***Basic Training***

***Daleem High-Orbit***

**Kiast System**

**1300 Hours**

The harsh darkness far above the pastoral landscape of Daleem was a lonely and somber place. The beautiful, vibrant, and well-preserved Vitali stronghold was a bastion of justice and tranquility within an ever more dangerous and complex sector of space. Most who glimpse the world from this vantage are either longing to make landfall or suppressing the bitterness of leaving such a paradise.

             Not so for Tython Squadron. The darkness was a blessing. The darkness meant they had purpose and more importantly *time*.  The absence of burning cities below or of silent debris in the vacuum of space was a welcomed reminder of what normalcy could and should be for these wayward veterans. And so, they flew, nine Quadjumpers against innumerable simulated scenarios and demonstrating synchronized maneuvers. Waiting, ever waiting, for the day training would conclude and they would be deemed worthy of protecting the Kiast System.

             Three tiny formations, miniscule against the backdrop of lumbering freighters and passenger liners scurrying about the system, flew with the hunger of men and women looking to satiate an itch. They were getting better. They were becoming good. Three flights of Quadjumpers, the hope of a system and the retribution of a lost dream.

             “Alpha Flight, loose formation, Tython-Five to high post, Tython-Six cover bandit low,” ordered Flight Leader Kasula Daegella. Instantly the two pilots obeyed the command, spreading out above and below Daegella’s Quadjumper. The tight line formation became a staggered diagonal in seconds, deftly avoiding the cluster of asteroids before rapidly reforming up and increasing velocity. Six more vessels followed in suit, executing the same maneuver.

             “Asteroid field cleared, all fighters proceed to zone delta-rho-delta bearing two-two-eight,” Ethan Martes, Squadron Navigator declared, “Tython-Nine, assign targets at will.”

 The squadron did as they were told, and took up position in a tightly coordinated dance of maneuvers and jockeying of position. Upon entering their designated zone the squadron Tactical Officer began scanning down the area, ready for the simulation about to be thrown their way. Incoming messages from Daleem alerted them of their simulation. “Tython, brace for impact.” Stated Mar Sul as he pulled up on the throttle. Massive holo projector feeds came to life in the distance, illuminating a hulking, ghostly apparition of a *Victory-II* class Star Destroyer. And in an instant, dozens of tiny dots began to empty from the belly of the behemoth.

 The *Victory-II* opened up with its turbo-laser batteries, lancing ephemeral lights beyond the squadron and into the blackness of space. Behind them, another holoprojection crackled to life, in the guise of a *Nebulon-B* frigate. Instinctually the flight leader’s issues orders to form up and prepare to engage the incoming projections of TIE fighters. The *battle* had begun.

**Central Cloister**

**Sky Breach Base**

**Daleem**

Mauro Wynter sat next to Major Silvia Tanos and the newest member of Tython Squadron, Tyraal Bitshiver. The trio were busy studying the displays in front of them, monitoring the progress of the simulation above Daleem. Wynter punched in a few commands on his display, and the training craft changed to the visage of B-wing Starfighters. Major Tanos’ eyes widened.

 “Three dozen TIES against a squadron of B-wings? They will get torn apart.” She stated, the certainty of her voice belied her tactical knowledge.

 Wynter nodded slowly and eyed Bitshiver who was intently following the conversation. “Indeed. But perhaps not. Let us see if Chrome and Mar Sul can figure this training scenario out. Firstly, the Nebulon-B has powerful frontal shields and dozens of anti-starfighter cannon. If they stay in close formation their superior firepower and shielding will have its effect on the TIEs. The enemy craft will not last long.”

 Tyraal perked up, ready to give his analysis. “Sir, you are forgetting the fact that the Vic-II can blast the Nebulon out of the sky.” Major Tanos nodded in approval. Mauro chuckled softly to himself. “Perhaps. If she stands still. The Vic is slower than a Dewback. Hopefully Tython can work together and figure out what they should be doing.”

 The monitors registered several TIEs being slagged by the multitude of lasers firing from the frigate. “That is their chance. I hope they take it.” Offered Mauro, watching with a new intensity. He smiled as the squadron formed up in a tight formation and increased speed, breaking off from the Nebulon-B which was now diving planet-side in an attempt to get below the firing arc of the much larger capital vessel. The TIEs did not give chase to the B-wings. “They took the bait.” Stated Tanos, reluctantly.

 The nimble Imperial craft scored several hits on the Nebulon-B’s poorly shielded central axis, attempting to sever the vessel in two. Yet, many flickered out of existence as the laser batteries scored crippling hits. The B-wings closed into attack formation on the Vic-II, launching their payloads of proton torpedoes.

 “Sir, Chrome has ordered all craft to switch to ion cannons. They are trying to lock the Vic down.” Stated Tyraal.

 The diagnostic displays recorded each hit. The proton torpedoes had caused moderate damage to several of the weapons platforms on the massive vessel, allowing the fighters to get in closer and target vital systems. “Tractor beams and forward propulsion have been damaged.” Offered Tanos.

 Wynter smiled yet again. They all watched as the Nebulon-B maneuvered below the enemy ship and prepare to jump to light speed, its path no longer blocked and receiving little direct fire. Tanos and Bitshiver gave a small round of applause as Tython Squadron formed up and followed the Nebulon-B’s lead.

 “They did it, Commander. The Vic-II is incapacitated and the Nebulon-B is effecting its escape from the system.” Tanos stated, preparing to signal all fighters to return to base. She was cut off by the laughter of Tython Squadron’s leader. He rapidly keyed in a sequence of codes. A new holoprojector flickered to life.

 “That isn’t fair,” Tanos laughed as well, “That isn’t fair at *all*.” They all stared wide-eyed at their displays. The shape of an Interdictor glowed menacingly as it too began to discharge TIE fighters. “Indeed, nothing in this life is fair. Let the training now begin.” Wynter turned and went to fetch a carafe of strong coffee.