



The Other Side - Mr. Spaceheater :: Unknown ::

Kachiia stared out the viewport at the surrounding stars. Always they overwhelmed her with their sheer beauty. It was the only good thing about this post. As a Taiidani commander in their Imperial fleet she was charged with guarding their boarder and preventing Pirates, such as the Protectors, away from trade lines and freeports. And to watch their ancient enemy. Long ago they had ruled over a large swath near the core. Few records remained from that time, but many were found detailing the Kushan. While contradictory, no one knew what to believe. The Kushan were either peace loving scientists, or vicious conquerors sitting on their spoils. Kachiia preferred to play it safe.

The Kaikau iii (Watcher iii) was an older carrier, but viewed as more than capable of dealing with the pirates. Turning from the viewport she gazed across the bridge. "Guard duty is too hard upon sentient beings" Kachiia thought "they always must deal with boredom." The Kaikau had an extensive holo-cube library, but the crew had exhausted it a mere month after the beginning of this patrol. Kachiia was startled as Barua'us came charging on to the bridge, straight towards her. The burly sensor technician was clearly vexed by what the datasphere he held contained.

"What's wrong Baru?" Kachiia asked. Ignoring the use of his nick name, which he hated, Barua began speaking so fast Kachiia couldn't catch it.

"TheregoneI mean it its all over were screwed, Kachiia" All Kachiia heard was her name, and before she could say anything, he started again. "Scout group Kou Taii was intercepted by a massive unknown bogie hypering out of the Kharak system." He said it slow and deliberately, reigning himself in. "They completely destroyed the Scout group, and a dropped sensor package detected them hypering towards us. We're screwed Kachiia." His voice broke, and no one rebuked him for falling into lower Taiidan while addressing a superior. There was no need.

"Any idea what they have?" Kachiia asked, panic at the edges of her voice. The sentiment was immediately echoed by the entire bridge crew. Sub-Commander Ar'hakk grabbed the data disk and jammed it into the nearest reader. He read it aloud, as if to reaffirm it.

"One Mothership size vessel, ten ships of Frigate size, approximately a dozen heavy strike craft, and nearly three dozen interceptors."

Silence reigned. While they could handle small pirate fleets they couldn't approach something of that size. With four assault frigates and a support frigate, plus 2 wings of interceptors, this was untenable.

Their hyperdrive engines required more fuel, so they couldn't escape. Stumbling over the words, Kachiia ordered the fleet prepared and tried to think about things other than death or surrender. Like being able to run.

Sub-Commander Ar'hakk wondered fitfully what Kachiia had in mind. There was no way she could retreat, and he knew her well enough to know that she wouldn't activate the self destruct protocols. Surrender was the only option for her, and if she took it, he was fully authorized to take command, and utilize the scuttling protocols. Anything to ensure that their ship did not fall into enemy hands...

---

As the carrier group rushed away from their designated intercept point, an odd thought came into the head of Ship-Leader Makk'arh. What if those Kushan bogies wanted them to flee this way? It would require in depth knowledge of the fleet commander though, and because of that he dismissed it. Still, it nagged on, and though he normally worried, Makk'arh found many of his own worried postulations ridiculous. They'd only been away for two standard Imperial years, and standard deep space protocol demanded that no communication occur between Imperial pickets. Command could contact them, though rarely did it do so. He remembered the last time a Command message had reached them. It had only been static, and was filed as a comms glitch, the relay stations were known to go down from time to time after all. Makk'arh realized he was sweating, cursing his paranoia. He ordered Comms tech 3rd Varls to send a tightbeam message to Kachiia from his ready room. Breathing heavily, Makk'arh relayed his suspicions to fleet command.

---

"Makk'arh, your paranoia has reached new heights today."

Kachiia shook her head slowly. She should have expected this from him. As it was she didn't think she could calm him down now. He was too worked up over his theory.

"But, Kachiia, we've been isolated for a long time, and we haven't heard anything from Command in months, save the..." Kachiia let his whining drone into the background as she tried to practice Ka'wahaii, the ancient trance art of her family. Nearly always she did this for insight into some problem, now she did it for respite. From Makk'ahr. From the coming confrontation. She relaxed very little, despite her skill in the craft, and found her thoughts again wandering to their luckless situation. As she struggled with her tension, the seeds of a plan began to form in her mind. She was shaken out of her reverie by a Gunner she didn't know. The braying alarms connected in her mind.

"What's wrong?" She asked, glancing at the chronometer. It was too early for trouble.

---

The Kushan Destroyers had jumped right into the middle of their formation. There were five of them, as well as a pair of support Frigates loaded with fighters and 'vettes. They held the advantage over the shocked Taaidanii, who were now rushing to full battle alert. Waiting to see if they would fire.

To be continued...