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by
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Snake Riders

The
hunt for the castral sword



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The stars glittered like diamonds against an endless curtain of black velvet, a spectacle unchanged for eons.

But amidst this timeless beauty, the Gladius made its way - a spaceship that traveled not only through space, but also through stories of adaptation and survival.

Originally designed to transport cargo, the crew converted it out of necessity and with a bit of love into a sturdy combat ship.

In the vastness of space, where every square meter counted and resources were precious, the crew had reduced the living space to the bare minimum.

This decision, as hard as it may have been, was never taken lightly.

It was a testament to the crew's willingness to make sacrifices to not only survive, but thrive in the unpredictable vastness of space.

The Gladius was now a labyrinth of cargo holds crisscrossed by narrow corridors that left little room for personal space, a visible sign of the crew's priorities: mobility, flexibility and the ability to respond to any challenge.

What it lacked was homeliness, it made up for in versatility and fighting spirit. Their weapons systems, a collective arsenal of the galaxy's most advanced technologies, were a living testament to the ingenuity and determination of their crew.

Every module, every weapon on the Gladius told a story of necessity, ingenuity, and the unwavering determination to do what had to be done to survive in the unforgiving infinity of the cosmos.

These principles were reflected not only in the physical design of the ship, but also in the soul of the crew who inhabited it.

Together they formed a unit united by the common goal of completing their missions while exploring the infinite possibilities of the universe.

So the Gladius, a ship as impressive for its unique blend of practicality and combat power as it was for the determination of its crew, navigated star-studded space, ready to take on whatever mission fate had in store for it.

Captain Peter Frog:



- **Age** : 40 years
- **Species** : Abarti
- **Origin** : The Abarti are a very rare race in the galaxy. Many wars decimated their numbers until finally their planet was completely destroyed. The remaining Abarti are known to live as mercenaries or protectors of kings. His loyalty to his employer is known throughout the universe.

Career:

- **Early Years :** Frog originally served in the 5th Galactic Fleet of the United Space Defense (USD), where he quickly rose to the rank of deputy captain due to his focused and calm demeanor.
- **After the military :** After completing his service, Frog acquired a small, old and rusty ship and began his career transporting rare goods throughout the galaxy we know.
- **Creation of the crew :** Over time, Zoe, Finn and Milo joined him and together they formed the team known to us as the "**Snake Riders**".

Personality and skills:

- **Loyalty :** Frog is known for his unwavering loyalty to both his employers and his crew.
- **Leadership qualities :** He has a natural authority and a calm, focused leadership ability that allows him to keep an overview even in the most difficult situations.

Particularities:

- **Background:** As an Abarti, Frog carries the legacy of a nearly extinct civilization, giving him a deep perspective on life and the fragility of peace.
- **Team Snake Riders:** Under Frog's leadership, the Snake Riders team has earned a reputation as a reliable and skilled crew across the galaxy, known for their ability to complete even the most delicate missions.

Captain Peter Frog is a symbol of resilience and adaptability, a leader who has risen from the ashes of his civilization to forge his own path in the vastness of the universe.

CHAPTER 1

THE EMERGENCY CALL

Captain Peter Frog, a young amphibious captain with a sharp mind as penetrating as his eyes, surveyed space thoughtfully through the forward viewport.

He sat strapped tightly in his chair, the fingers of his hands drumming softly on the worn armrests – a sign of his unwavering calm even in the deep expanse of the room.

Beside him, Zoe, the team's technical expert, was working feverishly on the instrument panel. Her bushy red hair was a wild contrast to the precision with which her fingers flew over the keys, constantly searching for improvements she could make to her flying home.

At the back of the bridge, Milo Blue and Finn demonstrated the diversity and strength of the crew in their way.

Milo, whose muscles threatened to burst even his sturdy uniform, and Finn, the spy, whose wry grin and deft handling of a deck of cards revealed just a hint of his complex personality.

The Gladius's most recent cargo voyage had been anything but routine. Their cargo consisted of hard-to-obtain medicines that were only available on Kolaris 2's black market.

The value of these rare drugs was extremely high, making them a desirable target for space pirates. These lawless gangs lurked in the shadows of official shipping routes, ready to extend their claws to anything that might be of value.

The dangers involved in transporting such precious cargo made any journey a risky undertaking where the slightest inattention could result in disaster.

But for the Gladius crew, known as the Snake Riders, such assignments represented exactly the kind of challenge they were looking for.

Their ability to navigate the most dangerous corners of the galaxy, combined with their willingness to take risks and their astute handling of unpredictable situations, made them ideal candidates for such missions.

The successful delivery of these drugs was further proof of her competence and courage, and added another shining facet to her already impressive reputation.

But it was while returning from this dangerous delivery mission that the Gladius received an encrypted distress signal.

This signal was not just a general cry for help lost in the vastness of space. It was addressed directly to her, to Captain Peter Frog and his fearless crew. The message was brief, but its tone conveyed the urgency and importance of the matter:

“We need your specific experience for a top priority assignment.”

Please find yourself on the moon Callero!

The fact that they were mentioned by name and the mention of their “special experience” left little room for doubt about the importance of this assignment. It was clear that someone with intimate knowledge of the Snake Rider's capabilities and perhaps even personal experience with the crew was behind the distress call.

The secrecy and direct approach suggested that this was a mission beyond the ordinary.

Captain Frog, known for his unwavering calm and strategic mind, felt curiosity ignite within him. With a decisive nod to his crew, he gave the order to set course for Callero.

Whatever awaited them, the *Gladius* and her crew were ready to face the challenges and prove themselves once again as the best Snake Riders in the galaxy.

As the *Gladius* set course for Callero, Zoe, the crew's engineer, broke the tension with a sharp-tongued comment, coupled with a fierce look that said as much as her words.

"Can you remember what happened the last time we received such an unnecessarily secretive distress signal?

You were able to party on Honoris for three months while I had the honor of working 16-hour shifts to patch up the *Gladius*."