

Tabletop Squadron Transcript – Season 2, Episode 7:
Baby Ghost

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Intro

NICK: Hi everyone, and welcome to Tabletop Squadron, a Star Wars: Edge of the Empire actual play podcast. I'm Nick, your game master. Every other Thursday, our story follows a thief, a bounty hunter, and a slicer as they hunt for galactic treasure, staying away from a bitter rival and growing closer together.

We wanna take a moment to thank everyone who turned out for Tabletop Squad Con this year. We had a blast, and it sounds like everyone else did too. Thank you so much for attending the various panels and hangouts. The recordings of all the public events are up on our Twitch page at twitch.tv/TabletopSquadron and will be moved to our YouTube channel as well in the coming weeks. It was really a great experience. Thanks everyone.

We have a new iTunes review this week. BeatsFoDays, thank you for leaving us a five-star review and your kind words about the show. We also have a new patron. Kole Ceridwen, thank you so much for helping us to keep in the skies. Tink keeps handing us these complicated ciphers to solve. They're either the secret to a hidden treasure or they're where he last put the popsicles. Do you mind taking a look at them and trying to get to the bottom of it?

Music credit and content warnings are available in the show notes this week.

So now, let's get into the episode.

##

NICK: Hello! Welcome to Tabletop Squadron, Episode 7. I'm your host and game master, Nick. Welcome back to this glorious fun-times adventure. Let's everybody go around the table and everybody say who you are and who you are playing today, and if you spent any experience from the last time that we played go ahead and say what you spent that on, starting with Lilit.

LILIT: Hello. I'm Hudson, and I will be playing Tink, a Gigoran slicer.

CAMERON: [laughs]

NICK: Oh, we haven't done that bit in a while.

[laughter]

HUDSON: Ah-ha! Cha-cha-cha-cha.

LILIT: I am Lilit, and I will be playing Xianna'fan, a Twi'lek smuggler, and I did not spend any points because I am saving them for something special.

NICK: Something special. Of course, something special being the box on the talent tree that says once per game you can pull a magic wand out of your pocket that knows prestidigitation.

LILIT: Yes, or maybe a new talent tree.

NICK: Ah, that can't be it. Up next we've got Hudson.

HUDSON: Hi. I'm James Earl Jones, and I'm playing a velociraptor.

[laughter]

HUDSON: I'm Tink, and I'm playing a Gigoran slicer, and I have—

CAMERON: I'm Tink, and I'm playing Hudson.

HUDSON: [laughs] Oh wait! I messed up that one. Alright, hold on. Who am I? I am Hudson, and I am playing Tink, a Gigoran slicer.

NICK: Oh gosh. It's fun, because the first one was on purpose and the second one wasn't.

CAMERON: [laughs]

HUDSON: It wasn't.

NICK: Great. Did you spend any experience, James Earl Jones?

HUDSON: No dog, that's a no from me.

NICK: Okay great. Last but not least, we have Cameron.

CAMERON: Hello! I am Cameron, and I am playing Karma Nailo, the Nautolan bounty hunter. I did spend some experience points.

NICK: Interesting!

CAMERON: I know~ I bought the Toughened talent on my marauder tree to get 2 additional things added to my wound threshold.

NICK: Oh wow, so you're getting pretty toughened, huh?

CAMERON: Yes. It felt important and useful.

NICK: Interesting. Well great. Good job. Now, before we get into the actual game, let's do the Destiny Roll~!

HUDSON: [like a ghost] Woo~

CAMERON: [laughing] Oh shit, I just threw my dice across my desk.

NICK: [laughs]

CAMERON: Into the dice tray. One dark side.

HUDSON: One dark side.

LILIT: Two light side.

NICK: Agh...

CAMERON: Yay Lilit.

NICK: I was so excited. So we have two light side, two dark side?

CAMERON: Yup.

NICK: Wonderful. So, we'll go ahead and jump into it.

[heavy techno music begins]

We open on the tumbling of dice as Tink throws the chance cubes in this defining game of Rancor Roundup. How the dice fall will determine if the crew will be able to scrape together the entry fee for the volleyball tournament for the main prize of some hooch to potentially be used for Mandalore cocktails to start a riot to break your employer out of the Kajim Regional Incarceration Facility. [inhales] My, what a tangled web we weave.

Tink, this version of gambling is a Skulduggery check at hard difficulty. We see the dice freeze in the air as we zoom out on this open field where you all are playing. Did you do anything, Hudson, to prepare for this roll? Did you try to cheat or learn the rules or anything in like the 30 seconds?

HUDSON: I didn't try to learn the rules, however I did blow on the dice, wink both my eyes, and that's all I did.

NICK: Roll me a Force die, please, for appealing to luck.

HUDSON: Two light side.

NICK: Two light side. Go ahead and add two blue dice to your Skulduggery check.

HUDSON: [gasps] Yay.

LILIT: Ooh~

NICK: Don't roll that yet. Xianna, you already know this game and you're an old hand at it. You already know from previous times that this is a game that's fairly easy to cheat at or rig. Did you do anything to try to help Tink in this situation?

LILIT: Oh yes, I definitely tried to do some setup to help him win.

[techno music ends]

NICK: And what would that consist of?

LILIT: Um...

HUDSON: You greased the dice.

[laughter]

LILIT: Maybe greasing the dice on one side that is the opposite side of what should land upwards, because maybe that side will be more sticky and more likely to stick to the ground so it won't roll as far.

NICK: Gross. Okay.

[laughter]

LILIT: I don't think this would work in real life, but maybe in Star Wars.

NICK: It's special magic grease. Whatever. Xianna, you have grease from somewhere.

LILIT: It's grease from inside the Funyun bag. They're fried. They're greasy.

CAMERON: [chuckles]

NICK: Okay. it's Spunyun grease is the way you rig the dice. Make me a Skulduggery check. This one's gonna be hard, with three black dice, because you're doing this with no time, with improvised tools, while an entire group of people are watching you.

LILIT: Okay, but I do have Convincing Demeanor, so I can remove one of the black dice.

NICK: Okay.

LILIT: I have one success and one advantage.

NICK: Dagnabbit. Okay.

HUDSON: Wow.

NICK: You're really good at Skulduggery is the thing. Alright, so with a success and an advantage I'll give two more blue dice to Tink's gambling roll.

HUDSON: Woo!

NICK: You'll have four total.

HUDSON: Heh, I have a triumph with a success, two additional successes, and an advantage.

CAMERON: Holy shit.

NICK: Wow.

HUDSON: I Kamehameha and blow them away.

NICK: So the thing is you don't just win, something highly improbable happens that's a big benefit to you. So, the way that you bet was going to get you enough money and Spunyuns to be able to enter this tournament. You are gonna be able to take that, deposit it, and be ready to go for this volleyball thing the next day. What else do you want to happen there?

HUDSON: Could I have put my bet down and somehow made some kind of indication that I wanted to do a Tatoonine parlay and I didn't know what that was, but I was like sure?

CAMERON: [laughs]

NICK: Yeah, you've done a Tatoonine parlay. So, a Tatoonine parlay is you bet not only on your own roll but that the person who is gonna roll after you was also going to have a certain outcome.

HUDSON: Yes.

LILIT: You know what? It makes sense that a Tatoonine parlay is that two people win, because they have two suns.

NICK & HUDSON: Ohh.

CAMERON: Yeah.

LILIT: So I guess you're betting that you will win the game but someone else will tie with you for the win.

NICK: There we go.

HUDSON: Yes, which is an incredibly rare bet.

CAMERON: Yeah.

NICK: Yeah, like you had to get three identical rolls, and you did it by doing the right shoulder touch and then putting your bet in a certain spot, and then you weren't thinking about it while they were getting set up but you drew a circle around your bet, and all of that means you did a Tatoonine parlay.

HUDSON: [laughs]

NICK: "Why's everyone looking at me like I don't know what I'm doing? I'm just throwing the dice. What's the big deal?"

LILIT: [laughs]

NICK: And everyone's like oh my gosh, what? Okay, okay...

HUDSON: [laughs]

LILIT: Why does Xianna want me to go second now?

CAMERON: Turned around, threw the dice over his shoulder to do the roll.

NICK: Yeah, but all that combines to... We fast forward back to you throwing the dice. Your bet is placed separately. Everyone is rolling their eyes at this new guy to the prison yard just basically making a called shot here. You throw the dice and they bounce and skid. There's no roll, they just go [scratchy skidding noise] across, and they tumble once and then stick back to the same spot, and you get a blue and two reds which is not terrible odds but shows oh hey, you won the throw. Then, you're getting ready to throw again, because everyone cheers, and they say no-no, you did a Tatooine parlay, now it's the next person.

CAMERON: [laughs]

NICK: That Rodian from before comes up and grabs the dice, and rolls them, and sees that his hand is slightly sticky but doesn't say anything. He just moves his bet to a different square. You can see he's backing up the Tatooine parlay and throws and lands on two blues and a red, and everyone loses their minds.

HUDSON: [laughs]

NICK: To the point where you can see the automated turrets in the guard towers all point towards you because they think that maybe a riot is going to happen. The Rodian quickly goes and picks up the dice and wipes them on his jumpsuit and then hands them to you, Tink.

NICK (as Rodian): Well, it seems like you've won. I'm not going to say how lucky you would need to be for that to happen, but you play a good game of Rancor Roundup.

HUDSON (as Tink): You know, people think it's luck but it's actually all skill. That's what you don't understand.

NICK (as Rodian): No, I understand quite clearly the skill involved in this roll.

[laughter]

NICK: He turns and looks at Xianna who's very obviously whistling and kicking the dust and not making eye contact with anyone. [laughs]

LILIT: Xianna does a little wave and her fingertips are bright red-orange from the flaming hot Spunyuns dust.

NICK: [laughs] Oh my gosh.

HUDSON (as Tink): Xianna!

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes?

HUDSON (as Tink): Should we go double-or-nothing?

LILIT (as Xianna): No.

HUDSON (as Tink): Everything on the table!

LILIT (as Xianna): No, do not go double-or-nothing.

HUDSON (as Tink): Okay.

LILIT (as Xianna): Now is not the time for that.

NICK: You say that and you see that a bunch of people are grumbling and throwing credits in the middle and you have eight bags of Spunyuns and 1,000 Credits.

HUDSON: [laughs]

NICK (as Rodian): Actually, I think you should go double-or-nothing, Tink. You've got a hot hand.

HUDSON: [laughs]

LILIT (as Xianna): No, no Tink, do not. You know me. Usually I would be all about telling you to make the double-or-nothing bet.

NICK (as Rodian): Xianna, you are not allowed to interrupt the gambler. I made the Tatooine parlay roll, and now the dice are back to Tink. He can choose to walk away, but look how much you've already won. Imagine double that, Tink.

HUDSON (as Tink): Whoa...

CAMERON: I think at this point Karma walks over.

CAMERON (as Karma): hey Tink, come here.

NICK: [laughs]

HUDSON (as Tink): If I have a hot hand, that means I need to cool it off, and if I need to cool it off... because if it's too hot it'll melt this scenario—yeah, no, I'm not gonna do it. I'm not gonna do it.

LILIT (as Xianna): We're gonna cool—

CAMERON: [laughs]

NICK: So, Karma, you were attracted by the cheering and you walk up as this Rodian is trying to pressure Tink into doubling. He says no, no, I'm not going to do that, and you're all standing there with the Rodian looking like there's still a chance.

CAMERON: Karma gives a disapproving mom look to the Rodian.

NICK: Who doesn't leave, but stops trying to peer pressure Tink, so Tink you have karma and Xianna and the Rodian all staring at you.

CAMERON: This isn't the same Rodian that I threw a cutting board at, is it?

NICK: Yeah, it is.

CAMERON: Oh, it is?

NICK: Yeah.

CAMERON: Oh, intensify the mom look then. [laughs]

NICK: Yeah. This is the one that tried to attack Tadzi because Tadzi cheated. He's been very busy.

CAMERON: Cross arms. Very disappointed look.

NICK: Yeah.

HUDSON (as Tink): A hot hand, and hmm...

LILIT (as Xianna): No Tink, do not do it.

HUDSON (as Tink): I need to cool my hand.

LILIT (as Xianna): No. No. The last time I did a double-or-nothing that is how I got one of my tattoos.

HUDSON (as Tink): Ooh.

LILIT (as Xianna): Doing double-or-nothing will lead you down a dark path, Tink.

HUDSON (as Tink): But sometimes you have to go through the dark path to get to the light.

CAMERON (as Karma): That didn't get you two of your tattoos?

LILIT (as Xianna): You would think that.

[laughter]

LILIT (as Xianna): But...

HUDSON (as Tink): No, the other one just says double-or-nothing and it has nothing to do with a bet.

LILIT (as Xianna): No, that is not the one I am talking about.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh. [laughs]

LILIT (as Xianna): I say you have to go through the dark path to get to the fun shit.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh.

LILIT (as Xianna): Not to the light. That is a different way.

HUDSON (as Tink): So you're saying I should go double-or-nothing?

CAMERON (as Karma): But—No... no.

LILIT (as Xianna): No, no-no-no, because we don't need to do the fun shit right now.

HUDSON (as Tink): Okay.

CAMERON (as Karma): Is that your winnings, Tink?

CAMERON: Karma points to the pile of Spunyuns and credits.

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

LILIT (as Xianna): Well so the Spunyuns will be mine.

CAMERON (as Karma): Let's just go.

HUDSON (as Tink): Okay. Alright. I guess I'll go. The thing is with this hot hand though, as long as I do this one trick...

HUDSON: And then I do the hand jive, and I say:

HUDSON (as Tink): ...I'm saving it for later.

NICK (as Rodian): Alright, well now that you're ludicrously wealthy by our terms you are welcome back any time. Just do me a favor, don't bring the purple one with you next time, Tink.

HUDSON (as Tink): No promises. You want this hot hand again, don't you?

CAMERON (as Karma): That sounds inappropriate.

NICK (as Rodian): It does sound kind of inappropriate. I was trying to decide whether I was cool with that or not.

[laughter]

NICK (as Rodian): I think I am.

LILIT (as Xianna): You can't call yourself that. Besides, I already have a friend who is in this prison whose nickname is Hot Hands.

[laughter]

LILIT (as Xianna): You can't both have the same name. That's not a thing that happens.

HUDSON (as Tink): Let me guess, they were trying to get a pie out of the oven and then they touched it without heating pads and now their hands were hot, and that's why you call them Hot Hands?

LILIT (as Xianna): Not too far off, but...

[laughter]

LILIT (as Xianna): It was a meat pie.

HUDSON (as Tink): Ahh.

LILIT (as Xianna): Which also had some fun connotations later on. They are also just good at gambling.

HUDSON (as Tink): Okay, so they just happen to be good at gambling on top of mishandling pies. Okay.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes, meat pies specifically.

NICK: So, you all are having this conversation standing over your winnings in a circle of gamblers who were all cheering but at this point are just staring at you with the distinct expression of kids waiting for you to get off the basketball court so that they can play.

HUDSON (as Tink): Alright. Let's take our winnings and get out of here.

LILIT: Xianna starts piling all of the Spunyun bags into the jumpsuit and briefly forgets that she does not have as many pockets as she is used to, and so she just has this big bulge, just stuffing them in her top, and it's just bulging with Spunyun bags.

[laughter]

LILIT (as Xianna): Okie fine, we will leave now. I can see we are not wanted anymore.

NICK: And you all walk away from the group of gamblers who look a little disappointed. You now have more than enough credits and Spunyuns to enter the volleyball tournament if you so choose. You see HK coming out of one of the side buildings wiping his hands on the door and then walk back towards the fence, so he is available if you need to drop your entry fee off with him.

LILIT: Xianna goes up to him and starts handing him the three Spunyun bags.

LILIT (as Xianna): Ooh, that is a good idea of wiping your bloody hands on the door, because they will think a baby did the murder.

CAMERON: [snickers]

HUDSON: [laughs]

LILIT (as Xianna): Because the handprints are so small. They will be like oh no, a baby got in here and murdered someone. We must find the baby!

NICK: Hey, uh, can you roll me a Ranged attack, Heavy, please, Cameron?

HUDSON: [laughs]

CAMERON: Sure?

NICK: Two greens and two yellows.

[peaceful twinkling music begins]

LILIT (as Xianna): They will have to call in some sort of paranormal expert, because they will be convinced some sort of angry child ghost is here haunting the place.

NICK: [smiling] it's an easy check, and flip me a dark side point to upgrade one of those.

HUDSON: [laughs]

CAMERON: Okay. Is HK aiming?

NICK: Yes, HK spends a maneuver to aim. HK is going to do Targeted Blow to add Agility damage to this hit.

LILIT (as Xianna): They are going to have to bring in those things that monitor the ESP waves or whatever to try to communicate to this baby ghost!

[laughter]

NICK: Add another blue die for Quick Strike because Xianna hasn't gone yet.

LILIT: [tearful from laughing] Oh, I'm gonna Dodge.

NICK: Okay.

[laughter]

LILIT: Xianna knows what's happening but she's going on.

NICK: I'm also using Precise Aim so that I will take a point of strain to reduce the target's Melee Defense by 1. You don't have any, but I'm doing it anyway.

CAMERON: Okay. Oh no... Five successes, two advantages?

NICK: [laughs] Okay. Would you roll me a crit, please?

LILIT (as Xianna): Some douchebag in an Ed Hardy shirt is going to have to run around this place trying to talk to this baby ghost.

CAMERON: Crit is a 54.

NICK: Plus two for Lethal Blow, so 74. What does 74 do?

LILIT (as Xianna): And any time the wind blows in a weird way he is going to think it is a sign from the ghost!

CAMERON: It's a 74...

LILIT: Heh, 74 is Hamstrung: Lose free maneuver until end of encounter, so it does nothing!

NICK: So, how many successes did I have?

CAMERON: Five.

NICK: Five? So that's 14 stun damage coming at you.

CAMERON: [laughs]

LILIT: Does stun go through strain?

NICK & CAMERON: Yeah.

LILIT: That puts me at 15, so Xianna passes out.

[laughter]

LILIT (as Xianna): They are going to have to put a plaque on the wall about how this place is haunted—
AHH!

[laughter]

NICK: So, Tink and Karma who were a few steps behind Xianna, you hear this conversation.

[peaceful twinkling music ends]

You see HK cock his head. You see him pull his stun rifle up. You see him charge it. You see him aim. You see him push it through the chain link fence so that it's resting on Xianna's collarbone, and you see him wait... and then he just shoots in mid-sentence, and Xianna goes flying backward in a cloud of Spunyns and credits and lands several meters away, just unconscious, just like a bag of loose {jorgan} fruit, just [makes thudding impact noises].

CAMERON: [laughs] What?!

LILIT: Like a small antique ragdoll that may or may not be haunted by a baby ghost.

[laughter]

CAMERON: Indeed.

NICK: So, the two of you walk up to that case as HK says...

NICK (as HK): Supposition: Really thought that would be more satisfying than it was.

NICK: ...and puts his stun blaster back at his side.

CAMERON: Karma gives HK a look as she's walking over to Xianna's now prone [dramatic bass noise] body and starts gathering up the credits and stuff so they're not just laying in a pile.

CAMERON (as Karma): Was that really necessary, HK? Like, I understand, from what I heard the tail end was pretty freaking insulting, but really?

NICK (as HK): Yes, I think it was necessary. I really do.

CAMERON (as Karma): Alright.

NICK (as HK): I just wish I had gotten some more joy out of it. Oh, hi Tink.

HUDSON (as Tink): [uneasy] Oh, hi... Is she gonna be okay?

NICK (as HK): Maybe.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh, alright.

NICK (as HK): What do you think about the size of my hands, Tink?

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh... Oh wow, they're great. You know, they're just the right size, and you know, actually... with smaller hands you can fit them into tiny places and that's very good, like if you have some change that falls down a little hole.

NICK (as HK): Are you saying my hands are small, Tink?

HUDSON (as Tink): No! I'm saying, they're not small, they're smaller than my hands is what I was saying.

CAMERON: [snickers]

NICK: You hear the sound of a hard drive spinning and resetting, that clicky whir, and HK says:

NICK (as HK): Equivocation acknowledged.

HUDSON (as Tink): [heavy sigh of relief]

NICK (as HK): So are you all joining the tournament? Do you have the pay? I have the Spunyuns that Xianna handed me, but the credits appear to have flown outward in some sort of freak stun blast accident.

CAMERON (as Karma): Yeah, strange that.

CAMERON: Karma walks back over to HK having picked up all of the credits and hands him the 600 that we need for the entry.

NICK (as HK): Wonderful. Thank you so much. I will add you to the team. Make sure you bring six combatants—I mean, six players for tomorrow, because if you don't have a full team you'll be at an extreme disadvantage.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh yeah, we need... Wait.

CAMERON (as Karma): We need to make three new friends. [laughs]

HUDSON (as Tink): Ooh, we need to make three new friends fast. Hmm.

CAMERON (as Karma): Hey. Hey-hey-hey. We have each made at least one friend, right?

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah, I guess. I mean, like, I'm friends with most people, but yeah, me and Ziller are buddies.

CAMERON (as Karma): Ooh, okay. We can use him as bait if he joins the team, that's fine, and maybe if we're on the same team he won't take a shot at me again. Uh... Blue seemed cool, I liked Blue, we can ask them. We could ask Tadzi.

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah.

CAMERON (as Karma): I don't know if they're already on a team, but they're friends with Xianna, so... each of us having one friend, that does make six.

NICK: A coil of smoke rises from Xianna's chest from where she is unconscious on the ground.

CAMERON (as Karma): Okay, well maybe I'll ask Tadzi. I did save her with a cutting board earlier.

NICK: The bell rings for you all to go back to your cells.

HUDSON (as Tink): Someone should pick her up, right?

CAMERON (as Karma): Yeah, I got her.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh, okay.

[laughter]

CAMERON: I'mma get Xianna.

LILIT (as Xianna): [dazed] They are going to have to put a note on our Yelp page for the prison that it is haunted...

[laughter]

LILIT (as Xianna): People are going to start requesting the more haunted cells so that they can see the baby ghost. Did somebody get my Spunyuns?

CAMERON (as Karma): Yes, we got your Spunyuns.

HUDSON (as Tink): We got your Spunyuns.

LILIT (as Xianna): Thank you...

HUDSON (as Tink): You go sleep now.

LILIT (as Xianna): [weakly] Okie.

NICK: As you walk back across the prison yard, and we see HK surreptitiously tuck the Spunyuns and credits into his chest cavity, but then they just fall to the ground because HK isn't wearing clothes and he has to pick them up and then carry them back, and the audience sees HK walking into one of the guard shacks and saying...

NICK (as HK): You know, I feel like I have a lot of pent up aggression right now. ... Hey, are you my next partner for patrol?! Come here for a second.

NICK: ...and we cut away. So, we get a swipe cut to the next day of the south cell block being funneled into the mess hall for breakfast. People are waiting in line. We see different prisoners serving breakfast to other ones and the normal scramble for people to join tables. We see Tink and Xianna and karma standing there with their trays with some nice oatmeal slop sitting on them, standing and overlooking the cafeteria. Xianna, you have a raging headache and there is a scorch mark on your jumpsuit.

HUDSON: [laughs]

HUDSON (as Tink): How are you feeling, Xianna?

LILIT (as Xianna): I do not feel great, but this is not the worst I have ever felt, so I think it was worth it.

CAMERON (as Karma): Gotta look on the positive side, I guess. Are you gonna be okay to play volleyball?

LILIT (as Xianna): When are we playing the volleyball?

CAMERON (as Karma): This afternoon.

LILIT (as Xianna): Tink, you are not going to drink your caf, are you?

HUDSON (as Tink): Nah.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okie. I will drink my caf and Tink's caf and I will steal some more caf from somebody else, and then I will be okay.

CAMERON (as Karma): Alright, sounds like a plan. Do we want to split up and go convince our new friends, or old friends in the case of Tadzi, to join this, uh, sure to succeed volleyball venture?

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh, we need a team name, because otherwise that's gonna be the main reason people join is a cool team name.

CAMERON (as Karma): Hmm.

LILIT (as Xianna): The Ball Handlers.

HUDSON (as Tink): Ball Handlers...

CAMERON (as Karma): [laughs] The Spunyun~

HUDSON (as Tink): [laughs]

CAMERON (as Karma): I don't think they have enough underscores and Xs in them.

HUDSON (as Tink): Yes.

LILIT (as Xianna): What about Ball Slappers?

HUDSON (as Tink): Ball Slappers. Doable. I could do Ball Slappers.

LILIT (as Xianna): I think it is a good one.

HUDSON (as Tink): So we need to build off of our previous volleyball experience that one time we won the tournament. Y'all remember that? That was a good time.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes.

CAMERON (as Karma): Mm-hmm.

LILIT (as Xianna): And what do you mean by build off of it?

HUDSON (as Tink): I mean, y'all have been practicing since then, right? Because I've been doing—

LILIT (as Xianna): No.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh. Ever since then, before I go to bed, I do some jumping exercises like I'm gonna spike the ball. That's the only exercise I do, though.

CAMERON (as Karma): I've kept working out but not specifically with the goal of volleyball success in mind.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes, I have been doing various things but none of them related to volleyball.

HUDSON (as Tink): Most times in your life you always need to be prepared for volleyball.

CAMERON (as Karma): Is that true though?

LILIT (as Xianna): I'm pretty sure the only time I ever played volleyball was the time at the resort.

HUDSON (as Tink): But now you're playing it a second time, so should have been more prepared.

CAMERON (as Karma): To be fair though, this one does sound a fair bit more like murder than volleyball.

LILIT (as Xianna): Ooh! In that case, I have been practicing.

CAMERON (as Karma): I do feel more prepared for that side of it.

HUDSON (as Tink): You have been practicing, okay.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes.

HUDSON (as Tink): And actually, oh, I didn't even mention.

HUDSON: I pull out the rules, just scribbled down on paper.

CAMERON: Oh gosh.

HUDSON (as Tink): Here's the rules as they were given to me.

HUDSON: And then there's like a [makes a rewind noise] and it flashes back to someone explaining the rules to me that sounds like Nick.

[laughter]

NICK: The piece of paper is the title page to a volleyball rulebook that says "like this, but also violent," is what the actual paper says.

HUDSON: [laughs]

NICK: So, the rules for volleyball are as follows. You will have to assign each member of your team some responsibilities. A Defensive Specialist will roll Leadership which will give dice to the rest of the team. There are three Blockers who will roll Athletics so that they can contribute to the main score, and two Setters who will roll Agility. You will add all these successes up, and if it beats the number of the other team then you win. If they don't, you lose.

Here's the other thing, though. For each game, when you're making that roll, you can also decide to be violent, and basically you have to balance how sneaky you want to be to be violent versus how much damage you want to be able to do. You can use weapons if you find weapons, or you can use your fists. The other team will also be trying to violent back at you, and that will be going against the Blockers, so if you're a Blocker every game you might start running the risk of falling unconscious.

If you get caught being violent with just your fists you have to sit out the rest of the game and your roll won't count. If you get caught being violent with weapons you get sent to solitary and you're out of the tournament. Same goes to them. That's pretty much it. We'll talk about how to build your dice pool for violence and stuff when we're actually playing, but basically you are playing volleyball but also fighting.

HUDSON: Ah.

HUDSON (as Tink): So this is the rules. It's just like what we were doing... but violence.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okie.

CAMERON (as Karma): Yeah, that's kinda what it sounded like.

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah.

NICK: So yeah, I think what y'all need to accomplish from breakfast is to recruit the other three team members.

CAMERON (as Karma): Alright, we have a team name. Are we prepared, Tink? Can we go get new players now?

HUDSON (as Tink): Uh... Do we need to practice on each other with the violence? No, we don't need to practice violence.

CAMERON (as Karma): No. No, I think that's fine.

LILIT (as Xianna): No. I'm going to go ask Tadzi. Okie.

CAMERON (as Karma): Alright, I'mma go ask Blue.

HUDSON (as Tink): Okie. I'm gonna go ask Ziller.

CAMERON (as Karma): Alright. Ready? Break!

LILIT (as Xianna): Ready, go!

HUDSON (as Tink): B-Break—Oh, you did it already. Okay, bre—Oh...

NICK: Tink is standing there. The other two are gone already. Let's start with Xianna and Tadzi, because Tadzi is fairly close by. They are sitting and just eating their gloppy oatmeal as Xianna approaches, and they gesture for you to have a seat.

LILIT (as Xianna): Tadzi~ Ello.

NICK (as Tadzi): Hi.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okie. I have a proposition for you.

NICK (as Tadzi): I'm listening...

NICK: You see Tadzi slide a sharpened piece of tray out from under their tray and look around eagerly.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okie, possibly the right direction. We somehow are involved in a volleyball tournament. I do not know why or when. I guess this afternoon. I don't know why, but we do have a team name, and the team name is the Ball Slappers.

NICK (as Tadzi): [laughs]

LILIT (as Xianna): So we have that going for us.

NICK (as Tadzi): That's a pretty good team name.

LILIT (as Xianna): Do you want to be on our team?

NICK (as Tadzi): I don't know if I can risk getting sent back to the clinic or solitary. Have you seen the way they play volleyball here? It's not probably what you're picturing.

LILIT (as Xianna): I am picturing a lot of murder.

NICK (as Tadzi): Okay, then you're right on.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes, which is why I said you had a good idea when you brought the shiv out.

NICK (as Tadzi): So that's great, and you know we go way back, but... why? Why should I help you with this one?

LILIT (as Xianna): Oh, okay, good question. Tink~?

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah?!

LILIT (as Xianna): Tink! Tink!

HUDSON (as Tink): yes?

LILIT: Xianna's just shouting this across a few tables.

LILIT (as Xianna): What is the prize for the volleyball game?

HUDSON (as Tink): I was going to say the power of friendship being strengthened.

CAMERON (as Karma): [grunts]

LILIT (as Xianna): No, that is... I don't like that.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh. Credits then? I don't know.

LILIT (as Xianna): Karma!

[chuckling]

LILIT (as Xianna): Karma, what do we win?!

CAMERON (as Karma): The prison hooch!

LILIT (as Xianna): Oh, okie! Okay, so we are winning prison hooch apparently and not credits, but I can give you credits, because Tink won some today, and I don't think he is going to use them.

NICK (as Tadzi): I mean, he might. He seems like a smart boy. We'll work out the details later. I'm sure you'll also win credits. The prison hooch is just to sweeten the pot. If you're willing to split some of the prize with me, then yeah, you've got yourself a volleyball warrior... I guess. I've never really gotten involved because I have very little interest in being stabbed.

LILIT (as Xianna): Understandable. It is not fun to be stabbed.

NICK (as Tadzi): Great. Now do you know the rules to volleyball? Because I super don't.

LILIT (as Xianna): I have played volleyball one time before, and I do not remember any of the rules, but I think Tink knows the rules.

NICK: [laughs] And we'll cut away from that to Tink. Tink, you're trying to find Ziller?

HUDSON: Yeah, I look around for Ziller.

NICK: Ziller is sitting in the back by himself. It's a full-size table, just no one's sitting near him. He's got his nice clover fur, and he waves at you. As you were walking Xianna was shouting at you, so as you walk further away Ziller says:

NICK (as Ziller): Oh brother, good to see you. You're trying to play volleyball, huh?

HUDSON (as Tink): Yes, and do I have a proposition for you. What if we could take our friendship levels and take them so high up in percentages that they would be out of this world and the next?

NICK (as Ziller): I don't like how rehearsed that sounded. I thought we had a relationship.

CAMERON: [laughs]

HUDSON (as Tink): No, no, that's what I'm saying. We would strengthen our relationship. I'm just trying to be a sales person here.

NICK (as Ziller): Well, you succeeded on a Charm check last time we talked—

[laughter]

NICK (as Ziller): —so there is a basic relationship already established, against all logic, considering that you killed my friends.

HUDSON (as Tink): Here's my proposition. What if you could win some of that good old prison hooch and maybe even some credits by joining a volleyball team with me and my pals?

NICK (as Ziller): Okay, so here's the thing, brother.

NICK: He leans in, and you have to lean across the table to hear him, because he's talking fairly quiet. He actually pulls his translator off so that it's just in Gigoran.

NICK (as Ziller): I don't know if you remember this, but you recently talked to the warden about how I'm helping him with information, and one of the trades there is that I can get prison hooch whenever I want, and I don't really need money... because I'm working my way out of here, so I don't really need any of that.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh... Well what about strengthening our friendship?

NICK (as Ziller): That is something I would presumably value having entangled you in this very confusing set of social interactions that'll result in the death of a popular member of the prison. So here's what we'll do. I will take some of your credits and prison hooch, and also, we move on killing Jeyb tonight.

HUDSON (as Tink): Tonight. I mean, why wait? Why not this second?

NICK (as Ziller): Because we're locked down in the mess hall and there's no way to get to Jeyb right now.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh right, right, right. I guess it would be more sneaky at night. That's when the darkness happens.

[laughter]

NICK (as Ziller): That is indeed when the darkness happens.

HUDSON (as Tink): Alright, so we move on Jeyb tonight.

HUDSON: I say that a little too loudly.

NICK: Several people look up, look at you, and then change tables. Ziller rolls his beady eyes and pulls his mask down and says, back in Basic because the translator's running:

NICK (as Ziller): Now if you could keep that quiet so that we don't get murdered, that would be ideal, brother.

HUDSON (as Tink): That's right, Ziller!

HUDSON: I say really loudly.

HUDSON (as Tink): We're going to help Jeyb move sometime! That's what I was talking about.

NICK (as Ziller): Saved it.

CAMERON: [laughs]

HUDSON (as Tink): Yes, I knew it.

NICK (as Ziller): So are you in?

HUDSON (as Tink): What about urine?

NICK (as Ziller): Fuck you.

[laughter]

NICK: So then we come to Karma. Karma, you're looking for Blue?

CAMERON: Yup.

NICK: Blue is sitting at a table with several other of the big body builders that you saw before. She waves at you as you come around a corner in the mess hall and see her. You see her shove another really large prisoner off the table. He catches himself, sees you, looks at Blue, shrugs, and walks away, and you have an open spot to sit.

CAMERON (as Karma): Aw, thanks Blue.

NICK (as Blue): Oh, you're quite welcome.

CAMERON (as Karma): How are you doing on this fine whatever the day it is of the week?

NICK (as Blue): What is even time at this point?

CAMERON (as Karma): Solitary kind of messed up my whole timespan of how long I've been here, so... yeah, right there with you. I have no idea.

NICK (as Blue): When you are inside most of the time and can't really go anywhere anyway, what does the time even really matter? It's like, just trying to get through, you know?

CAMERON (as Karma): Yes.

NICK (as Blue): I hope everybody in a similar situation is doing well.

CAMERON (as Karma): Yeah, me too.

NICK: [laughs]

CAMERON (as Karma): Anyway. Speaking of getting outside, though, are you planning on participating in this volleyball tournament that I have heard about?

NICK (as Blue): I haven't played since the last time when my entire team died except for me. I did win, though.

CAMERON (as Karma): Would you be down to play again?

NICK (as Blue): For you? The person who started three riots in less than 24 hours?

CAMERON: [giggles]

NICK (as Blue): Absolutely.

CAMERON (as Karma): Fantastic! Could you give me just like a description of the makeup of your last team? Not that I'm feeling insecure about any of the team members that we already have, but uh, if they all died that would be beneficial to know more of their skills and stuff and how we can avoid that this time.

NICK (as Blue): The last team was put together by a group of newcomers to the prison who thought they could use the prize to establish some sort of, I don't know, escape plan maybe.

CAMERON (as Karma): Huh. That doesn't sound similar at all. That's weird.

NICK (as Blue): there was one that was sort of a weapon specialist ex-bounty hunter who had recently been arrested. Another was really stealthy, a thief, quick nimble fingers. There was a really big Wookiee that looked like more of a melee combatant with a friend of his that was very similar, and then there was another quick person that seemed more agile with blades, had a lot of shivs handy. Then of course there was me, the strength.

CAMERON (as Karma): Yep, I figured you were filling the strength roll. Yeah, that team makeup doesn't sound concerning at all.

NICK (as Blue): Wonderful.

CAMERON: [laughs]

NICK (as Blue): Now of course we'll need to talk about my compensation.

CAMERON (as Karma): Indeed. The prize is credits and alcohol?

CAMERON: Right?

NICK (as Blue): If you give me half of the pot I'll contribute.

CAMERON: [long contemplative sigh]

NICK: You could make a Negotiation roll.

CAMERON: Yeah... [grumbles] I want to negotiate.

NICK: So you will get a blue die because you're already friends with Blue. That's kinda leftover from the last time where you convinced her to help.

CAMERON: Yay, blue die for Blue. Yeah, I don't think I have any altering talents for this situation.

NICK: Oh well. So it'll be an average difficulty. Depending on how successful you are you might be able to talk her down or you may have to commit to giving away a big chunk of the prize.

CAMERON: Yeah... I wanna flip a light side point though.

NICK: Okay.

CAMERON: Since we have three, to make me slightly more negotiaty. Okay, three successes, two threats.

NICK: Great. Any ideas for what the threats would be? Three successes, I think you're able to talk her down to like a serving of prison hooch.

CAMERON: Yeah.

CAMERON (as Karma): And then I'll be your spotter next time we're in the yard, too.

NICK (as Blue): I'm not thrilled with that. I had some plans for that hooch. I was gonna build my own empire in here. Herglics seem to be pretty successful at that.

CAMERON (as Karma): I had noticed that, actually.

NICK (as Blue): Yeah, it's interesting isn't it?

CAMERON (as Karma): Yeah.

NICK (as Blue): Strength, very handy. I will do it for a cup of hooch and 50 Credits, but you're not gonna get me at my full strength. I'm not going to put myself too at risk, because I do have myself to look after here.

CAMERON (as Karma): Well yeah, and I would feel awful if anything happened to you, so that sounds fair to me.

NICK: And we cut away to the late afternoon sun back on the prison yard as we see HK holding a volleyball that looks really weathered and worn, and parts of the skin is peeled off of it, and there's the glint of metal in it somewhere, and he's holding it up at the net. We see Karma and Xianna and Tink, and Ziller and Blue and Tadzi'texa, all lined up on one side.

NICK (as HK): Well, let's get this game of volleyball going, shall we?

NICK: There's a large crowd, and cheering, and music starts to play, and that's where we're gonna end the episode!

ALL: Ba-naaa~!

Outro

CAMERON: Thanks for listening to Tabletop Squadron. If you enjoyed our show, please consider leaving a review on your podcast listening app of choice. Reviews will help new listeners find the show, and every time we get one Nick lets the squad have a blue die.

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Xianna'fan is played by Lilit Penrod. They can be found on Twitter at @cheerio_buffet.

Tink is played by Hudson Jameson. He can be found on Twitter at @hudsonjameson.

Karma Nailo is played by me, Cameron Robertson. You can find me on Twitter at @midnightmusic13.

Our game master is Nick Robertson, and you can find him on Twitter at @alias58.

Our intro song is Space Jam by Pablo Ribot.

Additional music by James Gunter.

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