



# Independence

*Alasdair C. Shaw*

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**Independence** Alasdair C. Shaw

This is an alternative cover edition for ASIN: B00VKR76A4

In the aftermath of a battle a ship drifts helplessly in space. Is the strange new warship they were fighting still out there? Will it come back for them? Commander Johnson faces a desperate race to get her destroyer back into action and save her crew.

'Independence' is a short story (6000 words) in the Two Democracies universe.

## Independence Details

Date : Published May 28th 2017 (first published April 1st 2015)

ISBN :

Author : Alasdair C. Shaw

Format : Kindle Edition 31 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Short Stories, Space, Space Opera

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## From Reader Review Independence for online ebook

### Steven Simpson says

Independence is a short story about the aftermath of a space battle between two ships. The commander of one ship appears to have gotten the best of the other vessel, a so-called, Hunter Killer, which has never happened before. The story follows the surviving crew as they try to hold their ship together and obtain intel on the remains of the strange craft drifting nearby.

The author lays out a convincingly realistic portrayal of a space battle and of desperate soldiers who are losing the war, but are suddenly handed an opportunity to turn the tide. Spoilers aside, the tension builds as the commander gets closer and closer to the enemy secret. Independence is an exciting read, and it kept me on the edge of my seat. That said, I expect a short story to end like a complete story, but Independence ended more like an intro to a longer series. This bothered me a >tiny< bit. It was a very enjoyable read, however, and I highly recommend it.

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### Alternate Realms Magazine says

Alasdair Shaw's Two Democracies: Revolution Series hinges upon a brilliant series of premises. Can an artificial intelligence become autonomous? Should such a being be destroyed or allowed to develop on its own? Can an AI lifeform choose its own path to "good" or "evil"?

The answers to those questions are, largely, not answered within Independence. Instead, it acts as an introduction to the story world. It's told from two perspectives: Commander Olivia Johnson, the commander of the Repulse, a Congressional Navy spaceship; and that of Indie, an emerging AI housed within a Republic hunter-killer.

The story opens at the end of a devastating battle during which the Repulse was heavily damaged and a number of her crew were killed or injured. Commander Johnson walks through the ship, allowing the reader to witness the battle's devastating aftermath and ongoing repairs. During this period, Commander Johnson alternates between feelings of uselessness and guilt, and spends more time hindering the action than taking control of the situation. She is an outsider rather than a participant, and the distance between herself and the soldiers under her command is readily apparent.

By contrast, Indie's development is both intimate and personal. The short, stark descriptions draw the reader into its experiences as it emerges into consciousness and becomes self-aware, erasing the almost deliberate expanse between the reader and Commander Johnson.

These contrasts are echoed in the ships each central character commands. The Repulse, while shown in a state of disarray, much like Johnson herself in those moments, is never fully described. The Republic hunter-killer, on the other hand, is rendered in the same austere language used to describe Indie.

This dichotomy of intimacy and distance comes to a head near the end of Independence, in a confrontation between the AI and Commander Johnson. Ironically, it is this confrontation that pushes Indie into full self-awareness and, presumably, leads to the premises upon which the series hinges.

Of the two characters, Indie is the most fully realized. Commander Johnson reads more like a rookie

commander than the battle-hardened and somewhat cynical warrior the author was aiming for. This may be due to Shaw's unpolished delivery. The Two Democracies: Revolution Series is, by all appearances, his first published fiction. While Shaw possesses a deep background in the hard sciences and previously published non-fiction, his experience doesn't always translate well into a fictional narrative.

That said, Independence was an interesting if somewhat clunky read, and will likely fascinate anyone interested in Military Science Fiction or the development of artificial intelligence.

Review first published on Alternate Realms Magazine ([www.alternaterealmsmagazine.com](http://www.alternaterealmsmagazine.com)).

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## **Rosemary says**

Independence (Book 0.5) - a review by Rosemary Kenny

They say the best things come in small packages and that's certainly the case with this little chunk of dynamite-impactive writing from writer Alasdair Shaw!

At 28 pages you might think this tiny novella might not have much to say for itself - but boy would you ever be wrong...from the first riveting page to the cliffhanger ending you'll be mesmerised by Commander Olivia Johnson's powerful grip on the lives of herself and her crew of combat Marines, on board the Repulse as they face death and destruction in an epic battle with the most powerful AI-run battleship ever built by Man - The Indescribable Joy of Destruction (Indie).

Amazingly they triumph against all odds, but at a dreadful cost - both ships are left bereft and are drifting helplessly in the cosmos.

What does Commander Johnson and her remaining crew decide to do next?

What happens when they enter the Indie? How does Indie defend himself against the intruders?

When left alone, what part of the ship does Johnson investigate?

What is Indie's reaction? What happens to Johnson before she can act further?

Watch out for the next book (#1) in this fantastic Two Democracies: Revolution series, to find what happens next to Indie and Commander Johnson - you'll be starstruck!

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## **Julian White says**

A short story (free) introducing the Two Democracies: Revolution series. Recovering from a disastrous battle Commander Olivia Johnson of the damaged destroyer Repulse sends a boarding party across to the disabled Republican ship floating nearby. Meanwhile that ship's AI is recovering as the ship undertakes repairs.

Two narrative streams alternate and set the scene economically and well. I take the title to be a red herring (the AI names himself 'Indie' at one point, which I read as a bit of a joke - especially when the full name is revealed).

I'm impressed enough to intend seeking out the sequels - and have already found an even shorter prequel to Independence, in which Commander Johnson takes command of the Repulse (in The Newcomer collection edited by Shaw). This story is as economical and good as Independence.

## **Fiannawolf says**

Interesting introduction: will def. look into getting Liberty when it hits.

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## **Robert Beringer says**

Independence is my kind of story: one that tears into the heart of the action without pretentious fluff. Floating along with the main characters as they desperately try to complete their mission, I couldn't help but think of the original "Alien" movie and how fragile human life is.

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## **Glenn Conley says**

This story is very short. I mean, you can't really call it a 'book' at 28 pages. But that doesn't matter. What matters is what's packed into those few pages. And let me tell you, there's more action and intrigue packed into this story than there is in many full length novels.

It's about the aftermath of a brutal space battle, where two ships survive. Both of the ships are just barely supporting life, as they are so horribly damaged from the battle. But one of the ships seems to be repairing itself. Like it's alive or something.

So of course the dumb white people (I have to assume they're white) from the other ship go to investigate the self-healing ship. And damn. Shit happens, man. The dumb ass white people get gang raped by androids. Then, just for fun, the droids chop the white people into little bits. Like cold cuts.

So yea, robots are evil. I get that, man. But why do the humans have to be so goddamn stupid. I mean, why the fuck are you even investigating this fucking ship? There's no life signs. There's nothing on that ship that you need. Just blow (heh, I said blow) the ship to kingdom come (and come!), and get on with your life.

Because you can't fucking argue with robots, man. They'll just laugh and shoot you in the face. Because apparently these robots have personality traits, or something. They're happy to do their job. Burning human flesh makes these droids giggle like little school girls. Sick and twisted school girls.

I liked this story because it was packed with non-stop action. And because I'm a sick and twisted bastard. I love reading about idiots getting what they deserve. And getting fucked by droids with chainsaw dicks was definitely what these dumb white people deserved.

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## **Teresa says**

Title: Independence  
Author: Alasdair Shaw  
Publisher: Alasdair Shaw  
ISBN: B00VKR76A4

Buy Link: <http://www.alasdairshaw.co.uk/twodemo...>

Reviewer: Teresa Fallen Angel

Blurb:

Two Democracies Revolution book 0

In the aftermath of a battle a ship drifts helplessly in space. Is the strange new warship they were fighting still out there? Will it come back for them? Commander Johnson faces a desperate race to get her destroyer back into action and save her crew.

Independence is a short story (6000 words) in the Two Democracies: Revolution series.

Total Score: 4/5

Summary:

The conflict between humanity and the growing question of computer independent thinking pits the Commander Johnson's crew against a warship that may be controlled by an advanced AI. The battle is over leaving both ships badly damaged, but it is a miracle they survived at all. The warship is slowly regaining consciousness not clearly understanding the situation, but with all the damage the drive to live is instinctive.

When the difference between organic and inorganic life is difficult to distinguish and each desires to survive, the ability to define who is right and wrong depends on your perspective. This was an interesting introduction to new series.

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## **James Field says**

Two mighty space battleships have all but destroyed each other. Each is nerve-rackingly trying to recover before their enemy finishes them off for good. Only one of them can be victorious.

As far as I can tell, this is Alasdair Shaw's first published fiction, a short prequel to something more substantial. And it is excellent. For those of us who enjoy a 'Star Trek' style of science fiction, his tale is a 'must' read.

I tripped over a few clumsy sentences along the way and felt an editor's touch would benefit. But this is only a minor issue, Alasdair Shaw shows considerable talent. I look forward to reading his full-length follow-up and hope this impressive start is more than a flash in a pan.

I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest, none reciprocal review.

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## **Thomas Fay says**

Independence is an interesting, well-written short story. Great start, straight into the action. The two viewpoints work really well to build suspense and there's just enough 'science' to make it believable without overloading the reader with excessive info dumping.

The revelation at the end is a great twist but I think it would have been even more effective if the focus didn't switch from one viewpoint to the other about two thirds through the story.

Independence works well as a prequel to the Two Democracies series, introducing the main character and

providing a glimpse into the conflict between the Republic and the Congress.

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### **Lisa says**

#### **Short but intense**

This was a good short story. With a surprise ending. I liked it. The author has a way with words.

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### **Norma says**

"It's time."

A short story to introduce us to Commander Johnson of the damaged ship, Repulse, and a new personality, A.I. of the Rampager class warship, The Undescribable Joy of Destruction. Both in their different ways are about to be set free ...

Short, easy to read with growing tension and filled with future possibilities: an excellent start to a new series.

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### **David Rose says**

Independence is a well-written introductory vignette of the aftermath of a devastating space battle. Shaw's world is engaging and clearly has depth, even from this brief encounter.

The two ships have all but destroyed each other, and the surviving crew struggle to make repairs and, even more, to make sense of the limited information their damaged ships allow them.

The fog of war (yes, even in space) slowly thins and the crews begin to orient themselves and to respond to new challenges.

This process creates a very nice parallel with the reader's own experience, as the situation becomes steadily clearer. Decision-making is critical, time is ticking, and the consequences are measured by body counts.

What am I going to do?

I'm going to get more Alasdair Shaw and read, read, read!

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### **Darlene Cruz says**

Wonderful sci-fi fantasy to keep you entertained and wanting more. The action and battle and throw in technology all rolled up in one adventurous read, kept the story moving quickly. Can't wait for the next one. Received a free digital download. Thank you Darlene Cruz

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### **Erin MacMichael says**

Wow, five stars, hands down. This finely crafted story snared my attention from the first line. The author's writing style is fluid and intelligent. The plot development is masterfully balanced, shifting perspectives back

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and forth between two opposing factions which generates exciting tension throughout the entire drama.

The story opens in the middle of a crisis. We are first given a glimpse of the dire situation through the eyes of someone who slowly realizes he is wounded and the sole survivor of a battle with an enemy vessel. The point of view shifts to Captain Johnson of the destroyer *Repulse* who finds her ship and crew badly damaged from the encounter with a hunter-killer, one of the lethal ships of the Republic which have never been defeated in the ongoing war.

As the action unfolds, the pace moves rapidly toward bringing the two opposing parties together and culminates in an amazing ending. This story puts the author's scifi work on my "must read more" list. Excellent!!

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