

## The Vornskr

The devastated hulk of a pirate corvette rolled about its axis in a lazy spiral. Huge sections of its hull were missing, ripped away by explosions to expose the corvette's interior to the cold vacuum of space. Nearby, the notorious pirate frigate, Mourning Star, drifted lifeless, a stream of plasma venting from its shattered engines. It listed to one side and violent, electrical discharges danced about the surface of the ship. Visible in the viewports and through cracks in the hull, fires raged aboard.

Lieutenant Commander Aardvark eased the flight stick of his Cygnus Missile Boat to the left and rolled off the throttle as he led the gunships of Kappa Flight 2 on another attack run against the stricken frigate. The pirate starship's guns were now silent - there would be no flak or opposition.

Aardvark thought briefly about the pirates struggling for their lives aboard the frigate. He wasn't harboring pity or remorse, these scum had been preying on civilian shipping for years and sealed their fate when they were bold enough to attack an Imperial convoy. Rather, it was curiosity that turned his thoughts. Growing up, he spent a few years in a remote starport on the planet of Myrkr. Since the planet was sparsely populated but had a well-equipped starport, it attracted a fair number of criminals, fugitives and pirates. The Imperial pilot wondered if, years ago when a youngster, he might have helped his parents when they re-fueled and stocked one or both of these starships. No matter; the ships and their crews would soon be space junk. Aardvark leveled his wings and settled his sights onto the disabled vessel.

The targeting indicator in LCM Aardvark's HUD turned red and emitted a steady tone. Keying the mic, he announced, "Kappa 2-1 torps armed and locked. Fire!" With a determined press of the fire button, he rippled off a salvo of four proton torpedoes and broke the missile boat into a sweeping turn while kicking the throttle to full, knowing that the other members of his flight would each launch in turn and follow. He didn't have to watch the torpedoes hit to know the result, that many protons were more than enough to destroy the crippled frigate. Heading away from the carnage, he called up the tactical map. A quick scan showed that the TIE Defenders of Flight 3 had already mopped up the few starfighters that the pirates had managed to launch and there were no more threats on the board. Rescue operations were not part of the mission profile. Aardvark signaled his Flight to re-group and keyed in the coordinates for the jump to hyperspace that would rendezvous them with The Warrior. The stars turned from pinpoints to streaks and soon dissolved into a familiar swirling pattern. Relaxing and closing his eyes, Aardvark leaned back into his seat for the ride.

It had been years since Aardvark thought about his childhood. He lived many places during his youth, frequently moving as his parents hopped from starport to starport, always chasing credits and barely eking out a living. He enjoyed his time on the planet Myrkr, though. Except for one starport and a few scattered settlements, it was wild and untamed, its forests teeming with life and most of it dangerous. One one rare outing, he caught a glimpse of the planet's most dangerous inhabitant, the legendary Vornskr. Almost a meter tall and nothing but muscle, the vornskr was the planet's apex predator. Graceful in its movements, silent in approach and quick as a blaster bolt. It killed when and how it wanted, a poisonous tail sting followed by a flurry of fangs and razor sharp claws. Dangerous alone, a pack of vornskr was a deadly threat.

During the short hyper-travel, Aardvark drew a parallel between Kappa Squadron's recent mission and the attack of a pack of Vornskr. Working as a team, TIE Defenders streaking in, sweeping space of any threats, ion cannons stripping shields and disabling the prey just before the gunships arrive carrying oblivion by wave after wave of heavy ordnance. A poisonous sting accompanied by lethal fangs and claws – death delivered all too easy.

Back on board The Warrior, after the gear was stored, the reports were filed and the celebratory rounds were drunk, Aardvark walked back down to the hanger. It was quiet now, the hustle of flight operations replaced by a few droids moving here and there and some techs performing maintenance.

On the nose of his missile boat, Aardvark painted a silhouette. It represented certain death but also grace, skill, precision and teamwork. The image was that of the snarling, fanged head of a Vornskr.