

## Chapter Seven - Conflict

### *Cyrixia* Dantooine System Dantooine Five Days after the Fall of Dantooine

Larian watched as the small supply vessel spun in the zero gravity of space, and then rocketed away. It had dropped off several large crates that were now being moved by droids to a separate hangar, far removed from this one. He idly checked his blaster, and followed the droids. One of the crates had holes in the top, to keep the cargo alive, but he wasn't sure how lively it could be.

Meanwhile, Reanne stood beside Iliyana on the control deck, both of them monitoring the ships systems. The rest of the Terenatek were planetside, sniffing out the remaining Jedi. Iliyana thought that they were happy down there, with plenty of room to hunt and roam, but she knew that any person possessing a strong affinity for the Force would be attacked, unless shielded by the thought weave.

One of the monitors chirped, and Iliyana looked sharply at it. Two large Republic cruisers had just emerged from hyperspace, on the outer edge of the system. In an hour, they would be here. She hit the inter-station communication switch. "Master, we have two Republic Cruisers, identified as the *Hyperion* and the *Victor*, now in system. I estimate an hour before they're here."

"They responded faster than I anticipated," Tremar's voice came back. "Begin preparations to jump to Brigia. Larian, scramble as many fighters as you can. Reanne, assist Larian. I will be on the command deck shortly."

Reanne darted away as the line went dead, and Iliyana began to power up *Cyrixia*'s engines. They had taken them offline to save power, and were in a high orbit around Dantooine. As the reactors began to heat up, she rolled her chair to the astronavigation controls, and began to calculate the course. In the back of her mind, however, was the knowledge that *Cyrixia*'s engine systems would take the better part of an hour to heat up, and then another quarter to move far enough away from Dantooine to clear the mass shadow of the planet.

Larian and Reanne worked feverishly in the hangar controls, assessing how many fighters they had ready. The assault on Dantooine hadn't reduced their forces much, and about one hundred of the fighters were ready to go. Larian checked a second monitor, one that was tracking the reactor's power status. They were coming online, circulating power between themselves to heat up faster, but it was still an agonizingly slow wait.

Tremar swept into the hangar, and Larian spared him a cursory nod. "M'lord."

"Larian, our status," he asked calmly.

"Reactors are at 75% capacity, we can move, but far too slowly. It will actually be faster to wait in place until we reach 90%, and then we can start to move away. Once we reach a safe distance,

we should have enough power to jump to hyperspace,” Larian said, his fingers flicking over controls as Reanne jumped lightly off the top of a fighter and jogged towards them.

Tremar nodded. “Reanne, remain with Larian until you are summoned. Is there any way of recovering the Terenateks from the surface?”

“No M’lord,” Larian said firmly, “only you or Iliyana can command them and both of you are too important to be caught in a shuttle on your way up from the planet.”

Tremar nodded, a bit sadly. “Very well then; I am on my way to the command deck. Keep a line open at all times.”

Larian nodded as Tremar swept from the room, and Reanne gave him a hug from behind. “We’ll make it out, won’t we,” she asked him softly.

“I don’t know Reanne,” was Larian’s only answer.

As Tremar came onto the bridge, Iliyana was naked. While the computers were double checking her astronavigation calculations, she had started to change into her leather combat suit. She saw her Lord enter the deck, and bent over at the waist, presenting her pussy and ass to him, and then wriggled her hips as she pulled the suit up her legs and up to her waist. She turned and walked towards navigation, leaving herself naked from the top down. “I can sense my old Master. I do not know which ship he’s on, but he’s out there.”

Tremar nodded. “There are two powerful Masters out there. If possible, we must avoid meeting with them right now.”

Iliyana nodded, and touched her fingertips to the controls, and activated the main engines. *Cyprixxia* shuddered, and began to move away from the planet, slowly. Another console beeped and Tremar swept over to check it. “Larian, two squadrons inbound. Launch fighters as a screen; keep them from doing too much damage. If possible, get all our bombers out, and focus on one of the two cruisers.”

“Yes M’lord.”

Iliyana ignored the activity around her, and increased the power to the engines. The station began to move a bit faster, even as the fighters swarmed out of the bays. More fighters launched from both cruisers, and streaked in to intercept the bombers as *Cyprixxia* continued its slow advance.

***Hyperion***  
**Dantooine System**  
**Dantooine**

Jedi Master Kaesar Caestol stood on the bridge of the Republic Cruiser *Hyperion*, watching the unfolding space battle. He could feel Iliyana out there, on the mobile space station, as well as

Tremar. Jedi Master Koyi Komad came up beside him, dressed in the Jedi robes identical to his. “You didn’t have to come Kaesar,” she said softly.

“Yes, Koyi,” he replied softly, “I did. I missed the holding pens on Hurcha. I missed Iliyana’s obsession with her body and I missed her resentment towards us. Those are three things I must atone for.”

Koyi shook her head. “I hope we can recapture her, and Reanne. I’d hate to have to kill either of them.”

“No. Death is preferable to what will await them. I will refuse to cut them off from the Force, because that is a slow death and will make them even more resentful towards the Republic and the Jedi.”

Koyi sighed. Kaesar was always this way, she reflected. Life to him was only worth living to its fullest. The *Hyperion*’s Captain, an Alderaan native named Jec Armrill, approached the two Jedi. “Excuse me Masters, but the station is approaching optimal jump distance from Dantooine. Our fights are tied up defending from the bombers and fighters. This is not a battle we can win today.”

Kaesar glanced at the holographic display, and nodded. “I agree Captain. Move the *Hyperion* towards Cyprixxia, and prepare the boarding fighter.”

Captain Armrill nodded, and strode back to his crew, giving orders in a clear voice. Kaesar felt the *Hyperion* moving ahead, felt it as a spacer does, that shift in the artificial gravity. He left the bridge, heading for the hangar with Koyi a step behind him. When they arrived, they boarded a small shuttle, lightly armoured and armed, but with heavily upgraded engines. The entire shuttle was really just a manoeuvrable rocket.

A crewman stepped off as they boarded, the ship ready to go. Kaesar slipped into the pilot’s seat, and Koyi into the second seat, for weapons. One of the hangar captains waved them clear, and Kaesar floated towards the opening in the floor, dropped through it, and then, without even changing expression, slammed the throttle full open.

He was one with the Force as he rocketed through the cloud of enemy vessels. He heard Koyi saying something behind him, but he was too focused on piloting. The fighters couldn’t get a bead on him, and then they were through to the opposite side. He saw Cyprixxia ahead, rotating slowly, and diverted all power from the weapons to the engines. The acceleration pushed him into his seat, and he heard Koyi gasp.

The station was closer now, and he could see a docking bay. There was a sudden flash of light from a lower point, and then Cyprixxia was hurtling away into hyperspace. Kaesar cut the engines, and came out of his trance. He applied slow reverse thrust to slow down, and glanced back at Koyi. He was a bit paler than normal, and looking at him with something close to irritation. “That was dangerous Kaesar. We almost didn’t make it through.”

Kaesar chuckled softly. “Well, we did.”

Koyi glanced at her sensors, and gapsed. “Kaesar... the *Victor*...”

Kaesar looked out the view screen, and his eyes went wide. The bombers had gotten through, and despite the best efforts of the combined fighters, the *Victor* was reeling in space, fire visible from the damage, and oxygen venting into space. “The lifepods,” he muttered, “get to the lifepods.”

But it was not to be. The remaining fighters streaked in, and slammed into the hull of the cruiser, each one detonating like a space-bound bomb. Kaesar and Koyi watched, two Paragons of the Force, unable to do anything to save the tens of thousands of Republic Soldiers aboard the doomed *Victor*.

*Hyperion*  
**Dantooine System**  
**Dantooine**  
**One Day after the Battle of Dantooine and the Loss of the *Victor***

Kaesar sat at the head of a long table in the *Hyperion*'s conference hall. With him was Captain Armrill, Koyi and one of the four Jedi they had rescued from the lifepod ejected from *Cyprixxia*. Her name was Marie, and she was the least visibly shaken of the four Dantooine survivors.

“It was a sensory method attempt to turn us Master Caestol,” she reported. “Unlike the methods reported by Bastila Shan or Darth Revan, this method was mainly sexual stimulation and denial. If they had more time, four or five days, then I’m sure they could break somebody.”

Kaesar nodded, and looked at Captain Armrill. “Captain, did your men manage to track *Cyprixxia*?”

“Yes Master Caestol. We have a confirmed trajectory and entry speed, but there’s no way to tell where they came out without knowing their maximum fuel burn.”

Marie leaned forward lightly and spoke up. “Is there a world named Brigia along their trajectory?”

“Yes, there is. It’s about a six day jump from here, but why would they go there,” Armrill asked.

Koyi’s eyes scrunched closed, and a vision swam before her eyes. Kaesar waited, accustomed to her little spurts of prophetic foresight. When her eyes opened, she looked at Kaesar. “Brigia is the right spot. Its where we need to be Kaesar.”

Kaesar nodded again, then looked at the Captain. “Brigia it shall be. There we must end this.”

*Cyprixxia*  
**Outer Rim**

**Brigia**  
**Six Days after the Loss of the *Victor***

Larian stood in front of an ungainly looking transport. For the last six days he had been overhauling it, installing the package that had been delivered to him at Dantooine. Reanne came down the entry ramp, wiping her hands on a cloth. "Ok, it should be ready to go. EnDee is checking the alignment of the stygium crystals, and after that it'll be ready for shakedown."

Larian nodded and checked his chrono. "I have to meet Iliyana on the command deck. Let me know when it checks out."

On the command deck, Iliyana watched as the *Hyperion* came back into normal space, and began dumping fighters. Larian arrived on deck as the first wave of ships cut towards the station, among them the fast and manoeuvrable vessel that had almost caught them on Dantooine. "Larian, you're in charge of the fighters. We're evenly matched now, so do your best," she said, clapping him on the shoulder, and heading down to the projected landing site.

When she arrived, she saw the boarding ship approaching with reckless speed. She shrugged out of her black robe, leaving her in the tight top, pants and boots she had bought on Nar Shadaa. She kicked the robe aside, and left her lightsaber on her belt, ready, waiting.

The boarding shuttle swung broadside, and its braking thrusters fired, and it slid into the bay, the aft hatch already opening. Jedi Masters Kaesar and Koyi came slowly down the boarding ramp, each wearing the tan tunics, pants and boots of the Jedi Order, each with their lightsaber in hand, inactive.

Kaesar looked past Iliyana's shoulder, and she stepped aside. "I am sorry for the betrayal you feel Kaesar. But you taught me to live life to the fullest, and neither the Jedi, nor the Sith, allow me that."

Kaesar's eyes flicked to her once, and then back over her shoulder. She knew Tremar was there, waiting to draw Kaesar out. She saw Koyi flick one lekku at Kaesar, who moved smoothly past Iliyana, into the corridor, after Tremar.

Iliyana flicked her hand at the door controls, and the hatch sealed itself, locking the two of them in. She nodded once to Koyi. "Master Komad. We've never really had the pleasure of a proper conversation."

Koyi nodded in agreement. "A few words is about all. However, I am saddened that it has come to this."

Iliyana smiled. "Me too."