

Tabletop Squadron Transcript – Season 2, Episode 35:
We Bought A Safari

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.

We have a few announcements today.

First, the 2021 Tabletop Squadron Virtual Convention will be October 8th to 10th. You can find panel information at bit.ly/TabletopCon2021. Regular panels will be free and open to all and will be hosted on our Twitch channel, twitch.tv/TabletopSquadron. There will be some after-hours events that are Patreon exclusives. More information on those will be released on our Patreon page closer to the events. There's also a limited edition con shirt that can be found on our TeePublic store at bit.ly/TabletopShop.

The con schedule is not yet finalized, so be sure to check for updates as we get closer. We hope to see you there.

Second, thanks to Dexter for the use of the NPCs Ripper and Doc featured in this episode. You too can submit NPCs by joining the \$10 Build-A-Beru level on our Patreon.

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

Now, let's get into the episode.

##

NICK: Hello! Welcome to Tabletop Squadron, Episode 35 – the second season and 35th anniversary of me getting the number of the episode correct every time. I'm your host and game master, Nick. Today we're gonna go around the table and everybody say who they are and who they're playing today starting with Cameron.

CAMERON: Hello! My name is Cameron, and I play Karma Nailo, a Nautolan bounty hunter.

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

HUDSON: Hi, I'm Hudson, and I play Tink, a Gigan slicer.

NICK: Perfect. Last but not least we've got Lilit.

LILIT: Hello. I am Lilit, and I play Xianna'fan, a Twi'lek smuggler, and I like the implication that we have been doing this for 35 years.

[laughter]

NICK: Oh yeah, anniversary would be an "annual" thing, hence the name, huh?

LILIT: Uh-huh. Yeah.

NICK: Yeah...

LILIT: Yeah.

NICK: Yeah.

CAMERON: Well, it's the anniversary of the 35th episode of the second season... 35th anniversary.

NICK: Time is hard.

HUDSON: The inaugural 35th episode of the second season.

LILIT: The inaugural anniversary of the 35th episode.

CAMERON: The anniversary of the 35th... yeah.

NICK: [laughs] Sixty percent of the time it's the anniversary every time.

CAMERON: [disappointed] No...

NICK: Yup.

CAMERON: [cringing] Nuh-uh.

LILIT: Yeah, we started this podcast in 1986.

NICK: Huh!

LILIT: None of us were born yet.

NICK: [laughs]

LILIT: But you know, we managed. We made it work, you know? #GirlBoss.

CAMERON: It's called dedication.

NICK: [laughs]

LILIT: It's called, you know—

CAMERON: Hustle!

LILIT: Wake and grind. You gotta go get that bread, you know? Hustle!

NICK: Before we get started with the recap for the episode, let's do the Destiny Roll~!

CAMERON: Two light side.

LILIT: One dark side.

HUDSON: One dark side.

##

NICK: So, last time on Tabletop Squadron, you all made it to Mandalore. You had finished having a lovely sit-down snack and magic show with Tink's parents, Rhonda and Mossie, and you went to go procure a way to travel out into the Mandalorian wilderness which you discovered the only real way to do that is by chartering a safari.

There was one speeder left, and the only way to get a reservation with the speeder was through a traditional trial by combat, which Karma succeeded at in flying colors, revealing that the Mandalorian you were combatting was actually Mills, a friend that you had met long ago, and you went on a wholesome and educational adventure to see animals in the Mandalorian grasslands. You saw many different animals and you were very excited about this, and then you made camp for the evening, and that's where we are going to kick it off.

##

NICK: We open on the crew of the Afternoon Delight breaking camp the next morning. Balthazar the strill is wandering the perimeter and sniffing. Mills, your guide, is packing the equipment and electric fence back into the speeder, and the crew are standing around in the early morning light waiting for it to be time to leave. What is everyone doing after spending a night roughing it in the grasslands as they wait for camp to finish breaking down?

CAMERON: Eating some breakfast spaghetti, obviously.

NICK: Oh yes, that traditional treat. Is it still good? Has it started to get crispy yet?

CAMERON: Why would it get crispy?

NICK: That happens when you leave spaghetti out long enough.

LILIT: It's not out. It was in tupperware.

CAMERON: It's not—Yeah.

LILIT: It was protected.

HUDSON: If anything it would get more soggy.

LILIT: Yeah.

NICK: So are you all eating breakfast spaghetti? [chuckles]

LILIT & HUDSON: Yes.

NICK: Okay.

LILIT: I'm assuming Tink and Karma are eating it out of tupperware, but Xianna is eating it out of her spaghetti pocket.

CAMERON: [laughs]

NICK: Okay, I have questions about the spaghetti pocket and now's the time to get into it.

LILIT: It's not solely a spaghetti pocket. Sometimes it's a soup pocket or, you know, a nerf rib pocket. It can hold pizza. It is a heat... It is a thermal insulating pocket.

NICK: So the question is, though, is Xianna sitting down with the jacket held up by her face, eating with a fork? Have you detached the pocket and are eating out of it like a pouch? Are you using hands? Are you using silverware? Do you keep silverware in your jacket specifically for these purposes? I have to know.

LILIT: Yes, of course Xianna has silverware in her coat. It's not always the same silverware, but are we gonna act like Xianna doesn't always take at least a fork from every restaurant she goes to?

NICK: This is fair. This is true.

LILIT: At the very least she's stealing a fork if not a whole set of silverware and the cup when she goes to a restaurant, especially if it's a chain restaurant. Duh. So, she has a fork. She would never eat spaghetti with her hands. What even is that question? I feel insulted.

[laughter]

NICK: So, is Xianna just surreptitiously dipping a fork into an inside pocket and then pulling it out with a twirl of spaghetti on it, or... what is the technique here?

LILIT: No, she is very proudly eating spaghetti out of a pocket that is just on the bottom half of the coat. She's not holding it up to her face or anything, she has confidence in her spaghetti-twirling ability.

CAMERON: [chuckles]

LILIT: Also, it's a black coat, so it's not like it's gonna stain or anything.

NICK: This is a point.

LILIT: I'm sure it's also waterproof and non-stick. It's Star Wars.

NICK: They don't have washing machines or buttons, so...

CAMERON: That's true.

NICK: Clothes just have to be indestructible. So, as you are eating your spaghetti and the sun is beginning to rise, Mills finishes packing up the camp and calls to you all from the speeder.

NICK (as Mills): Hey, it's time to go. You ready to continue your, uh, your life-changing once-in-a-lifetime trip through Mandalorian wilderness and learn about animals?

NICK: You can see he's reading off of a little cue card he pulled out of his pocket to try to hit the main points as a safari guide.

CAMERON: That's adorable.

CAMERON (as Karma): I am super ready to see some more animals, Mills.

NICK: He nods thanks to you and gestures towards the elevated seats on the speeder.

NICK (as Mills): Well, climb aboard, adventurers. Perhaps today we will see the elusive stathas or more Fanned Rawls or other creatures.

HUDSON (as Tink): I'm ready-spaghetti.

HUDSON: And I swallow my last piece of spaghetti.

NICK: [smiling exhale] You all climb up into this speeder and you take off. We get another montage of you all riding low over the grasses, occasionally stopping to observe animals in scrubby trees or the brush. You do see a stathas which is like... it's just a komodo dragon. It's a komodo dragon. You see a stathas and it's very cool, and it starts to chase after the speeder. You notice most of these creatures at some point try to kill you, but Mills is an expert of maneuvering.

Around lunch time you're still continuing. He's handed out sandwiches for you all and is driving to the next watering hole to see what creatures he can find. I need you all to make a survival check for me at average difficulty.

CAMERON: Oh no.

LILIT: For me, that is three successes and one advantage.

CAMERON: Just one success for Karma.

HUDSON: Two failures.

##

NICK: So Tink doesn't notice. He's a little wrapped up in the memory lane of what him and Sabos had apparently planned for this trip when they were going to go. But Karma and Xianna, you both notice around the same time. The route that Mills is taking isn't straight.

He had said he was going to bring you into the heart of this grassland to see everything and that you would turn around and come back, but there's an area in a shallow bowl in the landscape. It's kilometers wide, but you can tell that he never goes downhill. There's a part of this reserve that he's avoiding and he's trying to do it subtly, but you notice it just from the directions and keeping track of where you are that there's clearly an area he's trying not to go to.

LILIT (as Xianna): Mills, why are we not going over in that area?

NICK: Mills is driving and you see his head hunch a little between his shoulders. I think you all have little headsets with microphones on them so you can talk over the sound of the speeder.

NICK (as Mills): Oh, uh... there's nothing really interesting over there. Look, this way, there's more shriek hawks. Remember how—

LILIT (as Xianna): No. No Mills, what is the super cool thing you are hiding from us?

NICK (as Mills): I'm not trying to hide anything. There's nothing there. It's like... It's like a shadowy area. We never go there. You should never go there.

LILIT (as Xianna): Is that where the petting zoo is? Because you haven't let us pet any of the animals yet.

NICK (as Mills): You've seen that almost all of them are venomous or can spit acid or have massive claws, right?

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes, and I don't see the problem.

CAMERON (as Karma): I don't think there's a petting zoo out here, Xianna.

NICK (as Mills): Karma's right.

LILIT (as Xianna): Why not?! Why can there not be a petting zoo?

NICK (as Mills): There is no petting zoo.

LILIT (as Xianna): Wait. What do you mean there's no petting zoo? I want to pet the animals.

CAMERON (as Karma): There could be one on Mandalore, I don't know, but I think that's gonna be SEPARATE from the safari.

LILIT (as Xianna): Why would you not have a petting zoo?

CAMERON (as Karma): So they can charge you more money, obviously.

LILIT (as Xianna): I know, but I want to feed some little animals.

NICK: At this point during the argument, Balthazar, the hairless strill, is climbing awkwardly over the seats towards the back. He has six legs, so they're kind of galumphing and stepping over. They manage to step on Tink's crotch and get kinda stuck on Karma's shoulder and it's very awkward. This giant 200 pound creature is now sitting in Xianna's lap and rolls over. It's got all these flaps of skin between its legs and it smells really bad, and it's panting and looking at you. Like, it'll take pets.

LILIT: Xianna does start petting it and does pull out a bantha cake from a pocket and starts breaking off little pieces and feeding it.

NICK: Oh, it definitely wraps its toothy maw around your hand and pulls free and you just have one little piece pinched in one hand and a slobbery empty hand in the other and that's it.

LILIT (as Xianna): Who's a good boy? Who's a good boy?! Balthazar is a good boy, yes.

NICK: As you're scratching his tummy his leg starts to kick, several of them, and the leg starts to kick where you're scratching so you pull your hands back so you don't get hit with the claws and he's hitting his own kick spot so his legs are just turning into like a Sonic the Hedgehog spinning wheel.

CAMERON: [laughs]

LILIT (as Xianna): Oh fuck. Oh no. Oh... oh, oh no. Okay. But Mills, we are obviously not going over to that area, so what super cool thing are you hiding from us?

NICK: Why don't you roll me a Charm check? See if you can get Mills to just straight tell you. It's gonna be a hard difficulty with a black die.

LILIT: Joke's on you, I have Kill With Kindness which allows me to remove a black die from all Charm and Leadership checks. I'm also going to use my skill Congenial. I can suffer a number of strain to downgrade the difficulty of a Charm or Negotiation check.

HUDSON: Take it all away.

LILIT: So I'm going to take 1 strain to reduce that check to average difficulty, and... that's all I got. That is one success and two advantages.

NICK: Mills realizes you're not gonna drop the subject. He looks over his shoulder and sees you... I guess just holding Balthazar, since Balthazar's basically just scratching himself at this point. He's got it covered. He turns the speeder down and lands and turns the bucket seat around so that he can look at you and takes his headset off, because you're not that far away from him, it's just loud.

NICK (as Mills): Look. There's some sort of boundary over there. There's a facility of some kind. All of the safari guides were told to stay out of that area, that it was very dangerous, or we could lose our licenses to come out here. That's how I'm making my living right now. It seems very under the table, like dispatch is getting paid, we get paid a little. I'm not sure if there's bandits or black marketeers or what, but I am not supposed to take anybody over there.

LILIT (as Xianna): Oh shit. That's probably where Kettle is.

CAMERON (as Karma): Yeah. Is that the middle?

NICK (as Mills): Yeah, it's pretty well close to the middle I would say.

CAMERON (as Karma): Yeah, okay, that's where we're trying to go.

NICK (as Mills): Ugh... I really don't want to take you there, though, is the thing.

LILIT (as Xianna): I mean, you just have to take us close. We'll get in the rest of the way. We know the person running the illegal facility.

NICK (as Mills): So, the other thing is what am I supposed to do? Just wait in the area I'm not supposed to be until you get back? I can't just—

LILIT (as Xianna): No, you wait "outside" the area you're not supposed to be. Duh.

NICK (as Mills): Okay, you're gonna need to pay me for this. There's no way that I just do this and risk losing my job.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okay. Tink, pay him.

HUDSON (as Tink): Do you not remember my recent betting incident?

CAMERON: [laughs]

LILIT (as Xianna): Karma! Karma, do you have money?

NICK (as Mills): Look, we have a long history. I'll do it for 1,000 Credits. I'll stay on-call. I'll come pick you up when you need me to. I don't want anything to happen to you, but I can't go back without you because they tend to frown on safari guides going out with guests and coming back with no one. That's what you call murder.

HUDSON (as Tink): I think we can come to an agreement in something that's not monetary.

HUDSON: And I wink.

NICK: He looks really uncomfortable at that. [laughs]

LILIT (as Xianna): Tink, you have to stop doing that. It doesn't mean what you think it means!

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh... Well, I meant we could, like, have a series of Rock Paper Scissors competitions or a nice crisp IOU that I've written down.

NICK (as Mills): Hmm...

CAMERON: Karma already has her wallet out and has been going through it. [laughs]

LILIT (as Xianna): Karma. Karma, do you have 1,000 Credits? Can we expense that? I know you pay taxes. Can you like write that off on your taxes as a business expense?

CAMERON (as Karma): I actually can, yes.

[laughter]

HUDSON (as Tink): We pay taxes?

LILIT (as Xianna): Karma does. I don't.

CAMERON (as Karma): It's part of the requirement for being in the bounty hunter guild. Yeah.

NICK (as Mills): Alright... Fine, I'll do it, but only because I like you three.

NICK: He glances pointedly at HK and then turns back to the rest of you. So Karma, you give him 1,000 Credits?

CAMERON: Yup.

NICK: Okay. You toss him a couple of gold bars with no marks of denomination on it, but it's very clearly 1,000 Credits, obviously.

CAMERON: Obviously. They're all different shapes, but they are the same monetary amount and it equals 1,000 Credits.

NICK: He bites on one, smiles, and slides them into a slot in his armor, and you begin to drive into the center of the wilderness. It looks the same starting out, just a slight downward slope, but very quickly you can see, as you go further in, the horizon seems to get closer as you go more and more into this "bowl."

It's not a thing that you would really notice if you weren't looking out for it, but it feels more claustrophobic and you see less and less of the sky. The grass starts to die and become more rocky. The speeder is juttering as you get closer. There is a copse of rocks and Mills sets it down and calls Balthazar who scrambles out of your lap, Xianna, and goes back to the front seat. It hurts, because Balthazar has six elbows and they all manage to hit you in the kidneys as he's scrambling to get out of your lap.

CAMERON: Does he have elbows or knees?

NICK: I don't know.

LILIT: Yes.

[laughter]

NICK: So Mills sets down the speeder.

NICK (as Mills): You can keep going. I'm just going to stay here. Here's my com number. You can radio out when you've finished whatever you need to do. I don't wanna know. Have fun, I guess. Try not to die. You have 24 hours and then I'm leaving you no matter what it looks like.

LILIT (as Xianna): [with attitude] Okay fine. Be that way, Mills.

NICK (as Mills): I'm going to be that way. That's why I'm here and camping.

LILIT (as Xianna): I know, that's why I said it.

NICK (as Mills): Good. It seems like we're agreed, then.

HUDSON (as Tink): You know what You know what? I think we're better than this. I think we can do it in under 18 hours.

CAMERON (as Karma): [sharply] Tink...

LILIT (as Xianna): Don't set that kind of limitation for us.

CAMERON (as Karma): It's very possible, however let's not limit the timeframe that we have to get back any more than 24 hours.

HUDSON (as Tink): See, you're thinking within limits, I'm thinking limitless. I'm thinking we need new challenges aboard the crew.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okay, okay, Tink. I bet you next movie night, next movie night, who gets to pick the movie, okay? I am betting that it takes us longer than 18 hours.

HUDSON (as Tink): I'm betting it takes us under 18 hours.

NICK (as Mills): I was gonna go in on the bet for more money, but I guess you all have that covered.

LILIT (as Xianna): Well no, you can't bet because you're not invited to movie night.

HUDSON (as Tink): Whoa. Whoa! Why aren't they invited to movie night?

LILIT (as Xianna): He's not going to be on our ship for the next movie night.

NICK (as Mills): I'm not getting on your ship. There's no way. I'm not doing that.

HUDSON (as Tink): It's a nice ship. But okay, it's a deal. The bet is agreed upon. What movie would you even want to watch if we win?

LILIT (as Xianna): I'd want to watch The Coruscant Job. I like the little mini speeder chase scenes.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh... What I would make us watch is Star Trek 3: The Search for Spock. I like the whales in it.

NICK: [laughs] You all make this bet on who will get to pick the movie for the next movie night, and Mills, as a neutral third party, starts a timer on his data pad. You can see large white numbers ticking upwards.

NICK (as Mills): Well, I guess time starts now, so have fun. I do feel it's important to remind you that while the over-under may be at 18 hours, at 24 you all are stranded out here with all the ravenous and super-deadly animals, so you're gonna wanna get under that 24 hour mark.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yeah-yeah, I know.

HUDSON (as Tink): Do bathroom breaks and snack times count toward the hour?

CAMERON (as Karma): Yes.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes! It is when we get back here.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh...

LILIT (as Xianna): Not the total amount of time we spend infiltrating or whatever.

CAMERON (as Karma): Alright, let's go~

HUDSON (as Tink): Let's go~

CAMERON: Karma does a Mandalorian fist-bump with Mills as she leaves the speeder. [giggles]

NICK: What's the difference between a Mandalorian fist-bump and a normal fist-bump?

CAMERON: The Mandalorian one makes a metal clinking sound when it happens.

NICK: Very good. I'm glad I asked.

##

NICK: You all continue down this slope and around this pile of rocks. After about a ten minute walk the pile of rocks is up above you. You can't see that there's a speeder there, it's very well-concealed. Mills is a good pilot.

You see a low duracrete building nestled within some hills down towards the bottom of this basin. You can see that there's a fence around this facility that seems to be made out of thorny bushes wrapped around scrubby trees. It's sort of half hedge, half fence. Besides the main building there are a few prefab buildings stuck within this little facility and there's people moving to and fro.

It looks like some sort of either scientific outpost or almost a military camp except there aren't really enough people for that. You can see two Twi'leks standing at the only gap in the fence. They look bored but alert. They see you. There's not really any cover. There's no way to sneak up or get close—

LILIT: No-no, Xianna's not trying to sneak up. Xianna is walking and is waving, going:

LILIT (as Xianna): Ello~

NICK: They see the four of you walking up and they wave back. You get within speaking distance and you get a good look at them.

LILIT (as Xianna): We are here to speak to Kettle. I know her.

NICK: As you get close, you see that these two gate guards are Twi'leks. They look like gangsters, essentially. They look like the kind of people you would hire to do dirty jobs and take care of things that people don't want getting out. Very obviously armed for, if not conflict, for hard living.

There is an orange Twi'lek. She's wearing a vest that leaves her arms exposed and you can see that one is cybernetic and has what looks like stim packs built into the forearm. Her lekku have floral and plant patterns all the way down them and they kinda look like tattoo sleeves the way the patterns mix together. It's very pretty.

The person standing with them is a white Twi'lek. They have a headset with a holographic display pulled up and what looks basically like a mask pulled up over their nose and lots of glowing parts everywhere. Very clearly attached to the Holonet and not necessarily paying as much attention.

The orange Twi'lek waves at you as you say hello.

NICK (as orange Twi'lek): Hey there. It's good to see you. This area is completely off limits to the public on pain of death. You may not want to be here, gonna be honest.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okay, but we are not "the public." We know Kettle.

NICK (as orange Twi'lek): Oh, you know Kettle.

NICK: The other Twi'lek doesn't talk, but their headset starts to scroll faster, you can tell. There's some lekku language from the white Twi'lek and the orange Twi'lek laughs. Xianna, you can't quite make it out from the angle they're standing at.

NICK (as orange Twi'lek): Yeah, they are kinda stupid to just walk right in and say that they know Kettle. That is a very risky decision. You're right, Ripper. I'm Doc, by the way. Just so we know who we're talking to here, what are your names?

LILIT (as Xianna): Okay, like we were supposed to sneak in with a Gigan? Okay? Like, we can't hide him out in the grass. Look at him.

HUDSON (as Tink): Look at me.

CAMERON: [laughs]

LILIT (as Xianna): What were we supposed to do? Of course we are just going to walk up here. If you just tell Kettle that Xianna is here... You could honestly just say a purple Twi'lek. She'd probably know. Like... I think she'll want to talk to us.

CAMERON: There's a shot of the four of us with the grassland behind us. We've got someone who's green, someone who's purple, a giant white fluffy person, and a red robot. We don't blend in at all! [giggles]

NICK: The white Twi'lek, Ripper, kind of shrugs and they glance again at Doc.

NICK (as Doc): I'm not saying that you should have snuck in. I agree, that probably wouldn't have been the best choice. I'm saying that you shouldn't have come here in the first place. There's no way you need anything here or that there's anything interesting going on. We're just doing some very basic wildlife research.

LILIT (as Xianna): [groaning] Oh my gosh. Like, again, just com Kettle and tell her that Xianna is here.

NICK: Ripper pulls their mask down and smiles. You can see that their teeth are all filed very sharp.

NICK (as Ripper): Nobody interrupts the boss, especially not for some trespassers. We already have orders there.

NICK: And pulls the mask back up.

LILIT (as Xianna): Ugh... I don't want to call her myself, mostly because I don't remember what her number is. It's somewhere in my com system, but it would take me a while.

NICK: Doc puts their hand on the butt of their blaster pistol that's at their hip.

NICK (as Doc): Rip's right, and the standing orders are to shoot anybody who approaches, so... you're gonna need to give us one good reason not to follow our orders because I don't wanna clean blood off my boots. That's why we're still talking right now.

LILIT (as Xianna): I don't know. Do you want some drugs or something?

NICK (as Doc): Yes.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okay.

NICK (as Doc): But that's not necessarily going to make us call Kettle.

LILIT (as Xianna): Ugh. Okay fine. If I give you some drugs, would you give me like ten minutes to go through my coms and figure out which Geonosian emoji phone number is actually hers?

NICK: Doc and Ripper lock eyes. You can see that their facial expression is changing like they're having a conversation but their mouths don't move and their head tails don't move either. It's just a silent exchange of eyes. Then Doc looks back at you.

NICK (as Doc): What kind of drugs, exactly?

LILIT: Xianna starts rifling through her pockets.

LILIT (as Xianna): So like, I have some death sticks, I have some impact, I still think I have a single vial of glitterstim. Um... I have a glow stick necklace. Wait, no, you can't have the glow stick necklace. That's for Sentinel. Never mind.

NICK (as Doc): Tell you what. We'll give you Kettle's com number in exchange for five doses of impact. Eh, six. I don't want to argue with Ripper again about who gets the extra dose.

LILIT (as Xianna): Ugh, okay fine!

LILIT: Xianna pulls out six baggies and hands them over.

NICK: Ripper moves very quickly and snatches them out of your hand and they disappear into various zippered pockets in a practiced gesture that seems very familiar to you. Doc tosses a little business card of flimsy to you with a practiced two-fingered flick, and you have the com number and you can give Kettle a call.

LILIT: First, Xianna goes through the eight numbers saved in her system that are just the little Geonosian emoji.

NICK: Mm-hmm.

LILIT: And finds the one that lines up with this number, and just adds a crown emoji.

CAMERON: [laughs]

NICK: Ah, good move.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okay, now I will know which one is Kettle.

LILIT: Then she dials up the com number.

NICK: It rings for a long time before it picks up and you just hear a voice respond.

NICK (as Kettle): Go.

LILIT (as Xianna): Kettle, it is Xianna, and we are outside, and it is hot out here, and your two little guard Twi'leks won't let us in so I had to give them drugs to get your com number because I forgot it. And it's really hot, and I don't want to be out here anymore. Can you let us in so we can talk?

NICK (as Kettle): Sorry, who is this?

LILIT (as Xianna): Xianna. You know, the purple Twi'lek. I left you an IOU. Or you gave me an IOU and so then I gave it back to you, because I beat you in Sabacc so I got the IOU but then I gave it back because I think we stole... Did we steal underwear? Is that what we stole?

HUDSON (as Tink): Wasn't it a coat?

LILIT (as Xianna): No. Well, I thought it was once a coat but then it got turned into underwear.

NICK: The com clicks off, like Kettle hung up, and then there's a long pause and Ripper puts their fingers to their ear on their headset and nods a couple of times, and then looks back to Doc and shrugs again, kind of wide-eyed.

NICK (as Doc): Okay, I guess you're cleared to talk to the boss. I'm sorry for the delay... People have stumbled in here once again always saying things like "oh, we're being hunted by strills" or "hey, can we have some water, we're dying," and it's just really inconvenient, so... yeah. I guess follow us?

NICK: They turn and they head into the facility.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okie.

LILIT: Xianna turns around.

LILIT (as Xianna): Karma, it was like underwear, right?

CAMERON (as Karma): Yeah, it was definitely a golden thong.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yeah, that's what I thought.

CAMERON (as Karma): I think there was also some armor?

LILIT (as Xianna): Was there a half-cape or something?

CAMERON (as Karma): Yeah, I think there were two pieces.

NICK (as HK): Extrapolatory Statement: It was called the Heart Breaker Robe and you did not manage to secure it. It was stolen by Illith in the process.

LILIT (as Xianna): Well, I mean, we stole it from Kettle and then somebody stole it from us.

NICK: As you walk through, you see that there are a lot of different Star Wars species here. You see several Kaminoans walking around, they're all in lab coats. You even see a couple of Jawas in white

robes wandering around. It looks like they're working on some of the atmospheric controls of some of these prefab buildings.

Ripper and Doc lead you into the largest building. You can see a huge marble entryway with a gigantic animal skeleton perched in the middle and there's a spiral staircase wrapping around the room up behind it. There's a very large banner that proclaims Welcome in jagged letters. The two Twi'leks don't even register the scene, they're just walking past that room and into a well-appointed office.

It has floor to ceiling windows that look out across the grasslands. You can see some strills hunting small rodents through the grasses in the far distance. The glass of the window has holo screens in it that zoom in on animal life, so you can always see really well what's going on at pretty much any distance in that direction.

Seated behind the desk you see a Geonosian. Her wings are slightly shredded as they sit over the back of the chair. Her face and shoulders are scarred, and she is holding a pen and writing on the data pad on top of this desk, and looks up as you come in.

NICK (as Kettle): Oh, it's the entire crew. Isn't that fun? Doc, Ripper, you can go ahead and go back to your post in case we get any other visitors today. Thank you.

LILIT (as Xianna): Thank you, bye!

NICK: For the first time, you see Doc and Ripper looking respectful and a little afraid, and they both give a slight bow and back out of the room. The door slides shut behind them, and you are alone with Kettle, the Queen of the Underworld, ruler of an entire criminal organization and all-around scary lady.

HUDSON (as Tink): Could I get a sparkling water? I'm parched.

LILIT (as Xianna): Oh my god, Tink. You have to like wait for them to ask first.

HUDSON (as Tink): Sorry. Sorry, I'll wait.

NICK (as Kettle): Tink, can I get you a sparkling water?

HUDSON (as Tink): Yeah.

NICK: Without breaking eye contact, she hits a button on her desk and an astromech droid tootles in. It has one of those serving platters on top of its head and a bunch of empty glasses. As it gets close to you it tootles and then a spray of water goes into one of the glasses and its head rotates to put it close to you.

HUDSON (as Tink): Thank you.

NICK (as Kettle): You're very welcome. Does anyone else want anything?

CAMERON (as Karma): I'm good. Thank you.

LILIT (as Xianna): I'm okay. Thank you.

HUDSON (as Tink): HK, what about you?

NICK (as HK): I do not consume liquids.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh yeah.

NICK: Kettle sits back in her chair and steeple her fingers on the arms of this... it's one of those round captain's chairs with the low backs with the ladder backing and the wide armrests. She steeple her fingers together and she says:

NICK (as Kettle): Great. I'm glad everyone's comfortable, because that means that now I can ask... what kind of balls do you have to have to walk into my base of operations having stolen from me?!

NICK: She's just glaring daggers at Xianna.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okay. I didn't actually steal from you, because you gave me an IOU and then I used that IOU when we attempted to steal the thong, the underwear.

NICK (as Kettle): I think you are vastly overestimating the value of an IOU for a game of Sabacc I lost on purpose.

LILIT (as Xianna): It was some underwear. You know? It was fine.

NICK (as Kettle): If it wasn't bad enough that robe had been destroyed by a fashion conglomerate, I don't even have it anymore. My entire facility that was going to be a huge front for money laundering by being a tourist attraction didn't have anything because you destroyed my robotic guardians and got rid of the artifact the entire thing was based around. Do you know how many millions of credits I lost on that?

NICK: You can see that she's tapping her fingers impatiently on her desk and that there are several buttons on the desk besides the one that summon the astromech. Her finger keeps lightly touching a red one specifically, and you can see she's thinking better of it, but she keeps almost pressing it.

LILIT (as Xianna): Look, I'm sure we can work something out, but you know, it was business and we were told we had to go steal that one. I mean, we were supposed to steal it before anybody bought it, so like oopsie-doopsie, that is our bad.

NICK (as Kettle): Oopsie-doopsie indeed.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes. So like, I very much apologize for that one. However, you now have something else we are supposed to come here to get, because like, we're not supposed to "talk" about these things, but we are working with somebody who used to be in some sort of Force-type cult that you know was like central to the galaxy and like had forces and then were like destroyed...

HUDSON (as Tink): Rhymes with Shredi.

LILIT (as Xianna): And now they're kind of working against the Empire, and we are supposed to collect objects that are important because somebody else is trying to collect them and use them for evil. We're trying to get them to take down the Empire?

LILIT: Turns to Karma.

LILIT (as Xianna): Is that right?

CAMERON: Karma has been standing there. She's got her carbine in front of her and has her arms crossed, like leaning on top of the carbine, and has just been picking at her nails.

CAMERON (as Karma): That is about accurate, yes.

NICK (as Kettle): So you found a Jedi remnant who's attempting to use the Shattered Force to destroy the Emperor, and you've been their errand people?

LILIT (as Xianna): Okay yes, that exactly.

CAMERON (as Karma): See? That was a very good explanation. She got it right away.

NICK (as Kettle): Eh, she danced around it a little bit, which I understand considering how powerful these artifacts are. But what brings you here? You already stole the Heart Breaker Robe.

LILIT (as Xianna): Well—

NICK (as Kettle): Whether or not you can hold onto it is your problem, not mine.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okay. Okay... So yeah, somebody did steal it from us. We hadn't even left the planet, so if you really think about it, "did we" actually steal it? Because they were just going to steal it anyways, so like, it was going to get stolen even if I didn't personally take it out of the little display case.

NICK (as Kettle): You're of course referring to Illith Utena Hatake, known fashion thief and overall heartthrob.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yes, them.

NICK (as Kettle): Hmm.

NICK: Kettle stands up from the chair and turns around, like bad guy style, with her arms clasped behind her back and looks out the window. You can see that she's actually wearing a blue and gold cape that looks very familiar to you.

LILIT (as Xianna): Oh... okay. Did you get it back from them?

NICK (as Kettle): For all you know, this could be a replica.

LILIT (as Xianna): It's probably not. I'm just going to assume.

NICK (as Kettle): No... No, it's probably not.

LILIT (as Xianna): I'm glad you got it back. We would have given it back to you, we just kind of need to borrow it for whatever reason. I don't know, the Force shit. So like... you know, in a way it worked itself out. The Force works in mysterious ways.

NICK (as Kettle): So I've been told...

NICK: She turns back around but doesn't sit back down in her chair. You can see she's thinking.

NICK (as Kettle): So here's the part of your plan that doesn't make sense to me. How were you planning on getting this artifact from me, or any others that I might have? I'm obviously not going to give them up.

LILIT (as Xianna): We were going to ask nicely and maybe offer to do some sort of job in exchange. You know, a quid pro quo? Is that the term?

NICK (as Kettle): It would have to be one hell of a job.

HUDSON (as Tink): Wait a second, though. Kettle. Kettle... What is it that you want more than anything in the entire world that you don't have?

NICK (as Kettle): For life to be restored to my planet that was destroyed by the Empire to cover up the conspiracy of the Clone Wars.

[brief but heavy pause]

LILIT (as Xianna): And you know, Kettle, if we destroy the Empire, then that would be a step towards, you know, restoring your planet.

HUDSON (as Tink): Or what if we go to the planet—Wait. So wait, when you say it was destroyed, like, is there any left?

LILIT (as Xianna): I mean it wasn't like an Alderaan situation.

HUDSON (as Tink): Okay, that's what I was asking. If there's anything left, we make it into the greatest memorial slash museum you've ever seen, and I've built a few of those.

NICK (as Kettle): Wow.

HUDSON: I wink at everyone.

NICK (as Kettle): I didn't know it was possible for me, a heartless crime lord, to be genuinely offended by a suggestion, but that really did it.

LILIT (as Xianna): Tink... shush, no talk.

HUDSON (as Tink): Okay...

LILIT: Xianna turns back.

LILIT (as Xianna): You know, because again, if we destroy the Empire then that would be a step towards restoring your planet, and we could do a job for you that would help in that process or something, and... we could, like steal credits for you or something from the Empire. You know... I don't know.

HUDSON (as Tink): Kettle, are you single?

CAMERON (as Karma): I don't like where this question is gonna lead.

LILIT (as Xianna): Tink, stop asking people if they are single!

NICK (as Kettle): For the sake of curiosity, yes Tink, I am single. Why do you ask?

HUDSON (as Tink): What if we could play match maker and find the love of your life?

CAMERON (as Karma): Oh gosh.

LILIT (as Xianna): Tink, no.

NICK (as Kettle): No-no, let's see where he's going with this.

HUDSON (as Tink): Wouldn't that just mean the world to you? Like, more so than any artifact that you could be just holding, you know, around your neck or on your back.

NICK (as Kettle): Hmm... Do you have an option readily in mind?

HUDSON (as Tink): Uh... So, I have options, yes, however I would need a sidebar so I can consult with the rest of my crewmates to get the list down to three.

NICK (as HK): Concerned Statement: Tink, this does not make any sense in a high-stakes negotiation. I am concerned that we are going to die. Tink, why are you doing this?

LILIT (as Xianna): Yeah, I would much rather risk our lives doing a very high-stakes heist or like murder somebody than try to do this.

NICK (as Kettle): No-no-no, I would love to hear what nice people Tink thinks are romantically compatible with me. Take your time, I'll wait.

NICK: Kettle sits back in her chair.

HUDSON: [laughs]

LILIT: Xianna pulls everyone for a huddle.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okay Tink, what the kriff? Who are you thinking of?

HUDSON (as Tink): Alright y'all, the only person I can think of is Donny Donaldson.

CAMERON (as Karma): Oh... What?

LILIT (as Xianna): The hole guy? That fills the holes?

HUDSON (as Tink): The what?

CAMERON (as Karma): Hole.

LILIT (as Xianna): The holes, in the ground.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh, the holes. I thought you said the old guy.

LILIT (as Xianna): No. I mean, I also don't know how old Donny Donaldson is.

NICK (as HK): Suggestive Statement: Maybe Kettle just needs a hole filled. Wink, wink.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh...

LILIT (as Xianna): Oh HK...

CAMERON (as Karma): Oh gosh, please don't say that any louder, HK.

LILIT (as Xianna): HK, that is inappropriate.

HUDSON (as Tink): Alright, who else do we know who's single and ready to—[gasps] Wait!

CAMERON (as Karma): Oh no.

HUDSON (as Tink): Okay. So I know that they said they were gonna wait outside the danger area for us, but what if we brought in Mills?

CAMERON: [laughs loudly]

LILIT (as Xianna): I don't know if... Is Mills single?

HUDSON (as Tink): Mills is definitely single. There's no ring.

LILIT (as Xianna): [gasps] Is Val single? She seems spunky enough to date a crime lord.

NICK (as HK): Val really strikes me as someone with a tragic romantic backstory who is maybe not ready for another commitment.

CAMERON (as Karma): Okay, well that's fair. I don't know, my mind keeps saying Sentinel and I feel like that's not appropriate either.

NICK (as HK): Karma, your two twin boys, Jet and Juke, are they single?

CAMERON (as Karma): Um, I think Juke is?

NICK (as HK): You should call him on the com and see if he is interested in getting into a romantic relationship with Kettle, Queen of the Underworld.

CAMERON (as Karma): Um... hmm.

LILIT (as Xianna): Wait. We should maybe figure out what Kettle's whole deal is. Like, does she like younger people? Does she like older people? Humanoids? Non-humanoids? Is there a gender preference there?

CAMERON (as Karma): I feel like we're missing some necessary information to be making this finalist list for you, Tink.

LILIT: Xianna pops her head up.

LILIT (as Xianna): Kettle, do you like younger people or older people?

NICK (as Kettle): Oh, I'm not picky.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okay. Okay. How many legs and arms do they need to have? Like, are you okay with a bunch of arms or do you want to stick with just a few? What are you looking for?

NICK (as Kettle): I tend to prefer two legs, but number of arms is negotiable.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okay. Okay.

HUDSON (as Tink): Would you rather them be lucky or hot?

NICK (as Kettle): It has to be both or no deal.

HUDSON (as Tink): Okay.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okay. Okay. Are we working with any gender preferences?

NICK (as Kettle): Nope.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okay. Okay. I mean, I know Val maybe has a tragic backstory, but again, I feel like she's the only one. Maybe Mills. So we put Val and Mills on the list.

HUDSON (as Tink): Yes.

LILIT (as Xianna): Because like, this could be a rebound for Val, you know? They don't have to stay together long-term.

HUDSON (as Tink): That's good. That's good. When I said three, I can just come in really excited and say well, I said top three, but fortunately for you we've actually narrowed it down to two, like it's better.

CAMERON (as Karma): [chuckles]

NICK (as Kettle): I'm waiting.

HUDSON (as Tink): Alright, we're gonna go with that.

LILIT (as Xianna): We gotta know somebody else.

[laughter]

NICK: You all know so many people!

CAMERON (as Karma): You know Tink, you're just gonna have to pick the third person on the fly. Ready, set, go. Alright, Tink is ready to give you your options, Kettle.

NICK (as Kettle): Great. Tink, come a little bit closer to the desk, you four, so I can hear you. I hate shouting across the room like this.

HUDSON (as Tink): Alright. We have a magnificent list of three finalists for you today, Kettle. Are you excited? Tell me you're excited.

NICK (as Kettle): [flatly] I'm... excited.

HUDSON (as Tink): First up on our list we have Mills! Mills is a very strong and powerful, um... warrior. Help me out, guys.

LILIT (as Xianna): They are Human. Yes, Mills is a soldier, warrior, now doing the whole Mandalorian thing. He's got the armor and everything. Very strong. Could carry you on his shoulders. You know, very romantic.

CAMERON (as Karma): Loves animals. Hates trees.

NICK (as Kettle): Okay.

LILIT (as Xianna): He's already here on the planet, so there would be no long-distance problems.

NICK (as Kettle): Alright, that's intriguing. Intriguing. What else you got?

HUDSON (as Tink): Next up we have Valorissia. Goes by Val for short. I'll let Xianna take it away.

LILIT (as Xianna): This one is also Human. She once beat up Tink in a bar fight. She's sassy. She likes explosions. You know, so I think that would be a good match.

CAMERON (as Karma): Brilliant engineer.

NICK (as Kettle): Okay... I feel like we're honing in on something. They don't have a tragic but as-yet-unrevealed backstory with romance, do they?

CAMERON (as Karma): Oh, they 100% do.

LILIT (as Xianna): No idea. I can't say that for sure.

HUDSON (as Tink): Wait-wait-wait. We're not gonna answer it until you say if you like it or not. Do you like that or do you don't like that?

NICK (as Kettle): Um...

LILIT (as Xianna): I mean, is that interesting to you? Do you feel like you could, uh, nurse them back to health kind of a thing?

CAMERON (as Karma): Are you compelled by that backstory?

LILIT (as Xianna): Yeah. Do you feel like you can be the one to rehabilitate them into love?

NICK (as Kettle): You know, maybe I could help them emotionally to find out where they go from there. You know? Okay. Okay, so not discounting because of the tragic potential backstory. Who do you have for number three?

LILIT (as Xianna): [smiling] Yeah Tink, who do we have for number three?

HUDSON (as Tink): Number three is kind of a wildcard if you're into that sort of thing. Number three is a creature known as Web-Web.

CAMERON (as Karma): Oh wow.

NICK (as Kettle): What is a Web-Web?

HUDSON (as Tink): Web-Web is an acrobat. HK, take it away.

NICK (as HK): Forced Character Description: Web-Web is a blue Gungan with shining red eyes. They are very deadly with kukri vibro-blades and are acrobatic. Tink has carried them on his shoulders multiple times. They appear to enjoy chaos, violence, murder, and long walks on the beach. End of forced character description.

NICK (as Kettle): Well, I have to say, you've certainly given me a diverse crowd to consider for romance in exchange for unbelievable galactic power through Force artifacts. I do have another one, by the way.

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh.

CAMERON (as Karma): Romance option or artifact?

NICK (as Kettle): Oh, Force artifact, part of the Shattered Force. I have the Bone Breaker. It's a staff that has the ability to destroy things with single swings. It's a very powerful weapon.

CAMERON (as Karma): Oh dang.

LILIT (as Xianna): Oh, that sounds very nifty.

NICK (as Kettle): Mm-hmm.

LILIT (as Xianna): Do we need to like introduce another contestant?

NICK (as Kettle): No, I'm fine with you knowing that because you're probably going to die in the next ten minutes.

LILIT (as Xianna): Okay, so what if we are able to get everybody here and we do like little blind dates?

NICK (as Kettle): I'll tell you what. Because I'm fun, I'm a fun crime lord—

CAMERON: [snickers]

NICK (as Kettle): If you manage to live through what I'm about to do to you, and you are able to get them all in one place seated at the same table, I would love to do that. And, I would probably give you a wild prize if you were successful in finding somebody for me to be romantically entangled with.

LILIT (as Xianna): We can like have you ask questions and then each one can give a response and you don't see who it is. Ooh, we can use like a voice modulator, and then you can guess at the end who is who and pick them, and then you can go on little dates with them and you can vote one off first so then there's just down to two, and you can go on longer dates with them, and you can give one of them a rose or something...

HUDSON (as Tink): Oh! I already have questions prepared in my head. On your first date, do you smooch? And when you smooch, how much tongue is in there, like in inches? That's cute, right?

CAMERON (as Karma): [disgusted] Oh... hmm.

LILIT (as Xianna): Yeah, or like, what do you do for Life Day? You know, like do you have to go to your own parents' house for Life Day or do you want to start a new tradition and have Life Day just between the two of you? What is the other cultural and religious holidays that you celebrate?

CAMERON (as Karma): Describe the perfect date.

NICK (as HK): Supplying date show question. If I was an ice cream cone, what would you do to me?

CAMERON (as Karma): Oh gosh, no.

[laughter]

LILIT (as Xianna): I mean, that is a valid question.

CAMERON (as Karma): HK! Ugh...

NICK (as Kettle): Well, you've definitely given me something to think about. Like I said, if you manage to survive... be thinking about that, if not, at least I have their names and I can look them up. This has been fun, but... bye now.

NICK: She reaches and she presses that red button and the floor falls out from under you, and you go sliding down this chute into this large arena with loose dirt. A bunch of lights turn on and you see empty

sports stands lining it. There's a ray shield going from the ceiling down to the edge of the stands. So really, the only thing that you have in this area is a large sandy pit with a very, very big durasteel grating on one side.

An announcer's voice crackles over a PA system. As the lights ping on, all of the stands are empty, there's no one there. Up towards the top there's what looks like a press box that some lights turn on in and you can see a wall of Kettle's office has slid up so that she can see. A couple of scientists approach and are taking notes, and an announcer's voice starts to come over the PA system.

NICK (as announcer): Hello guests, and welcome to Mandalore Park. We hope that you've enjoyed the tours and displays of our new sand facility. We thank you for taking the time to visit our wonderful location.

For what you have all been waiting for, with careful technological advances in cloning technology, our scientists at Mandalore Park have been able to resurrect a creature long extinct. This creature once roamed the grasslands of Mandalore, a terror to strills, shriek hawks, and stathas as they stomped and destroyed, eating their way across the planet. And now, one has returned to the realm of the living. Observe, the mighty and terrifying mythosaur!

HUDSON (as Tink): [gasps] yes~!

NICK: The grate slides up slowly, and standing behind this gate is a four-legged long-tailed scaled carnivore with a ridged back, various horns swooped back from its skull, and two large horns like massive mandibles curving towards its mouth. It's teeth must be at least as long as your arm. It gives forth a terrifying and bone-rattling roar.

LILIT: Xianna's standing off to the side, blaster in one hand, and in the other hand she holds up—

LILIT (as Xianna): Nobody panic! I have a grenade!

[laughter]

NICK: 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 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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