

Transformations

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Kapitel 8: Preparations

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After everyone finishes lunch, they all meet in the clearing and April joins Hothead in the yellow lion, Fireball with Shorty in the green lion, Colt joins Fala in blue lion, and Saber gets into red lion with Moody. "Okay everyone," Keith begins. "We are going to do some basic maneuvers for a few minutes, then if you think your Bismarck counterpart feels comfortable enough, try swapping out with them, just let us know first."

Everyone nods. "Okay!" The teams go over the controls each showing to the other how things work. After a bit, they all land in the clearing again and swap pilots. Saber takes over red lion. "You sure you're okay with this, Lance?"

Lance nods. "If Chief trusts you, then I want to see what you can do. So go for it. I'll tell you if you make me nervous." Saber nods and takes off.

Fala looks over her shoulder at Colt, "You ready, Cowboy?" she asks.

Colt nods, "Looks simple enough." They swap places and he slowly starts forward. He gradually gets enough control that he can run without wobbling, and he takes to the air.

"Well, Ms. April, you ready to try this?" Hothead asks, looking over his shoulder.

She smiles and nods. "I've been ready since we arrived. This is like a dream for me."

They swap places and she gets the lion moving, quickly taking to the air, laughing.

"This is great!" She begins flying about the others.

Fireball swaps places with Shorty. "This seems pretty straightforward." He says as he starts moving, then taking to the air.

Shorty nods. "This is one of the easiest to learn in. Blue lion is the simplest, but I didn't find it heard to catch on."

"Well, you were fighting to stay alive, right?" Shorty nods. "That can be a good motivator." They are suddenly hit by something. "What the Fuck?!"

"Sorry about that." Colt says sheepishly.

"Colt!" Fireball quickly fires a laser at blue lion, not thinking.

"Hey!" Fala screams. "You aren't the only people in these lions!"

Saber comes over the intercom "Both of you stop it now!" He places the red lion between the blue and green lions.

Lance leans over towards Saber, "Are you sure this is a good place to be?"

Saber glares over his shoulder, ceasing any other objections from Lance. "You both are acting childish. Stop it now, or you both are going to be in serious trouble!" He says in a very threatening voice.

"Fireball, Colt, I think you both need to swap back to the other pilots, if you are going to act like children." April states over the intercom.

Colt's voice comes over the intercom. "I swear, it was accidental, Saber. Honest."

Saber sighs. "Be more careful. Princess, Shorty, was either of you hurt?"

"No" they both reply.

Keith's voice comes over the intercom. "Okay people. Perhaps this is a good thing. We should work on maneuvers. Lance, do you feel Saber is ready to fly on his own?"

Lance nods. "Yeah, I think he'd be fine."

"Okay. You two land, and I want you to join me. We'll let Saber fly red lion and have the others fire at him, to see if he can avoid being hit." Keith says.

Saber sounds surprised. "Are you serious?!"

Keith laughs. "Yeah, you don't think you're up to it?"

Saber shakes his head. "I think I'll be fine, I guess we'll find out." He takes to the air and almost immediately Colt fires at him, Saber narrowly dodges the attack. "Nice shot." Colt fires a few more shots, Saber dodging each one, almost getting hit when Fireball starts firing at him simultaneously. April begins firing, giving him a bit more trouble. He gets grazed by one shot, causing him to drop a bit, before steadying the lion again.

This continues for several minutes before Keith comes in over the intercom. "Okay guys, everyone land. We need to give Saber a break." They all land the lions and everyone gathers on the ground.

Keith looks to each of the crew members, "Do you feel comfortable letting them try on their own?" They all nod. He nods in return. "Okay then. We take a five minute break, then you three," he points to April, Fireball, and Colt, "go back up in the lion you were in, and we'll let you try and dodge Lance and myself." The three nod their agreement. He turns to Saber. "Not bad. I just hope the rest of your team does as well."

Saber nods. "You mean the rest of his..." he nods to fireball, "...team. He is technically in charge."

Keith turns to Fireball. "I apologize if I have offended you. I suppose it's the way he acts."

Fireball smiles, "No problem. I'm not exactly used to being in charge. I still think of him," nods towards Saber, "as my boss in most cases."

Saber sighs. "And technically, you shouldn't, Fireball. We're equals now."

Fireball rolls his eyes. "Yeah, yeah, I know. I'm doing my best to remember that."

Saber shakes his head and smiles. "Sometimes you're impossible."

April chuckles. "At least we know you're not power-hungry, Fireball."

Fireball looks at her. "You thought I might be?" He asked surprised.

She shakes her head. "Not really. I was only teasing."

After a few more minutes of chatting, the three get back into the lions along with Lance and Keith and take to the air. As soon as everyone is moving Keith begins firing at them. They are able to dodge the attacks, some narrowly missing them. Then Lance joins in, making it significantly harder. A few times, April nearly runs into Colt or Fireball, then one time, Colt gets hit, knocking him to the ground. "Nice shot." Colt says as he recovers and takes back to the air.

A while later, April grazes Fireball while dodging a shot. She knocks him a bit, but they

both recover, almost hitting Colt in the process. After about an hour, they all land to regroup.

"You all did rather well." Fala says as they join the group on the ground. "How did you like it?"

Colt grins. "That was a lot of fun."

April and Fireball nod in agreement, "Maybe tomorrow, we can let you try your hand at controlling the Bismarck." April says.

Fala nods. "That could be fun."

Keith nods in agreement. "Let's head back. We told Raible we'd be back mid-afternoon, and it's a bit later than that." Everyone nods, and they all meet back in the common room a short time later. Raible is waiting, looking a bit impatient.

He waits for everyone to be seated, then looks around the room. "We have made good progress on your ship's modifications. Our techs are impressed with the design of your ship, and said the upgrades were fairly easy to make. One thing they did have to change was the Operating system. It is not a major change, but it will have a more stable platform. It should function and basically look the same to you as it did before."

April nods. "As for going out tomorrow, you may want to rethink that. I received a call just as you were arriving that some 'alien' ships were seen close to Yuma. I think it may be wise that we send all of you to investigate." He looks around the room, to see if there are any objections. When no one raises an argument, he continues, "My thought is that you rest tonight, so that all of you are well rested, just in case this turns out to be a viable threat. That will give our techs time to complete the projects they are on, including the 'hyper-drive' booster they have equipped the Bismarck with. With the added speed you could arrive there in about 4 hours, as opposed to 2-3 days."

Colt lets out a long whistle. "That'll be nice."

Fireball nods. "Yeah, can the GoLion Robot or the individual lions go that fast?"

Raible nods. "They can go that fast in formation or as individual vessels. If needed, they could increase speed a bit more, but that would be pushing the limits. So only in an extreme case would we allow the team to push that hard. We also updated the weapons systems, so everything has a bit more...firepower. I wish we had time to do more, but I do not think you can be spared much longer."

Fireball nods. "Maybe once things calm down again we can see about returning for a time. I have enjoyed our time here."

Fala smiles, "All of you are welcome here anytime. I am glad we have had the opportunity to work together, and hope that we can form a strong alliance between us."

"I hope so too, Your Highness." Fireball replies. He turns to the others, "Shall we try and rest up, and head out first thing in the morning?" They all nod their agreement.

"Okay then, let's go eat, then get some rest. We should leave as early as possible."

They all go and dine, chatting for a while afterwards. Everyone was slowly dispersing to their quarters to rest. Raible heads back towards the control room. Saber spots him and calls over to him. "Sir, would it be possible for me to contact Calvary Command from the control room?"

Raible nods. "Of course, Saber. Come with me." They head into the control room, and Raible sits down at the controls, bringing up the video screen. "Go ahead, Saber. Just hit this button to talk." He points to a button, and moves so Saber can sit down at the control panel.

Saber sits down, and after pressing the button makes the call. "Captain Rider Calling Commander Eagle of Calvary Command, come in." He waits for a reply.

A minute or so later, Commander Eagle appears on the screen. "Commander Eagle here, go ahead, Captain."

Saber nods. "What is the situation there, Sir? We heard that you have alien ships close by."

Eagle nods. "Yes, there are three rather large looking ships. They are very similar to the pictures sent out from Altea of the Galran fleet ships, although not exact. They have not tried to engage us, but I have an uneasy feeling about them. They appeared nearby this afternoon. We have some of the other Star Sheriffs on standby, just in case they try anything. But, for now, we are taking a wait and see approach."

"Yes, Sir." Saber replies, "As it stands currently, we plan to leave here early tomorrow to head back to Calvary Command. The GoLion team will accompany us, so that in the event of trouble, we have some reinforcement. We have now been equipped with hyper-drive technology, so our trip will be significantly shorter to return home, than it took us to arrive on Altea. Several upgrades have also been made, so we shall see if the improvements are working properly. I feel that is one of the reasons, the GoLion team is offering to come, in the event that we need some assistance."

The Commander nods. "I was hoping your team would be in a position to come back." He pauses, thinking. "You say the GoLion team is coming with you?"

Saber nods. "I think they are coming in case we need reinforcements. They are going to detour slightly through Orb, to see if they spot anything unusual there. That is where we first got a report of a ship sighting. I think they want to be sure our 'upgrades' are working properly. I have been quite impressed their technology. The robot lions are very easy to handle."

Commander Eagle looks a surprised. "You say that as if you have first-hand knowledge, Saber."

Saber nods. "I do, Sir. We have all had an opportunity to pilot at least one lion. I think we may have forged a good alliance with the Alteans. Captain Hikari has done well."

The Commander nods. "I am glad to hear things have gone so well." He studies Saber's face for a moment. "Are you still doing okay, Saber?"

Saber sighs and nods. "I still don't sleep as much as I should, but I feel a bit better. This has been a good distraction from...everything. I think I will be all right now, where as a few weeks ago, I wasn't so sure to be completely honest."

"It's good to know you feel that you are doing better. I feel better knowing when you tell me that you have had some doubts. That makes me feel that if you were seriously having doubts about yourself, you would tell me." Commander Eagle replies. "We shall see you tomorrow then?" Saber nods, "Commander Eagle out." The screen goes dark.

Saber sighs and turns to Raible. "Do you think I covered everything of importance?"

Raible nods. "I don't think you missed anything important."

Saber nods and gets up from the seat. "I should go and try and sleep. Good night, Sir." "Good night, Captain." Raible replies.

Saber nods and goes to his quarters. After writing for a bit, he finally manages to drift to sleep.

A few hours later, Saber wakes up, and for a moment, feels disoriented, before remembering where he is. He gets up and dresses, then heads out to the common room, noticing a light on, he enters. Looking around, he doesn't see anyone, so he shrugs and goes and sits in a chair and begins reading over his journal.

A few minutes later, Keith and Fala come into the room from the balcony, and jump

when they see him. "Oh, when did you come in here?" Keith asks.

Saber looks up from his journal, startled. "A few minutes ago, I saw a light on, but no one was in here, so I just sat down to read. Did I wake you?"

Keith shakes his head. "Not at all, we were just outside... admiring the night, and were a bit surprised to find anyone in here when we came in."

Saber suppresses a smile and nods. "Ah. Sorry if I startled you." He chuckles. "I might not have even noticed you if you hadn't said anything to me. I was pretty ...absorbed."

Keith and Fala sit down.

"What are you reading?" Fala asks.

Saber looks over to her. "Nothing really, it's the journal I was told to keep. I decided to read over my previous writings, I'm honestly not even sure why I'm doing it."

Fala nods. "Perhaps you're trying to gage your progress?" she offers.

Saber shrugs. "I suppose that's one way to look at it." He closes the book, and looks out towards the window. "Forgive me for being so...forward, but are you two...?"

Keith looks to Fala, not sure how to answer. Fala nods, blushing slightly. "We are...betrothed. I believe is the word you would use."

Saber nods. "Congratulations." He says quietly.

"You're one of the few who actually know outside of the castle. We haven't made an 'official' announcement yet. It's a recent...development." Keith states.

Fala notices his face and goes over and places a hand on his shoulder. "I'm sorry. We shouldn't have been so..."

Saber looks up to meet her gaze and shakes his head. "It's fine, Your Highness. I am glad for you. I apologize if it seemed otherwise. I'm just tired."

She watches him for a moment, trying to read him, then goes back to her seat.

"Honestly. I'm fine. I was a bit...surprised, is all. I am happy for you both." Saber assures her. He smiles slightly. "So I suppose I should tell you that Captain Hikari and April from our team are married."

Keith looks at him a bit surprised. Fala nods. "So I did hear correctly when Raible was assigning quarters." She states.

Keith looks to her. "You knew?!"

Fala laughs, nodding. "I was pretty sure. I had noticed they seemed...close. Always sitting together, things like that."

Saber laughs. "As you said before, none of us are exactly a 'typical' Military-style team. Perhaps that's why we work well together."

Keith nods. "You may be right about that."

Saber smiles. "I'm sure I had an interesting look when I figured out that they were...um, together. April sort of accidentally admitted to it. Their faces were priceless."

"I'm sure they were similar to ours, a few minutes ago." Keith says.

Saber shakes his head. "You two didn't look nearly as guilty as they did. Maybe because they knew they could get into trouble if they were found out." Saber replied seriously.

"Did they?" Fala asks.

"No. I don't think anyone dared to say anything after what happened...", He pauses, "...to my family and fiancé. Our C.O. is April's father. When he found out about it, it was after the fact, and it was sort of decided that since they actually wanted to marry, he gave them permission to do so, provided they go and do it right away."

Fala nods. "That was nice of him."

"I think he was more afraid of how things could turn out if they never got the chance

and something bad happened. I don't think he wanted them to face the same...fate that I have had to." Saber says, then adds quietly, "He didn't want them to have regrets."

Fala nods understandingly.

Keith gets up and looks out the window. "There are signs of first light coming up. Should we wake the others, or go out in the lions once more before we go?" He asks turning to Fala.

She shrugs and turns to Saber, "You want one more shot at flying? We could go out for half an hour or so, then come back and eat before we leave."

Saber stands up and nods. "Sure. Let me go place this," He holds the book up, "in my bag, and then I'll meet you at the control room." They nod and he goes off to his room, meeting them a few minutes later just outside the control room. They go in together, and see that Raible is already at work.

"Good morning, Raible." Fala says as the trio enters the control room.

Raible looks up, looking rather tired. "Good morning, Your Highness."

"Is something wrong?" Saber asks, noting how tired he looks.

"I'm not sure, to be honest." He replies. "I've been unable to reach your Calvary Command. I thought I saw a transmission from them, but when I tried to connect, I wasn't able to."

"How long?" Saber asks concerned.

"About an hour, I was just about to call for one of your team, Captain. I was hoping it was just some interference, but I have a feeling that it may not be."

Saber nods. "I'll go and try from the Bismarck; just to be sure it's not an equipment problem." He turns to Keith and Fala. "Looks like we will have to postpone that flight, I'm afraid. Perhaps you could go and wake the others?" Fala nods and he leaves towards the Bismarck.

Everyone meets in the control room a short time later. Looking around, Fireball notices Saber's absence. "Where's Saber?"

Raible turns to him, "He is on your ship. He's attempting to contact Calvary Command. We fear they may be having a problem. About an hour and a half ago, I thought I saw a transmission coming in from them, I went to answer it, and it wouldn't connect. I tried repeatedly to contact them afterwards, with no luck. At that time, Keith, Princess Fala, and Saber entered here and I told them what was happening. Saber went to try and raise a connection from your ship, and they," nodding to Keith and Fala, "went to get all of you up."

"I don't like it, Chief." Hothead says.

"Neither do I. I thought Saber would be back by now." Keith replies.

"Perhaps he is talking with Calvary Command and getting information? That could slow him up a bit." Fala states.

Several others murmur ideas as Saber enters the control room, looking grim. "The news is not good." Everyone turns to him. "I was unable to contact Calvary Command, but I did speak again to Captain Zala of Orb. He said there appeared to be several ships heading towards Yuma and our area of the galaxy." Several of the others look around nervously as he continues. "He said they appeared to be warships. He has offered to have one of their battleships try and get a closer look. I agreed telling him that at least some of us would be heading that way. I did tell him to stay at a safe distance. We don't need to pull anyone else into this unnecessarily." Fala nods her agreement. "I think at this point, we should continue as we planned. Your team,"

nodding to Keith and Fala, should head towards Orb and see if you can get any intel from them. We will head back to Calvary Command, and hopefully find that the lines have just been jammed or something. We can meet up with you there."

Keith nods. "I think that is the way to do this. We can move a bit faster than your ship still, so we may be able to time it so that we all arrive close to the same time, provided we don't run into trouble ourselves. Contact us once you know something." Saber nods. Keith then continues, "Lets grab a quick bite to eat, and then move out."