

## The Final Fight

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After a grueling day on the GTR Wolf removing jump node after jump node around Earth, Captain Jix was tired of patrol after patrol making sure that a last minute Shivan attack didn't come flying through the closing subspace channels. Jix had fought all throughout the T-V and the Great Shivan war and survived it all. The old veteran pilot could not remember any other patrols in his career this boring. He had seen it all, every thing from the introduction of the Apollo starfighters to the contact with the Vasudans. After 18 years in the GTA he knew he was soon heading for a desk job onboard an installation orbiting Earth. His hair was all gray now, and he believed it was because of patrol missions like this that took up too much time and were a worthless gesture in his eyes. It always seemed to him as if they were fighting for the wrong purpose, yet he knew that he was a great pilot and remained in the service of the GTA Navy. He always wondered whether he was doing the right thing. The battle worn captain juked his Ulysses fighter to the right, watching every tedious movement that the Wolf's monstrous arms made as they opened the gateway of subspace and began slowly moving inward, trying to crush the Alpha Centauri jump node out of existence.

"What's with this patrol any ways? We've been out here over six hours!" exclaimed Jix.

"This is Epsilon 2, sir. Shall I ask for relief from duty, sir?" inquired the young cadet straight out of training.

"Heh, I wish it were that simple scrub but you can't get away from it that easy pilot." Grinned the Captain knowing of the military's strict rules about following orders.

The node was half way closed, soon there would be a relief flight group to take over for the next and last node to be removed. The GTR Wolf had been silent this whole time and Captain Jix was beginning to fall asleep at his post.

"Pilots, you have new orders." Squawked the Wolf over the Communication link.

"Ready for new orders, sir." Replied Jix. "Anything's better than this!" he muttered to himself.

"We have just received a subspace transmission from Alpha Centauri. Terran Intelligence first believed that all ships in Alpha and Proxima Centauri had been destroyed, but we have just received word that the Installation is still up and running at 50% efficiency. You are to head there now before we close this node. You are to all enter this node and escort the survivors back here to Earth. Remember that Time is of the essence, we will not hold this jump point open forever. If we do not see you fly back here through this jump node in 15 minutes, we will continue to close the gateway and you will be stuck behind! Since Alpha Centauri is the closest star from here, it will take little time to get through subspace there. Good Luck! GTA Command out!"

"You heard them pilots! It's time to get out of this lousy patrol job and get to that system!" yelled the captain with a slight grin on his face. He only had 6 months more in the service of piloting; he enjoyed things like this to keep it active. But the grin soon turned to a serious look as he remembered the chaos and destruction the shivans had made, and how many dear friends and pilots he had lost in the battles. "Epsilon Wing, enter the node now." He said with total seriousness. The war wasn't over, and he knew it. Epsilon 1 engaged its afterburners and went flying through the node with his wingmen on his tail.

A couple minutes later the ships glided out of subspace as if they came out of a pool of light. The wreckage that caught their eyes as they came out of the node horrified them. Immediately the

captain was forced to juke down to avoid hitting a chunk of the Alpha Centauri Installation. Truly much had happened since they heard the original transmission.

“Sir, I am reading 4... no 5 life pods heading toward the node. They must have evacuated as many as they could when the attack happened.” Explained the female officer piloting Epsilon 3.

Jix scanned to a civilian frequency and began hailing, “This is Epsilon 1. We are here to provide escort, please respond.”

No answer.

“This is weird,” stated Epsilon 4, “There are 5 pods, all from the Installation which had been attacked, yet there are no attackers here.”

Epsilon 2 flew within 75 units of the craft to make a scan on it. “Shall I make a dock with it sir? I can see what condition they are in and see what’s wrong with the AAGGH.....”

An explosion rocked the Ulysses fighters. As soon as Jix gained control he realized that Epsilon 2 had been blown to bits, and one of the pods was gone. “IT’S A TRAP!” yelled Jix.

The 4 other pods exploded, taking out much of the remaining pilot’s shields. Now there were only 3 fighters left, they all formed on the Captain’s wing and hauled toward the node.

“Ok pilots we have 7 minutes left so lets move it out of here!” yelled Jix into the Com.

A blue glow flashed in front of them and through the glowing water like pool came the huge ship out of subspace. “Oh.... my.... God, It’s a Demon!! We’re not gonna make it out of here!!!!” screamed one of the wingmen. Behind the huge ship came 2 wings of Dragon class fighters. Captain Jix armed his hornet missiles and turned his attention to the dragons. “This one is for the Galatea!!!!” said Jix, screaming his battle cry as if this were the final battle between good and evil. His hornets streamed forward hitting the dragon dead on target. The Captain looked back to see the ship breaking up into nothing but space debris. “This is Epsilon 4! Sir, you got a fighter on you tail. Juke right!”

Jix made a quick barrel roll and a spin right almost if by instinct or reflex. As he looked out the side window he saw that Epsilon 4 had taken out the Dragon but was now swarmed with others.

Jix launched more missiles and fired many Prometheus shots at the fighters only taking out one.

“Number 3 , get over here! Epsilon 4 needs help!” commanded Jix. Sweat dripped down his face. Maybe he was too old for this after all. He had fought for the GTA for ages. He fought in the pointless battle against the Vasudans, yet did not see much combat with the Shivans. He began to think his whole career was pointless, killing thousands of innocent for what reason! The Shivans were the true protectors of space, yet Jix thought they were no better than the insane politicians and High Admirals commanding them around to kill someone.

“I don’t know how much more I can take!” yelled Epsilon 4 flying around madly.

“Only 2 minutes left to get to the node!!!” yelled Epsilon 3.

Jix knew what he had to do. He knew it would be the only way to make his career, his life, and all of Earth right. “You two, get out of here now! I’ll take out the fighters that follow you and keep any

from following you! I will try to slow down the Demon. GO NOW! THAT IS AN ORDER!”

Epsilon 4 just getting out of the furball started, “No way, sir! You leave and I will-“

He was immediately cut off by Jix, “I gave an order... and I am also asking with all my heart as a human being!! Go now damn it!”

Without further rejection the two fighters engaged their after burners and headed for the node. Jix turned his fighter around and fired at the couple of enemy fighters heading toward the escaping pilots. Jix knew he made the right decision for the other pilots, for the ships closing the nodes, and for himself. His career didn't matter to him anymore, his humanity out weighed everything. The two Dragon fighters swarmed his craft. He successfully took out one, but the other was locked on his tail tight. He looked back and saw the two Ulysses fighters entering the node, and in response he gave a final salute to the two. He acknowledge that this was the final flight and turned toward the Demon. He began firing all of his remaining payload at the engine of the ship to take it down with him if at all possible, or at least to avenge some of the many, many deaths that had greeted him in the years of his life. He for once was sure that what he was doing was right. The Shivan's were no better than the Terran's attacking the Vasdans, but they deserved to die for the countless Terran and Vasudan loses they caused. They told Jix the shivan's would be back someday to kill the humans... but Jix knew, the human race would live on. He prayed the other pilots made it. With that last thought, he engaged his after burners and slammed his ship into the hull of the Demon in one, last flight.

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The flags arose and the memorial service began. The many pilots that had flown beside Captain Jix during his career were standing beside each other at the memorial. Within the crowd were the two pilots that had just recently flown with him on his last mission. They knew of his bravery, his honor, and his courage more than any other person in the room. Jix was a great pilot, and a great human. The two pilots looked at each other and each knew what they were both thinking. When the Shivans did return, would there be any more great pilots like him?