

Star Wars: Imperial Treachery

Chapter 3

A lone red-headed guard stood in the middle of a dark forest. It was a typical cold, dark night for the area. The branches of the various trees rocked in the breeze. Suddenly, the guard heard a noise that was definitely not caused by the breeze. He drew his rifle. "Who's there?" he screamed, aiming into the darkness.

"You first!" a voice said. The guard couldn't tell where the voice was coming from.

"Glory to our imperator," the guard replied. There was silence.

"Skoti?" the voice asked. The guard lowered his rifle. A brown haired man walked into his view.

"Nayt?" Skoti said. The brown hair man nodded and hugged Skoti. "What are you doin' up so late you damn fool? Get back to base camp before a witch nabs ya."

"Couldn't sleep," Nayt replied. "After what happened at Cicatriz, I worry that the Nationalists will be upon us soon."

"You don't have to worry about them," Skoti reassured him. "No Nationalist would dare waltz into the forest. They worry more about witches than us."

"Always witches, witches, witches with you Skoti," Nayt said as he sat down on a fallen log. "How's night watch going?"

"Quiet until you showed up," Skoti replied. Nayt opened his satchel and removed his radio.

"Hopefully there's a song going on right now," Nayt said as he turned on the radio. The radio hummed for a few seconds until a soothing voice appeared mid-song. Both Skoti and Nayt knew whose voice belonged to; Arcia, the Krayt maiden, the most beautiful woman of Voltar. Nayt knew that there was a long history to the title, but he, like every soldier, just loved to hear her beautiful voice. The song ended, much to their dismay.

"And that was our very own Arcia ladies and gentlemen, singing a battle hymn for our men-at-arms," the announcer said. "Remember to show your support to our soldiers and their fight against the rebel scum." Nayt shook his head, *they* were rebels.

The rebels and Nationalists had been at war for years, it was a bloody war that had cost thousands of lives on both sides and so far, the Nationalists had control of everything: they held the government, the church and the Krayt maiden. He sighed and looked back to Skoti. How he wished he could watch that beautiful woman stand before him, her brown hair blowing in the wind, singing to him and him alone. A small red light lit up the area around them, which signaled that the Nationalists were talking to their headquarters. Nayt's job in the rebellion was to

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intercept Nationalist messages and report movement or anything else. He never got anything good. He was pretty sure that they were aware that he was listening in on them.

“HQ, this is prisoner transport TX-18, we’re delivering rebel sympathizers to Caucasus, ETA 20 minutes,” some soldier said on the line. Nayt quickly got out his notepad and jotted down the information. Once he was done he put the notebook away and sighed. He hated his job. He was the first to hear everything but the last to do anything about it.

A few days ago, he had intercepted a message that said the Nationalists were on their way to raid the village of Cicatriz. But like the Nationalist propaganda that plagued the radios and posters on walls, the rebellion was nothing more than a group of people who couldn’t work together, and yesterday, after finishing up their latest argument of how one “won’t work with a Westerner or Easterner or whatever”, they sent troops, only to find the remains of what was a village. They had brought some of the survivors to the base this morning. Nayt remembered accidentally walking into the medical tent and seeing some of the poor souls. Among them was a rather muscular man, crying uncontrollably. He had later read up on the man’s file that his name was Eska of house Var, one of the few miners that hadn’t been able to escape in time but had been lucky to survive. Maybe lucky wasn’t a good word. His daughter, Kea, had been kidnapped to become a hornet.

“My daughter,” the man had kept sobbing. “They took my baby girl. Why?” Nayt knew why they had. They planned on turning Kea into a hornet.

A hornet was the Nationalist’s ultimate soldier, capable of taking damage and dealing it back tenfold. During the initial years of the war, hornets were volunteered soldiers who underwent a grueling training program and essentially became organic machines. As the years passed, and their selectable forces dwindled, the Nationalists started to get their “candidates” from local villages, until finally they resorted to kidnapping children. From the damage report, the average age of the children taken was *eleven*. Just thinking about how the rebels did nothing to protect them angered him.

“Thinkin’ about Cicatriz again?” Skoti asked. Nayt looked up as Skoti pointed to the pen in his hand, which was almost about to snap in half. Nayt loosened his grip on the pen and set it down next to him. “You need to stop frettin’ about what happened,” Skoti said. “Nothin’ you do is goin’ to change that.” Nayt smirked at Skoti’s pronunciation of his –ings, also known as a Northcent. Skoti was from the Northern quadrant, which was the first area to go under Nationalist control. Much of the Northerners had fled and found refuge in the Western and Eastern quadrants. Unlike most of his brethren, Skoti actually wanted to bring the fight to the Nationalists, which is why he was now hiding in a forest, not doing a thing. “Hey, do ya think Neek is onboard that transport?” Skoti asked. Nayt only shrugged his shoulders. Neek was a rebel who had been undercover in the Nationalist ranks until a few days ago, when his cover was blown. The higher ups—as usual—had deemed Neek a lost cause and would not send a rescue

party. Neek was from their base and the fact that they couldn't save one of their own hit them pretty hard. Now that he thought about it, there hadn't been any reports of prisoner transports since his capture. Maybe Neek was on that transport.

"HQ, this is DF-88, an unidentified spacecraft has just entered our sector," a pilot said over the radio. "They seem to be transmitting Republic codes."

"Did he just say Republic?" Skoti asked.

"DF-88, regardless of affiliation, that ship is violating our treaties," the Nationalist operator informed the pilot. "You have permission to fire upon the ship"

"HQ, I am unsure if any other ships are approaching, will establish radio contact first," DF-88 replied.

"Proceed with caution DF-88. Reinforcements will be arriving shortly," the operator said.

"Unknown Republic spacecraft, please respond," the pilot said. There was silence. "Unknown Republic spacecraft, please respond or we will be forced to open fire."

"You don't think that's really the Republic?" Skoti asked. Nayt shrugged his shoulders again.

"HQ please respond!" the pilot exclaimed. "Spacecraft has just opened fire! 86 is down! I repeat, unknown spacecraft has opened fire!"

"Affirmative, 88," the operator said. An audible click meant that the operator was sending an all-spacecraft report. "Attention all *dragon*-class fighters, Republic forces have initiated combat with a DF-88's squadron, requesting all forces to repeal invaders." Nayt turned off the radio.

"I always knew this was goin' to happen," Skoti said.

"Stop panicking," Nayt said, packing his radio up. "We need to report this to Meda." Nayt stood up and grabbed his bag. Meda was the head of the makeshift encampment they called a base. "Get up. I'm going need to you to confirm this for me."

"I can't leave my post," Skoti interjected.

"This is more important than waiting for a non-existent enemy," Nayt said, walking away. Skoti sighed and shouldered his rifle, quickly following behind Nayt.

"You think we got another full on invasion on our hands?" Skoti asked.

"I don't know," Nayt answered, moving some bushes out of his way.

“Well, I hope Meda is back from his meetin’,” Skoti said, making Nayt stop dead in his tracks.

“Of all the times he has one of those useless meetings,” he said, looking to the sky. Just then, something shot through the sky, lighting it up.

“A shootin’ star?” Skoti asked. A loud crash could be heard in the distance.

“I don’t think so,” Nayt answered as another appeared in the sky, followed shortly by another, and another. Suddenly, one of the “stars” crashed not far from them, shaking the very ground they stood on. “Dragon’s tongue!” Nayt exclaimed.

“Let’s check it out,” Skoti suggested.

“No, we need to get to Meda immediately. Then we’ll come back here with reinforcements,” Nayt said.

“Identify yourselves!” a soldier exclaimed, startling both Nayt and Skoti. They both turned around to see a squad of six men, all pointing their guns at them.

“Nayt of house Fillion,” Nayt answered.

“Skoti of former house Romero,” Skoti answered.

“Oh,” the soldier from before said, putting his weapon down. “Sorry sirs. We were on our way to investigate the crash, thought you were Nationalists.”

“Is Meda at the base?” Nayt asked.

“No sir,” the soldier replied. “You’re technically in command at the moment sir.” Skoti punched Nayt in the arm. “What are your orders, sir?”

“Continue on,” Nayt ordered. “We’ll follow.” The soldier nodded and the squad ran off towards the crash site.

“Nationalists might try to investigate the crash as well,” Skoti said. Nayt nodded.

“Then all the better to get this over with as soon as possible,” Nayt replied.

“No Nayt,” Skoti said, grabbing Nayt by the shoulder. “They might actually investigate the entire wood. *They’ll find us.*”

“Meda needs to give that order, not me.” Nayt said.

“You know Meda,” Skoti said. “He’ll have us bunker down and try to hold the line, just like he did durin’ the last Republic invasion.” Nayt shrugged his shoulders.

“It doesn’t matter, I can’t give that order,” Nayt answered, even though he knew Skoti was right. Meda had served in the last Republic invasion thirteen years ago, during which he helped to repel the Republic’s faceless soldiers. His valor earned him the title of the “faceless slayer” in the Angel’s song. However, the rebels had taken away his valor and turned him into a bumbling fool. Of course he’d never say that to his superior’s face, lest he finally bare his fangs. The group finally reached the crash zone. The area was ablaze, Nayt could already feel sweat on his brow. The soldiers split off and began to search the surrounding area. Nayt and Skoti approached the cause of the damage; a giant metal cylinder in the middle of a crater. Nayt drew his pistol as Skoti drew his rifle and the two cautiously approached what appeared to be the door of the cylinder. Almost on command, the door popped open. “Come out with your hands up!” Nayt screamed as they readied their weapons. The soldiers returned to the cylinder and readied themselves for a Nationalist attack. Suddenly, a black-haired man exited the cylinder with his hands raised in the air. His gray uniform was nothing Nayt had ever seen. However, the emblem on the uniform he had seen before. It was the emblem of the Republic. “You are of the Republic?” Nayt asked, motioning for everyone to hold their fire. The black-haired man nodded. “State your name and rank.”

“Jared Mas,” the black-haired man answered, “I’m an engineer of the *Frayed Hunter*.”

“Where is your captain?” Nayt asked.

“Don’t answer any questions,” a black-haired woman said, approaching from inside the cylinder. “These Volta monsters will kill us once we blurt out the information.”

“What makes ya think we won’t just torture the information out of ya?” Skoti asked. The black-haired woman backed up. She wasn’t as brave as she sounded.

“She’s on a different escape pod,” the woman replied. “Her distress signal is encrypted. Her escape pod will look just like all the others on radar without the proper password.”

“Do you have the password?” Nayt asked. The woman shook her head.

“Our second in command did, but he disappeared shortly before the battle,” she replied. Nayt scratched his chin.

“Why did your captain launch an attack on our fighters?” he then asked, lying about who they attacked. The woman’s eyes widened.

“Our captain didn’t give that order,” she replied. “I did. I panicked.” Nayt turned to one of the soldiers.

“Take them back to the base and lock them up,” Nayt ordered. “Meda will want to speak with them.” The soldiers entered the pod and began to round up the various survivors. Nayt turned to Skoti. “I’m going to head back to base and try to contact some of the other bases,” Nayt

informed him. "Let them know to get to those escape pods before the Nationalists do." Skoti nodded.

"Viscera save us if those bastards get the captain first." Skoti said as Nayt walked away.

Echon awoke to a stinging headache. The last thing he had remembered was helping Aurea strap herself in. He lifted his hand up and tried to focus on his hand. His hand, like his surroundings, was blurred. Echon let his head fall back. He could see a blurry object approaching him. As the object got closer, Echon could barely make out Celeste's face. "-all right?" he heard her ask. Echon swung his head left and right. Celeste understood that as a "no". She grabbed his shoulders. Her body was still feeling the effects of the sedative that Evan had used and couldn't find the strength to lift Echon up. She turned to Aurea, who was staring at the door. "Aurea, help me lift him up," she asked.

"People are coming," Aurea said, her voice trembling on the words. Celeste stood up and walked over to her.

"I don't hear anyone," Celeste said, listening attentively. The escape pod was made of 5 inch durasteel. You couldn't hear a thing from outside in or vice versa.

"Get down!" Aurea exclaimed, grabbing Celeste by the sleeve of her uniform and slinging them both onto the floor. Just then, the escape pod's door was blown open and a group of soldiers barged in.

"Stay on the ground!" one of the soldiers screamed, shoving the barrel of his rifle into Aurea's face. Three other soldiers ran over to Aurea, Celeste and Echon and picked them up off the ground and dragged them outside into the dark and cold forest. Surrounding the escape pod was a squad of ten men, each of their rifles trained on the three of them. "Which one of you is of the highest rank?" the soldier from before asked.

"I...am," Echon struggled to say. Of course he was lying, but he wanted to protect Celeste. The soldier walked up to him and stared him straight in the eye. Echon could barely make out his face. From what he could tell, the man had no distinguishable features about him. He was just your plain run of the mill grunt. The grunt smiled, showing that he was missing his right second incisor. Echon smiled slightly, so *he did* have a distinguishable feature. The grunt seemed to notice Echon's reaction and head butt him. The resulting shock helped bring Echon back to his senses. He could now see the man in front of him clearly. His uniform was a mixture of various browns and greens, camouflage.

"What is your reason for comin' to our planet?" the grunt asked. Echon thought for a moment.

"I don't know?" he answered. Another head butt crashed into his skull.

“Republic scum,” the grunt said. “You’ll tell us your reasons after a few hours of torture in Caucasus.” Before Echon could ponder on what a Caucasus was, one of the other soldiers started to open fire on something in the tree line. “What are you doin’?!” the grunt exclaimed.

“I saw something, sir,” the soldier replied. “It had glowing eyes. The grunt looked through the tree line but saw nothing.

“There’s nothin’ there you fool,” the grunt said, chastising the soldier. Suddenly, a Krayt dragon’s howl could be heard through the trees. The soldier opened fire into the tree line once again. “Quit firin’!” the grunt exclaimed. “There’s no way a dragon could fit through those trees.

“At least one of you is smarter than your average soldier,” a voice said through the trees. All of the soldiers freaked out and focused on the tree line. “You decided to enter my forest, boys” the feminine voice said. “I’m giving you one chance to leave quietly.” A young, black-haired woman stepped from behind a tree. She was dressed in a red and yellow dress in a design that Echon, Celeste and Aurea had never seen. Her dark-blue eyes went down the line of soldiers, noticing the fear in each of their eyes. She smiled, loving the attention she was getting. The previously spooked soldier lifted his rifle and aimed carefully at the woman’s head. He fired a round from his rifle. The solid slug quickly flew from the barrel and the woman lifted a hand and stopped it in mid-air.

“W-witch!” the soldier screamed, dropping his rifle and running in the opposite direction. The other soldiers followed suit, leaving the grunt, who was still holding Echon. The grunt stared the woman in the eyes, dropped Echon to the ground and started running. The woman slowly raised her hand and quickly swung it down, flinging the bullet, which struck the grunt in the leg. The grunt fell to the ground, writhing in pain. The woman casually walked towards the grunt as Echon, Celeste and Aurea watched the scene unfold. She knelt down and reached into a pouch on her hip, removing a pair of handcuffs. The grunt, realizing what was about to unfold, attempted to reach for his side-arm. The woman grabbed his wrist before he could draw it and cuffed it to his other wrist.

“Don’t make me use the elbow binds as well,” she said, straddling him and making sure the cuffs were on tight enough.

“I hope you burn!” the grunt exclaimed. The woman smiled again.

“You’re going to be a fun one,” she said, running her index finger across his cleanly shaven chin. The grunt tried to maintain his composure, but it was quickly waning. “What’s your name?” she asked. The grunt ignored her. “How rude of me,” she said. “My name is Mila. And you are?” She gestured to him. The grunt ignored her once again. “You’re going to make me guess?” she then asked. “I give you a chance to speak and you ignore it? Bad form bad form indeed.” She took her hand and placed it over his forehead. The grunt’s eyes widened.

“Stain!” the grunt exclaimed, finally answering her question. “My name is Aron of house Stain!” Mila withdrew her hand.

“Good boy,” she said, patting him on the cheek. “Now you be a good soldier and keep quiet for a bit. I want to see to your rebel friends.” Mila stood up and walked over to Echon. “It’s not every day I snag a Nationalist and rebel,” she said, lifting Echon up and dragging him over to Celeste and Aurea. “Let alone ones so handsome.” Celeste frowned. “Is there something wrong?” Mila asked, walking over to Celeste. “I’ve never seen a uniform like this though, it’s odd,” She said, examining Celeste’s uniform. As she reached the collar she noticed the Imperial insignia. “A Republic officer?!” she exclaimed, remembering the invasion from years before. “You guys are from the Republic? Oh this is rich.” She stood up and walked back over to Aron, picking him up and setting him next to Echon. “I’m slightly sorry for this,” Mila said, raising her hands towards the sky. “But I can’t bring you back to my hideout. You might be able to remember your way back.” A small ball of light was emanating from between her hands. “I expect you guys won’t be out that long though.” She threw the ball towards the group, which promptly burst, blinding them in a bright light. Each of their ear drums rang as a force of energy knocked them out.

Nayt sat on a box in his makeshift office. The office had once been a supply closet. He could never understand why communication interception was so taboo in this base. Meda said it was because the Nationalists could trace it back to the base. But if that was the case, why make an office in the first place? Nayt didn’t understand Meda at all. He picked up the receiver on his radio and dialed the frequency of another base. This was his fourth attempt to convince someone to intercept the Republic survivors. So far, he’d been told that it was all a Nationalist trap, that the escape pods were empty and that the escape pods were bombs. Just as he was getting the last digit on radio, he heard his door swing open. “What are you doing?” a gruff voice asked. Nayt sighed and turned around to face Meda, his superior, and leader of the base. Meda was a rather intimidating fellow. He was physically fit and mentally able to twist your thoughts. There were talks of how he was once a part of a secret Special Forces team. No one really knew if it was true or not, but based on Meda’s appearance, Nayt was inclined to believe so.

“I’m contacting a few bases,” Nayt answered truthfully. He knew that lying to Meda would get nowhere. “I’m informing them of the Republic survivors.

“And why are you doing this?” Meda then asked. “Who gave you the authority to do that?” Nayt swallowed hard.

“No one,” he answered. “I did it myself. You weren’t here, so-”

“So you decided to take over?” Meda interrupted. Nayt shook his head. “Take a walk with me,” Mead ordered as he exited the shack. Nayt turned his radio off and stepped outside. The base was amongst the trees. The cover from the canopy helped shield them from aerial scouts and the perimeter was guarded 28/5. It being late night, there wasn’t anybody waltzing

about the base. Of course nobody really waltzed around the base ever. What the base had in protection it didn't have in use. The base pretty much served as a dead end for the path to Bedlam. Bedlam was where the rebel's headquarters was located. Because it didn't exist on a map, the only way to it was to follow the base's supply paths. Of course, the rebels—in their only intelligent act—made multiple paths, most of which lead to a dead end. This base was a dead end of a dead end route. Almost nobody ended up here. The other soldier's called the base the "dead dead end" but Nayt never really liked that name at all. The base had an actual name, but nobody remembered it. Meda probably knew it, but asking him might result in him snapping your neck for being an ignorant fool. Speaking of Meda, Nayt saw that he was busy talking to another soldier. Nayt started to slip away, hoping to hide for a bit until Meda was tired of bothering him. "Where do you think you're going?" Meda said, seeing him out of the corner of his eye. Nayt stopped and turned around, slightly scared. Meda motioned for the soldier to leave and walked over to Nayt, grabbing by the collar. "Want to add abandonment to your record as well? Don't be like your father." At this point, Nayt was remembering all the reasons why he hated his boss, while also remembering why he couldn't just frag the bastard.

Nayt's father had allegedly abandoned his men during the coup. He was later captured by the rebels and executed personally by Meda for treason. Meda had made sure to have Nayt a part of his base, perhaps to make sure he didn't end up like his father or some other asinine reason. Meda let go of Nayt, putting it around his shoulder instead. "Nayt," he said, leading him off towards a thick area of trees. "I don't think you quite understand how things work around here." He stopped walking once they were out of sight. He turned on the shoulder-light on his uniform. "If I was you, I would've manned up the day I got here. You however, have decided to take this rebellion like it was a joke." He let go of Nayt and reached into his pocket. "You see this?" he asked as he drew a Krayt dragon fang, fashioned into a knife. The blade glistened in the light. "I earned this after slaughtering those Republic bastards almost twenty annuals ago. If I could, I would walk right into that room holding all those Republics right now and slit their throats." He made a cutting motioned near Nayt's throat. "But you know why I can't?" he asked. Nayt, scared for his life at the moment, shook his head. "I have superiors that I take orders from. And they will want to discuss what to do with this scum." Meda put the blade back into his pocket. "I'm going to Bedlam to talk to Ialad. She'll know what to do with them." He put his hand back on Nayt's shoulder, which caused him to flinch. "Until I return, your orders are to remain here. Maintain radio silence. Is that clear?" He squeezed Nayt's shoulder.

"Yes," Nayt answered. Meda squeezed Nayt's shoulder harder. "Yes sir," he then said. Meda smiled, removing his hand from his shoulder.

"Now, follow orders and maybe I won't inform my superiors about your little transgression with the radio," Meda said as he walked away.

"I still think we should help them," Nayt muttered under his breath. Meda stopped and turned around.

“And why should we help them Nayt?” Meda asked. “History dictates that the Republic has never done anything to help us. In fact it was when we became too powerful that the Republic retaliated and wiped us out. If you ask me, the Republic deserves what’s coming to them. They’ve messed with the dragon and they only got the horns.” Meda paused and smiled. “Just wait for the Nationalists to bare their fangs.” Nayt swallowed hard again. Meda knew how to scare him sometimes. And not with force either. Sometime after the Imporator was executed, Meda had attempted to lead forces into Viscera in order to take it back. The plan failed horribly and General Meda found himself four ranks lower and now serving a dead end base. Nayt liked to think the only reason the higher-ups still talked with him was the fact that he was living history. The Angels sang about him in their hymn of the Republic invasion. If the rebels abandoned him, then there’d never be a chance to keep the public on their side. Meda turned around and walked away. Nayt sighed, brushing off his shoulders. He then began the trek back to his office.

“Who boy, that didn’t sound pleasant at all,” Skoti said, intercepting Nayt.

“No, no it wasn’t,” Nayt said. “I really thought he was going to accuse me of treason right then and there.”

“That wouldn’t be pretty at all,” Skoti said. “I don’t have any way of savin’ ya from that.” The two stopped in front of the garage, or what would be a garage at a normal base. Their garage was made of old, rotted wood. If it snowed in this area, the snow would collapse the whole structure. The garage housed their two *Turtle*-transport vehicles. Used for if they ever planned to bring their troops to the front lines. But since the troops never left the base, the *Turtles* just sat around, collecting dust and dirt. Nayt even wondered if they still worked. The reason why they stopped was because Meda was sitting on a *Dact*, a small, one manned fighter, staring at them. Meda looked at Nayt dead in the eyes as two other soldiers climbed onto their own *Dacts*. The three *Dacts* quickly hovered slightly above the ground and they drifted forward, as not to damage the garage, or their skulls. As soon as they were below open air, they shot off into the sky, making a screeching noise as they flew out of view. “I always imagine that some Nationalist is goin’ to hear that and investigate here,” Skoti said.

“That would be random, wouldn’t it?” Nayt said. The pair walked past the garage towards the barracks.

“Not goin’ to lie, but Meda freaks me out sometimes,” Skoti then said. Nayt nodded his head in agreement. “But if you ask me, I never want to be in the same room as his mentor.” Nayt stopped and turned to Skoti.

“Jax?” he asked. “Of house Refiek? Is he even still alive?”

“I believe so,” Skoti answered. “Last I heard he was living over in the Sutherlands.”

“Sutherlands eh,” Nayt said, scratching his chin. “That’s not far from here, is it?” Skoti started to think.

“I think its a few clicks east,” he answered. “Just past Cicatriz.” Nayt started to think some more. “What are you plannin’?” Skoti asked.

“Meda doesn’t do anything,” Nayt answered. “We need someone who will actually bring the fight to the Nationalists instead of waiting for them to arrive. And who better to stick it to Meda than his old mentor.”

“Good luck with that,” Skoti said. “Jax said that he wasn’t goin’ to pick a side in this war.”

“That was a long while ago,” Nayt said. “With the way things have gone, maybe he’ll change his mind.” Skoti sighed and shook his head.

“Your funeral,” he said. “But are you sure that you want to abandon the base after that chewing you got from Meda earlier?”

“I don’t think he has the horns to say anything to me if I brought Jax to our side,” Nayt answered, courage emanating from him.

“Your funeral,” Skoti repeated. Nayt punched Skoti in the shoulder. “How do you plan to head out to the Sutherlands?” he then asked.

“I was thinking of snagging a *Raptor*,” Nayt answered. A *Raptor* was a four-wheeled vehicle that was good on any terrain. It was fast enough to outrun foot soldiers but the rider was completely exposed to gunfire.

“A *Raptor*? Count me in,” Skoti said.

“You really want to abandon the base?” Nayt said. “You’ll most likely be accused of treason with me.”

“That’s a risk I’m willin’ to take,” Skoti answered, starting to walk back to the garage. The sun was starting to rise. Nayt followed after Skoti. Once the two reached the garage, they immediately walked over to the *Raptors*, getting onto them with ease. The *Raptors* growled to life as they pressed the ignition buttons. Nayt looked around, wondering if any soldiers were going to show up to see what the commotion was. When nobody approached them, they pressed their feet on the pedals and drove off into the trees. Their low-level lights helped them to avoid the trees in the dim sunlight. Once they were free of the trees and onto the grasslands, Nayt pulled out a compass. He pointed in the direction of east, informing Skoti of what way to go. Skoti nodded and the two drove off to the Sutherlands.