
The war for Maelstrom

Pouring in the Tyranids

Shas'el Ty'Kaeth lowered his hi-power binoculars and sighed silently. There was no way he or any of the men and women under his control would see another day. They were as good as dead. The horde of otherworldly monsters was closing on his position. Tyranids. So the raid that they heard about three weeks before had not been an isolated incident. A whole splinter fleet just jumped into Maelstrom two days ago. All the defenses were on alert, but there was no defense fleet assigned to Maelstrom, a rather remote Tau world that was being colonized since not even 40 years. A young world. Green, lush. Beautiful under its twin suns. He looked at Ma'her and Taek'r. For its last day under their light he thought.

Still he knew what he had to do. The tyranid bombardments had damaged the power generator of his outpost. His was only a listening outpost with a minimal garrison. Not even a full hunter Cadre. He was too far north to expect any reinforcement in the following hours, and for sure, not until he could get that message out to the nearest base.

The fusion reactor that acted as a generator had been repaired, but needed still more time to ignite. Until then, they had to hold the base. If they ran away, the Tau military would have to wait for several more hours before knowing what was happening here. It could make the difference between life and death. Of this whole world. So beautiful. Their world. They had to make their stand here, and die. For the greater good.

A neural command kicked in his target lock system. Going from one target to the other, while they were still several miles away. Zoanthropes. Carnifexes. Genestealers. He shuddered. A Hive tyrant. The horizon was dark with the horde landing and already erecting some bio structures far behind. This was going to be hell. He felt sorry for his Cadre.

Sha'vre Ste'kavr walked in. The whirring sounds told Ty'Kaeth that his friend was in his Crisis battlesuit. He didn't feel the ground tremble, as the crisis was probably hovering inches above the ground. Ty'Kaeth whirled to face the new comer.

- *They are almost on us now, Shas'el. You have to get into your Crisis suit and to take over the defense.*
- *Thank you my brother.*

Ste'kavr was indeed his brother. With tash'ie, they formed a talissera. A bond. They were bonded together many years ago, when they were still fire warriors. When he was promoted to Shas'el, naturally both tash'ie and ste'kavr had followed him to become his bodyguards. There were no finer warriors on Maelstrom, and no finer friends in the whole empire. Ty'Kaeth spoke again.

- *Go and have the pathfinders recon their advance. I'll be outside in a few minutes. This had been great, serving with you, my friend.*

- *The time for farewells is not yet arrived, Shas'el. And there could not be a better end than dying together for the greater good.*

Maybe, thought Ty'Kaeth. He knew it was the truth, but somehow, he would have liked to live a bit longer. He witnessed his friend leave the hangar, knowing that he, too, felt the same, despite his words.

He climbed into his XV8 Crisis battle suit. Aptly named he thought. For they were in a hell of a crisis now. He couldn't help wondering briefly what part of that impregnable armor would be breached when he would succumb. He chased the thought. He had a last mission to accomplish. But somehow, his small cadre was too small to contain the horde. A few fire warriors. A hammerhead. He closed the hatch and connected to the crisis suit. Instantly on the TAC display, his force and the enemy become visible. Represented as triangles, vectors and symbols. He started walking out of the hangar, and caught glimpse of a broadside battlesuit, walking to get into fire position. Its twin rail guns would buy us some time for sure Ty'Kaeth said to himself. How much? We are so few.

He got out of the hangar and turned to face the tyranid horde.

- *Engineering, how long to comm. System energization?*
- *We need 45 minutes Shas'el.*

45 minutes. A small eternity in those conditions. He looked at the advancing tide. They were ravaging everything. They were already killing this world. He had a last thought for his talissera. May the Au'n guard you Tash'ie, Ste'kavr. Then he steeled himself, bringing on the targeting display. They had to warn the high command. He left nothing in his mind but the drive to succeed one last time. He remembered the words of the Au'n: We are the Tau. We fight for the something greater than ourselves. We fight for the greater good.

- *Understood engineering. You will have those 45 minutes.*
- *Cadre, prepare to engage!*