

Tabletop Squadron Transcript – Season 2, Episode 34:
Safari Weekend

Transcript by Raina Harper

Intro

LILIT: Hello everyone, 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.

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

Now, let's get into the episode.

##

NICK: Hello! Welcome to Episode 34! You know, Episode 34 rules. I feel like it rules really well, Episode 34. Uh... just a good time.

LILIT: Are you implying that our listeners should google Rule 34 to see how much 34 rules?

NICK: [gulps] Yeah, um... just 34 rules.

LILIT: Wanna learn more about it? Search "Rule 34 Sonic," because we all know Sonic, the fast food chain, is a great place to get afternoon drinks.

CAMERON: America's drive-in.

NICK: Mm-hmm.

LILIT: They are America's drive-in. Please, nobody do these Google Searches.

[laughter]

NICK: I'm your host and game master, Nick. Let's go around the table and everybody say who they are and who they're playing today starting with Lilit.

LILIT: Hello. I am Lilit, and I will be playing Xianna'fan, a Twi'lek smuggler. I am already regretful about saying the phrase Rule 34 Sonic. I apologize and I see the error of my way.

NICK: Wonderful. Up next we've got Hudson.

HUDSON: Hi. I'm Hudson, and I play Tink, a Gigoran slicer. If you enjoyed this Rule 34-based episode of Tabletop Squadron, you might also enjoy Golden Girls inflation porn.

[laughter]

LILIT: There's no joke there! There's no joke. There's no subtlety. No mastery of the craft.

NICK: But he did just put that image in my head.

CAMERON: He's got the shock value down, though.

NICK: Yeah.

HUDSON: Yeah, it was really just for the shock value. There was no craft or nuance to that.

LILIT: We're gonna have to put so many warnings on this episode.

NICK: No, shock value is a different kind of porn. Uh...

HUDSON: [laughs]

NICK: Last but not least we've got Cameron.

CAMERON: Hello. I am Cameron, and I will be playing Karma Nailo, a Nautolan bounty hunter. I would like you to know that not only did Nick forget which episode number this was, he also initially forgot that we needed to record an intro for it, so it's just going great so far.

NICK: It's been... It's been a time. I feel like our listeners can relate to it being "a time."

CAMERON: Has it been a Thursday for you, Nick?

NICK: Yeah, it's just really been a Thursday. Before we get started with the episode [laughs], let's do the Destiny Roll~!

CAMERON: Two light side.

HUDSON: One dark side.

LILIT: One light side.

##

NICK: Last time, you all settled on Mandalore. You were here. You had been sent there by some sort of strange disembodied voice that gave Tink a hunch that he needed to go to Mandalore to find the items that they seek. You met up with an apparently Force-sensitive red Nautolan named Nyx who tried to give you the information you wanted and you gave him a very difficult time but eventually got the basics that you needed. Then, rather than act on that information, you decided instead to visit Tink's parents, Rhonda and Mossie, who are just great people and also stage magicians. Am I forgetting anything?

HUDSON: I had a moment of emotional growth when I learned that I don't need to be upset about past spaghetti-related incidents and that I can grow from that.

CAMERON: No upsetti spaghetti.

HUDSON: No upsetti spaghetti.

NICK: That's very true. So, let's go ahead and get into it.

##

NICK: We open on the crew of the Afternoon Delight seated around a coffee table in a comfortable living room. There are a lot of doilies and there are a lot of what look like props for magic tricks. The crew is munching on a few snacks, talking, chatting, and laughing. Next we wipe to see the crew leaving, walking through a manicured yard. Rhonda and Mossie, Tink's parents, stop you in the yard to give you the snacks that they promised. What snacks do they give you?

LILIT: It is a stack of tupperware filled with spaghetti.

NICK: Wow. That's a comprehensive snack.

LILIT: It's a very big stack of tupperware. It's like those big, you know, seven-cup tupperwares.

NICK: Oh wow, yeah. You climb into a local taxi and cross the Mandalorian suburbs. We see you enter an area that looks like half cattle pasture and half industrial yard. In the distance you can see the rolling plains of the Mandalore Wilds and the last vestiges of the city.

There are open docks along the plains. You can see places where speeders have been parked and departed outlined in dirt and dead grass. A small wooden stand with a sliding window stands among the empty births, and you can see a bored-looking Human wearing a wide-brim hat seated behind the window flipping through a holo-magazine.

The taxi driver takes your credits and kicks you out here saying he won't go any further into the wilderness, and you are standing here in what looks essentially like an empty parking lot with an attendant. You had asked to be brought somewhere where you could get a ride, and this is where you find yourselves. What do you do?

HUDSON (as Tink): Hello sir. We are seeking passage.

NICK: The attendant slides the window back with a creak. You can hear bits of dust and grass stuck in the sliders. He leans forward and says:

NICK (as attendant): Sorry about that. I missed that. What? What's going on? What do you need?

HUDSON (as Tink): We would like passage.

NICK: He pushes his hat back on his head.

NICK (as attendant): Well uh... I'm afraid all the safari barges have already left for the day. You'll have to try and make a reservation for some time next week I'm afraid.

NICK: Then he slides the window shut and goes back to his magazine.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh... um. Xianna, Karma, the person in the booth said that there are no more ways to get to the jungle until next week.

LILIT (as Xianna): Did you try asking a second time?

HUDSON: I knock on the window, once again.

NICK: He sighs so loudly you can hear it through the window, grinds the window open and says:

NICK (as attendant): Now don't tell me you're about to ask for a second time like that's gonna change my answer.

HUDSON (as Tink): ... Xianna! Karma!

CAMERON: [giggles]

HUDSON (as Tink): I think we need a different strategy.

CAMERON (as Karma): Hello. So, I heard that there are no more trips today and you don't have availability until next week. Are there any other options that exist for getting out there?

NICK: He pushes his hat back further on his head with one finger. At this point it's seated very far back on his head. He looks you up and down, Karma, and smiles real wide.

NICK (as attendant): Well ma'am, it sure is nice to see you, but there is nobody you would want to ride with out into the wilderness. The only people who can go out that way have to be certified. Only safaris are allowed out there. You have to have a special speeder and they're all gone. They already took their trips out and most of them aren't due back for at least a week.

CAMERON (as Karma): Are there any people we wouldn't want to go out there with?

NICK: He looks at his magazine longingly as this conversation goes on and slowly shakes his head.

NICK (as attendant): [exhales] Technically yeah, we've got... there is one guy, but I don't think you're gonna like him that much. He's really weird. He doesn't even take payment.

CAMERON (as Karma): Is he certified?

NICK (as attendant): He does have a certified speeder. Yes.

CAMERON (as Karma): Where can we find him?

NICK (as attendant): Alright, but don't say I didn't warn you. He's all the way down at the end.

CAMERON (as Karma): Alright. Which direction?

NICK (as attendant): Uh, it'll be down that way.

NICK: He sticks his head out the window and points down the line. You can see a large fuel tank that's been obscuring the last part of this flattened area. It looks like it's next to a burned out warehouse.

NICK (as attendant): It's down past the fuel tank if you head that way.

NICK: He tosses the magazine over and pulls up a clipboard.

NICK (as attendant): If you're gonna try and talk to him, these are waivers I'm gonna need you to sign ahead of time that shows that Mandalorian Safari Company is not responsible for any injury or death that may result as a result of the negotiation process or the safari thereafter should you be successful.

NICK: He slides some pages of flimsy over.

CAMERON: Karma starts signing it and dating it.

CAMERON (as Karma): Would you please expand on the description of "weird?"

NICK (as attendant): Uh... [exhales] He's just real traditional. I think you'll understand it a little better when you get to him. You wouldn't believe me if I told you.

CAMERON (as Karma): Like traditional Mandalorian warrior?

NICK: He puts his finger on his nose and then points at you, like you got it in one.

CAMERON (as Karma): Alright. The being hurt in negotiations is what gave that away.

NICK (as attendant): Yeah. You must have worked with them before. Are you a bounty hunter?

CAMERON (as Karma): Yes.

NICK (as attendant): Alright. Well sweetness, you have fun with that. You should be able to talk to him as a representative of the group, but I will need waivers for everybody. So uh, big guy over there, if you could sign, and the Twi'lek lady, if you could sign please, it would be much appreciated.

CAMERON: Karma hands the pen off.

LILIT: Xianna absolutely signs a different name.

HUDSON: I take the pen and as I'm signing I say:

HUDSON (as Tink): So, you say this person's weird. Well, we know a lot of weird people, and between us we know a lot of people in general, so we probably already know them.

NICK: As you're signing this, Tink, make me a Knowledge (Education) roll, please, with your "legal" background.

HUDSON: Oof.

NICK: This will be at average difficulty.

HUDSON: Three successes.

NICK: Taking a look at this waiver, it protects this company from liability to an absurd degree. On most planets you would think that it would invalidate the waiver in the first place. Like, for anything: act of God... basically they're free of liability and the drivers of these places are free of liability even if they're just to turn and attack their clients, although there's a subsection saying that would result in the people being fired. You would know with your background that this would hold up in a Mandalorian tribunal but pretty much anywhere else in the galaxy it absolutely wouldn't. It's ridiculous.

HUDSON (as Tink): Hmm. This looks a little bit... This is an intense document you got here, but you know, you look trustworthy.

NICK (as attendant): What, are you some kind of lawyer? Sign it.

HUDSON (as Tink): I am a lawyer, actually.

LILIT (as Xianna): No you are not, Tink.

HUDSON (as Tink): [hushed] No, I am.

LILIT (as Xianna): Stop saying you are a lawyer. You are not.

NICK (as attendant): That's gonna be a 50 Credit lawyer fee as well, and I also need you to sign this.

NICK: He hands over another piece of paper.

HUDSON: What does the piece of paper say?

NICK: This one is just an invoice for "agreed to allow lawyer to apply for safari."

CAMERON: [laughs]

HUDSON (as Tink): Alright! I mean, it checks out.

HUDSON: So I sign the lawyer invoice and the waiver.

[laughter]

HUDSON (as Tink): You know why they call it a waiver?

NICK (as attendant): Uh... because you're waiving your rights?

HUDSON (as Tink): Nope, because I'm waving goodbye. It was good meeting you!

NICK: He chuckles and takes back all of the clipboards and slides the window shut, and before you've made it to the path that goes down all of these speeder births you can see he already has his feet up on the desk and is flipping through this holo-magazine again.

##

NICK: So you walk around this dirt trail. This whole area is kind of the same trampled down grass and dirt of a fairground or something like that, but it has raised concrete slabs in different places to show parking spaces and things like that. It's very much a converted industrial place.

As you walk around this gas tank you see a speeder that looks rugged but beat all to hell. You don't know what color it was originally. It's all just rust and patches of bare metal. Several panels are missing and you can see the workings underneath. There are curved skids that extend down below, which normally you know is to allow for any changes in elevation so that you don't bottom out with the speeder, but these look like they've been used to catch the entire speeder's weight multiple times, like the engines have burned out.

Sitting on the back of this speeder is a man in full Mandalorian armor, helmet affixed, cape blowing dramatically in the breeze, a large vibro-spear buried in the dirt at his feet. He has a vibro-knife and is whittling away at a piece of bone making some sort of trinket. Even though he doesn't stop whittling or appear to look at you, you can feel his eyes on you as you approach.

CAMERON: Karma's checking out his armor.

NICK: It looks like traditional Mandalorian armor. You can't tell just by looking at it, because it's painted, whether or not it's actual beskar, but it's in the right cut. It's a breastplate, gauntlets, helmet, the whole nine yards.

CAMERON: What's the color pallet looking like?

NICK: It's like a jungle camo, so it's like dark green and brown and blacks. It should be noted, that doesn't blend in very well here. These are all golden grasses and brown dirt. But it doesn't show any clan crests or anything on it. He continues to whittle away, not breaking the silence.

CAMERON: Karma stops probably a good six to ten feet away from him.

CAMERON (as Karma): Good afternoon.

NICK: You get the helmet panning up to look at you. The knife stops for a minute. A slow nod, and then the head goes back down and goes back to whittling.

HUDSON (as Tink): Nice speeder you got there. What's her name?

NICK: The helmet looks up to Karma, pans a couple of degrees over to Tink. Tink, you can feel the appraising look. You hear a distorted voice come from the helmet.

NICK (as Mandalorian): Aspen.

NICK: And then goes back down, and he goes back to whittling.

HUDSON (as Tink): Why is it called Aspen?

NICK: The Mandalorian takes the trinket that he's whittling and throws it down into the sand at his feet. There's a point on it and it sticks into the dirt. Nonchalantly he sheathes his vibro-knife, pulls the spear out of the ground, spins it with a flourish planting the butt of the spear next to his feet as he stands to his full height. Which, you see now e's not actually that tall. He's maybe 5'6", 5'7", but looks very strong even under the armor. And looks up at you, Tink, and says:

NICK (as Mandalorian): What do you want?

HUDSON (as Tink): We'd like to go on a safari.

NICK (as Mandalorian): [hardy sarcastic laugh] It's not that easy.

NICK: The helmeted head turns to Karma and to Xianna as well.

NICK (as Mandalorian): Four passengers... I'm your only ride. It doesn't matter if you have money. That's not how you would pay for a journey into the Mandalorian wilderness.

LILIT (as Xianna): How would we pay for a ride? Do you want drugs? Because we have drugs. I don't know if that will work.

NICK (as Mandalorian): The only way you're getting on Aspen and earning me as a guide is to follow the traditional Mandalorian rite of combat.

LILIT (as Xianna): Egh... you are weird.

HUDSON (as Tink): Is it a fight to the death?

NICK: His hand that's not on the spear makes a "what are you talking about" gesture.

NICK (as Mandalorian): Some guide I would be if I killed people who wanted a ride. No, you just have to make me feel the joy of combat like I used to.

NICK: And the helmet turns a little and stares far into the distance.

LILIT: Xianna looks at Tink and Karma.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okie! Which of you is going to fight this weirdo? It's certainly not going to be me. It needs to be one of you.

HUDSON (as Tink): Why is HK excluded?

LILIT (as Xianna): Because HK would just kill him.

HUDSON (as Tink): Not necessarily.

LILIT (as Xianna): HK, would you just straight up murder this man?

NICK (as HK): De Facto Statement: I have been targeting a micro-missile at this man's carotid artery since we began conversation.

LILIT (as Xianna): See? I told you.

CAMERON (as Karma): Okay. HK, stand down.

NICK (as HK): Disappointed Sigh: Sigh...

CAMERON (as Karma): Thank you. What are the rules of engagement?

NICK (as Mandalorian): We fight until one person is left standing or someone surrenders. If you kill your opponent, you lose.

CAMERON (as Karma): What weapons?

NICK (as Mandalorian): I choose my spear. No guns.

HUDSON (as Tink): So you have to interact or battle each other with weapons you choose and you gotta tease them a bit but they can't die. You just gotta violently tease them.

CAMERON: [snickers]

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes, this sounds kind of like it might be some sort of sex thing.

NICK (as Mandalorian): Do you want a lift into the wilderness or not? Do you want to see the noble Fanned Rawl or not?

LILIT (as Xianna): That didn't answer my question.

NICK (as Mandalorian): You're detracting from the noble rite of combat of the Mandalorian people.

LILIT (as Xianna): So it is a kink.

NICK: The Mandalorian does not move. [laughs]

LILIT (as Xianna): Okay, so it is. Karma, Tink, which one of you is going to fight this weirdo?

NICK: [cackles]

CAMERON (as Karma): [sighs] Tink, how much armor do you have?

HUDSON (as Tink): I have my backpack.

CAMERON (as Karma): [dismissive] Okay.

HUDSON (as Tink): And I have a lot of heart.

CAMERON (as Karma): You do. That is true. I don't know how much armor that really provides in combat, though.

NICK (as Mandalorian): Choose your warrior. Time is wasting.

NICK: He does a kata with the spear where he goes to stab into the air and then do a retraction and then takes a pose with one leg extended and one hand holding the spear forward.

HUDSON (as Tink): Uh, you know, looking at the past, I've taken a few battles for the team. If I recall, I was in some fight where you won money, Xianna?

LILIT (as Xianna): Oh yes, I did.

CAMERON (as Karma): Yeah?

HUDSON (as Tink): And that was very public and very damaging to me. I think it's someone else's turn.

CAMERON (as Karma): Alrighty.

CAMERON: Karma detaches her carbine from its strap and hands it to HK.

NICK: HK takes it and holds it lovingly.

NICK (as HK): This weapon has killed so many organics.

HUDSON (as Tink): [gasps]

CAMERON: Uh... [giggles]

CAMERON (as Karma): It is on stun right now, HK. Be aware.

NICK (as HK): That is easily rectified.

HUDSON (as Tink): Can't you use HK as a weapon? They did say any weapon of your choosing.

CAMERON (as Karma): I think HK counts as a gun.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh, yeah.

NICK (as HK): I am an Imperial-registered firearm.

CAMERON: [laughs] Karma draws her sword.

HUDSON (as Tink): Where does the battle take place? Do we got a stadium or like an arena? Is there stands? Is there popcorn?

NICK (as Mandalorian): A true battle takes place when you least expect it.

##

NICK: He lunges at Karma, and I need you to roll Vigilance.

CAMERON: Okie-dokie. Three successes and an advantage.

NICK: Okie-dokie. Can you roll me three yellows, please?

CAMERON: Three successes, three advantages.

NICK: Alright. Y'all almost go at the same time. He lunges forward at you, and you're expecting it, you could tell from the way he set himself, but he still moves faster than you thought would be possible in this heavy armor. Maybe it really is beskar. He lunges at you to attack. You can see a golden shimmer on this spear as he stabs at you with near-perfect form. Can you roll me three yellows again, please? With two purple, it's just a normal Melee attack.

CAMERON: And two black for my Defense.

NICK: Yeah.

CAMERON: Three successes, a triumph, and three threats.

NICK: Okay. So, he makes contact with the chest of your armor. The spear doesn't go through, but you still feel the impact as a shock pulse comes from the spear. You take 9 stun damage, Pierce 2, and go ahead and roll me a crit as you feel something hit you even harder than expected.

CAMERON: A 48.

LILIT: A 48 is Head Ringer. Increase difficulty to Intellect and Cunning checks until the end of the encounter.

NICK: Okay. So you do have a crit on you, so that will increase further crits. The shock appears to be conducted by your armor and goes up into your head, and you can feel your mind buzzing, and your vision clouds a little. He assumes a defensive posture, and it's your turn.

CAMERON: Karma is very upset that her sea creature scales somehow conduct electricity. It's very rude.

NICK: Maybe it's a special spear.

CAMERON: Two successes, a triumph, and four advantages.

NICK: Okay, so how much damage is that?

CAMERON: That is 8 damage, Pierce 2, and I can crit five times.

NICK: Oh...

CAMERON: My sword is Crit 1, and I have a triumph and 4 advantages.

NICK: Okay, so it'll be +40 on your crit.

CAMERON: Plus another 40.

NICK: If you choose to use those all for critting.

CAMERON: Okay then, sure, let's do +80! A 22, +80! Oh no, wait, sorry. It's another +10. My sword is Vicious. [laughs] So it's +90, so 112?

LILIT: A 112, Temporarily Incapacitated. Cannot perform more than one maneuver per turn until injury is healed.

NICK: Describe how, after this guy lunges at you and stabs you, shocking the bejesus out of you, how do you stop him in one swing?

CAMERON: I think Karma uses his momentum coming towards her and kind of going off slightly to the side, since it didn't puncture her chest plate, to then bring her arm around and she just smacks him on top of the head with the hilt of her sword and it makes a really loud bell ringing noise in his helmet, and he falls down.

NICK: He falls... Oh yeah, because he did have three threats. So, he falls prone. [dramatic bass noise] You can see the dust making wave patterns below him from the vibration of his helmet. He reaches as though he's going to push himself back up and then falls flat again and drops the spear and holds up a hand.

NICK (as Mandalorian): Wait... Wait. You have bested me, in a single blow.

NICK: He lifts the helmet off and you see long dark hair and a really angular scarred face.

NICK (as Mandalorian): I haven't had my ass kicked that bad since the last time I saw a tree that wanted to kill me. It's been a long time, Karma. You've gotten a lot stronger.

CAMERON (as Karma): [laughing] Oh shit! Mills!

NICK: And you're looking at Mills, the former guide from Unroola Dawn, the security officer from the secret space station that you stole, and now your guide into the wilderness on safari. He holds out a hand to be helped back up as blood trickles out of one ear.

CAMERON: Karma helps him back up.

NICK (as Mills): That was one heck of a swing. Tink, Xianna, it's good to see you. It's been so long.

LILIT (as Xianna): Wait. Why did you not say hi to us earlier?

NICK (as Mills): I... I was... This is my new life. The last two times I've met you I've had to leave a planet. I was hoping to just do the job and move on, but if you had to go somewhere else I could've continued to do this. Now that you've beaten me, I'm honor bound to help you, by Mandalorian creed, which I now follow.

HUDSON (as Tink): Okay, so... there was an attendant back there that we paid money to and signed contracts with named Rocco or something. I said "we might actually know this person because we know a lot of weirdos."

CAMERON: [laughs]

HUDSON (as Tink): Everyone just brushed me off, and it turns out we know you.

NICK (as Mills): You're a smart guy, Tink. I've always thought you had sort of a sixth sense for that kind of thing. I've always been very impressed by you. Your, uh... Your group should really respect you more, really listen to your advice.

HUDSON (as Tink): Thank you~ Can we do like a voting out a member of the crew thing and then get this person in?

NICK (as HK): Indignant Statement: If you vote me out, I know all your secrets, I will expose them to the galaxy. Do not get rid of me.

LILIT (as Xianna): I vote we get rid of Tink.

CAMERON (as Karma): Yeah... Tink, buddy, you really can't be the one to suggest voting out people from the group. That's not... [sighs]

HUDSON (as Tink): I retract my statement. We must add an additional member that we will debate after... the safari!

NICK (as Mills): So you wanted to go out on a safari. The wastes of Mandalore are not for the weak of heart. I hope you're prepared.

HUDSON (as Tink): I would love to see animals.

CAMERON (as Karma): We survived the trees.

NICK: He gives a shrill whistle, smiling at you, Karma, as you mention the trees. You see what looks like a six-legged headless dog with a rat tail and giant horrifying teeth come bounding from somewhere in the shade where it was lying still, where you didn't notice it before. It pants broadly, and Mills pets at its head and then pulls his hand back as it tries to nip at him.

NICK (as Mills): Alright Balthazar, we've got some clients. Hop on up, it's time to go.

NICK: This weird creature does this gangly six-legged jump and sits in the passenger seat. This thing kinda looks like an airboat but piloted from the front, so the driver seat and the passenger seat are down low and there's like a stepped seating that goes up so that other passengers can sit up high near the engines but can see further.

NICK (as Mills): Balthazar's a strill. It's native to here. Think of it as a terrifying and deadly companion that will sometimes help you if you feed it.

HUDSON (as Tink): How offended would you be if I called that thing very ugly?

NICK (as Mills): How offended would you be if I called you very ugly?

HUDSON (as Tink): I'm very sensitive. I don't think that thing cares what I call it.

LILIT (as Xianna): Tink, you can't just call other people's pets ugly.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh, it's a pet?

NICK (as Mills): Balthazar is a handsome boy, yes he is.

NICK: And it's drooling like a spider web of drool between all the teeth, and you realize that part of the missing paint on this speeder appears to be from the drool as it melts through a little bit more of the side of the speeder where it's standing there panting. Mills ruffles its... where its ears would be—it doesn't really have ears—and this thing again tries to take a nasty snarling bite out of his hand, but it also does a panting smile at him.

NICK (as Mills): So yeah, hop on up. Mandalore doesn't really have any trees to worry about. It's mostly scrubland like this, so we should be perfectly safe, but if not... you have your weapons. I know you can handle yourselves in a fight.

NICK: He rubs at the back of his head kind of ruefully and wipes some of the blood away from his ear and smiles at Karma in a friendly manner.

NICK (as Mills): I'm thinking I've got supplies for a few days. If you all want to go deep out into the wilderness, we could really make a show of the safari thing. How does that sound?

CAMERON: Karma takes her carbine back from HK and rehooks it on.

HUDSON (as Tink): Sounds good to me!

CAMERON (as Karma): So, we are safariing with a mission.

NICK (as Mills): Well, everybody has a mission to see the glorious wildlife of Mandalore when they're on a safari, especially with me.

CAMERON (as Karma): Also that. We have been directed to go deep into the center of the wilderness.

NICK (as Mills): Well...

CAMERON (as Karma): We're looking for a gangster friend.

NICK (as Mills): I don't know anything about that, but I do know that I can show you all of the best animals. I have their prime watering holes. I've got exactly where they like to feed. It's the perfect season for it. The stathas should be looking for mates right now so their coloration will be really nice. We can go way out there. I guarantee that you will hear at least one shriek hawk while you're out there.

HUDSON (as Tink): Wow, a shriek hawk!

NICK (as Mills): So we'll head out there. The entire thing until the next city is probably only three or four days across. Normally I go about one or two days in. We've got plenty of supplies for that and a return trip. So, if you see anything interesting, whatever you're out here to see, you can guide us in that direction and that should be fine. Although, I can't guarantee the shriek hawk if we don't keep to my guaranteed guide route.

CAMERON (as Karma): That is fair. Also, we brought spaghetti.

NICK (as Mills): Awesome!

NICK: So, do you all climb up into the speeder?

CAMERON: Yeah.

HUDSON (as Tink): I call shotgun—top!

NICK: You say you call shotgun and Balthazar the strill's head whips around and growls at you, and all you can see are massive teeth the size of its head and spit flying everywhere. It just stares you down, growling.

HUDSON (as Tink): I meant, um... I call back seats.

LILIT (as Xianna): I think we will sit in the back seat. That may be for the best.

NICK (as Mills): You will get the best view from up there, so I would recommend it. Balthazar really likes this seat, plus the upholstery is all shredded.

NICK: The strill whines at Mills and he shrugs.

NICK (as Mills): It's true. You scratched up the seats. I don't know what you want me to tell you.

NICK: And it settles down huffily into the speeder.

NICK (as Mills): Well, it's only early afternoon at this point, so we could make some pretty good time today, maybe see some interesting animals. What do you say?

CAMERON (as Karma): Let's do it.

HUDSON (as Tink): Let's do it!

##

NICK: So, you all pile in. You can see that situated under your seats there's large crates of what look like supplies: some medical supplies, some first aid kits, but mostly food and camping gear and things like that. This is a full-service safari. Mills jumps into the driver's seat and guns it, and you all take off over the grasslands into the afternoon sun and continue on your way.

Even on the first day, close to the city, you see a couple of really interesting animals. You see a Fanned Rawl which is like an iguana with no legs. It's really big and has a massive hood that sticks out of it. You see several of those and they're fighting, and then they're breeding... and it's just kinda weird. We get the shot of you all up in the seats and Mills has cut the engine and the thing skids to a stop.

NICK (as Mills): Look over there. This is really nice. Those Fanned Rawls only breed during this season. You never get to see stuff like that.

LILIT (as Xianna): Ooh~

CAMERON: If I flip a light side point, can Tink have a disposable camera?

NICK: Yeah, absolutely.

HUDSON: [excited] I was thinking about having one!

CAMERON: [giggling] I just really think he needs one.

HUDSON: I pull out my disposable camera and start taking pictures.

HUDSON (as Tink): Ooh~ Oh, and they're under the succulents. They're so succulent right now.

NICK: So, you're taking pictures of these strange lizard monsters, and after a while they slither away and Mills turns the speeder back on and continues onward. A while later he cuts the motor again and you can see Balthazar the strill is whining and perked up in his seat, and in the distance you can see more strills.

These aren't domesticated, they're even bigger, and Balthazar is already quite large. They have thick fur whereas he's hairless. One of them jumps out of a thorn tree that's sticking up above the grasses and flaps its six legs and manages to stay in the air for a while like a very enthusiastic sugar glider before falling on another one. This group is tussling and playing. Imagine a group of hyenas towards sunset. The sun is also setting here, and you all get a great view of wild strills across the grasslands.

NICK (as Mills): Now you're gonna wanna be very careful here. If the wind changes direction, we're gonna have to go really quick, so stay in your seats because these will absolutely hunt us and kill us if they figure out we're here.

HUDSON (as Tink): They don't look 'too' scary.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yeah Tink, go pet one.

HUDSON (as Tink): I mean, I wouldn't go that far. In my mind they just—

LILIT (as Xianna): Get out of your seat and go over and pet one.

HUDSON (as Tink): They just look like a bunch of wrestlers with wings.

NICK (as Mills): Part of the reason that you have to have a certified guide out here is for your safety. There may not be trees, but the wildlife out here is very dangerous and we're very far from the city. We've been driving most of the day. So, I would advise against leaving your seat or attempting to pet one of the most dangerous creatures on the planet that created the most feared warriors in the entire galaxy.

CAMERON: Karma adjusts her grip on her carbine and checks the stun setting.

NICK (as Mills): It should be fine as long as the wind doesn't change direction.

NICK: Could you roll me a Force die, please, Cameron?

CAMERON: One dark side.

NICK: [chuckles] As he says that, Balthazar yips and starts to sniff the air.

NICK (as Mills): Aw kriff, we gotta go.

NICK: You can see that these strill—there's probably about ten of them—have fanned out in a semicircle and are loping towards the speeder much faster than you would expect. They'll run for a bit and then jump and glide and then run and jump and glide, kind of like penguins will run and slide on their tummies except in the air and full of teeth.

These things are slowly circling to cut you all off and ambush you as Mills throws the speeder into full speed and guns it and spins the speeder to escape, and you're able to get away. Tink, do you take any photos of being hunted by these terrifying strills?

HUDSON (as Tink): Karma! Karma! Turn around. Okay, now just move a little bit so we can see you and the strills.

LILIT (as Xianna): Tink, time to stop taking photos.

HUDSON (as Tink): But, but... that's a priceless expression on her face.

CAMERON: [laughs]

NICK: What is the expression on Karma's face?

CAMERON: Concern!

NICK: [laughs] And that's pretty much the most exciting parts of the first day of your safari on Mandalore. We get a screen cut to the speeder at night parked next to a crackling campfire. There are bedrolls and camp chairs set up. There's kebabs of meat cooking over the fire. You can hear the gentle hum of an electric fence set outside the perimeter of the firelight as well. Mills is sitting by the fire, waiting for the food to cook, playing a harmonica.

CAMERON (as Karma): So, Mills? How'd you get Balthazar?

NICK (as Mills): It's a pretty funny story, actually.

NICK: Balthazar huffs and rolls over. He's clearly asleep, but all six legs are sprawled out and his stomach is facing the sky. Lines of drool are running up his face and into the dirt.

NICK (as Mills): When I landed here I challenged an interesting guy to a Sabacc game. I managed to win. That's actually where the armor came from, too. This guy just kept betting and I just kept winning. It seemed like the Force was in my favor. So, once I had all the gear that I needed to do it, that's when I took over doing these safari guiding jobs.

CAMERON (as Karma): That is a super-high stakes Sabacc game.

NICK (as Mills): Yeah... I did bet my life multiple times to get to that point.

LILIT (as Xianna): Sometimes you just have to bet your clothes. Like, sometimes that is the only option left and that is what you do.

CAMERON (as Karma): Okay, but I feel like there's a difference between betting your clothes and betting your Mandalorian armor set.

NICK (as Mills): Well, to be fair, it is durasteel. It's not actual beskar.

CAMERON (as Karma): Okay, but still. Like, still impressive craftsmanship.

NICK (as Mills): It looks nice, right?

CAMERON (as Karma): It looks nice. Great paintjob.

NICK (as Mills): Oh thanks. I did that.

CAMERON (as Karma): Yup. Great. It would blend in very well on Unroola Dawn, actually.

NICK (as Mills): Yeah, that's kinda what I was thinking, if I ever got to go back. I wonder how my sister's doing.

NICK: He stares off into the distance.

NICK (as Mills): I'm sure she's fine. She's a tough lady. But what brings you out here? I can only imagine you've been fighting for the Rebellion and now you're out on a pleasure safari on Mandalore. That seems a little out of your forte.

HUDSON (as Tink): No one said anything about pleasure, yet.

NICK (as Mills): I just mean that it was for fun, big boy. Calm down.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh! Oh, okay.

CAMERON (as Karma): That is definitely part of it. We promised Tink we'd go on a safari a very long time ago.

NICK (as Mills): That's an interesting request. Why would you promise that?

HUDSON (as Tink): Hey, it involved the death of a crewmate. Have some respect.

LILIT (as Xianna): That guy was on our ship for like maybe a week or two.

HUDSON (as Tink): Sabos was an integral part of what makes our crew a crew.

NICK (as Mills): Who?

LILIT (as Xianna): He was there for like a week.

NICK (as Mills): I don't remember anyone named that.

CAMERON (as Karma): Uh, the Togruta with the rifle?

NICK (as Mills): Oh. I always assumed that was like a hostage or something. He wasn't with you the second time we met.

CAMERON (as Karma): Oh no, that's true.

NICK (as Mills): Huh.

CAMERON (as Karma): Yeah, no.

NICK (as Mills): Wow. So you're following up on a wish with a crewmate from that long ago, huh?

HUDSON (as Tink): [indignant] Don't judge me.

NICK (as Mills): I'm not judging. I'm really not. This job, I get a lot of weird answers. That one's just kind of new to me, that's all.

LILIT (as Xianna): Tink is just very sentimental.

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah, and safari just is that piece of the puzzle that I needed to complete the hole in my heart that was left behind by Sabos.

NICK: As you all are talking, you hear a loud ear-piercing scream coming from the distance. Mills holds up a hand and then smiles wide.

NICK (as Mills): Shriek hawk. Told you I guaranteed it. People come from all over the galaxy to hear that mournful cry.

NICK: Your ears hurt. This thing is very uncomfortable to hear even from a distance.

CAMERON (as Karma): [weakly] It's beautiful.

NICK (as Mills): It really is.

CAMERON: Karma's holding her head tails over where her ears would be, slightly, but is making it look like she's just resting her chin in her hands, but is definitely using them as earmuffs.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh! Mills! Mills.

NICK (as Mills): Yeah? What is it, Tink?

HUDSON (as Tink): Are we gonna see a mythosaur?

LILIT (as Xianna): Those don't exist, Tink! They're not real.

NICK: His brow furrows.

NICK (as Mills): For one thing, Xianna, they did exist.

LILIT (as Xianna): Well they're not real 'now.'

NICK (as Mills): Does being extinct mean that it's not real?

LILIT (as Xianna): Anymore, yes.

NICK (as Mills): They've been dead for thousands of years, Tink.

HUDSON (as Tink): What?! And no one told me?

LILIT (as Xianna): Tink, I am sure your education told you growing up.

NICK (as Mills): Even if they were real, they're one of the most terrifying creatures in the entire galaxy. You wouldn't want to go near one.

HUDSON (as Tink): I just think it would be really cool to see, and I would give you the highest ratings ever on the Holonet and tip you SO well if we got to see one.

NICK (as Mills): While that is a really good offer, Tink, it's not like I'm hiding the mythosaur from you. They're long extinct. No one's even seen bones of one.

LILIT (as Xianna): Oh, oh, wait! Tink, hold on.

LILIT: Xianna starts patting her pockets and rummaging through.

LILIT (as Xianna): I think I left a mythosaur in one of my pockets.

HUDSON (as Tink): Ha-ha. They're so much bigger than your pockets. You couldn't fit one in there.

LILIT (as Xianna): I mean, I don't know, maybe if I curled one up real small into a little ball.

HUDSON (as Tink): You're just playing.

LILIT (as Xianna): Maybe if you got a small one, like a baby.

HUDSON (as Tink): You're just playing with me.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes, I'm just joking. I mostly have spaghetti in my pockets right now.

CAMERON (as Karma): In the tupperware?

HUDSON: [laughs]

LILIT (as Xianna): Well, so some of the pockets are heat retaining, so they keep your food warm, and some of them are coolant pockets, so they keep your snacks nice and cool, so I do kind of just have the spaghetti free-floating in one of the pockets. The pocket unzips out of the entire coat so you can wash it in the dishwasher.

CAMERON (as Karma): Okay, that's good.

HUDSON (as Tink): You're walking around with loose spaghetti.

LILIT (as Xianna): Well like, it's in the zipper pocket.

HUDSON (as Tink): That's sloppy as hell.

LILIT (as Xianna): It's not like just loose falling out of the open pocket. It's in its little container, zipped up, still warm.

HUDSON (as Tink): Some animal is gonna smell that from a while away from here.

LILIT (as Xianna): No, it is like fully contained and smell-proof and everything.

NICK (as Mills): Whether it is or not, that's why we have the electric fence set up and old Balthazar here.

LILIT (as Xianna): Because if it wasn't, Creamsicle would get into my coat all the time and find my snacks.

HUDSON (as Tink): [disappointed grumble] Loose spaghetti...

LILIT (as Xianna): It's not loose! It is contained. It is loose inside of the pocket, but it's contained within the pocket.

CAMERON (as Karma): It's loosely contained.

NICK: We zoom out away from this argument around the campfire, and we see the Mandalore grasslands spread out, and we hear the mournful cry of a shriek hawk in the distance, and that's gonna be the end of the episode.

ALL: Ba-naaaa~!

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.

If you're so inclined, you can also help support the show through our Patreon which can be found in the show notes, on our website, and basically anywhere else we post things. We have all sorts of Patreon levels including Tarkin's Underwear Drawer, a level that includes bonus channels on our Discord and tons of bonus episodes that include side character arcs, flashbacks, bloopers and TV show reviews.

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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