

Atonement

"The Founding of Tython Squadron"

Sky Breach Base

Daleem

Kiast System

D-1

The *Havoc's Tether* was packed to the brim with unruly, boisterous patrons. Not a single table or barstool in the dimly lit cantina remained empty. Returning soldiers, pilots, mechanics, and mercenaries drank and caroused to celebrate the recent victory against the forces of the Collective. Many drank to dull the pain of losing comrades and to forget the horrors of battle. Others chased their vices with wild abandon to escape the memory of the closing of the last war. That was a *different* time. That was a *different* place.

Far in the rear of the establishment, nestled in a corner booth sat three very *different* men. Millions of miles and lifetimes of regret and hard choices had brought them together. The heavily bandaged man, early thirties and compactly built slowly pushed his glass around the table. Clank. Clank. Clank. He was as silent and inflective as the grizzled Jedi and the stout Chiss seated to either side of him. They took turns chasing the shadows in the corners of their mind as a gaudily dressed barmaid came over to refill their slowly evaporating drinks.

Mauro Wynter should *not* have been at the *Havoc's Tether*. If it were not for the men seated with him, his corpse would lay crumped next to the bodies of the Shikari on the bleached sands of Nancora. Perhaps none of them should have been *here* at all. The same question that had haunts every soldier in every war stalked the Human's mind. "Why are we alive when so many better men are dead?" he asked.

Director Maximus Alvinus and Executor Len Iode looked up from wherever their minds had wandered to. Mauro's rhetorical question, his aching survivor's guilt was answered by the literal and methodic Chiss. "Mauro, you know the way the cards fall in war. As soldiers, we simply do what we must and hope that..." he was cut off. "He isn't talking about Nancora." Maximus stated dryly. They returned to the exhaustive work of staring at their glasses.

Commander's Quarters
Sky Breach Base
Daleem
D-Day

Standing at attention did not come easily to Mauro Wynter *these* days. Once he had been a fanatic Imperialist with Clan Scholae Palatinae. He recalled that the Director seated in front of him had often stood by his side in those days following orders mercilessly and efficiently. New Tython *had* changed that.

Satele Shan's Director and Executor were somberly reviewing the Odan-Urr's casualty lists. Even in victory, the butcher's bill had come due at a steep price. Mauro remembered the Harakoans of New Tython. He recalled an ancient civilization eradicated due to hatred.

Len signaled for Mauro to stand at ease, a lifetime of military bearing and etiquette radiating off of his blue skin. "Director Alvinus has brought you here because of your shared history and because he *trusts you*. To be blunt, claiming victory in this recent war has shaken Odan-Urr to its core. We were prepared to die fighting in the skies above Kiast and on the fields of Daleem as the Collective bombarded our cities and slaughtered our people" he stated calmly.

The Chiss turned to Maximus who eyed his old friend sullenly. "We have a dilemma. Victory has brought us a windfall of recruits and credits. We are being flooded by strangers seeking asylum and former enemies seeking alliance. For our *resistance* to truly become a *rebellion* we must take this help at face value. The question becomes how can we protect our bastion of Kiast from *without* when we no longer are assured from *within*?" he asked.

BOOM. As if on cue, the holo projector built into the Director's desk began playing newsreels of events none of them could ever possibly forget. *New Tython*. The death of a planet. The genocide of a people. The shattering of a dream. Mauro shook, startled from the trauma freshly awakening in his shattered psyche. Maximus reached across the table and steadied him. A look of compassion and understanding was shared.

The Director held Mauro by his shoulders and locked his gaze. "With so many new faces we simply do not know who to trust. The Iron Throne has agents everywhere. Jedi are tempted to the Dark Side. With wealth and victory, sycophants and vice always follow. Never again shall we allow our pride and frailties be the reason for a planet to burn and a people experience genocide." Maximus was now the one shaken, if only ever so slightly.

He regained his composure. "You are to recruit an internal security force with the authority to investigate any and all members of our resistance, rooting out corruption as you find it and thwarting it from planting a seed. Furthermore, to provide the ability to launch such operations we will secretly provide you with military assets. You are to become an independent arm of the defense of the Kiast System. This is not a request, *Commander Wynter*, it is an order."

Control Cloister
Sky Breach Base
Daleem
D+1

The task of clearing out the offices previously inhabited by Garza's Pathfinders gave him no pleasure, despite his recent promotion. *Pathfinders* had a storied tradition, and had sacrificed much in the service of Odan-Urr. He hoped his erstwhile internal security force would live up to such a legacy. *Different times. Different people.*

Director Alvinus' pledge to secretly provide assets was more literal than Wynter might have envisioned. He was given no support staff and only granted access to the Cloister. The question of where to begin organizing a secret police force eluded him for many hours.

Mauro was jarred back to his senses as the doorway of the Control Cloister opened, allowing a petite, porcelain skinned Zabrak woman to enter. Wynter looked up from the console he was brooding over, puzzled by the apparition defiantly sauntering towards him. Her vestigial horns were shorn close to her scalp, covered by her wildly flowing platinum hair. She might have been mistaken for one of those angels Deep Core explorers often fabled if not for the crisp uniform she wore bearing the insignia of the O.E.F. Navy.

Wynter slowly released the blaster he had seated on his lap. *Looks could kill*, he thought to himself as the woman stood firmly at attention in front of him and rendered a crisp salute. He rose and returned the salute as best he could.

"Major Silvia Tanos, Intelligence Officer, *Remembrance of Seher*, reporting for duty as by orders of Director Alvinus," she declared smartly. A slight tone of disdain registering in her voice. She glared at Mauro as she waited to be put at ease.

"At ease, Major Tanos. Tell me, what *were* your orders exactly?" asked Wynter. He motioned for her to be seated as she set down a stack of dossier files. It appeared her orders included not to leave a digital footprint.

"Director Alvinus had me personally *removed* the *Seher* to serve as your Liaison Officer. I was briefed that while this mission is classified, the O.E.F. Navy will have nominal OPCON over it. I am unaware of *what* exactly the O.E. F. Navy thinks it will be controlling," she answered.

Wynter eyed the stack of dossiers. *Service records*. That is a start, he thought to himself. "Major Tanos, my mandate was to provide Odan-Urr an internal police force to suppress any corruption within our ranks while also being able to credibly support the defenses of Kiast. How I can do both with no funding or equipment is beyond my grasp," he answered ruefully.

The Zabrak sat emotionless, staring at Mauro. The thought occurred to him that Alvinus providing him with an Intelligence Officer may have been a mocking gesture. *No, it must be a*

clue. He counted the number of dossiers. Eleven, including Tanos' own. He keenly scanned her service record. Much had been redacted but he noted she had previous experience as the Training Officer with *Sigma Squadron*.

"Major Tanos, please use the Cloister's comically advanced communications array to get a hold of all of the service members contained in those dossiers. Schedule a meeting as soon as possible and see if we can't reserve a hanger bay on the orbital side of Sky Breach. Meet me topside in six hours," he ordered, "I have some crates to move."

Hanger Bay Delta-Seven
Sky Breach Orbital Platform
Daleem Mesosphere
D+1, 1800 Hours

Several lights flickered in the cavernous hanger bay as a faulty klaxon hummed defiantly in the distance. Mauro sat idly, waiting for Major Silvia Tanos to arrive. His desk was a drab metal alloy, shabbily constructed and showing years of abuse. So too were the four benches arranged nearby.

The Zabrak arrived punctually, as expected. Saluting crisply, she took a seat on the bench in front of him. "All recruits will be arriving tomorrow. I have scheduled a briefing at zero nine-hundred hours," stated Major Tanos. She eyed the large crates laid out symmetrically along the length of the hanger bay.

Wynter smiled, "I have reviewed the dossiers you provided earlier, if you will?" he implored her, pointing towards a display board. Twelve spots were clearly defined. *A squadron*.

They took turns going over the roster, all the pieces falling into place. In truth, they had a remarkably skilled group of individuals in their midst. Mauro Wynter was humbled. "Now then, *what* will they be flying?" asked Tanos.

Mauro picked up two crowbars hidden below his desk, handing one to the Zabrak. They walked over to the nearest crate and began dismantling the planking. When finished, Tanos stepped back with a startled gasp. "You have got to be joking!" she exclaimed.

"Far from, I am afraid. We don't have any fighters yet, so I cashed out my credits to afford these. War spoils don't come cheap," answered Mauro.

The two worked feverously into the night, breaking down the crates of the makeshift training squadron. Tanos shook her head repeatedly. Finally, a crack in her façade appeared as she let out a laugh. "Quadjumpers, why does it have to be Quadjumpers?"

Hanger Bay Delta-Seven
Sky Breach Orbital Platform
Daleem Mesosphere
D+2, 0900 Hours

The curious sight of Quadjumpers preparing for launch was made ever more absurd by the ramshackle podium set between them. Commander Wynter and Major Tanos had spent the entirety of the morning performing pre-flight diagnostics. The recruits reported in punctually.

They were composed of a smattering of races. An alabaster toned Twi'Lek. A grey skinned Pau'an. A blue skinned Togruta. A pair of Miraluki. The group were halted by Major Tanos, who ordered them to be seated as Mauro Wynter clambered up the podium.

Mauro scanned the faces of these veteran pilots. He thought of New Tython. The silence lingered for an eternity as Wynter gathered his thoughts. "Odanites, thank you for coming here today. Many of you were there when New Tython burned. Some of you, like myself, helped bring about that destruction. After Odan-Urr found its way to Kiasit we all swore there would never be another New Tython. To that I say, we *are* New Tython. This *is* Tython Squadron," he paused.

He scanned the crowd. "Make no mistake, Tython Squadron will be a dedicated part of the defense of the Kiasit System. Yet, we have another mission. Director Alvinus has ordered the creation of a secret police force to safeguard the internal security of Odan-Urr. We will root out the corrupt and traitorous in our midst. And I promise that if we find any among us that are aiding the enemy we will be as merciless," he declared.

Low cheers rang out from some of the recruits, while others nodded with approval. Major Tanos called for silence. "Upon review of your service records postings are as follows. When your name is called please rise and go to your assigned ships."

"Vanguard Skrumm, Mystic DeMorte, and Reaver Daegella," she paused, "in light of your piloting aptitude you are appointed temporary flight leaders." The three rose. "Knight Martes, due to your colorful smuggling history you are hereby appointed squadron navigator." The young Jedi's excitement was visible as he approached the leading craft.

Major Tanos waited. "Seer Sul, due to your leadership abilities you are appointed as squadron Tactical Officer. Raider Chrome, due to your mastery of weapons systems you are hereby appointed as the squadron Weapons Officer." The two veteran warriors nodded approvingly.

"Savant Aaleeshah, in light of your slicing skills you have been appointed as squadron Electronic Warfare Officer. Seer Junazee, you are appointed as flight surgeon and squadron Medical Officer. And finally, Vanguard Korroth, due to your wealth of knowledge in sapientology and anthropology, you would serve as Scientific Officer." Tanos finished and preceded Wynter off the podium.

The hanger blast doors retracted. The energized field holding the artificial environment of the orbital platform strained as pressure stabilized. All pilots were ready for tasking.

“You are all experienced combat pilots. However, can you fly cohesively? Until we can prove our aptitude in squadron tactics we will train. Based upon the performance record, we will see what platform Tython Squadron will be commissioned to fly,” Wynter declared, “all pilots prepare to launch.”