

Tabletop Squadron Transcript, Tink Interstitial 1, Part 1: The Phantom of the Ballet

Transcript by Tyler (Twitter: @Tyler_MoonSage)

Intro

LILIT: Hello, and welcome to Tabletop Squadron, a Star Wars: Edge of the Empire actual play podcast. I'm Lilit, your MC for today. Every other Thursday, our story follows a thief, a bounty hunter, and a slicer as they explore the galaxy helping a mysterious benefactor and each other.

Except for today, where we follow a slicer as they explore the stage helping a prima donna dancer and themselves.

Thank you to our newest Patron, Sven Svednir. We're glad you're enjoying the show out in Sweden and are grateful for your support.

Music for today's episode can be found in the show notes. Enjoy.

##

NICK: Hello! Welcome to Tabletop Squadron. I'm your host and game master, Nick. We're back for another interlude episode. Taking a little time, get to know what the characters are like on their own, away from the squad. Doing their own thing, striking out. Other synonyms for not being with the group... So, without further ado, let's go around the table and everybody say who you are and what character you're playing today, starting with Hudson.

HUDSON: Hello. I'm Hudson, and I'm playing Tink, a Gigoran slicer.

NICK: An oldie but a goodie.

HUDSON: Oh yeah.

NICK: And new to the Tabletop Squad, we have a special, special guest today. It's Aaron!

AARON: Oh my goodness. When you said you had a special guest I was looking around thinking who is he talking about.

NICK & HUDSON: [laughs]

AARON: It's me! It's actually me. That's so cool. Hey everybody, I'm Aaron J., Twitter @ImAaronJ. I'm gonna be playing a dancer in the Star Wars universe named Azul.

{EDIT: new handle, @TurboHoodie}

HUDSON: Oh, and by the way, because Aaron I guess you haven't played with us before, Tink's pronouns are he/him.

AARON: Very good. Thank you. I don't think I thought much about the pronouns for Azul, but maybe we will discover them along the way.

NICK: Okie-dokie. Do you have any projects you're working on, Aaron, things you wanna get out into the universe?

AARON: Sure. I mean, right now we could all do with some more audio content since we're cooped up in our houses. I'm just gonna direct you to a tabletop RPG show that I run called UniCURSEity. It's the tale of three collegiate folks that discover there's some demonic BS happening, bubbling up underneath the campus, and they are forced and tasked with solving that mystery.

NICK: I love UniCURSEity so much.

AARON: Oh yeah, I should probably tell you where you can get it. You can search iTunes for UniCURSEity or just put UniCURSEity into Google. It's a punny name. If you like puns you're gonna like the show.

NICK: And if you like disembodied skeletons with fun voices you will also enjoy the show quite a bit.

AARON: And if you like musical theater you're really gonna like our second arc that will be starting up sometime in the next month.

NICK: Aw man, you can't hit me with teasers like that!

AARON: I'm so excited! Oh my goodness. I can't wait.

NICK: [laughs] Great. Before we get into it, let's start off with the Destiny Roll!

AARON: Okay, let's see, I got one filled in black circle.

NICK: You got one dark side point. How about you, Hudson?

HUDSON: I got one dark side point.

[techno party music begins]

NICK: Tink, you find yourself in a bar lit by neon lights and glowing smoke. Music with heavy bass causes the drinks on the bar around you to ripple and rattle. The bartender slides you another beverage with a blank stare. What are you drinking?

HUDSON: I'm drinking the Takodana Twister.

NICK: You do the math in your head as you take another sip and stare into your hypnotic drink. You haven't gotten any real work since the shipyard job three months ago. What have you spent that payday on?

[party music fades]

HUDSON: Well, I started collecting figurines, and then that got expensive really quickly, so I stopped. I'll be honest, it was becoming a problem. It was basically figurines, like, kind of back-alley. I didn't know this was a thing, but back-alley figurines where you have to go and it has like Jedi pilots and famous intergalactic heroes and things like that, that normally would be something that could get you in trouble.

NICK: [chuckles] Okay. Are they all still in the box?

HUDSON: Yeah, absolutely, and if there's any kind of stickers I very carefully peel them off, because I want it in mint condition.

NICK: [laughs] Great. As the camera zooms out we also see that Tink looks a little different from the last time we saw him. What does Tink look like now?

HUDSON: Tink got a haircut...

NICK: [laughs]

HUDSON: ...but the thing about the haircut is it was like one of those really awkward in-between haircuts where you cut off just enough that it's almost too much but not enough for it to be appropriate, like two inches deep off the hair surrounding the entire body.

NICK: Okay.

HUDSON: It's also a little bit gray and a little bit kind of disheveled, because I mean I'm not impressing anybody. I don't need to really wash or anything that often.

NICK: [pauses] Cool. You also lost your leg recently.

HUDSON: I bedazzled the leg and kinda put an X on with bedazzled jewelry on there so people know I'm straightedge, because I can't just do the symbol with my arms all the time. That gets really annoying.

NICK: So you just point to your shin now?

HUDSON: Yeah, I just point to my shin and I'm like, "keep it, keep the edge."

[party music returns]

NICK: [chuckles] So, as you contemplate your finances and what you've been through lately, you see a Mirialan man wearing a loose tunic and pants with a hooded duster on. They're a Human-looking alien with green skin with refined features. You can see that their traditional tattoos are focused mostly on

their hands rather than traditionally where they would be on their face, and that the tattoos only seem partially filled in which is a little weird. The Mirialan leans backwards against the bar on his elbows, looks at you and says...

NICK (as Mirialan): How are ya now?

NICK: ...and grabs a shot glass that is sliding along the bar to a different patron, without looking at it, and he downs it in one go.

HUDSON (as Tink): Well, I was a little down thinking about how my life is right now, but now that someone's talking to me I've kinda perked up a little bit.

NICK: The Mirialan chews on the inside of his cheek a little bit.

NICK (as Mirialan): Oh, not so bad.

NICK: Then smiles at you and then looks around the bar.

NICK (as Mirialan): Looks like you've got a pair of idle hands there, friend.

HUDSON (as Tink): Looks like you got a pair of, uh, mostly colored in hands.

NICK (as Mirialan): Well, the thing about having colored in hands is you never know exactly when they're going to be finished. It's sort of a metaphor, you see, for the journey.

HUDSON (as Tink): Ohh...

NICK (as Mirialan): How's this galactic life treating you?

HUDSON (as Tink): The galactic—You're very inquisitive. I like that. I don't think it's weird at all.

NICK: [laughs]

HUDSON (as Tink): So, the galactic life, I'd say sometimes I live on the edge, sometimes the edge lives on me.

AARON: What? [laughs]

HUDSON (as Tink): Meaning I accidentally fell in some razors recently. It was an ordeal.

AARON: [laughs]

HUDSON (as Tink): This was just at the supermarket. Just so much blood...

NICK: [laughs] The Mirialan looks genuinely concerned for you.

NICK (as Mirialan): Well, I was going to say that the Force moves in mysterious ways, but... I don't think the Force would be responsible for throwing you into a batch of razor blades.

[party music fades]

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah, that was more just my clumsiness in general. I don't think it was the Force.

NICK (as Mirialan): Well...

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah, get to the bottom line here. You're asking me a lot of questions.

AARON: [laughs]

NICK (as Mirialan): That's fair. I find that the Force tends to bring me places where I'm needed, and I happen to be near somewhere where a friend needs some help with a problem. I noticed you, I could see that you have an outlaw tech data breaker there on your belt, and I have some friends who might need help with a problem.

HUDSON (as Tink): Hmm. I'm a problem solver, and I'm glad you noticed my status symbol. I like to show it off.

AARON: [laughs]

NICK (as Mirialan): You know those are extremely illegal, right?

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh... Earlier I said I live on the edge, most of the time.

NICK (as Mirialan): Very fair. Very fair. There's a ballet theater just a few levels down from here, actually.

HUDSON (as Tink): Ooh.

NICK (as Mirialan): They ran crosswise with a hacker group a few weeks ago, and now their lighting system just flashes curse words all the time.

HUDSON: [laughs]

NICK (as Mirialan): It's a kriffing shame. They do good shows there. The money isn't great, but I have a feeling the Force would appreciate the help. What do you say, friend?

HUDSON (as Tink): Hmm... A ballet job, you say? Hmm. I've... I'm skeptical, because the last time I ran into a ballet company it was just, it was uncomfortable.

NICK (as Mirialan): You ran into an uncomfortable company of ballet?

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah, yeah, you could say they were very uncomfortable. The reason being, they would... You know how a normal gang—it was like a gang of roving ballerinas, so this was like, unlike any kind of ballerina company you've ever seen. They come up, they're snapping their fingers, they got their outfits on, and then they start doing pliés and touchés and valets and they just twist and turn and flip, and it just confused me, and then suddenly my belt was gone. I had to run after them.

NICK (as Mirialan): Well, I can tell you that this particular ballet company isn't much for crime. You'll probably be okay there.

HUDSON (as Tink): Alright. Alright. It sounds like what I'm battling here is someone who wants to mess around with them, so I don't appreciate that, especially if they're nice people.

NICK (as Mirialan): Well, that sounds just wonderful. My name's Chundi Sandal by the way.

NICK: He grabs what's left of your drink and takes a big sip of it.

NICK (as Chundi): [affronted] What is this, a Takodana Twister? Gross.

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah, absolutely. I keep the edge, so you know, you have to get the good non-alcoholic drinks.

NICK: He shrugs and then pours the rest of it down his throat.

NICK (as Chundi): Well, it's been a pleasure meeting you, friend. Pitter-patter.

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah. Let's go, Mr. Sandal.

NICK: We get a swipe. It does like a fractal spiral into the next scene which is... Tink, you are walking down a very narrow staircase in an alleyway. There are desperate people huddled up in the shadows. You're on Coruscant. People with little money and less options, but they leave your hulking frame alone, especially when they see the kind of gear you're carrying around. You've got a giant vibro-axe on your back.

HUDSON: Yeah!

NICK: You quickly find yourself standing in front of a rundown theater. It's tucked into an overhang created by a much larger building. A stream of water runoff from the higher level trickles perpetually into the front entryway like the world's dirtiest waterfall. What I need from you all is a detail about the outside of this theater.

AARON: Hmm. I think my detail about the outside of the theater is that the doors to get in are made of the most clear glass that it almost appears like there's no door there. It looks like the handle is actually floating in place because the glass is so clean and so nice.

HUDSON: If you look above the nice, clean glass you can see that the sign for the entrance and the title of the building is really rundown actually, kind of rusted and has water marks. It's like in a very cliché way flashing and you can hear a buzz-buzz-buzz as it flashes.

NICK: So, there is water dripping down right in front of this door, and that's why the lights on this sign for this theater are buzzing and flashing, and we don't quite see the name of it, but inside you can see a... we'll say it's a Chadra-Fan, so a little bat person is constantly cleaning the inside of these doors. It looks like he's doing just really top-notch mime work as you appear.

HUDSON (as Tink): Good work, there.

NICK: He smiles at you and goes back to scrubbing. As you approach, a little bit of water splashes off you onto the door and the Chadra-Fan gasps with a little squeak and goes to wipe that down. As you enter, you pass through a lobby. There are mildewed posters and a few sagging chairs as you go through into the theater proper. On the stage you see a dance troop going through the final acts of production. Aaron, what does this production look like and what is your character doing?

AARON: I think my character, I think Azul is the front of this ballet squad. They are not a ballet team, they are not a ballet company, they are a ballet squad. They all have nice, flashy jackets on, they're all wearing these ballet point shoes with cool bits of graffiti on it, and there's a lot of people on the left and right hand sides of this stage where they are rehearsing that didn't get the memo about the doors. The doors were so clean these people just walked into them and they have bandages around their faces. There's bruises all over them. They just did not get the memo that the doors were there. They were just so clean they kept bumping into them.

[flute music begins]

I think that Azul is currently going through a ballet routine. You see them perform all these sorts of very agile, almost acrobatic type moves, and when they are done they go back to first position and then they sit cross-legged on the floor and place their palms on their knees and just kind of breathe in [inhales], and out [exhales].

[opera singing joins the flute music]

NICK: Oh, that's lovely. So, as all of the dancers sit cross-legged in the flashing lights, one single spotlight casts down to the person leading this dance squad. Now, the spotlight does say KRIF in huge red letters, but it still illuminates your character, Aaron, so we get a closer look at them. Describe what they look like.

AARON: Azul I think drapes themselves in a lot of blue clothing, a lot of blue garb. Their jacket itself is like a periwinkle blue, and on the back of the jacket is just a giant graffiti "A." Hanging around their head is a bandana that has different constellations on it, and they're wearing very tight, black dance shorts that cut off right above the knee. When you get down to their feet they have these beautiful ballet point shoes that right at the tip of the point shoes, right at the toe, everything is basically worn through but that wear and tear actually makes itself look like it should be there because the paint on the shoe is made to look distressed, it's made to look like something really industrial.

I think Azul pretty much at all times appears calm. Azul always looks like they know exactly what they're going to say. They always look like they are in control of a situation, but who knows if that's actually the case. I want to say that Azul also has one gigantic tattoo running from their left shoulder all the way down to the palm of their left hand that is just a giant lightning bolt, and the reason that is very interesting for Azul specifically is because the actual tattoo ink is like a black light, so whenever they

dance under a black light you see this lightning bolt just silhouetted against the darkness, glowing in this amazing, incredible, white light.

NICK: Oh, that is very, very cool. Azul is a Mirialan, right? So they have green skin?

AARON: Yeah. I think there's always whispers of people watching Azul dance where they're like "Why is their name Azul?"

NICK: [laughs]

AARON: "They're green. It doesn't make any sense." [record scratch] "Their name should just be green." That's why Azul tries to incorporate as much blue into their coterie and culture as much as they can.

NICK: Oh, that is great. So, we get this zoom in, Matrix 360 view of Azul basically being in her comfort zone in her point of strength, and then you hear someone clap twice from off-stage, and the squad gets up to do it again, start the rehearsal over. They get through the first few moves and there is a section of choreography where there's a flurry of leaps all at once, and as they are starting that, Tink, you are walking down the steps towards the stage and all of the lights cut out at once.

[music stops abruptly]

And then all of the spotlights start swinging wildly and flashing kriff, splurt, kark, fuck-fuck-fuck, and just strobe lighting obscenities all over the stage. Many of the dancers stumble and crash into each other and the holo player that was playing the music skips in the music. Tink, you can see the rehearsal grind to a halt with these technical difficulties as you're approaching, and there is an elderly Chadra-Fan woman sitting in one of the seats that you're walking past. As you get close, she's got her hands resting on the top of a durasteel cane with a large, glass gem in the pommel. She says to you, without looking, still looking at the stage.

NICK (as Chadra-Fan): It really is a shame. With the lights like this it will all go to waste. We were going to save the theater with this show, but now it's all just kriffing kark.

[laughter]

NICK: On the stage it just flashes "kriffing kark" in big, yellow letters.

HUDSON (as Tink): Well, this sure doesn't look like a phantom of the ballet situation, so uh... I think what we're dealing with here is someone trying to sabotage your performance.

NICK (as Chadra-Fan): Well, we thought it was just petty vandalism, but generally petty vandalism doesn't completely destroy a business and the livelihood of artists, so maybe you're right. Knowing why it happened doesn't fix the problem, though.

HUDSON (as Tink): Do you have competing ballet companies? I mean, usually they have guns and that's how they get you, but maybe they're just going with something easier this time. Has that happened to you before?

NICK (as Chadra-Fan): Did you grow up on Mandalore?

HUDSON (as Tink): I did grow up on Mandalore. Yes.

NICK (as Chadra-Fan): See, Mandalorian ballet battle companies are the only ballerinas that tend to shoot first and ask questions later. I did my dance school a very long time ago out there.

HUDSON (as Tink): Ohh.

NICK (as Chadra-Fan): Generally, you don't have to have the black swan also be black ops in Coruscant ballet.

[laughter]

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah, definitely seems more refined and, uh...

HUDSON: And he pauses awkwardly too long as he's thinking about a fancy word to impress this person.

HUDSON (as Tink): It's very apropos.

NICK (as Chadra-Fan): Well, I'm glad that you think it's... apropos.

NICK: On the stage, as you said things look refined, there's just straight up giant hologram outlines of two headless people having sex on the stage.

NICK (as Chadra-Fan): What's less apropos is this vandalism.

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah, that's gross.

NICK (as Chadra-Fan): It's always on loop. They're not even being creative.

HUDSON (as Tink): Ick... I mean, yeah. If I was doing this I'd just have something that said "butts, butts, butts" and then have a tastefully drawn butt, just an outline, you know.

AARON (as Azul): Hmm. Yeah, that's good. That's dance. That's dance, for sure.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh, hello there.

NICK: The elderly Chadra-Fan shakes her head.

NICK (as Chadra-Fan): Yes, a good tasteful butt is why we all got into the business.

AARON: I think Azul just has a towel draped over their neck and they're holding onto it with both their hands. It's just a series of shrugs.

AARON (as Azul): Yeah, butts are great and all, but we really have kind of a situation on our hands right here and I don't think we're gonna get our reps in unless we can figure this out. I know the rest of the squad is ready and willing to get back on that, but it's kind of a dark cloud hanging over our heads.

HUDSON (as Tink): You're in luck, because I destroy dark clouds. But what I really mean is I'm here to fix your problem.

NICK: [laughs]

AARON (as Azul): Wait. Are you like a weather man or are you like a detective? You're gonna fix the cloud?

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah, no-no-no, sorry. I should have introduced myself. I am Tink, and I am a doctor and lawyer, but besides those things I'm also a slicer, very good slicer at that, and I believe I can figure out who's doing this.

AARON (as Azul): Okay, well fantastic. You obviously know who I am, so yeah, if you—

HUDSON (as Tink): Wait. I... you know, I do, but can you remind me?

AARON: I think Azul looks around, and as you've said that I think people have had hushed gasps. "Wait, oh my god, does this person not know who Azul is?" Azul I think begins to walk away and then looks over their shoulder...

[dramatic performance music begins]

...and then launches into the air in this very allegro fashion and lands right in front of you in third position and then bows to you.

AARON (as Azul): I am Azul. I am the head of the company here. I am the captain of the squad, and if you need me I will be at your service. It's not every day I meet someone who actually requests to be introduced. I have to say, that is kinda cool.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh—

AARON (as Azul): You, you don't, like, you're not intimidated by me. This is so new.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh yeah, you saw, I didn't even flinch. Do you see how large I am compared to how small you are?

[dramatic music fades]

AARON: [laughs] I think as you say compared to how small you are Azul just kinda laughs and jokingly smacks you on the shoulder and just then begins to lean on you with their whole arm, and looks to the rest of the company.

AARON (as Azul): I like this guy. Is it guy? I like this person. I like this... What are you?

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah, yeah, it's guy. I am a Gigoran.

AARON (as Azul): Ah, fantastic, and you said your name is Tink?

HUDSON (as Tink): Yes. It's actually Ralltinkraatakak, but you can just call me Tink.

AARON (as Azul): Ah, well Tink, it is very good to meet you. I'll be at your service as soon as you need me.

HUDSON (as Tink): Thank you, and I actually, you know, this was probably a trivia question for later, getting to know you, but I actually know why your name is Azul. Your like blueish-green skin, and the H is silent, isn't it?

[long pause]

AARON (as Azul): The... The H?

NICK: [cackles]

HUDSON (as Tink): Yes.

AARON (as Azul): I'm... I'm sorry.

HUDSON (as Tink): So, it's like Hazel, but you drop the H for fun.

AARON: I think everyone around this dance company is just, their interest is piqued, they're looking on with baited breath. Azul looks around kind of hesitantly, not really knowing what to say and not really getting the joke, looks back at you Tink and then says:

AARON (as Azul): Uh... Yes, that is correct. Yeah. Sure. We'll go with that. Of course. Yes.

HUDSON (as Tink): Alright. I'm starting to—You know what? I think we're gonna work well together here. I'm not seeing any issues so far. Like you mentioned, you're at my service, and I haven't heard that... ever, from anyone, so that definitely sparks some joy in me.

NICK: As you all are talking the Chadra-Fan theater leader steps up into the aisle, and her head comes up just about to where Tink's new prosthetic leg finishes.

NICK (as Chadra-Fan): Azul, why don't you take our new slicer friend up to the lighting booth? Maybe he can troubleshoot this problem a little bit.

AARON (as Azul): Absolutely, dear. And hey, do me a favor, please get a drink and sit down for a little bit? I don't want you losing any undue energy due to all this. Okay? Can you please just do that for me?

NICK (as Chadra-Fan): I was dancing before you were born. Don't talk to me like that. But I will sit down and have a drink, I'm very tired.

AARON (as Azul): Alright, fantastic. Remember, I know what's best for you. Alright, let's go, Tink.

HUDSON: [laughs]

NICK: As the two of you start to walk, I think you walk towards the stage and then there's a staircase off to the left that leads up into the rafters where the lighting booth is. We see the secondary dance leader that is a very tall and dancer built pink Twi'lek, and she's whispering to the other members of the group.

NICK (as Twi'lek): He didn't even know who Azul was. Isn't that interesting?

NICK: The other ones are all giggling.

NICK (as Twi'lek): I think that she is slipping. Perhaps we should bring in a new dance leader.

AARON: Do we think that Azul hears them?

NICK: Why don't you roll me a Perception check. First roll of the game.

AARON: Alright. Alright. Because yeah, if Azul hears them I think there's definitely some ish that's gonna go down. So that's Cunning, my Cunning is 1, and then I have one little dot filled in, so...

NICK: That'll be one yellow die against two purple dice. We'll just say this is average.

AARON: Okay, rolling...

NICK: But I'll give you a blue die as a boost.

AARON: Oh.

NICK: Because I think you're used to this other dancer stirring up shit.

AARON: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

NICK: So you pay attention to them.

AARON: Okay, so I just rolled one yellow die and I got two wings with a dot at the top.

NICK: Those are advantages. You're gonna wanna reroll with that blue die or you're not gonna succeed.
[laughs]

AARON: Okay. I got so excited. Alright, rolling... I got three what looks like a hexagon with a bunch of pathways going into it.

NICK: Threats.

AARON: And I got another one of those advantage symbols.

NICK: Okay, so it cancels out to absolutely nothing, because the threats and the advantages cancel out. You do not hear her starting shit, but I don't think the rest of the dance troop really listens to her either. It just kinda neutrals out. It's just an interesting data point for the audience.

AARON: [laughs] I think regardless of hearing this "secondary" dance leader, this dumb pink Twi'lek, I think as we're making our way up to the booth that Azul and Tink are just kinda chit-chatting, and I

imagine that Azul, the more I think about Azul's character, they're kinda like Jameela Jamil from The Good Place. They think they know everybody, they're kind of perfect in a lot of different ways, and they can dish on people. As they're going past these groups you see that Azul is pointing out these are these people, these are these folk, these people have been here forever, these are the rookies, they all know me...

AARON (as Azul): And it's so very refreshing to meet someone that isn't intimidated by me. I just want to work with these people.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh no, I... Well, I was gonna say I understand, but actually, the only part I understand is the intimidation. I don't know if you've seen this baby.

HUDSON: And I pull off my axe.

AARON (as Azul): Oh! For a second I thought you were actually gonna have a child with you. This is much different.

HUDSON: [laughs]

HUDSON (as Tink): No, no babies, just—I mean, really this is the closest thing I have to a child. I definitely take care of it. [cooing] Isn't that right/ Isn't that right?

HUDSON: And I kinda rub the blade.

AARON (as Azul): So, is this the most valuable thing that you have?

HUDSON (as Tink): You know, I guess it is. Yes.

AARON (as Azul): Okay, because I was just, you know, you seem like the kind of person that, I don't know, would... I don't know, wanna play a game or something, just figuring out what kind of leverage you have.

HUDSON (as Tink): [gasps]

AARON (as Azul): me and some of the other dancers like to place some bets, just you know, feeling out, but seriously, if you're interested let me know. No pressure, but also, kind of pressure because it is very fun.

HUDSON (as Tink): It definitely sounds fun, and you know what I have in my pocket right here?

AARON (as Azul): Is this—Wait. Is this like a question? Do you wanna put money on it?

HUDSON (as Tink): Uh, no, not yet.

AARON (as Azul): Oh, okay.

HUDSON (as Tink): Not at this second. They are actually a pair of chance cubes.

AARON (as Azul): Agh! You know, I was gonna say a pair of chance cubes. I would've put 5 Credits on it. Agh, okay. That's fantastic. Look at these. Wow, they're so cute.

HUDSON (as Tink): And you know, sometimes when I need to make decisions about what I'm doing, either in my mind or physically in the real world, I roll these things.

AARON (as Azul): Wow. You know, it sounds like people that like to roll dice in order to make decisions are really an interesting type of folk, wouldn't you say?

NICK: [laughs]

HUDSON (as Tink): [unsure] Yeah...!

AARON (as Azul): Especially when it comes to their whole character and world building.

HUDSON (as Tink): They might even be better than all the others.

AARON (as Azul): Yeah. I think people that roll dice in order to make decisions are better than the rest of the people in this galaxy. Phooey on everyone that says otherwise.

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah. Yeah... Phoo- Phooey.

NICK: You arrive in the lighting booth. It's up in the back of the theater hanging from the ceiling. It's not a very big room. It's probably only about three meters wide and three meters long. It's just crammed full of lighting boards and technology, but it's Star Wars so everything runs on magnetic tape and blinking lightbulbs. There is a big old pile of servers with a single entry port, it's like one plug-in like R2-D2 would use.

HUDSON (as Tink): This is some old shit. I mean, like, it's classy ancient, but still. I've worked with this before back at the university. Um... Yeah, let me see if, um... [sighs] You know what, I would ask for the username and password, but I think I'm just gonna use my data breaker. You can kinda just see how I do things around here.

HUDSON: So I roll a Computers check, I'm guessing.

NICK: Yep. This one's gonna be a hard Computers check.

HUDSON: I have two successes and, [counts], eight advantages, and two threats.

NICK: You ended up with how many successes and six advantages?

HUDSON: Yeah, two successes.

NICK: Okay, so two successes and six advantages, which is ludicrously high.

AARON: [chuckles]

NICK: You're able to get into the system pretty easily. The biggest hampering factor isn't the security, it's the fact that there's no real interface, so you're having to do everything through your data breaker, and then also whoever got into this system in the first place did whatever the programming equivalent of laying landmines was. There's a lot of loops in the code that, if you activate them, start shutting stuff down and messing with things, but you're able to skip easily past those. You find that there's a toggle switch somewhere in the programming that basically says 'Set lighting code to fuck you,' and you just turn that off. A couple of your advantages are that the spotlight falls on this pink Twi'lek down on the stage and she's picking her nose.

AARON (as Azul): [scandalized] Oh my god.

NICK: Like everyone stares at her, because she was in the dark, and then pulls her hand away really carefully.

NICK (as Twi'lek): It's not what you think.

NICK: And stomps angrily across the stage. You still have like infinity advantages. Is there anything you wanna get out of this check?

HUDSON: I turn to my right and there's a small fridge, and I'm like ooh, so I open it and there's some sodas.

AARON: [laughs]

HUDSON: I grab a soda, and I'm actually, I have the soda and I open it and it just goes (fizzy splashing sound), and then suddenly it just literally slips between my fingers and lands on the computer, but somehow the liquid that got on the computer, because it spilled, caused me to get further into the system. [laughs] That might be too much for an advantage. It's really up to you.

NICK: What if you short out something with the soda, but that actually was a security system and now you just have control of the network in here. Does that work for you?

HUDSON: Yes, that sounds great.

NICK: Okay. Great. So, the lights appear to be back to normal. Azul, do you have any sort of reaction to how quickly Tink was able to fix this?

AARON: From this bar attached to the wall, Azul has been watching Tink go through all of these little procedures to get into the computer, and there's been a variety of reactions. I think getting in, number one, raised Azul's eyebrows. The second thing that they reacted to was seeing this Twi'lek picking their nose. [laughs] I think Azul made kind of a mental note, like "I need to talk to that person, that is unsanitary and that will not stand, also gross." Then, I think the third and final reaction was when Tink saw the sodas, opened the sodas and spilled it on the computer. They started to rush over to clean everything up but discovered that it was fine, so now they're just standing behind Tink admiring everything that's going on in this mainframe now.

NICK: Very, very cool. Tink, you have complete access to the network. You're typing away. I think in the past you've just always kinda taken the chance to familiarize yourself with systems when you have access, so you can see there's a little security camera pointed out of the box office towards the street, there's some lighting controls that are not related to the stage, just to the house lights and things, and there's a series of motion sensors that are down below the theater – which is weird – and they periodically look like they've gone off lately, but that's probably just part of the city infrastructure. It's just a weird thing to have under a theater.

As you're looking through this and Azul is watching you, the pink Twi'lek stomps back onto the middle of the stage and the rest of the dance squad is kinda scattered towards the wings, and the pink Twi'lek starts to do a warm-up and a dance, and you can tell the leader of the theater is still watching. You can see she's showing off and that she's actually dancing the lead part, she's doing Azul's part of the dance, just for fun, you know, not trying to make a statement or anything.

AARON: Oh hell no. That's not happening. No-no-no. Do we have a name for this pink Twi'lek? [laughs]

NICK: [smiling] We could come up with one.

AARON: Oh my god. I have just made a new enemy. No, no one's staking my dance spot. That is my spot.

NICK: What about Selona?

AARON: Selona is pretty good.

HUDSON: Yeah, and actually, it's really weird because there's just a microphone laying by all of us...

NICK: Oh yeah, for sure, you have a PA system for stage direction.

AARON: I think Azul eyes the microphone and then looks back up at Tink.

AARON (as Azul): Do you mind if I use that?

HUDSON (as Tink): Go right ahead. It's not connected to any of my systems.

AARON: Azul picks up the microphone, taps it twice, [taps his own microphone twice], and in one flurry of words just like a breathless sentence says:

AARON (as Azul): Selona, I see that you need to work on your technique there, it looks a little snotty right now, wouldn't you say?

NICK: Selona stops mid-revolution. She's doing the ballet spin that has one leg straight out behind, and it's really good form, and she stops up on point on one toe and then drops down. She goes to make the rudest hand gesture you've ever seen towards the lighting box, and the two of you see a giant sandbag fall from the ceiling.

[intense music begins]

AARON: [gasps]

NICK: Straight down onto the stage. In the process of Selona stepping forward to make a hand gesture at you the sandbag bursts on the stage right where she was standing just a second ago.

AARON: Azul puts their hand over the mic and says:

AARON (as Azul): Oh, holy crap, I didn't want Selona to die. I mean, it would have been nice, but... What? How did that happen?

[intense music fades]

HUDSON (as Tink): You dirty, dirty dog. I mean, I didn't think that you'd sandbag someone today, but...

AARON (as Azul): I wasn't sandbagging somebody! I just wanted to tell them off and give a pithy reply. I don't wanna kill anybody.

HUDSON (as Tink): Then why'd you launch a sandbag?

AARON (as Azul): I didn't launch a sandbag! Can't you see on the computer where the sandbag was launched from? All the stuff is tied to circuits.

HUDSON (as Tink): You're right. Um...

HUDSON: I start typing. Tap-tap-tap.

NICK: You made this system yours, essentially, so you don't have to roll for it. As you type away, the spotlights rotate and point towards the catwalk up above the stage, and you see a figure back in the shadows where the spotlights don't quite reach, for just a second, and then they whip and run away into the darkness above the stage.

[intense music returns]

HUDSON (as Tink): [gasps] It's the phantom!

AARON (as Azul): I need to go kill—

AARON: Gerard Butler? [laughs]

[intense music fades]

NICK: So yeah, you can run to try to see where this mysterious figure went, but I will need either an Athletics or a Coordination check from both of you to see how quickly you get there.

AARON: I think for me it's gonna be Coordination, because that's Agility, I've got a 4, and then I have 3 ranks in Coordination. It's four pows and one hexagon thing.

NICK: [smiling] So, four successes and a threat. [laughs] Cool. Hudson, if you want to do an Athletics or Coordination check against three.

HUDSON: One success and three threats.

NICK: Okay. So, Azul, since you're using Coordination I think it's much more of a graceful parkour to get up there. Tink, you were rolling Athletics, right?

HUDSON: No, Coordination, I have nothing in Athletics.

AARON: [laughs]

NICK: Okay, so you're also parkouring but not nearly as gracefully and Azul quickly outdistances you.

AARON: I think under Azul's breath they're just whispering to themselves:

AARON (as Azul): Allegro. Allegro. Allegro.

NICK: [chuckles] So, talk me through. You have to run down a staircase, across a gangplank, through some rafters and then up a rope to get to where this figure was. What does that look like?

AARON: Oh, you said down stairs, across a gangplank and up a rope?

NICK: Yep.

[action music begins]

AARON: Easy! That is easy like Sunday morning for Azul. What they do is they parkour down the rail of this staircase and then they do an aerial over the gangplank thing that you were talking about, so basically they flip themselves forward, no hands touching the ground, and there's just this slow-motion movement as they're levitating in the air, you hear everyone just go... [long gasp].

[action music stops]

Everything's quiet, and as their foot touches the ground on the other side,

[action music returns]

it feels like all the orchestration and heat of the moment comes filtering back in. Then they grab this rope, and they don't just climb up it, they grab the rope as they're running and they vault towards a wall and just kind of wall jump (effort noises) all the way up to the top of this rope and land on the catwalk.

NICK: Tink mostly is jogging through this. I think he does one vault where you plant a hand and flip your hands over. You get to this catwalk. You see the figure standing on the very back of the stage in a section that there's no way to get to, there's no way the figure could have gotten there as quickly as they did, and you're about to go after them, but Tink runs up behind you and – you wouldn't know that it's new, but his new mechanical leg shorts out and he collapses into you and knocks you both down to the floor of the gangplank and the figure vanishes.

AARON: Oof.

NICK: Because Tink falls prone. [dramatic bass noise]

HUDSON: [remembering] Oh yeah!

AARON: [laughs] I think, Tink falling on top of me, I think I still do it with a little bit of grace, and as I watch the person ahead of us running away I just look over my shoulder, pinned to the floor with Tink on top of me, and I say:

AARON (as Azul): [strained] I think we'll have to work on some of your moves, but it looked pretty cool.

HUDSON (as Tink): Thank you. I thought it was very cool.

AARON (as Azul): I wouldn't say very cool, but we'll work on it.

HUDSON (as Tink): Nah, we can agree to disagree.

NICK: As you are there you see a little folded up piece of flimsy – which is Star Wars paper – on this gangplank next to you where you have both collapsed to the ground.

AARON (as Azul): What do you wanna do? That could be a bomb.

HUDSON (as Tink): Ooh, ooh, ooh. If there's one thing I'm not it's a bomb diffuser.

AARON (as Azul): Hey, how much you wanna bet that this is a bomb, huh?

HUDSON (as Tink): Ooh...

AARON (as Azul): You wanna take that action?

HUDSON (as Tink): I'll take that action. Yeah.

AARON (as Azul): Alright. What do you wanna bet?

HUDSON (as Tink): Hmm...

HUDSON: I look at my leg.

HUDSON (as Tink): Is this enough to bet my leg.

AARON (as Azul): Yes, I will bet you your leg.

HUDSON (as Tink): No, no. Wait, wait. I probably need that. No, I definitely need that. Um...

AARON (as Azul): Let's just make it easy. Let's say 10 Credits.

HUDSON (as Tink): 10 Credits, got it.

AARON (as Azul): Alright, because I saw this in a movie once where somebody picked up a scrap of flimsy, and they read it, and then at the end of the sentence it blew up. So, it might be 'nice knowing you,' but at least I'll get 10 Credits out of you.

HUDSON (as Tink): Alright, let's do it.

AARON: And they go to pick up the scrap of flimsy.

NICK: And it does not explode!

AARON: That is bullshit!

NICK: [laughs]

AARON: Aw man. They pick up the scrap of flimsy and they're just like (gritted struggling noises), and they are unraveling this flimsy but with their other hand they're taking out their wallet which is probably always on them and mindlessly takes out 10 Credits and throws them at Tink.

HUDSON (as Tink): Whoa. Whoa. A little aggressive there. Just 10 Credits, bud.

AARON (as Azul): Yeah, yeah, yeah. Alright, what's this say, what's this say?

NICK: The note is simple. It just says in a frantic scrawled calligraphy, "This theater is doomed if you do not dance my ballet."

HUDSON (as Tink): That's ominous. What does that mean?

AARON (as Azul): I think it's pretty self-explanatory. I think he wants us to dance his ballet or else the theater is doomed. It's only two sentences. It looks like regular punctuation. Is there any deeper meaning? I don't know. Do you know any deeper meaning to this?

HUDSON (as Tink): You know, I think it's a disgruntled ex-balleter, and they had a dream, and that—

AARON (as Azul): Excuse me, it's balletist.

HUDSON (as Tink): Balletist.

NICK: Fuck. I love balleter so much though. [laughs]

AARON: [laughs]

HUDSON (as Tink): So it was an angsty ex-ballist, and...

AARON: [laughs]

HUDSON (as Tink): ...what's happening here is they wrote what they thought was a seminal just extraordinary ballet to change the face of ballet, or the whatever the moves of ballet, and they probably came and tried to pitch it to different companies, and for some reason something happened and no one

got it including this group here. So, maybe they just go from company to company doing this, or they could just be, you know, the disgruntled janitor who just wants to play a little prank.

AARON (as Azul): You know, I gotta say, Tink, I was a little sad that this wasn't a bomb, but also, that sort of insight and analysis is exactly why I'm excited to be working with you. Typically we would have to find a variety of different clues to track down the motivations and where-tos and wherefores for this dastardly villain, but no, you seem to have determined what it could be pretty easily.

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah, yeah, you could say I'm a genius. I mean, you should say it.

AARON (as Azul): Alright, you're a genius. You're a genius.

HUDSON (as Tink): Thank you.

NICK: [chuckles] And, I think we see Tink and Azul come back down to the main stage. Selona is crying really dramatically with a group of ballerinas around her, comforting her. You really get the feeling that she's seizing this opportunity for sympathy more than she was super shaken by it. The head of the ballet troop walks her way slowly up onto the stage to be with you all.

NICK (as Chadra-Fan): Well, it looks like we've got a bigger problem than just some vandals, doesn't it?

AARON (as Azul): I would agree. Selona's technique was just sloppy, and really they should learn how to turn out a bit better. It was very disgraceful. Also, the sandbag was bad.

NICK: [chuckles] Selona lets out a louder wail that sounds more genuine than the rest of them were.

AARON: [laughs]

NICK: The Chadra-Fan shakes her head.

NICK (as Chadra-Fan): Well, never let it be said that Madam Zostra doesn't care for her dancers. Young man, would you and Azul be able to get to the bottom of this?

HUDSON (as Tink): You know... before I answer that question, I have a much better question. Why in any galaxy, on any planet, would a ballet need sandbags? It's just dancing!

AARON: [laughs]

NICK (as Zostra): It raises and lowers the scenery.

AARON: Just starts laughing.

AARON (as Azul): This guy doesn't know why we need sandbags! [laughs] Ah...

HUDSON (as Tink): I mean, it's not obvious. It was being hidden until it fell.

NICK: The Chadra-Fan also laughs.

NICK (as Zostra): Not everyone can understand the mystery importance of the sandbag to ballet, dear. You must be understanding of outsiders.

AARON (as Azul): Next thing you know he's gonna ask why a ship has an engine. [laughs]

NICK (as Zostra): Ha-ha! Oh, Azul.

HUDSON (as Tink): I mean, sometimes... Never mind. I was gonna say sometimes about ship magic. I actually maintained a ship for a while with my old squad.

HUDSON: Then I just look into the distance really dramatically.

NICK: [laughs]

AARON: [laughs] Get all glassy-eyed.

HUDSON: yes. I turn and I say:

HUDSON (as Tink): Now, to answer your actual question, I'm on the case.

AARON (as Azul): Um, this is a stage, it's not a—Oh! I understand. You're gonna take up the case. We're gonna work together more~ Aw, this is great.

HUDSON (as Tink): yeah, not literal, dummy.

AARON (as Azul): Ah, sorry, sorry, and my name is Azul.

HUDSON (as Tink): Hazel... Az... A-Azul. Yes.

AARON (as Azul): Ha-HaaAzul.

HUDSON (as Tink): Heh.

AARON (as Azul): Ha-Azul.

NICK: [laughs]

HUDSON (as Tink): Hazul been to any good ballets lately?

AARON (as Azul): Oh, this is great. We can do a two-hander, we can take this on the road. I like this, but we should probably solve the mystery first.

HUDSON (as Tink): yeah. Yeah.

AARON (as Azul): But seriously, we should think about an exclusive run together.

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah. Are you a little bit country or a little bit rock and roll? Because I can do either.

NICK: [laughs]

AARON (as Azul): You know, I'm a big, I'm a neat freak. I don't like anyone who's messy.

[gentle sleuthing music begins]

NICK: So, I think what we see is Azul and Tink working their way through the theater, looking for clues, and they are under the stage and on the sides and interviewing dancers, and we get a quick shot of Azul and Tink interviewing Selona, and Selona shrugging and walking away and Tink having to hold Azul back from punching her in the back of the head.

HUDSON: [chuckles]

AARON: I just think, I think that Azul, like you said, is talking to dancers, is talking to maybe one Gungan about what happened, then they talk to another Kaminoan about what happened, and then when they speak to Selona the questions deviate entirely and are just like:

AARON (as Azul): Why are your jetés so sloppy? Why are you so mean? Why were you picking your nose?

AARON: And just walks away.

[laughter]

NICK: The day comes to a close and you are not able to find this mysterious figure. Madam Zostra approaches the stage where Tink and Azul are sitting quietly, feet dangling over the edge.

NICK (as Zostra): The show opens in three days. Hopefully we'll have better luck tomorrow.

AARON (as Azul): Yeah, I mean, how long could this possibly take? I think Tink is pretty good at this. Tink, how long does it take to solve a case? Is it like one or two hours, maybe three hours? We should be done soon, right?

HUDSON (as Tink): You know, it can take anywhere from 30 seconds if they just decide to reveal everything very quickly about themselves...

AARON (as Azul): Oh great. Nice.

HUDSON (as Tink): ...or it can take all the way up to the last minute before the show goes on.

AARON (as Azul): Whaaat? That's crazy. Ugh, alright, well hey, if that's what it takes.

HUDSON (as Tink): Yep, yep, that could be what it takes. I mean, there's a range, and within that range we will solve the case.

AARON (as Azul): Got it.

NICK: [smiling] And that's where we're gonna end the episode.

ALL: Ba-naaa~!

Outro

LILIT: Thanks for listening to Tabletop Squadron. If you've enjoyed our show, please consider logging into iTunes, or wherever else you listen to podcasts, and giving us a review. Good reviews help new listeners find the show and decide if it's right for them. You can also support the show through our Patreon at Patreon.com/TabletopSquadron. We have all sorts of fun Patreon levels like Tarkin's Underwear Drawer which gives you access to our secret feed full of bloopers, fun extras, and more.

Azul is played by Aaron J. Amendola. He can be found on Twitter at [@ImAaronJ](https://twitter.com/ImAaronJ).

{EDIT: new handle, [@TurboHoodie](https://twitter.com/TurboHoodie)}

Tink is played by Hudson Jameson. He can be found on Twitter at [@HudsonJameson](https://twitter.com/HudsonJameson).

Our game master is Nick Robertson. He can be found on Twitter at [@alias58](https://twitter.com/alias58).

Our intro song is Space Jam by Pablo Ribot, and our outro song was performed by James Gunter.

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