

Tempest: The Coming Storm

“Stand clear. Shuttle arriving”.

LCM Colo “Coldsacks” Delste looked up from the myriad of switches and screens he was trying to refamiliarize himself with in his TIE Defender to watch the Lambda-class shuttle enter the hangar of the ISD-II *Challenge*.

Shaking his head slowly, he climbed out of the cockpit of the advanced fighter and made his way down to watch the shuttle land. Emblazoned across it was the logo of the Cygnus Spaceworks Corporation.

Standing nearby to welcome the new arrivals was Tempest Commander Honsou, flanked by the Executive Officer EchoVII and leaders of Flights 2 and 3 Commanders Richlet and Morgoth.

The shuttle’s ramp lowered with a slight hissing noise and striding down it came a figure dressed in a slightly fancier version of a technician’s uniform.

Delste was too far away to hear the conversation that occurred, but by the dark look that suddenly crossed Honsou’s face, he knew it wasn’t good news.

“What do you mean they are delayed!”, rasped out Honsou, just keeping the volume of his voice low enough that they wouldn’t hear him on the bridge.

“Well, Commander”, said the Cygnus representative, “It’s merely a side effect of the new protocols for ferrying craft. Gone are the days of individual pilots, they’re now controlled by a slave circuit and —”. The technician cut himself off as he noticed Honsou’s fingers twitch, almost like he was wanting to grab at a blaster that wasn’t there “-well, suffice to say, it should only be a short delay.”

Honsou turned to EchoVII, took a deep breath and with forced politeness instructed her to see the Cygnus technicians were assigned bunks on the *Challenge*. He then spun on his heel and stalked out of the hangar bay.

Delste caught Morgoth’s eye and both gave each other a shrug. They were not unused to their commander’s moods.

“Watch out, Tempest 3, you’ve got one on your six!”

Delste involuntarily ducked as a burst of crimson laser fire went past his cockpit, barely grazing the shields of his TIE/D. Rolling the ship and throttling back to engage a tight turn, he got the offending X-Wing in his sights and let off a burst from the six cannons his ship was equipped with, but the maneuver meant he only scored a partial hit.

Eyes running over his scanners to make sure he was clear, he pursued the X-wing. Its pilot valiantly twisting and turning to evade. Delste was able to follow, his targeting sight jittering green as he got intermittent weapon locks, able to land two more hits from his cannons when suddenly everything went dark....

The simulator pod opened. "What happened?", asked Delste.

A whoop from behind him as the second simulator pod opened and LCM Jaxx Nassin triumphantly raised his fist. "What happened is that you got target fixated, and I took you out like you were a dewback! Guess first round is on you at the bar, after all."

"Yeah, alright Jaxx. Come on then, let's see how the new batch of Chalquilla is."

As the pilots sat, watching out the transparisteel viewport and nursing a Chalquilla each (you had to nurse it, otherwise it punched a hole in your stomach lining) several ships dropped out of hyperspace. Delste moved closer to the viewport, and called out "Hey look, the Spectres are here!"

Several pilots clustered around the viewport to see the new ships Tempest had earned from TIE Corps Command during the recent mobilization exercises.

"Sithspit, Phalk!", Delste called out to his old Flight Leader, "I see what you mean by them looking like sad chickens!"

The grizzled veteran Colonel sighed. "Yes. But, they have a large capacity for warheads. And the ion cannon means we won't be reliant as much on you hotshots in Flight 1 to strip shields and disable targets anymore."

Delste laughed and ordered another round. "Well, be that as it may, think I can take one for a test flight later? For old time's sake?"