

Tabletop Squadron Transcript – Season 2, Episode 27:
Loose in Lessu

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Intro

LILIT: Hello, and welcome to Tabletop Squadron, a Star Wars: Edge of the Empire actual play podcast. 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.

If you're wondering why you've been hearing my voice in the intros for two weeks now, it is because Nick and I have switched editing roles. I will now be editing the main show and Nick will be editing our Patreon exclusive content.

Musical credits and content warnings are available in the show notes.

##

NICK: Hello! Welcome to Tabletop Squadron, Episode 27 of Season 2! I'm your host and game master, Nick, and I'm interested in telling you about Star Wars today. I hope that you are interested in this new and revolutionary topic, and we'll all learn something together. But before we go into my 45 minute informative speech, let's all go around the table and everybody say who you are and who you are playing today, starting with Hudson.

HUDSON: Hi. I'm 30 under 30 visional luminary Hudson Jameson.

CAMERON: giggles]

NICK: [chuckling] And who are you playing today, 30 under 30 visional luminary Hudson Jameson?

HUDSON: Well, as a visional luminary, I've chosen to perform as Tink, the Gigan slicer.

NICK: I do have to ask. Are you saying "visional?" Is that a word.

[Hudson presumably nods]

NICK: [laughing] Okay.

CAMERON: [laughs]

HUDSON: I did say visional. I'm sticking by it.

NICK: It's like a special kind of toilet. "I used the visional."

HUDSON: Yeah. [laughs]

LILIT: Yeah. It's a combination of visionary and visual.

CAMERON: Oh...

HUDSON: No, visionary and magical.

LILIT: Oh. I'm sorry, that was my mistake.

NICK: Next up, we've already heard their voice, we've got Lilit.

LILIT: Hello! I am Lilit, and I play Xianna'fan, a Twi'lek smuggler. Are you interested in becoming your own boss?

HUDSON: [gasps]

LILIT: Because Nick's little spiel at the beginning 100% sounded like the intro to some sort of MLM where someone that I knew from high school is gonna message me being like "hey, how's it doing? Do you wanna learn how to be your own boss while working from home?"

NICK: Boy do I!

LILIT: [laughs] Already do that, and I make a bad boss, because I constantly tell myself yes, you can take a break to get more coffee. I shouldn't, I should be a meaner boss.

NICK: Yeah. I've seen myself be a boss. I would rather not be held accountable to myself. That seems like a bad idea. Last but not least, we've got Cameron.

CAMERON: Hello. I am Cameron, and I am playing Karma Nailo, a Nautolan bounty hunter. I want to know, do you have a powerpoint presentation to go with your Star Wars talk, Nicholas?

NICK: The last time I had a powerpoint presentation everyone said it wasn't a good powerpoint presentation, so this is one of those ones where I stand up at a podium and have note cards and then, two note cards in, dramatically throw the pile across the room and turn a chair around to sit in it backwards.

CAMERON: Oh god. That's great. That's my favorite kind.

NICK: And say "we're just gonna talk off the cuff." Well, before we get to the recap, let's do the Destiny Roll~

CAMERON: [snickers] Two light side.

LILIT: Two light side.

HUDSON: [menacingly] One dark side.

[relaxing jizz begins]

NICK: When we last left off you had charged into the Song Bird Jizz Club, found that it was under attack by some sort of hostile takeover, rescued Keyna the jizz singer from her imminent demise, found out that she had manipulated you into fighting and killing the Kemslingers for her own revenge and that they had never stolen the Space Breaker which was the magical Force artifact you were hunting, and that she had it but it was stolen by some Tognath and that she had overheard that they were going to Lessu which seems to be their base of operations.

You kicked open a door, sang some Billy Joel lyrics, and shot a man in the face... [chuckles] and that's where the last episode ended.

LILIT: Sounds like us.

NICK: We open on a shot of the Afternoon Delight. Its mat black paintjob blends with the darkness of space except for the square of the unfinished hull, still graced with the name of the ship and a depiction of a pin-up girl. We zoom into the ship. The halls and the passageways are empty. The ship is oddly peaceful as we float through space... until we get to the holo theater. The crew is sitting in a circle around the holo projector in the middle of a conversation.

[relaxing jizz ends]

LILIT (as Xianna): They are called hard-boiled eggs because you boil them!

HUDSON (as Tink): Water makes things soft. They don't make things hard.

LILIT (as Xianna): It is the heat! It is the boiling.

HUDSON (as Tink): No-no-no, but water trumps heat. It's like an order of operations.

CAMERON (as Karma): Uh...

LILIT (as Xianna): That's not how that works, Tink. The reason the pasta gets soft is because it absorbs the water, but the eggs have a hard protective shell.

HUDSON (as Tink): No-no-no, there's a light above the stove and that's what makes the pasta soft?

CAMERON (as Karma): What? ... It's definitely the water.

LILIT (as Xianna): I thought it was the water.

HUDSON (as Tink): No-no-no, it's a combination, but it's definitely not the heat.

CAMERON (as Karma): You can make pasta in the dark, Tink.

HUDSON (as Tink): I have never done that. You know when you turn on the microwave and it's heating something up, the light comes on inside. Why do you think that happens? Because you wanna see your food?

CAMERON (as Karma): Yeah.

LILIT (as Xianna): But Tink, why do you think they are called boiled eggs? What do you think is happening there?

NICK (as HK): Chaotic Statement: Then how do you explain soft-boiled eggs?

HUDSON (as Tink): There we go.

LILIT (as Xianna): They are still boiled. It is because they're soft. The yolk inside is still soft where the hard-boiled eggs the yolk is hard, but it is still boiled.

HUDSON (as Tink): What magic are you doing in order to, like, make one soft and the other not soft?

CAMERON (as Karma): Using an egg timer?

LILIT (as Xianna): Setting a timer. Yes.

LILIT: Xianna holds up a little timer that is shaped like a small droid.

LILIT (as Xianna): See? It has it here. It is a little timer, and it's got the marks, and you can see this mark here says Soft and then this one says Medium and this one says Hard, because the amount of time.

HUDSON (as Tink): Okay, so we have hard-boiled, we have soft-boiled, now... when you make spring festival eggs, it's the color that you paint the eggs that determines the flavor, right?

CAMERON (as Karma): No, they all taste like eggs.

LILIT (as Xianna): No, unless you are doing some sort of pickled eggs, the color is just food dye.

HUDSON (as Tink): So you can combine pickles with eggs now, like a morphing.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes. You can make pickled eggs.

NICK (as HK): Tink, I'm afraid that you are getting your egg facts all scrambled.

CAMERON (as Karma): HK!

LILIT (as Xianna): Oh, that is a good one.

CAMERON (as Karma): Yes.

[gentle quirky music begins]

HUDSON (as Tink): Did HK do a pun?

LILIT (as Xianna): HK did a pun.

NICK (as HK): I don't know what you're talking about. I've never made a yolk in my life.

CAMERON (as Karma): [amused] Oh god. Did someone change his setting?

HUDSON (as Tink): Whoa...

NICK (as HK): Now that I've gotten started, they really do seem to be over-easy.

CAMERON (as Karma): [impressed and overwhelmed exhale]

LILIT (as Xianna): I don't know what to do with this new information.

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah, I'm kind of at a loss for words.

NICK (as HK): You are quite right. No one ever shells out for the humor module.

CAMERON (as Karma): [contented hum]

LILIT (as Xianna): Who broke HK? I will not be mad, I just want to know.

NICK (as HK): Are you suggesting that I've cracked up?

CAMERON (as Karma): Yes.

LILIT (as Xianna): Tink? What did you do to HK?

HUDSON (as Tink): I, um... Okay, so you know when there's those pop-up ads where you can add new things to your droids when you're browsing the Holonet?

CAMERON (as Karma): Oh no... What?

LILIT (as Xianna): You took a perfectly good droid and you've ruined him!

NICK (as HK): Hello. I see that you're writing a letter. Would you like some help with that?

CAMERON (as Karma): Ugh...

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh yeah, I got this Clippy plug-in. It's like an old, old, old-school thing.

CAMERON (as Karma): Why?!

LILIT (as Xianna): Ugh, Tink.

HUDSON (as Tink): I thought that HK could use some features...

LILIT (as Xianna): Okay, well HK, all of your puns were egg-cellent, but I feel like we are in this room to do something.

NICK (as HK): I don't get it.

CAMERON (as Karma): And you should really watch for those pop-up ads. They'll fry your hardware.

NICK (as HK): I got that one.

LILIT (as Xianna): Why were we here?

CAMERON (as Karma): Uh... because we—Where are we going? What are we doing? I don't know why specifically we chose this location and are sitting in a circle around the holo projector.

[quirky music ends]

LILIT (as Xianna): It just felt like we came in here to do something...

HUDSON (as Tink): So what are we doing here? We're looking for the, for the... glass dildo?

CAMERON (as Karma): Along with the rest of the things.

NICK (as HK): It was crystal, and also it's called the Space Breaker.

CAMERON (as Karma): I know you keep saying that, but it's the crystal dildo, HK.

HUDSON (as Tink): That reminds me of a movie that had a crystal dildo.

LILIT (as Xianna): Now is not the time. Ooh, I think we needed to discuss how we are going to Ryloth.

CAMERON (as Karma): Yes, because Keyna said that a Tognath stole the dildo and was going to Lessu?

LILIT (as Xianna): Yeah... uh-huh.

NICK (as HK): I am not familiar with Lessu.

LILIT (as Xianna): So, that is the capital city of Ryloth, and um... shit is on fire. Okay? It's just, um, things have been very weird on Ryloth for many, many years. First it was the Separatists, then it became the Empire, and um... there are lots of insurgent groups and rebellions and stuff, and it gets weird. There's lots of stormtroopers, and if somebody yells "grenade" you should get down.

HUDSON (as Tink): Now wouldn't you want to jump during a grenade being thrown so it goes under you and if it blows up you just go higher in the air?

CAMERON (as Karma): Um...

LILIT (as Xianna): That's not how it works, Tink.

NICK (as HK): Boss Man, I believe you have been physically hit with grenades in the past. I am surprised you do not understand the consequences.

HUDSON (as Tink): They've only made me grow more powerful, and I understand them better as time goes on.

CAMERON (as Karma): Have they?

NICK: The camera zooms in on Tink's robot leg.

NICK (as HK): Secondary user, Twinkle Toes, you seem familiar with Lessu. Have you been there before?

LILIT (as Xianna): HK, I thought we discussed this and that you weren't going to call me that name anymore.

NICK (as HK): If you are trying to make a spreadsheet to handle your finances, can I suggest this simple plug-in for 12.99?

LILIT (as Xianna): Oh my god. Tink!

HUDSON (as Tink): Sorry. Sorry. Um, I do not accept! Delete.

LILIT (as Xianna): You have to fix him. He can't keep living like this.

NICK (as HK): I see that your HK-67 unit droid is having some bloatware. If you download this special program for 55.99, it can remove the bloatware.

CAMERON (as Karma): Nooo.

HUDSON (as Tink): Hey, does anyone have 55.99 in credits?

CAMERON (as Karma): No! Don't do that!

LILIT (as Xianna): Tink!

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh... Oh, okay, I guess I can just remove it.

LILIT (as Xianna): Anyways, yes, I used to live on Ryloth. It's where I am from. Why do you think I speak like this?

[laughter]

NICK (as HK): So, if you are originally from Ryloth, do you have contacts that can help us to track down the Space Breaker?

LILIT (as Xianna): So the answer to that question is it's complicated. There are definitely people I can talk to. Some of them might not be happy to see me, and some of them, um, would try to shoot me, but I think there's maybe one or two people that I could talk to who wouldn't.

CAMERON (as Karma): Xianna, how old were you when you left Ryloth?

LILIT (as Xianna): I was like 16, so it's been like a few years.

CAMERON (as Karma): Yeah... but not long enough that your contacts shouldn't—at least some of the contacts shouldn't be there still?

LILIT (as Xianna): No, they are still there. I know that for sure. It's just some of them still might not like me a whole lot.

NICK (as HK): Xianna, my sensors indicate that your pulse and body temperature are rising rapidly. For 23.99 I can offer you three simple pills to help with these symptoms.

LILIT (as Xianna): [exasperated] Ugh... No, it is just—I feel like I have mentioned that I have family. Some still left on Ryloth. Who knows where the other ones are. But when I left Ryloth, things were a little, again, complicated. I maybe left my sister behind. Although, in my defense, I feel like she abandoned me, because we did agree we were going to leave Ryloth and then she did not.

CAMERON (as Karma): Older or younger sister?

LILIT (as Xianna): She was a few years younger than me.

CAMERON (as Karma): Ah... that's gotta be rough.

LILIT (as Xianna): And I should state, I did not just leave a 13 year old child alone in the world. We did have another family member, who uh, she stayed with... and I have maybe been sending money to that family member to help pay for my sister, but I still feel like my sister is not happy with me. Also, I have not been back to Ryloth I don't think, not that I'm aware of, but who knows.

NICK (as HK): How would you accidentally travel to a planet?

LILIT (as Xianna): It is easier than you would think. You know, sometimes you just wake up and you are on a new planet and you are not quite sure how you got there.

CAMERON (as Karma): I don't believe that's ever actually happened to me.

LILIT (as Xianna): It has happened to me a few times.

NICK (as HK): So, the next plan of action is to head to Lessu on Ryloth and attempt to reconnoiter where this Tognath has been located and where he has kept the valuable Force artifact.

CAMERON (as Karma): Yeah.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes. And try to not get arrested or anything.

HUDSON (as Tink): And meet your family?

LILIT (as Xianna): Uh... look, I don't know about that.

HUDSON (as Tink): But...

LILIT (as Xianna): You can maybe meet my uncle or something. I don't know if my sister will even talk to me directly, so.

HUDSON (as Tink): I would love an insight into your familial history.

LILIT (as Xianna): Tink, I do not think we have enough time to unpack all of that.

HUDSON (as Tink): Well let's see.

NICK (as HK): Are you interested in your family history? For only 95.99, we will send you an envelope where you can swab the inside of your cheek and then we'll tell you random stuff.

CAMERON (as Karma): [overwhelmed exhale]

HUDSON (as Tink): Ooh.

LILIT (as Xianna): I already know all about my family history and stuff.

CAMERON (as Karma): I don't think I've ever regretted not going to school to be a slicer more than I regret it right now.

[somber music begins]

NICK: HK takes a trembling hand and reaches to his front panel and pulls it open, and you can see complicated wiring and data cores.

NICK (as HK): Boss Man, please help remove this virus.

HUDSON (as Tink): But HK... what if I want more vitality, endurance, and passion in the bedroom? Is there something you can do to help me with that?

NICK: HK falls to his knees and then falls to his hands and some wires start to spill out of his chest, and a little bit of smoke starts to come out of his head.

NICK (as HK): Bigger, bigger, be stronger, last longer. Satisfy, satisfy, satisfy.

CAMERON (as Karma): Oh god!

LILIT (as Xianna): Tink, I swear, you need to fix HK right this moment!

HUDSON (as Tink): Fine.

HUDSON: I pull HK up.

LILIT (as Xianna): You cannot let him live like this!

HUDSON: And I just pull my fists back and then I just grab a bunch of stuff on the inside of him and pull it out.

NICK: When you pull your handful of gizmos out, it's actually like a biological—it looks like a jellyfish with suckers on the end of its tentacles. It's purple and glowing, and its arms are waving. It's some sort of literal giant biological virus that had infected HK. [laughs] And it stings you on the hand.

[somber music ends]

HUDSON: Oh wow.

HUDSON (as Tink): Ow! Someone shoot this thing.

HUDSON: I throw it.

LILIT (as Xianna): Ugh.

CAMERON: I'll shoot it. [laughs]

NICK: Yeah. So you throw it in the air. Karma, surprised, spins around, quickdraws her carbine and shoots it out of the air leaving a slight scorch mark in the wall behind it. We zoom out to the ship floating in space, and we see it jump to hyperspace, and the next thing we see after a wipe is the Afternoon Delight descending through a desert atmosphere on the planet of Ryloth.

[old western style music begins]

You all are able to negotiate quickly a landing pad at the spaceport. The city of Lessu is built into a large mountain that is on a plateau that is separated from the rest of a larger mesa by a large cavern, so it's essentially a floating island hundreds of feet above the normal ground, and buildings are sticking out of the sides of the mountain and there's a wall. As you are flying to land, you can see that there's a laser bridge connecting Lessu to the rest of the mesa, but you also see that it's sputtering and looks really old and poorly maintained.

As you come in to land you can see imperial garrisons on the mesa and walking the streets, and this place is extremely occupied. You can see, as you exit the ship, even from where you are in the spaceport, the Twi'lek population is moving quickly, trying not to get delayed, actively avoiding the stormtrooper patrols. This is a city that is occupied.

You've already planned this out, but how are you going to go about trying to collect information on this Tognath that has the item you want?

LILIT: So I think Xianna is first going to go meet with her uncle and figure out who is still in the game, who any new players are, who the main person to talk to about smuggling would be.

NICK: Okay.

LILIT: Or smuggling and black market items.

NICK: So, Xianna informs you all that she's going to go talk to somebody and try to get some basic information. You all decide to do the same thing as Xianna disappears into the crowd. Karma, what are you doing?

CAMERON: I have pulled up a photo from the Kajim Regional Correctional Facility databases of Endo, who is the only Tognath I know, and who also has come and attacked us and tried to take the artifacts before, so I feel fairly confident that this is the Tognath that we're looking for. I'm heading to either a bounty hunter office or one of the Empire outposts to show his picture around and see if anyone's seen him.

NICK: Okay. Tink, what are you doing to collect information?

[western music fades]

HUDSON: Hmm. I'm gonna put on kind of a noir hat and jacket, rain jacket.

NICK: [laughs]

HUDSON: And go to a bar and try to collect information.

NICK: Okay. I'm going to say, with Xianna's contacts, there's no roll. You know where your uncle is. You're going to be able to get to him and have that conversation very easily. Tink and Karma, for both of you I'm going to need Streetwise rolls at hard difficulty.

HUDSON: Two failures and two threats.

NICK: Oh! Okay.

CAMERON: A success and a threat.

NICK: Okay, so Karma, do you go to a bounty office or do you go to an imperial, like, barracks?

CAMERON: Probably whichever one I pass first.

NICK: Let's say you pass a bounty office. It looks like a cell phone shop, like it's a small square building nestled between two larger shops. I'm imagining that it has a flashing sign kind of like a stock ticker that's showing new bounties as they show up and if the offers are going up and down. There's a Rodian behind the counter. There's a door that's just propped open and the counter's close enough to the door that you don't even have to walk into the building necessarily. You show this picture of Endo, and what do you ask?

CAMERON: What time of day is it?

NICK: It's like mid-afternoon.

CAMERON (as Karma): Good afternoon.

NICK (as Rodian): Hello!

CAMERON (as Karma): Hi. Quick question, just got here. Um... have you happened to see this gentleman walking around?

NICK (as Rodian): Not a lot of Tognaths here on Ryloth. Um... maybe? Let me look through the files here.

NICK: This Rodian pulls up a data pad and holds it very close to his eyes and starts flipping through.

NICK (as Rodian): I've got six bounties on Tognaths in this region of the galaxy. You got any more information?

CAMERON (as Karma): So this one's not gonna be on the actual bounty list. This is... The spouse hired me, so he's not in the system.

NICK (as Rodian): Oh, doing some sort of illicit job, huh?

CAMERON (as Karma): No, just not an Empire job.

NICK (as Rodian): Well, I don't have a lot of information beyond the official postings, but let me give you the address of somebody who might be able to help. There's a guy, his name is Carson. He's a Human. He runs smuggling in and out of here. He might be able to tell you a little something.

CAMERON (as Karma): Alrighty.

NICK: He coughs and rubs his fingers together in the universal sign of "are you gonna pay me for this information?"

CAMERON (as Karma): Yeah, obviously. I know how this works.

CAMERON: And I'm flush with cash. [laughs]

NICK: So you give him some credits.

CAMERON: Yeah.

NICK: And he smiles real wide which looks very cute on a Rodian snoot.

NICK (as Rodian): Well thank you kindly. If you have any other needs or if you find anybody along the way that you want to turn in, don't forget to come back.

CAMERON: Before heading out, Karma taps her data pad against a panel they have on the wall and downloads all of the local contracts to her data pad and then walks out.

NICK: Yeah. The download takes about three times as long as you're used to. Normally it's a quick tap. This one, it taps and you don't get the confirmation beep, and you have to hold it.

CAMERON: I tap, quickly take it away, look. It's still got, like, it was halfway through a spinner. Holds it back out to the wall, just watching it slowly spin up.

NICK: It's not that the connection's bad, there's just that much information. There's a ton of bounties on Ryloth. They all appear to be Imperial wanted postings.

CAMERON: Hmm.

NICK: We see the little spinning progress wheel, and then that spinning wheel wipes the screen in a circle, and we come to Tink wearing his noir coat and hat standing in front of a bar called Leaky Pete's.

[old western saloon music begins]

The doors open. There's a guy sweeping. It's a Twi'lek man. He's green. His two front canines are filed very sharp as he smiles at you and he's sweeping the doorway. He looks at you, Tink, and says:

NICK (as Twi'lek): What are you, some kind of, uh, detective or something?

HUDSON (as Tink): Eh, you could say that, not that it's any of your business.

HUDSON: And then I flip the toothpick in my mouth, in place.

NICK (as Twi'lek): Well you're standing here in front of the bar... Welcome to Leaky Pete's, number one tourist attraction in Lessu. We don't open for another three or four hours, but if you want an iced tea or something I could make that happen. Or you could move along.

NICK: And he sweeps at the entryway and a bunch of dust goes onto your legs.

HUDSON: I flip a credit in my hand and I say:

HUDSON (as Tink): Well, I'm not looking for iced tea, but a piping hot cup of information, if you know what I mean.

NICK (as Twi'lek): I actually don't know what you mean... is that like a mixed drink or—?

HUDSON (as Tink): Listen, buddy.

HUDSON: I grab him by the lapels and hold him up against the wall.

HUDSON (as Tink): Now see here, buddy, I'm looking for a Tognath. You know about those?

NICK (as Twi'lek): Whoa, whoa, whoa. I don't want any trouble, big guy. I'm literally just sweeping out the doorway to Leaky Pete's. I just have the opening shift.

[saloon music fades]

NICK: As you look past this guy that you have held off the ground up against the wall, this is the bar that's just outside the airport. Like, it's very touristy.

HUDSON: [laughs]

NICK: It's kind of... clean enough that the bar doesn't look comfortable but dirty enough that the bar doesn't look nice. You know? There's a lot of neon lights and booths, and it looks like they have a few drinks and then everything else is going to be very expensive. You look past that. This is not necessarily the sketch hole in the wall full of information that you thought it was, but you've already started.

HUDSON (as Tink): No trouble here, buddy. I'm just saying, I need some information. Do you know any Tognaths?

NICK (as Twi'lek): You know... maybe I do, if you set me down on the ground and make it worth my while.

HUDSON (as Tink): If you're asking for sexual favors, I'm not inclined, unfortunately.

CAMERON: [snickers, giggles]

NICK: He was smiling real big, showing off his sharp canines, and that drops off of his face.

NICK (as Twi'lek): No, you were flipping a credit chip a minute ago.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh, oh, oh! Sure, yes, I can make it "worth your while."

NICK (as Twi'lek): Just to be entirely clear, I'm not asking for sexual favors. The wink made it a little murky there. Money. If you give me some money, I can give you a little bit of a hint about what's going on.

HUDSON (as Tink): Ah, yes, that's exactly what I'm looking for, pal.

HUDSON: And I put him down.

NICK (as Twi'lek): Great. That's step one. How about step two?

HUDSON (as Tink): Alright. You say the name of the Tognath and where they are as I'm slowly handing you the credits.

NICK: This bartender reaches for this credit chip you're holding out, and he opens his mouth, and you hold it closer, and he snatches it out of your hand and jumps back.

NICK (as Twi'lek): Look, I don't know where any Tognaths are, but you need to talk to Carson. Mr. Agen knows a lot about these kind of things, and I'm sure he can help you out if you're looking for companionship or whatever.

NICK: And slams the door to the bar, and then two seconds later a closed sign appears on the bar and the door shuts again.

HUDSON (as Tink): Where do I find Carson?!

HUDSON: I yell.

NICK: A little slot opens and the door and you can see his eyes peeking out.

NICK (as Twi'lek): Around this time, he's probably at the blurr races. Check the back alleys and listen for the weird stompy noises. You can't miss it.

NICK: And the slot slams shut again.

HUDSON: I talk to myself.

HUDSON (as Tink): Well, it looks like I have more snooping to do for this Carson fellow.

NICK: Do you pop up the collar of your coat and walk away chewing on your toothpick?

HUDSON: Yes.

NICK: We cut away to Xianna. Xianna, where do you go to find your uncle?

[rustic nostalgic guitar music begins]

LILIT: Xianna heads into a little older part of the city and finds a home that looks much like the others carved out of the rock and gives a small knock to the door before entering and saying:

LILIT (as Xianna): Jer? Are you home?

NICK: There's a long pause, almost to the point where Xianna turns to leave and look somewhere else, and then stepping around the corner into this little lobby at the front of this house is your uncle Jer. What does he look like?

LILIT: Jer is an older Twi'lek man who is sort of a deeper shade of blue and he's wearing rather simple clothes and has dark glasses on. He is a taller man, and you can tell that when he was younger he would've been quite muscular, and is still in good shape but has lost some of that with age.

NICK: Mm-hmm. He stops for a second. There's a vibro-knife in his hand. He drops it to the ground with a clatter. His head cocks to the side a little bit.

NICK (as Jer): Xiann, is that you?

LILIT (as Xianna): Jer, were you going to stab me?!

NICK (as Jer): You can never be too careful.

LILIT (as Xianna): I know it has been some time since I have been back home, but like, you don't have to stab me.

NICK (as Jer): I didn't know it was you. It's been a long time since I heard those footsteps on this floor.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes. It has been, uh, quite a number of years. But um, as you can hear, I am back and, um, was hoping to get some information from you...

NICK: He looks sad for a second.

NICK (as Jer): So you won't be staying then?

LILIT (as Xianna): Unfortunately, it is probably best if I don't stay here for too long. Um, just, there is a lot going on in my life right now, and I do not trust my crewmates to not get arrested. They are not from here and will stick out, and I'm sure they will create targets on their back rather quickly.

NICK: He kicks the knife over towards the wall.

NICK (as Jer): I've always been one to help, but at least I can get a hug out of this.

NICK: And he holds his arms wide.

LILIT: Xianna very awkwardly and stiltedly goes in for a hug, but then after a second or two relaxes into it, and it feels much more genuine.

NICK: His head is over your shoulder, but you can hear the smile in his voice as he pats you on the back and lets go of one arm but keeps one arm around your shoulder.

NICK (as Jer): Alright, let's get you some tea and talk about what you need.

NICK: And we cut to you in a different room of this house. It's a homey kitchen. There is an earthen teapot and two steaming earthen-ware cups sitting on a rough-cut table, and Xianna is holding one of the cups up to her face as Jer busies himself cleaning up the kitchen and then takes a seat, and grabs the cup, and takes a sip, blows on it, sets it down.

NICK (as Jer): So, I thought when you sent that many credits that you might be coming back. It's enough to retire on.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes, um... well, I would love to say that I was coming back to, um, to stay, but the whole statement would be a lie, because I would not love to say that. It is more that I sent that money out of a deep-seated feeling of guilt out of abandonment. I am supposed to be working on my feelings and saying my thought process and trying to figure out where my feelings are coming from and what sort of actions in my past may have caused them.

NICK: Jer sits up straighter and nudges his cup back and forth between his two hands for a second, processing that.

NICK (as Jer): Well, it sounds like you've matured quite a bit. I'm proud of you. I had assumed that money was to get Taun out of here. I gave it to her. It was enough to go to university, move somewhere a little less... this, but that's not how it worked out.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yeah... I mean, I kinda tried that before when, you know, mother was arrested, and I said we should leave Ryloth altogether, and then she kind of just did not go with me even though I had bought the transportation ship and everything and kind of used all the money we had left. But um, you

know, good to see she's still doing the same thing. I imagine it is because she is still working with the Resistance?

NICK (as Jer): She's stubborn, like her sister.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes. Well, I have somehow managed to, uh, fall into that same style of work. Also I am still stealing, don't worry about that.

NICK (as Jer): [chuckles]

LILIT (as Xianna): I am still, you know, stealing illegally and all that fun stuff. Was in prison for a little bit, so that was fun.

NICK (as Jer): Is that where you learned how to talk about your feelings?

LILIT (as Xianna): No, no. I have a girlfriend, and she is very emotionally mature, and she keeps handing me self-help books and telling me that I need to work on myself.

CAMERON: [laughs]

NICK: He smiles super wide and you can see that his teeth are bright white and are all filed to points.

NICK (as Jer): That's good. I'm glad that you've found someone. You have to hold onto those that you can keep.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes. Also, she is a fence, so it works perfectly.

CAMERON: [snickers]

NICK: He nods seriously.

NICK (as Jer): Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. You've always been the practical one. Well, not necessarily the practical one. You've always been the one to seize upon convenience, I would say.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes. Yes.

NICK (as Jer): It's funny though that you said you're in the same line of work. You left, you said you would be looking after you, that there was no point trying to make the galaxy better, and now you're fighting against the Empire just like your sister.

LILIT: Xianna lets out a big sigh and sets her cup of tea down.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yeah... yeah. I did that for a long time, and you know, it worked out pretty okay for the most part. You know, I made it, but I think at a certain point it just started getting kind of, uh... lonely, having new friends every few months and constantly being on the run with no one else to watch your pet loth-rat or anything. But um...

NICK: Does Creamsicle poke her head out of one of your coat pockets?

LILIT: No. We're in occupied territory. Of course Creamsicle is safe on the ship.

[laughter]

NICK: Oh, okay.

LILIT (as Xianna): But I am with a new crew that I've, uh... I say new, but we have been on the same ship for some time now, and then also my new girlfriend, Nolaa, just kind of helped me realize that maybe I was just not dealing with the trauma of my childhood very well, and maybe trusting people and maintaining relationships was a better way than what I had been doing.

NICK (as Jer): So will you see her?

LILIT (as Xianna): Well...

NICK (as Jer): Do you want me to reach out to Tann?

LILIT (as Xianna): I... I think it is maybe still for the best that I don't see her. I just... we are not going to be here for very long, and I don't think she'd want to see me anyways.

[nostalgic music ends]

NICK: He looks genuinely sad, and then you can see him force some brightness into his demeanor and he sits up straight again.

NICK (as Jer): Okay. That's your decision, and I understand. So what information are you looking for?

NICK: And he's suddenly all business with his hands knitted in front of him.

LILIT (as Xianna): So we are here looking for a Tognath who has probably started making some minor plays and acquiring a base and some people, probably some cargo ships. Is there anyone new to the scene who could maybe fit that description? Usually not too many off-worlders who are setting up long-term business here.

NICK (as Jer): A Tognath... Yeah, there's been a Tognath around lately. I don't know where they're set up, but I've heard about them a couple of times. I think Tann had a run-in with him a couple of times and his gang. I'm not sure exactly what his angle is here, but I think I might have a contact for you. A different smuggler who might be able to point you in the right direction.

LILIT (as Xianna): Cool. That is very helpful.

NICK (as Jer): His name is Agen. He's a Human. Not sure exactly how he got here, but he has pretty wide contacts, brings in a lot of things, runs the Imperial blockades, very impressive stuff. He's not the brightest glow rod in the crate, but his heart is good. I'll point you in the right direction. He's been trying to raise some funds for some sort of big job doing blurr racing on the backstreets. Remember when you used to do blurr racing? Ah.

[nostalgic music returns]

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes. I was not very good at it, which is kind of why I started figuring out how to rig the races... and then take bets. But I distinctly remember you telling me that you would let it slide, so.

NICK (as Jer): I was always one to try to teach you the way of things, and sometimes you do what you gotta do. If you get harnessed with a blurrig named Mr. Stompers who's half as fast as the other blurrigs, you do what you gotta do.

LILIT (as Xianna): [grinning] Mr. Stompers was a very good blurrig.

NICK (as Jer): [grinning] That's not true. Mr. Stompers was maybe the worst blurrig I've ever seen.

LILIT (as Xianna): He was terrible, and he bit, and he was very slow, and—

NICK (as Jer): And he kicked.

LILIT (as Xianna): Kicked.

NICK (as Jer): And spat.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes.

NICK (as Jer): And ate more than any blurrig I've ever seen, and the reciprocal action.

LILIT (as Xianna): But he made me quite a lot of money, so...

NICK (as Jer): I think you would have done better dressing Tann up as a blurrig and riding her.

LILIT (as Xianna): I mean, I just feel like the other children would have seen that it was a Twi'lek child dressed up as a blurrig. Mr. Stompers was an actual blurrig. It was much easier to rig the races with actual blurrigs.

NICK (as Jer): Now that you mention it, I'm not even sure that Mr. Stompers was a blurrig. I think he might have been a loth-wolf with mange.

LILIT (as Xianna): I mean, I know that was debated many times, but I am pretty sure Mr. Stompers was still at least part blurrig. Besides, it has been nearly a decade since the blurrig racing incidents, and um... while I thank you for these lovely memories, and the information, I do need to get going. Because as I said, I am here with a crew, and I don't entirely trust all of them out on their own.

NICK (as Jer): If you can, come back and visit again before you leave planet. It's been good to hear your voice.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yeah. I will, um... I will think about it.

NICK: And Xianna gets up and leaves, and the door shuts quietly, and Jer swirls his tea, takes a sip.

NICK (as Jer): She's not coming back.

[nostalgic music swells before ending]

NICK: We cut away to Tink walking down the street, and ahead of him there is an imperial checkpoint checking the foot traffic as they go by. What do you do?

HUDSON: I salute them.

NICK: You're carrying a lot of weapons, and you're not a Twi'lek, and they're racist assholes.

HUDSON: [laughs]

NICK: You salute them and two of them draw their guns, and one of the stormtroopers says:

NICK (as stormtrooper): Stand by for search, citizen.

HUDSON (as Tink): Uh... okay. Oh, bathroom emergency!

HUDSON: And I run.

NICK: [laughs] You just take off?

HUDSON: Yeah.

NICK: Roll me an Athletics check at hard difficulty to outrun these stormtroopers.

HUDSON: Guess who has 0 in Athletics.

NICK: Well you have a ton of Brawn. You'll be okay.

HUDSON: I think I'll flip a light side point. [chuckles] Three successes and one threat.

NICK: So you're able to escape, but now they are on the lookout for a Gigoran. Describe how you outrun these stormtroopers on the way to the blurr race.

HUDSON: I turn around and look as they're about to catch up on me and I say...

[jaunty "shenanigans" music begins]

HUDSON (as Tink): You won't catch me!

HUDSON: ...and I take off my jacket and I just, as I'm running, I just wave it back and forth on the ground to kick up dirt and dust so that they can't see me and I disappear.

NICK (as stormtrooper): [coughs pathetically] Where did he go? We've totally lost him to that expert tactic.

CAMERON (as stormtrooper): You'd really think these helmets would have had better filtration systems.

NICK (as stormtrooper): They only filter smoke, not toxins.

CAMERON (as stormtrooper): ... I know, I'm just saying, I would have thought that... Don't you think they should?

NICK (as stormtrooper): Anyway. Let's radio—Well... You know, the budget's tight this year. The captain says that maybe next year we'll get real helmets.

LILIT (as stormtrooper): Oh, are you talking about the new helmets they're gonna get us next year that are gonna filter out both smoke AND toxins?

CAMERON (as stormtrooper): Yeah!

NICK (as stormtrooper): I'm not convinced. I think they're just saying that so that they'll get better reviews on the culture survey.

LILIT (as stormtrooper): I don't know. I heard that they're just still in development and that we're gonna get them sometime soon, but...

NICK (as stormtrooper): Either way, someone radio in. There's a Gigoran somewhere loose in Lessu and they're highly suspicious and much faster than they look.

[music ends]

NICK: And Tink manages to escape. Karma, you're coming from a different direction, but you also see a checkpoint. How do you get through? It's in the way on your way to these blurr races that you were directed to.

CAMERON: I flash my bounty hunter badge.

NICK: Eh... they don't look super impressed.

NICK (as stormtrooper): This area is for civilians only. You'll have to move along. No entry.

CAMERON (as Karma): But I'm trying to collect bounties... on civilians. I have this whole list.

CAMERON: Karma scrolls up and it just goes on for forever.

NICK: Roll me a Negotiation check, but you can have a blue die for having a prop.

CAMERON: Yay props. Okay.

NICK: This will be average difficulty. They're out of breath now having just chased a Gigoran.

[laughter]

CAMERON: Okay, three successes, three advantages.

NICK: Cool. Another stormtrooper with one of the orange shoulder pauldrons walks up and says...

NICK (as stormtrooper): Look, this isn't the combatant we're looking for. Move along.

NICK: ...and waves his hand at Karma.

CAMERON (as Karma): Thank you, officer.

NICK: Xianna, you're heading towards where you know the blurrig races are in the side alleys. The checkpoints haven't changed much from your time here. Because there's so many of them, there's not a lot of places to add or move them. Because you are not surprised by the existence of the checkpoints, what's your plan to get through?

LILIT: Assuming that most of the businesses have not changed too much as far as the shop layouts, Xianna knows that there's a certain checkpoint against a row of shops that all have a connected hallway in the back, and that if you know about it you can enter in through the first shop, go in through the back hallway, and completely bypass a few rows of shopfronts and emerge on the other side of the checkpoint.

NICK: This is a wonderful plan except for the little old lady Twi'lek who is in the first shop that you haven't seen in years and years. How are you going to get past her without her making a scene? Either because she's excited to see you or you stole something from her the last time you were here.

[peppy shopping music begins]

LILIT: It's much more appropriate that Xianna shoplifted something as a teen. So, Xianna is going to attempt to stealth past by watching and waiting for someone else to go up to the shop owner with a question, and at that point she will try to sneak past the tall display of spices and get into the back hallway before the owner can see her.

HUDSON (as customer): Oh, this... this spices. Very good spices. I would like a whole crate of them, please.

CAMERON (as owner): Which spices? You're waving at an entire rack. Which...?

HUDSON (as customer): Yes, the rack of spices, right here.

CAMERON (as owner): Which?

HUDSON (as customer): All of them. I have major plans for my cooking.

CAMERON (as owner): You, you... A crate? Of each?!

NICK: And now, Xianna, roll your Stealth check at average difficulty with a blue die, because apparently they're very distracted. [laughs]

[shopping music ends]

LILIT: Yeah. I have Stalker, so I can add more blue dice. I don't think I need to look up if I have any other skills there.

NICK: Probably not.

LILIT: That is one success and six advantages.

[somber nostalgic music begins]

NICK: So you're able to sneak by, and you have this flash of nostalgia as you press your back against the side of the counter waiting for the two of them to look the other direction, and then you're off into the hallway. It's almost like you're a kid again, sneaking through to shoplift some things and dodge imperial patrols. Hudson and Cameron, a non sequitur ending to the spice conversation?

[shift back to peppy shopping music]

CAMERON (as owner): You can make noodles in the dark!

[laughter]

HUDSON (as customer): I know, but what about the heating element?

CAMERON (as owner): The... The heat from the spices?!

HUDSON (as customer): No, the light, that hits the spices in the night.

[music ends]

NICK: And we fade away from that. The camera cuts to the beginning of a blurr race. Blurrgs look like really ugly Pac-Mans with dinosaur tails and big long bulky legs. Imagine a T-Rex, made out of clay by a four-year-old, with an extra-large mouth. There are Twi'lek jockeys with goggles mounting or petting down their blurrgs before the race, there's about five of them, and there's a small crowd of people either gambling or betting.

We see Xianna slip out of a side building and nudge somebody and ask a question, and they point in a direction. We see karma walk down the main street, duck down a side alley, and look around, find the person they're looking for and head purposely towards them. We see Tink sprinting down a separate alley, coat flapping in the breeze in one hand behind him, his other hand holding his hat onto his head as he runs.

The three of you begin to converge on this one Human. He's leaning against a rail watching the blurrgs get ready. We see the three of you all moving towards each other and towards this guy who is looking away from you, and his red hair stands out amongst all the lekku of the citizens of Lessu... and that's gonna be the end of 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 help new listeners find the show, and every time we get one the squad does a special secret dance.

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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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