

The title card features the words "STAR" and "WARS" in a large, yellow, outlined font. Between them, the words "THE DREADFUL CHIMAERA" are written in a smaller, white, solid font. The background is black with several small white stars scattered across it.

STAR THE DREADFUL CHIMAERA WARS

BY VA HAWKINS

***“Madness, in its wild, untameable words,
proclaims its own meaning;
in its chimeras, it utters its secret truth”***

Michel Foucault

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The chamber was in darkness; the deep black of interstellar space. None but those steeped in the dark powers to which this temple was dedicated would be able to perceive anything beyond a deep sense of unease. But to those with the correct gifts, the walls would stand well defined, glowing with a living energy. The high, bisected triangular alter would bathe the room in dark-light, as clear as midnight. Silent, unspoken, whispers echoed off the stone walls of the temple, imperceptible to all but the most sensitive, drifting away into the high vaulted ceiling. They spoke of glory, of fame or fortune, but above all, of power.

The two figures, hooded and cloaked despite the blackness, spoke in whispers barely louder than the ghostly echoes that surrounded them.

“There will be casualties,” the first figure breathed, “Many may not see the end of our journey.”

“Then they will have been proven weak,” the second figure answered sternly. “We have no need of weakness, and will not tolerate it. The weak deserve death. That is their only destiny.”

“On that, we are in agreement. Yet we must not be wasteful. We must emerge from this stronger, not lessened by the conflict.”

“We have planned this carefully, and are prepared for all eventualities. None in the Corps, nor Fist, must know of our true plans. Surprise, suspicion, jealousy and mistrust will be our allies. We shall sow confusion, pit brother against brother, and reap the rewards. None will know our true purpose until all is complete.”

“Then there is no further reason to delay.”

“Let it begin at Coyerti.”

The figures departed, their mission clear before them, leaving nothing but voiceless whispers and darkness.

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Admiral Plif stood on a bridge bathed in a deep red light. The Doldur System was deep within a nebular famed for its haunting beauty, a colossal cloud of luminescent red and orange gasses that shifted and moved seemingly with a consciousness of its own. Had been of such a mind, Plif could have admired the scene. However, focused as he was on his mission, the red illumination gave the bridge of the ISD Warrior an angry, bloodthirsty atmosphere. If anything, it was mildly unsettling. Plif had always considered himself an ambitious, efficient admiral, but bloodthirsty? It seemed out of place for both himself and the nature of this mission. Training missions were useful exercises, but hardly a ‘bloodthirsty’ occasion. Still, this unusual atmosphere would keep him on his toes. It wouldn’t do to let the Warrior be out-performed by the Hammer.

“Admiral Plif,” One of his subordinates called. Plif turned to regard to officer, below him in the operational pit below the bridge walkway.

“Report,” the Admiral replied.

“Signal received from the Challenge. Hammer reports ready, and all drones are prepped for engagement. How shall I reply?” The officer enquired, waiting for the order to confirm the readiness of the Warrior.

“Tell the good Fleet Admiral that the Warrior stands ready to put the Hammer back in her place.” Plif replied, with a subtle smile.

“Aye, Sir.” The officer turned to his subordinates, and messages were hurriedly relayed. Plif stared at a small indicator light on the comms panel. In mere moments it blinked on; a signal that operations had begun. He turned to address the bridge crew.

“Officers of the Warrior!” Plif called, to an echoing chorus of stamps as the bridge crew came to attention. “Today, we remind the Hammer why we have spent the last standard year as the official flagship of the Tie Corps. This may be a training exercise, but I want all officers working at maximum capacity. We’ll show the whole fleet why we...”

Plif was cut off by a warning claxon. He turned to the scanner station, both annoyed at the interruption and pleased that his crew had the good sense not to let his speech interfere with their duties.

“Multiple squadrons of Starfighters inbound, Admiral! Standard range of alphabet fighters, all bearing TIE Corps training ID codes.”

“The speech can wait!” Plif replied, hurriedly. “Scramble Kappa and Sin squadrons to engage the fighters. Launch Sigma Flight I and Theta Flight II, I want them out there locating the Calamari Cruiser. That’s our primary goal. All remaining Sigma and Theta flights prep for assault on the Cruiser – Sigma load for destruction, Theta for capture. I want to be ready for any eventuality.”

“Aye, Sir!” came the chorus of replies as the bridge crew went to their work.

“Let the games begin...” Plif said to himself.