War of the Roses

The Tie Defender sat idling, hidden amongst the asteroid belt fluttering through deadspace of the Kiast System. How indeed the Collective had established a toehold in the home sector of Odan-Urr was as perplexing as it was troubling to Mauro Wynter and the other professional soldiers and pilots serving the Jedi.

Lost in thought of how the intelligence arm had not caught such a threat, Wynter was startled as his sensors lit up and multiple contacts vectored towards his location. His vantage was above and wide of the incoming formation. It appeared to be a squadron of red X-Wing, newer models, flying in tight formation.

The human mercenary was confident in his dogfighting skills, and his fighter was technologically and tactically superior to the enemy in every way. Except, quantity has its own quality that are known to all veterans of space battles. The thought of calling in the contact to Odanite forces nearby would alert them to the threat, but would also give away his position. Wynter decided how best to mitigate the threat to his allies and himself. If he ran, he might be pursued and cut down. If he signaled in, he could be targeted while trapped in the asteroid belt.

The seconds were dwindling away on the window of Wynter’s effectiveness. His life hung in the balance, surely, but so did his allies and employers. The thought of switching allegiance to the Collective and their mercenary heavy forces crossed his mind before the sheer challenge overwhelmed him. He pressed hard on his throttle and came screaming into the rear of the X-Wing formation.

The rear most flight peeled off to the left immediately. Mauro thumbed his four laser cannons into life, taking out the high-post pilot of the flight. Scratch one. The next rear-most flight to Wynter’s right stayed tight and attempted to pull a k-turn. This move was equally as ineffective as the powerful X-Wings were simply not as nimble as Mauro’s craft. He followed the flight and went inverted as he launched two homing missiles that hit their mark. Leveling off he checked his sensors. The vanguard flight of the squadron had increased velocity and pulled far distant from the combat. It would take less than twenty seconds for them to be within firing range of Wynter.

Time had nearly run out. The Tie Defender was soon to find itself trapped between the five remaining fighters behind him and four fresh craft in his front. His speed and hyperdrive could allow him to vector at a forty-five degree angle and perhaps jump prior to being slagged. Perhaps. The Tie Defender continued to increase speed as Mauro’s thumb pressed the firing trigger. Laser and ion bolts sprayed across space.

The X-Wing in front of Mauro barely shot in response, fearing hitting their own allies in the rear. The same hindrance forced the fighters in the rear to pick their shots carefully. Most laser blasts were deflected by the advanced shields of the Tie Defender. And Mauro continued to fire. Two X-Wings directly in front of him simply could not handle the withering fire, incapacitated by ion charge, and were slagged. Scratch five total. Mauro was content knowing he did more than any pilot had the luck to consider. He punched the emergency vector trajectory and conducted a micro-jump across the system. He had bought his allies time and given them a fighting chance by diminishing the squadron’s numbers. He eerily had the sense he had made a mortal enemy of the enemy squadron’s leader.