

Fight Night

Palioxis Cloud Kias System Deep Space

The warning alarms blared within the cramped and claustrophobic cockpit of the lonely Tie fighter. Odd, thought Mauro Wynter that unidentified craft had arrived on station. The Palioxis Cloud was an impenetrable maze of space storms, debris, and magnetic fields. Indeed, the Palioxis Cloud was the reason that Odan-Urr was in the Kias System at all. It was true that some small scale pirates and criminal bands know ways through the nebula, but most had been scattered to the wind since the OEF took over policing of the space lanes.

Wynter's display panel gave the small, flashing, indication of a pair of assault craft were on his tail, approaching rapidly. Their comms channels were dead, and both craft had all their energy into the engines – a move intended not to give off more of a signal than needed. This was a hit. Wynter didn't need to raise the unidentified craft, he knew an ambush when he saw one. Odd, however, that they knew he would be coming this way. Were these merely pirates they would have raised him, providing a chance for surrender.

He was all alone, and he knew it. It was not a wise move to go on a patrol mission so far into the edges of the system alone. However, the Human missed being behind the controls of a fighter, relying on his wits and ability to make it home alive. Apparently, he got what he was after in this engagement.

The enemy craft were no pirate affair indeed. Top of the line, new T-70 X-Wings. How in the world did the Dominion finance those craft? Wynter's thoughts raged in his head for a second, pondering the geopolitical and financial ramifications if these were a taste of the forces ranged against OEF. If the Dominion could afford to throw a pair of new fighter craft into hunter-killer missions like this, what else did they have in reserve and ready to assist on the grounds of Daleem and Kias?

Wynter instinctually knew his odds. Fights between Ties and X-wing were studied and taught in every flight academy in the galaxy. And yet, he knew his odds from a lifetime of dogfights and leading pilots into battle. He liked his odds. While the X-wings were fast and heavily armed, they were not as nimble or as agile as his weaker Tie. In the close confines of the Palioxis Cloud speed and weapons mattered for little, piloting and finesse were paramount.

In a flash Wynter piloted his craft *into* the cloud. The electromagnetic fields and violent discharges raged all around him, smashing into asteroids creating fields of debris everywhere. The enemy followed, but had slowed their approach. Poaching a lone Tie was one thing, flying into a death-trap was something different entirely.

Wynter toggled his craft in erratic movements, hugging and passing asteroids at will, daring the X-wings to follow him deeper. It was a bluff, he knew, for the deeper he went the less his chances of making it out too. Soon, he saw on his monitor as the assailants turned tail and ran. He had eluded them. Time to return to Sky Breach and debrief the House.