, he who was as much his vessel as his pride, but above all his home. Its carcass is torn apart on all sides. Panels, doors, crates and other electrical wires swirl in the vacuum of space. Slowly, but surely, the Chimaera is caught in the gravitational field and is now falling towards its end, taking in its wake so many names that the world will immediately have forgotten. Worse still, demonized, ignoring the complexity that was his crew and which died out in deafening silence. Not once did Thrawn look away, as the Chimaera pierced the atmosphere of this nameless planet and disappeared from sight.

Once again he failed.

Without a word, Thrawn detaches his rank tag and places it on the empty seat to his left. The Grand Admiral is also dead. The rest of the half hour the Chiss spends gazing at the planet and the many stars that shine eons ago, before standing up, his gaze settling on Ezra. He tempers this resentment he feels all at once and he approaches a wall where several compartments are interlocked. He opens one, retrieves the first aid kit that is there, before kneeling next to the young man from whom he removes his jacket, then his t-shirt, before turning on the portable scanner. The Chiss examines him without delay and what he sees makes him wince: two cracked ribs, broken bones at his shoulder blade and quickly discovers another fracture further down his back. Likewise, his shoulder and forearm are not left out, they also have fortunately clear and easily healed fractures. In addition, the scanner does not detect any internal bleeding, but the large wounds running through his body inevitably cause blood loss. He places the scanner and begins by saturating the various wounds, before applying a layer of bacta, then a bandage which he adjusts correctly. For the shoulder, Thrawn finds a splint in another compartment and traps Ezra's arm inside.

Thus treated, Thrawn lays the young man down in a good position and finds a survival blanket in a third compartment which he places on Ezra, before checking the temperature in the cabin using a touch screen: 21°. Thrawn hesitates and increases a degree, before focusing on another screen which is a map of their galaxy. The Chiss enters a query and launches a search for their exact position, while he again observes the planet which is strangely unknown to him. This lack of knowledge already puts him on a trail: they are not in a star system listed by the Empire or even by the Old Republic and he faces two hypotheses: either they are in the Unknown Regions and in a solar system that is not known by the Chiss Ascendancy or the hyperspace jump of the Purrgils took them beyond Chaos and, potentially, into an entirely different galaxy. Is that even possible? This is a subject that Thrawn has no answers to and he curses himself for not having studied his star whales more seriously.

He turns away from the screen, letting the computer do its work and some would have taken the opportunity to rest, this is not the case for Thrawn who remains active, he who is already starting to plan the next course of events: once he is aware of their exact position, he could, perhaps, send a distress signal... *No*. Negation weighs on his shoulders as he realizes that even if they are still in the Imperial zone (which is very unlikely), he could not risk giving his position to the Empire: he had just lost the entire Seventh Fleet and Thrawn senses that the next summoning of the Emperor will mark his end. But if they are indeed in the Unknown Regions, fleeing the Empire is much simpler, only the use of the distress beacon should be avoided, because the scoundrels are actively looking for their signals. No, he will have to land on this planet and get his hands on a communication system that will allow him to contact the Ascendancy in complete safety. What if they were in a completely different galaxy? Thrawn purses his lips: impossible to contact anyone.

In any case, it will be necessary to land on this planet at some point, because this capsule in no way allows for long-term survival and Thrawn does not know how long they would stay there while waiting for help. However, before fully considering this option, he must first perform a scan of the planet to ensure environmental viability and if, by chance, it has cities or at least one outpost. A loud alarm alerts him and Thrawn glances at the screen which shows a simple line: position unknown.
This solar system is not listed in the Imperial database, so either they are in the Unknown Regions... or they are beyond Chaos... Thrawn grabs the first aid kit and sits down heavily behind the cockpit, exhausted. Without waiting, he starts scanning the planet from the control panel computer, before stretching and taking off his jacket, then his t-shirt, before applying first aid to himself.

"Come on," he mutters, not without bitterness. "Just like old times."

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