The Children
of Raxxla

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The Children of Raxxla

By

Alessia Verdi

I am Alessia Verdi. You won't have heard of me. That does not matter. I am not very important in this tale, though I had my part to play in what happened.

I did not meet all of the people mentioned here. This occurred before I was involved. I pieced it together from what my father told me about how it all began. You probably won't believe it, not that I care. It's the truth, regardless of what you think or what you've been told.

It was a time of myths and legends, stories that came back from beyond the Frontier, the promise of adventure never far away. It was dangerous too; the new hyperdrives, the death of the Emperor, the shock when… well you remember it all I'm sure. Everyone remembers where they were when that happened… I miss those times. I was still young and naïve then, but even as a youth I could sense the fundamental changes going on around me.

Compared to all that, this might seem a small affair, but the actions of the 'Children' had ramifications that echo even now. It falls to me to tell how they began. So here it is.

My father claimed to be a simple trader. I never found out the full scope of his activities, but he was far more than that. He knew more than he ever told me. Perhaps one day I'll find out. He met a young woman who went by the name Salomé and changed her life.

I didn't know her well. We were once caught and locked in a cell by Federal agents, sentenced to execution. She saved my life that day. I remember being

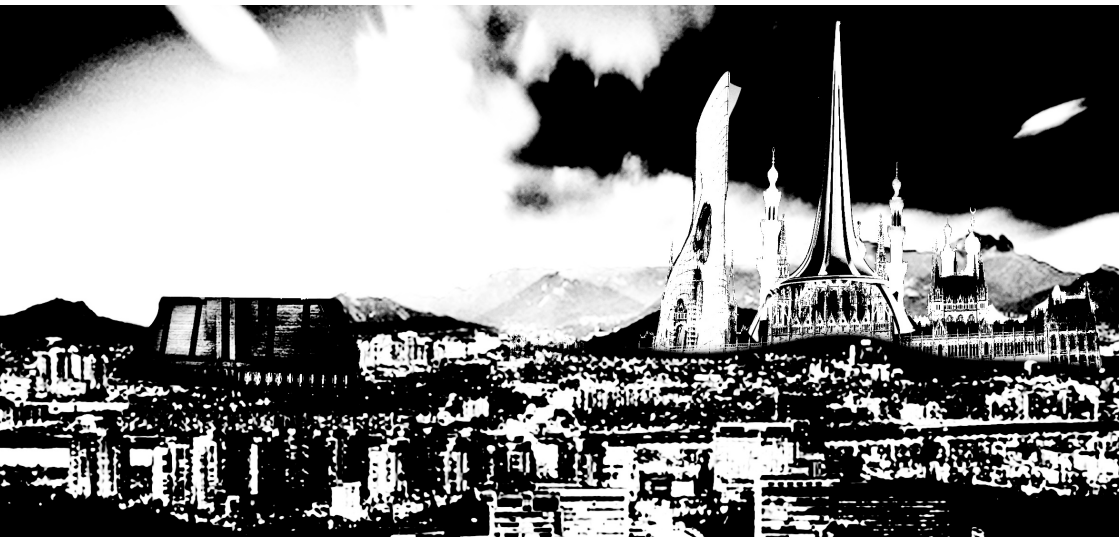
terrified, but I never saw fear on her face no matter what the circumstances. Back then I had no idea she was once a Senator of the Empire – imagine that! That information only came to light after… much later on. She gave it all up for a cause she believed in.

My father was no fan of the imperials, but he served Salomé as loyally as any citizen. That told me enough about her character. Don't believe the propaganda or the twisted truth of Galnet. They tried so hard to poison her reputation.

The others – well you'll find out if you dig deep enough. I've pieced together what I could find out about them from various sources. I make no apology if their details seem vague and sketchy – that is how they want it.

Those days were times of turmoil, with factions rising up on every side. Maybe it seems petty now, through the lens of history, but it mattered then.

And so the tale, how it started anyway, as I doubt the story has an end. The children will be back when they are needed. Darkness falls and the wheel turns. As my father was fond of saying. "We are just people passing through history. We step on the stage, we say our lines, we step off."



July 3301: Capitol, Achenar 6d, Achenar System, Empire.

The great palace of the Duvals rose above the sky line of Capitol, seat of the Emperor on Achenar 6d. The palace was silhouetted in the evening glare from the blue-white actinic light of the Achenar star as it lit clouds heavy with rain a glowing purple. Just visible alongside was the Hall of Martyrs, obsidian black, the vaults of those who had fallen in the service of the Empire, entombed forever. The rumours said that some had their martyrdom enforced for political expediency, buried alive within the pillars.

Perhaps half a kilometre from the palace stood the ambassadorial complex. It too was a vast building, towering into the sky, its upper levels penetrating the clouds. The moisture was redirected around it by complex force-fields, ensuring no unseemly marks or stains tainted its exterior. Rain was directed away, downwards to street level where it would sully only the poorer citizens of the city, far from the concerns of the bourgeoisie above.

Penthouse suites atop the building afforded their occupants breath-taking views of Capitol. Wide windows, decorated with baroque duralium lattice work rose several dozen metres in height.

From one such window, a woman, dressed in a simple white gown could be seen staring out through the rain, one hand pressed up against the glass. A cowl was drawn across her head. A lock of dark hair fell in front of her face, she brushed it back behind her ear absentmindedly.

Behind her a man stood, dressed far more ostentatiously, in the manner of a high ranking Imperial. He was immediately identifiable as an Ambassador.

‘You are looking well for a corpse, Senator.’ The familiar faint smile was firmly in place upon the man’s aged face. The owner of the smile stood ramrod

straight, arms crossed in front of him, hands buried deep in the folds of his ceremonial robes.

'Do not call me that.'

The glare he received was formidable, but Cuthrick Delaney was immune to its fierceness after long association. That wasn't to say he would ever underestimate the erstwhile Senator of the Prism system.

'You know I despise them all; their politics, their scheming, their lies and deceits.'

The woman moved away from the window, resuming the task she had been previously engaged in. She moved quickly now, packing belongings into a small travel pod, discarding exotic clothing and jewellery in favour of more practical attire. She came across a small amulet, marked on one side with a strange symbol. She turned it around in her fingers, a silver chain running through them with a faint musical chime. On the flipside a name was inscribed. After a pause she tossed it into the pod.

'And I can't change your mind?'

She stopped and looked up at him with a quizzical look.

'You really think that is a worthwhile use of your time?'

'No. However, it gives me emotional security to know I have at least tried.'

'Do your best then. I'll indulge you.'

Cuthrick sighed and took a step forward. 'Your disappearance will unsettle the Empire. It will cause acute embarrassment to those you have… interacted with… here on Achenar. It will not be something you can undo. Blame will fall, and it's not clear precisely where.'

'The Empire has bigger concerns than the… what did he call my home?' Her

voice took on an acid tone. ‘The minor disquiets of an outlying border moon of little consequence? The Empire of today cares little for me, I care little for it.’

‘The Federation would have annexed Prism in short order. You know this. Senator Patreus had no choice but to assure Imperial continuity…’

‘Senator Patreus,’ she fairly spit the words out, ‘Failed to even communicate his intentions or seek my permission. I will not forgive him the slight of appropriating my homeworld.’

‘I would have thought that by now you better understood the costs of anger and vengeance.’

‘I do.’ She flashed a grin at him. ‘That’s why I didn’t run him and his glitzy trophy princess through with my sword when I had the chance.’ Her hand rested on the hilt of the antique holva blade at her side. She pulled it half out and then slid it back into its scabbard with a smooth metallic scrape. ‘Though I won’t promise that won’t happen one day.’

Cuthrick coughed and raised an eyebrow. ‘Good to see you have developed a measure of restraint.’

‘A time will come to deal with that arrogant flux-stain. I have more pressing things to attend to than his vainglorious lust for power.’

‘This… quest of yours.’

‘Indeed.’

‘Are you going to explain? If it’s more important than the miseries that beset our Empire at present it must be…’

‘Don’t be ridiculous. The less you know the less you can reveal.’

‘I’m hurt that you don’t trust my discretion.’

She smiled. ‘Practicalities, nothing more. Anyway, you have a job to do, making sure his exalted pomposity doesn’t bring about the collapse of the Empire whilst I’m away…’

‘Senator Patreus you mean.’ Cuthrick winced at her diatribe. Kahina would never be a diplomat.

‘I know who I mean. He is a dangerous warmonger. Lend support to Arissa, she’s the only one who values the traditions that must be held dear now the Emperor is no more. The contacts I made with the Federation and the Alliance will assist you. They like him even less than I do. Be subtle.’

‘I’m dismayed you think I could be otherwise.’

‘Why do you think I chose you for this?’ Her face softened. ‘I need someone here I can trust.’

‘Lady Kahina…’

She froze for a moment, shivering, before carrying on with her packing.

‘Salomé,’ she countered. ‘It’s just Salomé now.’

‘Is there anything you can tell me?’ he asked. ‘Can I contact you, how long will you be gone?’

‘I will contact you discretely,’ she answered. ‘As often as I can. There cannot be any suggestion that you are aware of anything other than that I have gone missing. You cannot be compromised.’

‘I understand.’

‘As for how long… six months, a year. I really don’t know. As long as it takes.’

Cuthrick frowned. She took a step towards him.

‘I’m sorry to be so mysterious, I would not be doing this unless I was convinced.

This ridiculous play for power our so called leaders are indulging in… they're not listening to the peoples of the Federation, the Alliance or the Empire. Destabilising systems, wasting resources on infighting… It has to be stopped before…'

'And you believe these otherworldly star-riders are genuine? This… Dark Wheel? I was told those stories as a child, a fairy-tale to send me to sleep at night…'

'What they have shown me thus far is compelling. If there's even a chance they are right… I need to know. They asked for me by name, they promised an answer…'

She looked up, waving a hand across the travel pod. It sealed, compacting itself and flipping upright, ready to be carried away.

Cuthrick nodded. 'If I cannot help you further, at least know I care about you.'

He extended his hand. Salomé took it, clasping it firmly. To his surprise she drew him into a hug.

'I know. But I have to do this and I have to do it now, they say time is pressing.'

She released him and stepped back.

Cuthrick sighed, looking at her for long moment before bowing low. He straightened. 'Do not worry about Prism. I will keep it safe. All your instructions will be carried out as directed.'

'Thank you, Cuthrick.'

'Until we meet again, my Lady.'

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An ancient starship lifted from the docking ramps of one of the Capitol flight hangers. It hung unsteadily on its thrusters for a moment, before accelerating decisively upwards, gaining speed through the atmosphere. Blue starlight flickered across its hull, shining bright as the ship rotated around its central axis.

Seasoned sky watchers would have recognised it easily. It was a common enough craft, a multi-role vessel beloved of impecunious traders throughout the core worlds. A Cobra Mk3, an old but worthy design. This particular one was vintage even for that class of ship, built back in a simpler and more honourable time, the days of the long vanished Galactic Cooperative. A small brass nameplate was just visible on the dorsal hullplate.

Bella Principessa.

The pilot brought the ship into a geo-stationary orbit about the planet, lost amidst the many orbiting satellites that serviced Capitol. Effectively hidden and with the ship secured he moved to the expansive cargo bay of the Cobra. The pilot grabbed a commtab and studied the hold inventory, floating gently in the zero-gee.

He was a stocky fellow, grizzled and wiry, yet spry, with an unruly crop of hair upon his head.

'Ah, ecco qui.'

He selected one of the many cargo canisters aboard the vessel and watched as it was extracted from the storage mechanism that secured it whilst in flight. It lowered itself to the floor with a faint clank as the magnetic couples took effect. He moved across, activating his own magboots, clamping himself down.

With a tap on the commtab the canister opened revealing a single occupancy

cryo pod. He touched the control panel on its surface and watched as it opened. He wrinkled his nose at the unnecessary Imperial flamboyance of the mechanism as it folded away.

Inside lay a woman, dressed in a pale gown, with a cowl pulled close around her head. She was wreathed in a faint mist as the cryo pod purged itself from the suspended animation it had been providing.

A moment later her eyes snapped open and her gaze fell on him.

'Ah… signorina!' he said.

'Luko!'

She rose from the pod, floating towards him. He grasped her close in a fierce embrace.

'Is good to see you again.'

'You too.'

He released her from the hug, but held her close. 'You will need your boots, yes?'

She nodded.

'Your choice of travel accommodation does not become you, surely first class at the very least for such an exalted dignitary of the high and mighty empire?'

'Don't you start,' she said. 'It was necessary. The Empire has spies everywhere. I could hardly take a transport, not with the paparazzi everywhere, and asking Hassan would have invited too many awkward questions.'

Luko chuckled.

'Ah, the intrigue. Such a wonderful society you are from. Come, this way. All is ready.'

He stomped off across the docking bay, pulling her behind him. Within minutes they were in the Cobra's generous cockpit. Space hung outside, an exquisite backdrop peppered with the light of distant stars. Salomé lowered herself into the co-pilot's chair with a sigh of familiarity, looking around her and running her hands over the old fashioned brass controls. Before her a bewildering array of physical gauges and displays was a stark contrast to the ubiquitous holofac instrumentation of modern vessels.

'Good to see some things don't change,' she murmured.

'Signorina?' Luko asked, looking over from the pilot's chair as he buckled himself into place.

'Oh nothing,' she answered. 'I missed this ship more than I knew.'

Luko grinned. 'A classic Cobra is not just a ship, is… hmmm… a way of life.'

'Thanks for agreeing to this.'

The lone holo-fac display in the cockpit was burbling some news feed about a new championship where pilots from across the core worlds could compete in mock battles against each other. Luko watched it absentmindedly as he prepped the ship. Salomé watched as ships angled through a twisty course of maze-like passages at breakneck speed.

'This looks like fun,' Luko said, gesturing at the display. 'I might try. Though I think maybe my ship too big…'

'Bread and circuses,' Salomé said, sadly. 'Give the masses something to occupy themselves so they don't notice the loss of their rights and liberties.'

'Ah… politics. Always politics with you.'

'Everything is politics.' Salomé smiled at him.

Luko shrugged. 'Huh. This I not care for.'

He nudged the throttles and the *Bella Principessa* leapt forward, angling away from Capitol and out into free space with a rumble of powerful engines.

'Smuggling you across space seems to be my regular job.' He looked across again. 'We not fighting a war this time I trust?'

She smiled in response.

'No war. Believe it or not I may be trying to stop one.'

'Just checking. Always the big quest with you, eh? Why not just stay out of trouble, relax, enjoy the universe, plenty to see and do without getting involved…'

'You know me…'

Luko sighed. 'Alas, I do.'

Salomé called up the navigation charts and studied the surrounding systems.

'We must be getting underway. You'll need the destination.'

She frowned. A course was already plotted. Luko activated the hyperdrive charging mechanism and then looked at her with a wry expression.

'Let me guess. Tionisla. Am I right?'

Salomé looked at him with a frown. 'But… how did you know? I never…'

Luko smiled. 'Myths and legends. This Dark Wheel you spoke of. Tionisla for sure, yes?'

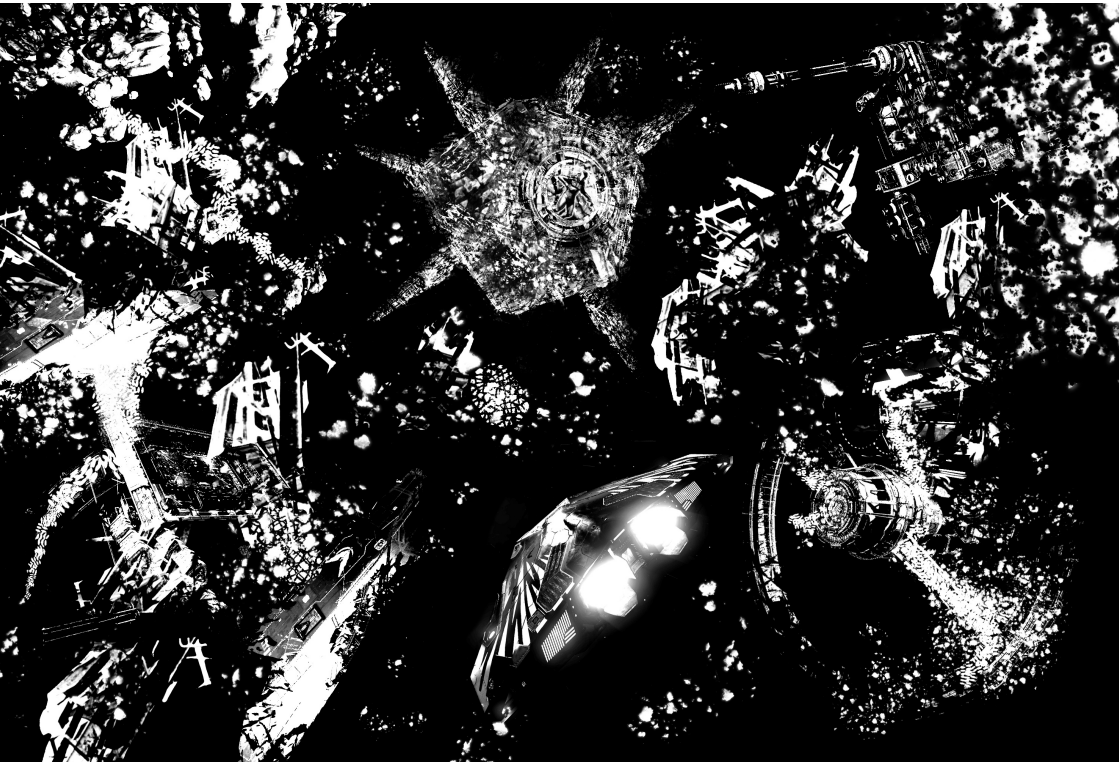
Salomé nodded slowly.

'I know my history, signorina,' Luko said. 'These people, they appear and they disappear. Whenever a crisis occurs, there they are. For hundreds of years they have been turning the pages of the story. That system is steeped in mucho ancient lore.' He shrugged. 'Now they want Salomé, eh? An honour I think?'

Frameshift drive charging.

‘Perhaps,’ she answered.

The *Bella Principessa* disappeared into the void between the stars.



August 3301, Lagrange Point, System space, Tionisla System, Old Worlds.

Salomé watched as a vast collection of faint traces appeared on the *Bella Principessa's* scanners. She frowned, squinting out of the cockpit windows.

A clue had led her here. Luko nodded knowledgeably when she'd shown him the single phrase she'd been given.

Lagrange, Tionisla.

'I know this.'

Salomé could just make out the tumbling remains of monuments, ancients ships tethered to enormous markers; great lumps of metal, with the words and symbols still visible after untold centuries in the vacuum. It was a bizarre and otherworldly sight. The markers were rarely less than a hundred metres across. There were corroded chrome-alloy crosses, titanium stars, duralium henges. All the strange symbolic shapes of all the worlds, minds and faiths that had come to die in this ancient mausoleum.

'What is this place?' Her voice was hushed.

'This signorina, is the wreck-place. The Tionisla Orbital Graveyard.'

'You've been here before?'

'No, but I have heard of it,' Luko said softly. 'It was a final resting place for the rich and famous. Long time ago… maybe two hundred years.'

'What happened?'

'Politics again. The Old Worlds, they were not treated well by the Federation and the Empire I think. Once they were a mighty power, now no one remembers. Even the history has been rewritten. Have you heard of Galcop? I think no, eh?'

Salomé shook her head, still captivated by the view from the windows of Luko's Cobra. Many of the abandoned ships out there looked like contemporaries of his old ship, their lines simple and angular. Most were of a type she had never seen before.

'The Galactic Cooperative,' Luko said, wistfully. 'Long gone now. Best government the void has ever seen.'

'And why was that?'

'They left people alone and didn't interfere.' Luko answered, his voice tinged with a hint of anger. 'Brought down by the Federation and the Empire… 3174 was the year. Very sad.'

'You speak as if you were there.'

He laughed. 'Not that old, signorina! But I knew some people who remembered those times.'

Luko throttled back the *Bella Principessa's* engines and nudged the ship into the edges of the graveyard.

'Should we even be here?' Salomé asked, her voice low as she gazed at the huge and sombre gravemarkers slowly drifting past their ship. 'Isn't this trespassing?'

One particular artefact caught her eye, a great crystalline structure, a puff-ball of diamond-bright needles, easily a hundred metres across. Within it was a body, dressed in a red military style uniform, hovering in stasis at the centre of the great construct, illuminated by focused light from the Tionisla star. She watched it with a strange sense of awe as it passed them on the port side.

'If we are humble – not a problem,' Luko said, carefully guiding the ship on. 'We just… paying our respects. Yes?'

'And now what…' Salomé said. The graveyard was huge, and the shadows of

the great tombs made this strange sanctuary of the dead into a place of innumerable hide-outs.

Luko gestured with his hand. ‘Over there.’

Salomé looked where he was pointing. A large and dilapidated ship could be seen in the distance, surrounded by the wreckage of other vessels. As she watched, a light winked on and off briefly. She blinked. A red light, flashing on and off, directed at them.

Salomé looked across at Luko. He flipped on the *Bella Principessa’s* external hull lights in acknowledgement and manoeuvred the ship closer.

‘Is a Boa,’ he said, squinting at the big ship. ‘Grande freighter from many years ago.’

A docking port swam into view on the flank of the mammoth ship. Luko rotated the *Bella Principessa* to match. A few moments later there was a metallic clunk as the two mechanisms joined and sealed. Green light flickered on the dashboard.

Docking complete. Engines disengaged.

‘All ok,’ Luko whispered. ‘Power and atmosphere. Good to go.’

There was a crackle from the narrow-band comms. After a brief moment of static a heavily disguised voice spoke.

‘She comes alone.’

***

Salomé stepped through the airlock. The opposite hatch swung back revealing the form of an old woman nonchalantly leaning against the interior. The bulkheads beyond were dimly lit, but seemed in remarkably good repair considering the dilapidated exterior of the vessel.

The two women stared at each other for a moment. Salomé registered a small wiry frame, fit and supple despite the age. Her eyes were dark, her skin olive. She wore her hair in an unusual array of coloured spikes and was dressed in a tight fitting full length tunic.

'No reaction at all?' the woman asked. 'What's the problem, Senator? Cat got your tongue?'

Salomé frowned. 'Cat? What's a…'

'Never mind. Come, time is short.'

The woman turned on her heel and began to walk away. Her magboots clicking sharply on the floor. She seemed possessed of an energy that belied her age.

'Wait! Who are you? Why should I…'

The woman stopped and huffed impatiently. She looked back.

'Trust me? We could have shot you down the moment you entered the graveyard. We could have assassinated while you slept in your sumptuous Imperial bed just last week. We could have left you on LTT 8740 when you crashed nine months ago…'

Salomé recoiled in surprise.

'Left me? But it was Luko who rescued…'

The woman smiled and gave Salomé a pointed look.

'What a fabulously lucky co-incidence that he was there, eh?' She winked. 'Come on.'

Salomé looked over her shoulder at the airlock and the hull of the *Bella Principessa* just visible through the nearby viewport. She let out a short gasp of disbelief.

‘Why you deceiving little…’

She looked back at the woman.

‘It was you all along?’

‘Good to see you catch on quick,’ the woman said. ‘Hurry now.’

‘Stop. Who are you? I don’t even know your name.’

The woman kept walking.

‘And you won’t either.’

Salomé had no choice but to follow.

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‘Wait here,’ the woman instructed. They had entered the cargo bay of the vessel, standing in shadow. It was a cavernous space, though almost entirely empty. At the far end, Salomé could make out the form of a ship. It was instantly recognisable. An Imperial Clipper, elegant even on its landing gear. Below it stood two men, space-farers by the look of their clothing.

‘A single ship?’ Salomé asked. ‘You told me I would command a force.’

‘And in time you will. Such things do not happen overnight.’ The woman clicked her tongue. ‘The youth of today, so impatient! Do not come until you are called.’

Salomé watched as she strode off. It didn’t take her long to reach the two men. They turned, apparently already familiar with her. Salomé could just hear their conversation.

‘Ah, the Children of Raxxla.’ The woman began. ‘How sweet. I trust your trip was safe, Commanders?’

‘Safe as it can be in this day and age,’ replied the first man. He was the tallest

of the pair, with short dark brown hair and a goatee without moustache. He was wearing a navy blue tactical vest over a black shirt with matching cargo pants, finished with black combat boots apparently fitted with magnetic soles.

A pair of optical enhancers concealed his eyes, doubtless providing him with a wealth of telemetry about what he was looking at.

The second was shorter and stockier with a heavier build. He simply nodded without saying anything. He wore a long grey coat zipped at the front, it ran almost down to the floor. His hands concealed in deep pockets.

The woman turned to the first man.

'You understand who I represent I assume, Commander Thorn?'

'I've seen you run missions out of Shinrarta Dezhra,' Thorn replied.

'Shinrarta Dezhra?' The woman laughed, her scorn plain to hear. 'You think the Dark Wheel advertises on a station board in plain sight? That we need rookie pilots to drag a couple of tonnes of thrumpberry flavouring across to Hutton orbital? A trivial ploy to keep the founders amused.'

'I'm gratified to hear it,' Thorn replied. 'You had me worried for a moment.'

'It was a little too obvious,' the second man agreed.

'It keeps the treasure seekers and wishful thinkers occupied,' the woman said. 'They believe they are on to something. They have their uses for occasional menial activities. The truth is far more subtle than they will ever suspect. Shinrarta is nothing.'

'So…?'

'You should not consider the Dark Wheel a single organisation, gentlemen. How could it survive for so long if it were so? The Wheel has many levels, many hubs, cogs, gears and spokes. It is more akin to an affiliation of

organisations that share certain common goals. Interlocking in purpose. Consider yourselves now spinning on the outermost rim.'

'You promised you would help us,' the second man prompted.

'And so I have, my dear Lestenio. I have selected you a leader.'

'We already have a leader…' Thorn said with a frown.

'Trust me, you do not. Nor strength enough for the tasks ahead.'

'We have allies,' Thorn argued.

'You've done well to ally with the Phoenix group. Commanders Noctivagus and Moore were most complimentary. But you still lack more than you know.'

Salomé saw the woman beckon to her. She walked cautiously across to the group, conscious of Thorn and Lestenio's stares as she arrived. All three looked uneasily at each other. Salomé was glad of her cloak and cowl.

'I'm never adverse to a pretty girl,' Lestenio said, 'But…'

'Does she have her own voice?' Thorn asked.

'You may call me Salomé,' Salomé answered, turning to look him squarely in the eye.

Thorn ignored her, addressing the other woman directly.

'Means nothing to me, I don't know her. This time I need more than just your word to accept a stranger. We have worked hard to get where we are, I will need reassurance that this… girl… is as capable as you say she is.'

Salomé narrowed her eyes, but made no other move.

The woman leant forward slightly, pointing a thin bony finger towards Thorn's face.

'Oh, but you do know her,' she stated with an amused tone. 'She is Lady Kahina

Tijani Loren, until very recently the Senator of the Prism system.'

There was an audible gasp from Lestenio.

'Senator Loren…' Lestenio muttered, looking at Salomé with wide eyes. 'Then you're the one who… Thorn – the rift! It's her!'

'You want us to bow the knee to an Imperial Senator?' Thorn sneered, raising his chin and still ignoring Salomé. 'She's a spoilt prima-donna, I've read about her antics…'

There was a faint sound, a whip of something travelling through the air at high speed. Salomé smiled as she saw Thorn take in the sight of a dark-metal holva blade resting gently under his chin. His gaze travelled down the blade to see the hilt held in her right hand.

'Don't believe everything you read on Galnet,' Salomé said. 'Though that bit about the disembowelling?' She smiled thinly. 'That did happen.'

'Enough,' the woman said. 'You may be the children, but this is not time to be childish. Salomé has been chosen by those above. She is what you need at this stage; more than just a leader, a figurehead and rallying point. She knows the Empire, she knows the Federation and the Alliance. She has the diplomatic contacts you will need. She can open doors that would otherwise remain permanently closed to you. She is acclimatized to power. She can engender loyalty and adulation. When the time comes, you will need more than ships and weapons, you will need charisma, charm and admiration. The masses will follow her, love her and… if necessary, they will fight and die for her.'

Thorn looked at Lestenio, who nodded. He looked at the woman, who stared at him fiercely. Then he finally acknowledged Salomé.

'And what do you want from us in return for your… favour?' Thorn asked.

Salomé licked her lips.

‘For now? A place to hide far from prying eyes. Then, a team capable of carrying out covert operations under the noses of the factions and powers, discovering the secrets we all know are out there. And one day…’

She paused, a flash of anger crossing her features.

‘Yes?’ Lestenio asked.

‘Senator Patreus’ head on a platter.’

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So that was how it began. They rallied many Commanders to their cause, only accepting those who knew their lore, knew the stories and respected the lessons of history. The Children of Raxxla were not the Dark Wheel of course, who is to say who really was or wasn’t part of that mysterious group.

But the Children became a part of that mythos, part of the lore, part of the story that shaped our little corner of the galaxy.

If Commanders wanted to join Salomé and the Children, they had to learn and understand the nature of the situation the galaxy was in, the ebb and flow of politics. This was no place for those with itchy trigger fingers and the hope of quick glory. The children only took the measured, the wise and the competent – Salomé saw to that.

Only if applicants passed the test would the location of their secret base be revealed, far from the well-travelled worlds of the core.

Only those who understood their watch-word and knew what it meant. ‘Remember…’

— Alessia Verdi.

About the Author

Alessia Verdi is a native of Alpha Centauri in the heart of the Federation. She was born in the year 3279. It was reported that she was the daughter of Tsu and Marek Verdi. Both Tsu and Marek were allegedly killed in unusual circumstances in 3281 by Imperial aggression in a border dispute, leaving their daughter orphaned. Alessia grew up within the Federation, serving it loyally as an administrator for many years. A chance investigation into sealed Federation records revealed that Marek was not her real father and had, infact, murdered her mother Tsu. Her mother had been having an affair with one Luciano (Luko) Prestigio-Giovanni, of the Alliance worlds. The Federation had covered up Tsu's death at Marek's hands for reasons of political expediency, the Empire had not been involved at all. Luko had been framed for the murder and killed Marek in revenge. He went into voluntary exile to protect Alessia's identity, blackmailed by the Federation. Luko and Alessia were reunited in 3301. Bitter about all the lies and her betrayal by the Federation she had served for so long (and encouraged by her newly found real father) Alessia took to a life amongst the stars working for independent organisations. She was personally recruited by the leader of the mysterious group the 'Children of Raxxla' and now acts as one of their official spokespersons. She flies a heavily armed Cobra class trading vessel known as the 'Eurydice'. She is known to be a canny rare trader, a natural explorer and a talented bounty hunter.