

Xandar and destroy this 'Star-Lord.' Get me that Orb," Ronan commanded.

"I am honored to do that," said Nebula.

"It will lead to your death," interrupted Gamora. "If you don't get the Orb, you will face our father without his prize."

Nebula looked at Gamora angrily. "I am a daughter of Thanos—just like you. I can do this easily!"

"That is what Korath thought, but this thief was better than him," Gamora said. "Why will it be different for you?"

Ronan watched with interest as the women argued.

"And who would go if I did not? You?" Nebula asked.

"I have been to Xandar many times and know it well," Gamora said.

Nebula shouted, "Ronan has already said that—"

"Do not speak for me," Ronan said, interrupting Nebula. He turned to look at Gamora. "You will not fail?" he asked.

"Have I ever failed?"



On Planet Xandar, Capital of the Nova Lands

It was a great day at the mall. The Xandarian sun was shining, the air was warm, and people were out having a good time. There were families playing, people in the stores, and friends eating outside the many restaurants. But Rocket wasn't enjoying himself.

Rocket was an alien a little over a meter tall who looked like an Earth raccoon. He was hiding behind some trees.

"Humans! All in a big hurry to get from something stupid to nothing at all." He pointed at an ordinary man and turned to his partner, Groot. "Look at this guy! They call us criminals but he's walking around with that ugly haircut! Now that *is* criminal! Isn't that right, Groot?"

But Groot, a tree alien more than two meters tall, wasn't listening. He was drinking from a faucet on the sidewalk.

"Don't drink that water! It's dirty!" Rocket shouted.

Groot quickly stepped away from the faucet and looked around innocently.

"I saw you," said Rocket. He looked at his computer screen. "Oh, there's one." Rocket's computer could recognize faces and he was looking for anyone who was wanted by the law—or who was wanted by anyone

Gamora sat in the pilot's seat on the spaceship that would fly her to Xandar and programmed the computer. Two Sakaaran soldiers came to her.

"We are happy to serve you, my lady," one of them said. "You are Ronan's most trusted servant. My brother and I look forward to success." He looked at the other Sakaaran.

"Yes," Gamora said. "But it is sad about the number of people we will lose."

The Sakaarans looked at her, confused. But before they could ask a question, Gamora took out her sword and killed them. She didn't want any of Ronan's men with her. She had her own plans.

The spaceship moved away with Gamora as its only living passenger. Looking out the window, she thought about the dangers. It would not be easy to fight Ronan.