

Through Brown and Blue Eyes: Maelstrom

Serene white clouds formed a blanket across the sky, pierced only the peaks of the tallest mountains. Deeper into the dense layer, a tumultuous chaos of wind and rain buffeted those brave enough to face the tempest. Or foolish enough...

Nikita's hands pulled down her sunshield as her twin-engined Torrent fighter burst through the carpet of cloud, the brilliant bright orb in the sky beaming down on the water streaked fighter. Her hands flexed on the stick and throttle, her head turning back to scan the tops of the clouds behind her. Air forced into her lungs as she pulled on the stick, her mask delivering pressuring charges of oxygen to keep her mind processing clearly. She sucked it down greedily, holding the bubble tight in burning lungs as the force of inertia stacked upon her chest. Arching to the left, she watched a glittering silver speck chase her wake in the reflection of her mirrors.

Her aircraft's Threat Warning Receiver wailed a caution as invisible waves painted her aircraft with targeting information. Almost simultaneously, Sky Eye's voice filled her helmet.

"Star 8, Radar Spike!!"

"I see it!"

She tightened the turn, driving her left foot into the rudder pedal. The Torrent rattled, beeping in earnest as she exceeded the fighter's preferred angle of attack. The airflow was separating off the top of the wing. Her hand pushed the throttle forward, using thrust to carry the craft through the turn. The inertia was stacking upon her chest but she remained resolute. She measured her breaths against the flight forces. Ailerons governed the wings as speed rippled from the triangular craft due to competing factors of drag and lift.

Blue and brown eyes swept her mirrors, and she caught the silver dart shaped Mystique sweep high and to her right, lagging desperately to stay on her six. Airspeed was getting lower and the stick was twerking in her hands, her Torrent vying to roll and nose over as the stall caution echoed out. Nikita could almost hear the pursuing Mystique's roaring engines beside her. Exhaling against the force of her pressurized mask, she took another gulp before guiding her Torrent into its desires.

Backing off the throttle, she rolled into her turn and inverted. The chunky delta wing of her Torrent spun around the awkward point between center of weight and lift. Even with so little precious speed, the agile craft had responded. Nikita peeled away, the Torrent's canards deflecting into the airstream. Guiding the nose down through a half loop she restored her momentum quickly before firewalling her throttles.

"Two Bogies, bearing 329 for 065, 7000" Sky Eye called again. Her MFD flashed with targeting data being relayed from the airborne radar aircraft. Her body rattled as she penetrated the sound barrier with ease, the roar of her twin engines resonating through the airframe.

“Star Eight,” She affirmed with her callsign. Her wake carved a trail across the carpet of the clouds, swirling patterns rising up and obscuring her path into the raging maelstrom hidden in the clouds below.

The Mystique, having lost visual and radar, pitched upward. His eyes scanned at the wake left by the departing Torrent. “Damn... so close.”

He dove down, eager to find a new target in the storm. Plunging into the clouds, he too disappeared from sight. Before long, the layer of wispy cloud tops reformed, offering a sense of calm to the rainy countryside. Above the sound of rain and thunder, the churning roar of jet engines stirred the storm.