

# *Raptor Squadron*

*Mercenary Corps*



*By GFMakina*

*A book from the Epos of souls*

**RAPTOR SQUADRON**  
**MERCENARY CORPS**  
CHAPTER 7



A work of fiction by The Grand Fantasy Machine

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# Raptor Squadron: Mercenary Corps

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# CHAPTER 7...

## DYLAN SHIPYARDS

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Maria threw the hauler down a ramp and came off the highway after what was 3 minutes of dodging and flailing through traffic. The sirens from the police cars echoed in the distance; it was obvious they were beaten by Maria's reckless, yet magnificent driving skill. She turned left into a nearby alleyway and stopped the car behind a large dumpster. The occupants breathed heavily and wiped cold sweat off their faces. Maria yelled.

"Wow! That was so much fun!"

Levon angrily climbed out of the hauler and went to the driver's side. The tub door suddenly flew open and several beaten, but visibly okay, Raptors stumbled out and collapsed on the ground. Levon looked at them. He gritted his teeth and turned back to Maria.

"Out!"

"Huh?"

"Out! What were you thinking? Are you trying to kill us? This reckless attitude isn't like you!" he said, fuming.

"I was just proving to myself that I'm really alive, and I guess you guys were right! ...It's not much different from the things you all do during missions anyway." She smiled at him brightly.

"This isn't how you prove that, Maria! You could have killed all of us!"

"Oh, hell naw...I am done with you, child. This is bullshit...I ain't felt this close to death since we fought them Dark Seraphim a few years back," the Raptor in the driver box, whose name was James, said as he climbed out. He puked and left a mess all over the floor and on his boots. He sat against a wall to calm himself.

"I had everything under control. The map told me everything from city layouts to traffic. Besides, I'm not the one who climbed into a moving hauler through a window while it was flying through the air. Unlike me, you didn't know if you were going to slip off and die or get pulled off by wind. Besides, I got us here way faster than you would have!" she complained, looking annoyed this time.

"Don't try to flip this on me, Maria. I was just trying to stop you from getting us all killed! Besides, what about him? He almost died! And everyone else in the back?"

"Yeah, but like I said, I had everything under control! At least...I thought I did...ugh, I won't do it again...I just wanted to prove something to myself. I was able to go against one of my protocols...the crew protection protocol. I'm not allowed to endanger any of you unless it's

necessary, and I was able to do it right now despite my programming...I might not be able to control all of my protocols, but I at least have control of a good portion of myself.”

“Oh, I can’t believe this...,” James whispered while wiping himself off. The other Raptors started to inspect the drones.

Levon thought for a moment. They had to make daring escapes in the past with reckless driving and chases, but it wasn’t without damage or injury to the occupants of their vehicle. Surprisingly enough, nobody was actually hurt after Maria’s show of imprudence, aside from the one Raptor who almost flew out. The truth was that Levon was scared for his life and those of his crew, but nothing happened to any of them. He figured he wouldn’t continue scolding her since she did a good job. If done right, he could cultivate her driving skill in later missions. Even so, it still didn’t change the fact that she disobeyed him and put everyone in danger, so he made a motion with his hand for her to get out of the car. He at least wanted a smooth ride the rest of the way.

Her face turned sour and dejected. She swung the door open and jumped out. Levon hopped into the driver’s seat and closed the door. The other Raptors went back into the tub.

“Get in through the other side. You can ride on Kamilla and Cadoc. And don’t worry, gang. I’m driving. It’ll be a smooth ride from now on!” Levon yelled.

“Thank the lord...,” James said.

“Ugh. Alright,” Maria said. She got into the hauler and slammed the door. The sirens echoed closer.

“Maybe we should stay here until they leave...and we need to alert the maintenance crew about what happened,” whispered Kamilla in a low dazed voice with her eyes closed.

“Yeah, I think so too,” replied Levon as he laid his chin on the wheel. Levon relayed the events to the maintenance crew and gave them directions after telling them to meet in 30 minutes.

They waited for 20 minutes. The situation quieted down relatively quickly, and Cadoc, who regained his will to live again, checked on guard positions around the city and found that they were slowly giving up their search for the hauler.

“It doesn’t look like these guards have the same motivations as police forces, does it? They gave up on us fast,” commented Levon.

“Maybe because they see people like us on a daily basis,” said Kamilla, who was finally regaining her color.

“Or maybe because they’re just like us, criminals with fancy uniforms and titles. Probably here to keep order, not to uphold laws,” croaked Cadoc while typing in his computer. The Raptors in the back seemed calm. Levon sighed and looked down at Maria, who was laying face down on the two Raptors next to him.

“Maria...don’t do this again unless it’s necessary. You scared us shitless. If you feel like I take too many risks, then I’m sorry. I won’t pull a stunt like my window jump again...remember that I did it because I didn’t want anything to happen to you or any of the crew.”

“Yes, Levon,” she breathed out and pressed her face against Kamilla’s legs.

“I might be okay with letting you drive again. Just don’t tell the crew or make this a habit. Act like a civilized sentient. As civilized as a mercenary can be... And last thing, you’re not slick. I



told you not to bring your actual self off the ship,” he said and tapped her head with his fist. She laughed into Kamilla’s legs and didn’t say anything.

Levon shook his head. He realized that climbing in through the window of a moving car was suicidal. He promised himself to never do anything like that again unless a situation called for it. He started up the hauler again and made his way out of the alley.

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They arrived at Dylan Shipyards 15 minutes after the maintenance crew. The owner was an alien whose full name was Dylan Kore. Humans adopted him when he was a small child.

Dylan and his family had been living on the Warp-Gate for generations. Dylan’s grandfather bought the shipyard when he was young and then passed it onto his son when he grew too old to operate it. Now it had passed on to Dylan the third who spent his time fixing ships and selling parts for travelers. Dylan and his family had never left the Warp-Gate, but because of the nature of the Gate, he and his family were well informed on galactic news.

They weren’t criminals, but they didn’t mind involving themselves with people on the run from the law. Criminals usually had good money and they profited from making business with them. As a result, Dylan usually stocked his shipyard with a plethora of warship parts and illegal modifications for star fighters, carriers, and transports. A few of the Firebird’s best modifications came from this man.

The shipyard was a large cylinder structure that went up and through the sky barrier and had a small dock. It allowed clients to dock, and allowed Dylan to bring parts into space or take junk ships apart and bring their parts down to the ground level of the wing where he had his yard: a lot that took up the whole block around the cylinder. It was closed off by a metal wall and had hundreds to thousands of scrapped parts and full sized ships. There were warehouses sprinkled throughout the yard where he sold new parts.

Levon drove down the street and turned left into the main entrance. A large holo-sign said:

*Dylan Kore Shipyards! The finest ships in the galaxy!*

There were armed guards on either side of the entrance. An alien at the green energy gate stopped them and asked for a small fee of 10 credits per person before entering the yard. Levon drove past scrap fighters, gunships, half a scout carrier, freighters, transports, and small space cars. There were full sized engines sitting out in the open and many Aliens and humans were hard at work taking the ships apart or hauling out entire ships. There were busy roads between towering mountains of scrap and ships. Levon veered through them carefully.

“Wow. I’ve never seen so many junk ships before,” Maria said as she crushed Kamilla to get a better look.

“We’ve never taken you to a junk yard, have we?” breathed Kamilla.

“No, Levon has always been too scared. He thinks a piece of ship will fall on me or someone will kidnap me again when you guys get distracted.”

“Hey, I never said that first part. I just don’t think this is a good place for you. Shops and

amusement areas are fine, but these places are dirty,” he said.

“So are we going to buy used parts for the ship?” Maria said, eyeing a rusty freighter with a scowl.

“No. They sell new parts and brand new ships here. We’re going to the central office. Dylan’ll be happy to see us. We haven’t been back here in years...hey Cadoc, how you doing over there?”

Cadoc sat with his computer on top of Maria’s Buttocks. He hadn’t said much and was typing into his computer.

“I found something.”

“Found what?” Kamilla replied.

“A possible lieutenant of Zradnik Luo. He is here on the Warp-Gate. He docked at docking bay 1009 at the west end of the wing.”

“How did you find that out?” asked Levon as he drove over a scraped hover mini-van.

“Zradnik Luo was traced by a number of hackers and spy networks I keep in contact with. As we know, he works for the Rexar Galactic Trade Group, but all information on his location was lost after his joining. It is rumored that he isn’t just part of the cartel. He is a commander. A Rexar Lieutenant is here on a resupply mission and is here to meet a new business contact. The information says that it is possible that he is part of Luo’s chain of command because he accidentally told a spy that his commander is from Ophion, the Warp-Gate where Walther and Tania were born.”

Quite a mouthful from Cadoc, thought Levon, but if he was right, then they could help Tania and Walther get closer to their revenge. They had to move quickly, though. The Raptors hadn’t even started repairs.

“Thank you, Cadoc. You think you can relay this information to Walther and Tania?”

“Affirmative,” he croaked. He continued to type and Levon parked the hauler near a large warehouse that had a well-kept two story industrial office in front of it. The Raptor maintenance crew stood nearby, talking while staying near their hauler. Levon waved them and their drones over.

Kamilla let their drones out of the tub, but upon closer inspection they had scratches and dents on their bodies, to which Levon responded by glaring at Maria. She dug a boot into the dirt and laughed nervously.

“You’re going to buff out that damage when we get back,” he ordered and slammed the door of the tub as the last drone jumped out.

“Yes, Levon...”

Cadoc stayed in the hauler to work on his computer. The group walked over to the office, but only Levon, Kamilla, and Maria went inside. They saw a man in a jumpsuit with blue dyed hair. He was sitting on a desk with a number of orange holograms surrounding him and a number of holo-tv’s on the wall showing a game of Hammer ball, a popular game in the galaxy where sentients on jetpacks fought over scoring balls by hitting each other with large power hammers.

“Hello. Welcome to Dylan’s shipyards. If it can be found then you will find it here. What can I

do for you?" he said in a rehearsed way as he watched a pained alien get pummeled into the ground by numerous hammers.

"I'm looking for Dylan Kore. He knows me. My name is Levon Artyem."

The man rotated in his chair and looked at Levon. His face brightened immediately.

"You're Mr. Artyem! We haven't seen you around here in 3 years! How have you been? My lord, the boss talks about you people all the time like 'yes yes, I know the Raptors personally. I worked on their ship, you know,'" he giggled.

"Ah...yes, um...who are you again? Were you working here when we came by to fix our ship last time?" said Levon with thoughtful look.

"Oh, you won't remember me, Mr. Artyem. I was just a regular junk scrapper when you came by the last time, but I caught a glimpse of you and your crew. I could never forget your blue hue or that pretty young lady over there." He walked around his desk and took Kamilla's hand and kissed it, making her blush lightly. Maria looked angry.

"Oh, and who might this be? Is this a little girl you've adopted?" he said, observing her closely and then patting her head.

"That's Maria. She's a good friend, not an adopted child. I was wondering if you could let us see Dylan. We're on a tight schedule. Sorry for being blunt."

"Why, yes! Right this way. It's no problem. He's in the warehouse right outside."

He waltzed out the door and led them to the large warehouse, which had a slit open on the large metal entrance. Maria pulled on Levon's sleeve.

"I don't like him. He's trying to seduce Kamilla," she whispered.

"Nah. Don't worry about him. He's just being courteous."

She pouted as the group walked inside. There were many new looking spacecraft inside and Dylan was under a clean looking freighter helping some workers repair electrical wiring. The blue haired man stopped in front of it and put his hands behind his back.

"Sorry to bother you sir, but guess who just stopped by! ...It's Levon Artyem!"

Dylan dragged himself out hastily and looked over at the 3 Raptors.

"By the gods. It is!"

He marched over to the group shaking hands with Kamilla and Maria. After Maria let go of his hand, she stepped back, feeling intimidated at the sight of the Alien. Dylan was huge and about 8 feet tall. His red skin and jumpsuit were full of oil and grime. His head was long. Levon smiled as he shook one of the beaming Dylan's six muscular hands.

"Dear god's, man! I thought you lot had forgotten about me! How is everyone? Is old Garth still playing the part of ship jester?" he said, roaring with laughter.

"Oh man, you bet he is. You can't drown that guy's spirit," Levon said.

"Ah yes, he's a fine pilot I must admit, even though the man is a clown. And Mazan? I spoke to him a few weeks ago. He says you lot haven't been to Pok in quite a few months."

"We've been pretty busy. We've had to do a lot of extra jobs to keep up with our standard

paychecks.”

“I see. Nothing’s changed about you then. Always hunting for credits, hah! So what are you doing here, Levon? I don’t imagine you’re here to chit chat with ol’ Dylan, are you?”

“I’m afraid not my friend. I have to leave this Gate in 24 Coalition hours and I need a great number of supplies for my ship.”

“Well, have at it then. Let’s see what you need?”

Levon typed into his computer and swiped a detailed list over to Dylan.

“Gods. Levon, this is going to cost you quite a chunk of dime. I hope you came with a fat wallet to be able to afford all this!”

“Don’t worry, we did. We want them new, if possible.”

“Well, I got you covered old friend. Just follow me out to the warehouses and we’ll get you sorted out. You’ll be needin transport for them?”

“Yes. We’re docked at docking bay 632.”

“Ah, that isn’t too far. A few of the pieces might take a bit longer since we have them stored on other warehouses across the Gate, but we should have them there in a few hours. Lars, listen up!”

The blue haired man stood at attention.

“Yes sir?”

“I need you to prepare a Gorilla transport. We’ve got a lot of stuff that needs to be delivered to our friends here soon.”

“Right away sir!” he said and ran out of the warehouse. Maria pouted at Lars as he left and Dylan looked down at her, confused.

“What’s wrong with the little woman there?” he asked.

“She doesn’t like him. She thinks he’s hitting on Kamilla,” replied Levon.

Dylan threw his head back and laughed heartily.

“Don’t worry little girl. He won’t be takin your friend here. He doesn’t like girls. He has a boyfriend,” he said.

Maria looked confused at him.

“Bah. I’m no good with kids. You take over, Levon.” He laughed as he walked out of the warehouse.

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Levon started to realize how innocent Maria was. Despite her kill counts on the ship and the one alien she killed defending Nannette a few years ago, she was quite new to the galaxy. She had little knowledge of life outside the ship or the Raptors. Her reaction to Lars, the homosexual attendant, and Dylan, the massive alien, provided Levon further proof of her innocence. She rarely got off the ship since they were afraid for her safety, and her naïve attitude didn’t help her case.

Whoever programmed her with the intent of creating a realistic child Artificial Intelligence had accomplished it.

He looked at the little girl who seemed to be musing as they walked back to the hauler.

“What are you thinking about?”

“About those Lars and Dylan guys.”

“What about them?”

“Why doesn’t Lars like girls like Kamilla? I like her and I think she’s really pretty.”

“He does like her. He just doesn’t like her the way other people might like her. You know. Like the way Garth likes Faye.”

“Why though? Don’t all guys like girls? My programming says that sentients and humans are attracted to the opposite sex. It helps with procreation.” She looked at him confused.

“Well, not all men like girls. Your programming might say one thing, but real life is a lot more complicated than that. Lars himself likes other men, from what Dylan told us.”

“Really? Why though?” she asked.

“He just does. That’s the way he is. Everyone is born different, Maria. I don’t know if it has to do with our minds or if we have souls or something, but sentients always follow whatever makes them happiest. In this case, Dylan said he has a boyfriend and that means that whenever he is with him, he feels the same thing that Garth does when he’s with Faye.”

“Oh,” Maria said. She lost herself in thought.

“Yeah. All sentients have different experiences and lives in this galaxy. I know you felt intimidated when you saw Dylan. You shouldn’t feel bothered when you see someone who isn’t ‘normal’ to you. Just look at me and the others on our crew. I have blue skin and I bet a lot of Aliens think that’s weird. I’m sure a lot of aliens think you’re strange too, but that’s just the way it is. Everyone in the galaxy is so different and unique, and I really think it would be boring if everyone looked the same way and thought the same way.”

Maria thought for a moment and then smiled.

“That’s weird...I didn’t know guys could like other guys. Can girls like other girls too?”

“Yeah. It’s possible. It’s pretty normal in the galaxy. Like I said. People seek whatever makes them most happy. Lars is happy not liking girls and Garth is happy liking girls. Everyone should live this way, including you.”

“Yeah...I guess you’re right.”

She ran forward to one of the haulers and started skipping and jumping in front of it. Cadoc and the others Raptors looked over to see what was happening.

“This is why I love getting off the ship. I always see new things I’ve never heard about!”

“Yeah yeah. Calm down, Maria. We’re on a mission, remember? We need to get our ship repaired and then we’re leaving for planet Rubin.”

“Alright,” she said and climbed into the hauler. Kamilla came up from behind Levon and whispered.

“Sometimes it surprises me how innocent she is despite being a programmed killer.”

“I know. It’s crazy. I find it refreshing to be traveling with someone like her on these missions, though. We usually just leave her stuffed on the ship, she looks happy right now.”

“Well, as long as her happiness doesn’t mean that we’re letting her drive again then I’m fine,” she laughed.

“Yeah, you’re right. Anyway, let’s get moving. We need to get off this Gate.”

“Okay. If you want I can go with Maria and the drones on Dylan’s transport after we buy our supplies. You go return the hauler with Cadoc.”

“Sounds like a good plan. I leave you and Rin in charge since Garth is a lazy ass. Make sure that we get all our supplies and keep things in order during the repairs.”

“Got it. I’ll make sure the Firebird is left like new.”

They got in the haulers and drove deeper into the heart of the yard until they stopped at a white warehouse with many scarpers, sailors, pirates, and varieties of ship operators walking in and out of it. Inside they found thousands of crates stacked in large rows. Set pieces were placed in front of the rows to display the parts on sale.

The Raptors spent the next half hour browsing for the parts and sending them to be packaged and prepared for shipping. The parts were taken to the central cylinder leading up to the Dylan Shipyards docking bay. Here Maria, Kamilla, the Raptor crew, and the drones parted ways with Levon and Cadoc who left with the hauler to go return it to the ‘squidman’. Kamilla and her group walked through the stabilizer hall and stepped into the Dylan Shipyards dock hangar, which had many storage barges. They were loaded with scrap and parts to be delivered to customers around the Gate. Kamilla and Maria sat down on some boxes near a great barge with the word ‘GORILLA’ across its hull. They patiently waited for the loading to begin.

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The Raptor crew was hard at work loading the barge with the other hangar workers. Kamilla was bored. She tapped her feet, sent messages to Phoebe and Faye on her computer, and braided Maria’s hair in a style used on her home planet of Yaryar. There were a number of smaller ships being taken down a green central gravity well that went through the center of the cylinder to be dismantled in the lot below. Some barges left and other ships came, and other craft underwent repairs in the corners of the docking bay. After 15 minutes, Lars came and greeted them with a smile.

“We are almost done loading the Gorilla Transport with the first part of your order.”

“Good. How much longer?” said Kamilla

“Just an hour or so. If you want, you can inspect the pieces to see that everything is correct and to your liking. It will save time from tedious exchanges.”

“Yes, I’ll do that. Which ship is it?”

“It’s that one, the second Gorilla transport.”

“Awesome. Let’s go Maria.”

The girl hopped off her box and walked behind them as they went into the Gorilla’s airlock. While walking its halls, Maria looked at Lars with wonder making Kamilla giggle. Kamilla and Maria spent 30 minutes checking over the make of every tube, wire, fuel cell, and metal plate. When the parts were verified, Kamilla and Maria went to the bridge of the Gorilla and watched it undock.

“Hey Kamilla...I was wondering, why are Walther and Tania are looking for that Luo guy anyway?”

“Oh, well, the thing is that before Tania and Walther joined us, they were police officers on the Coalition Warp-Gate called Ophion. They exposed their old police chief, Zradnik Luo, after they found out he funded terrorism so that the Confederates could take over the Gate. He tortured them for days and nearly killed them, but they escaped. Now he is on the run, and so are Tania and Walther. They’re wanted dead by many Confederacy sympathizers and allies of Luo.”

“Wow...I didn’t know that...Hmm, are they going to go look for him at that Bogdan house?”

“Possibly. It’s good luck that for the first time in a long time that we have a lead on him.”

“I hope Levon doesn’t go.”

“He’ll be fine even if he goes. Don’t worry too much. We’re the Raptors after all...we’re the greatest mercenary group in the galaxy... By the way, do you like the braid I made you?”

Maria sighed and looked at herself on a bridge terminal’s camera.

“Yes. I love it. Thanks Kami.”

“Anytime, little Mari.”

The Gorilla weaved itself through space and over anti-air platforms and then docked at bay 632 in a spot next to the Firebird. Kamilla got off the transport and found the rest of the crew and drones hard at work, storing supplies from Dayo and her group. They had brought in many large crates full of food, water, medical supplies, and armor. Apparently, they had to rent more haulers and make several trips to bring all the supplies.

With most of the crew and drones together, a massive repair effort began. After a while, Levon and Cadoc arrived with the new computers and started their own repairs on the barrier generator and water purifier. Out of all the repairs, they had the most trouble trying to get the moisture absorber working again since they had to replace most of its circuitry and wiring. Dylan had to help them on several occasions. Later in the day, the hull plates they ordered arrived, meaning they could finally repair their shuttle and Firebird exterior. They stored extra plates in the ordnance area of the ship.

Much later, Emil and his crew returned with massive crates of magnetic slugs for the Firebird main cannons and with missiles branded ‘super hornet’ for their missile batteries. They also bought a variety of guns and bullet drums and fusion cores for the Firebird’s defensive guns.

Overall, the repairs took about 16 hours, with the crew members giving each other breaks in between the long labor hours. In total it took them 19 hours and 30 minutes to get the Firebird ready for departure, and to the joy of the crew, it left them over 4 hours of recreational time before they had to leave the Warp-Gate again. They were exhausted, but some of them looked animated

and ready to go out into the station with the time they had left. Levon called a meeting in the Firebird hangar again. He stood on a box and overlooked the crew before speaking.

“Okay guys. A job well done! We are officially ready to begin our trip to Rubin. This mission should be a weird one but also a dangerous one. I want all of us to stay strong and alert while we’re out there. Now, we need to decide who wants to stay behind with the ship to get rest, while the rest of the crew goes out. We also need guards.”

Kamilla raised her hand to stay behind, as did Phoebe and Sabbas. From the bridge crew, Dayo, Ian, Aku, and Jael decided to stay behind. Yancy also decided that he wanted to do work in the armory. Overall, about 50 decided to stay. The rest of the Crew who wasn’t staying behind got into 2 groups and left for the gravity stabilizer. Levon decided that his group would go out to search for the lieutenant. Levon’s group consisted of Emil, Walther, Madison, Tania, and Cadoc. The rest went with Garth to go to a nearby shopping area filled with bars and clubs.



## PREVIEW OF CHAPTER 8:

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*Tania to Levon while inside a bar within Bogdan's house of Sots:*

“I know...you're right...hey Levon, do you see that?” Tania said, nodding at a group of sentients with wide eyes.

Levon shot his head up and an emblem caught his eye. A blue bird on its side had its wings closed and looked like it was accelerating through the white circle background. It was stitched on the arm of a tall dark skinned human wearing a brown silk suit. He was suave with a shaved head and black sunglasses. His eyes were dark and his face was sharp. He wore a smug look, and carried himself with pride and brazenness. Sentients moved fearfully out his groups' way as they walked through the tables to the VIP area. Behind him were two aliens. One was a Lal, much like Dayo except he was a tall male with white skin and no pebble designs. He had razor eyes and looked ferocious. The other was a Karu alien, a humanoid with green skin and spikes protruding from his face and arms and back. It looked angry. Both were equally well-dressed and carried rifles on their backs.

It was the mercenary team, Skyhawk.

**End of the chapter. Comeback next week to join Captain Levon and the rest of Raptor Squadron on their adventures across the Kaleco Galaxy! Remember: this web novel is published for free on GFMakina.net. Not sure when it will end, but as far as the current written work goes, it could go on for months to years! Enjoy the ride everyone!**

I want to thank everyone who took the time to read this book.

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It would be greatly appreciated!

-GFMakina