

Friend or Foe

By Ethan Martes #14873

Ethan tightened his belt and holsters into place as he quickly strode through his apartment. Aseka, Marri and Kritim holstered into their respective places as he went into his kitchen. A black haired and silver skinned Chiss was in there, holding a cup of coffee out for him. "Don't forget your lunch this time."

Ethan took the coffee and gave her a quick kiss, "Thanks." Ethan sipped the coffee as he went into the fridge and found his lunch box. "Is it more of that healthy stuff?"

"You said you wanted to get into shape more, so you are going to eat whatever I give you." The Chiss glared at him. "I worked hard on making a good diet for you."

"Alright, alright! I'll enjoy every bite." Ethan smiled at her as he went out the door, "Try not to get into trouble Petth!" Down a flight of stairs and out the door, Ethan drank his coffee as he went. Outside Tyraal was waiting, leaning on a car, "Mornin'!"

"I'm not sure how you got me to agree to pick you up, but why is it that I sense a dark presence here?" Tyraal didn't even look to Ethan, instead his eyes scanned the outside of the apartment complex.

"That? Oh don't worry about it." Ethan slid into the passenger seat of the car, "Come on, we don't want to be late." Tyraal didn't move for a moment, still eyeing the apartments as if expecting something to jump out at him any moment now. "Look, I'll explain it later. Right now, mission."

"Alright, alright..." Tyraal muttered as he climbed into the driver seat and the two took off. It was a long drive, but a smooth one. After they were miles from the city and well on their way to base, Tyraal finally spoke again, "Have you read the briefing yet?"

"Yea... Something about we intercepted messages being sent to and from the base. Sounds like we've got a leak to plug." Ethan finished his coffee. "If there is one thing I don't like, it's traitors."

---Tython Squad Hangar---

Everyone gathered around Mauro as he read off the mission details again. After explaining their destination Mauro looked to everyone, "Remember everyone. We won't be getting backup from the rest of Odan-Urr, otherwise this wouldn't be all that covert. If we get into combat, keep

formations and cover each other.” His eyes roamed to each of them, as if measuring them up for a moment. “Tython Squadron, move out!”

Ethan nearly hopped into his TIE Defender, buckling up and quickly going down the mental checklist of pre-flight priorities. The engines hummed to life, screens clicking on to show green across the board. Mauro’s voice came over the communication line, “This is Tython Leader Moff, everyone check in.” Ethan could see Mauro’s TIE Defender screeching out of the hangar and into the sky.

One by one, each member called out their call sign as they rocketed out of the hangar and into formation. Ethan gripped the two handles tight and pushed his foot onto the accelerator, “This is Ulwan, taking off!” He felt some g-force push against his body as he took off out of the hangar, quickly getting into the formation with the others.

The squadron was soon in space, holding together tightly. Mauro’s voice came back on over the speakers, “Alright, we have our coordinates. Ulwan, you know a back way?”

“Give me a moment Moff.” Ethan spoke, resting his datapad on a small docking port. A map appeared on one of his screens, “Alright I think I got one for us. Going into the Unknown Regions seems pretty risky though.” He pressed a button and sent the map to everyone else.

“Let’s just hope this isn’t a trap.” Tyraal called out.

“Keep formation and prepare for hyperspace. I want silence on the comms until we are clear.” Mauro ordered, his fingers quickly hit switches and prepared for the jump. “Jumping in three, two, one... Go!” Tython Squadron raced forward into hyperspace, leaving the planet Daleem far behind.

----Unknown Regions----

One by one the twelve TIE Defenders blinked back into space as they exited hyperspace. It was peaceful for a moment, but then a flurry of fire hailed down towards them. “Ambush! Battle formations!” Mauro called out, jerking his controls to one side and narrowly moved out of the way of a TIE Fighter that screamed past him.

Energy flared all around as the battle began, shots barely missing their targets and rocketing off into space. “Star Battlecruiser off the starboard side!” Chrome called out, “Looks like they were waiting for us!” His targeting system flared for a moment as he fired, taking out a TIE Fighter as he raced away with two more on his tail.

“Hey guys, is now a bad time to mention I’ve been sober for the last week and a half?” Ethan smirked as there was just a conjoined voice of everyone telling him to stop goofing and fight. He

sped up and took out one of the TIEs on Chrome's tail. "I'm only bringing it up so you guys will remember to buy me some alcohol."

"Ulwan, if we live through this, I will buy you the good stuff!" Tyraal shouted through the comms, focusing on trying to take out the one TIE Fighter in front of him.

"Stop flirting and help me! I've got three bogies on my rear!" Zeline yelled, barely maneuvering enough to keep them from taking her out.

"Damsels to the rescue!" Kasula called out as she opened fire, taking out two of the ships before flying past the third like a madwoman.

"You missed one." Was all that was said by Korroth as he swooped in to take the last one on Zeline's tail down.

Aaleeshah took one out before her eyes start to go wide, "Hey Moff, I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but they are launching more fighters."

"Tython Squadron! Make yourself hard targets, we don't want to get hit by that cruiser or any of these flyboys after us!" Mauro pushed his ship as hard as he could, turning the tables on one of the ships on his tail and taking them out.

"Something is coming in from hyperspace!" Sai yelled out, not even a second later a large star ship popped into view, intercepting two shots from the enemy cruiser that were intended for the Tython Squadron. The energy cascaded around a chrome shielding that made the whole ship light up like rainbows.

"That's distracting." Ethan muttered as the rainbow of colors were a bit painful to the eyes compared to the dark colors of space.

"This is the Nighthawks of Arcona!" A female voice blared over the comms, "Who is engaging our target?"

Mauro went to speak when suddenly he heard Ethan's voice reply over the speakers, "Oh we are just a lovely band of misfits and lovers, by the way, if you'd like to help us I'd be sure to repay that pretty voice of yours with a nice dinner and wine."

"Wh-what?" The female voice stammered before it spoke more forcefully, "Listen here! Either get out of the way or help!"

The communications cut, with a few snickers being heard and a scowl on Mauro's face. "Ulwan, I swear to all that there is... If we live through this, I'm hitting you."

The Arconan ship launched out its X-Wing fighters, aiding the Tython Squadron in fighting off what they were already engaged with. The main batteries flared to life before firing at the enemy cruiser. As the last of the TIE Fighters went down, the enemy ship launched into hyperspace, leaving the battlefield behind. The only trace of it was the destroyed TIE Fighters and wreckage from the damage the cruiser had taken.

Mauro cursed under his breath and leaned back in his chair, "Tython Squadron, sound off." One by one they each checked in, no losses but each ship had a good bit of damage. "Alright, I'm opening communications with the Arconan ship. Ulwan?"

"Yes?" Ethan spoke as he dug into he popped open his lunch box to grab a bite to eat. "Ah man... Protein milk again?"

"Don't say a damn thing." Was all Mauro said as he clicked on the communications, "This Mauro, leader of Tython Squadron of Clan Odan-Urr. We thank you for your assistance."

"Pleasure to speak with you. Come aboard. We can repair your ships while we talk, as I'm sure we have much to discuss." The female voice returned over the speakers.