

STARFALL

Written by

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EXT. PORT NBELLO SPACE STATION

Spaceships of all sizes zoom about the station.

INT. PORT NBELLO SPACE STATION - CONTINUOUS

A crowd of different aliens bustle about a large room lined with food stalls, seating areas, and signs that scroll through a myriad of languages.

Parents CALL OUT for children, vendors HOCK their goods, and MUSIC comes from a three-headed alien playing two different wind instruments and singing along. On the floor in front of this alien is a small electronic bracer with a sign that reads: ELHADRAIN OR BUST.

ALIEN MUSICIAN

(sung)

The stars don't stay fixed in their
places.

The constellations move.

I've seen too many broken faces
to not recognize you.

Traveler, lone traveler,
adrift among the sea of stars.
We're all travelers, lone
travelers.

But we weren't meant to be apart.

No we weren't meant to be apart.

A small pair of shoes walks up to the box in front of the alien musician.

ZANTU (O.S.)

Momma? Can I give them a credit?

We see that the small shoes belong to a young alien boy, ZANTU. He has bright blue skin, large dark eyes, small ridges along his cheeks, and silky grey hair pulled into a top-knot secured by two gold rings. The rings are the only signifier of wealth on him. His coat looks too big and is missing a button. His shirt is stained. The stuffed animal he carries with him is just as raggedy and disheveled.

Another blue, four-fingered hand grabs Zantu's. This hand belongs to LEEANDRA, an older woman of the same species. Her hair is much longer and bears six gold rings, but her clothing is even more disheveled.

LEEANDRA

No, Zantu. We need to save our
money for the trip.

INT. DOCKING BAY 6

A medium-sized spaceship is docked. Across the side, a nameplate reads: THE STARFALL.

In front of the loading dock; a human man in cargo pants and a light jacket, TOM; and an eight-foot tall, four-armed, bright yellow, reptilian creature dressed in colorful silks, B'SCARREI; argue over a large floating palette covered in a tarp.

B'SCARREI

It is on floating palette! Why do you care about weight?!

TOM

It's still weight that the ship has to carry. I charge extra for heavy cargo; you know this.

B'SCARREI

Bah! Come, you can make small exception for returning customer, yes?

TOM

B'Scarrei, buddy, I like you and all, but I gave you discounts the last two times you flew with me. The hyperfuel market is up, I really can't afford to cut corners right now.

B'SCARREI

Fine, fine. If you can stay on world for extra day, I can get you rest of money then, yes?

TOM

(sighs)

Fine.

They each hold a wrist out to each other and their electronic bracers CHIME.

B'SCARREI

Ha! You are good friend, Tom!

B'Scarrei pushes the palette up the loading ramp. Tom looks up at a nearby station clock.

Leeandra and Zantu rush over to the Starfall.

TOM
Leeandra and Zantu, I presume?

LEEANDRA
(out of breath)
Yes, that's us.

TOM
I was starting to worry you
wouldn't show.

LEEANDRA
Sorry, we had some trouble finding
the right gate.

TOM
It happens. Nbello's a busy place.
Do you two have any extra cargo?

LEEANDRA
No.

Tom looks puzzled at their lack of luggage.

TOM
No tesseract storage? Nothing?

LEEANDRA
We um... we left in a hurry.

A look of realization crosses Tom's face.

TOM
Got it. I won't ask.

LEEANDRA
Thank you. Here,

She reaches into her pocket and pulls out a gold statuette.

LEEANDRA (CONT'D)
I don't have a banking brace. Will
this be alright? It should cover
the cost if you pawn it off.

Tom looks at the statuette, then looks at Zantu, then back at
the statuette.

TOM
This'll be fine. Your room will be
the third on the left.

INT. THE STARFALL MAIN HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Leeandra and Zantu move through the tall hallway of the spaceship. Safety lights run along the edges of the floor, but wall decorations make the place seem homier than would be expected of a spaceship.

Zantu stops in the middle of the hall to look at a glowing flower. The flower moves its center to face him, as if it's looking back. Suddenly two voices echo in unison behind him.

CHARAN
(in unison)
Excuse me. You are blocking my
room.

Zantu turns to see Charan, two identical, light pink, bald aliens with entirely smooth faces aside from their 8 eyes each. They each wear small circlets with a gem that glows when they speak.

CHARAN (CONT'D)
(in unison)
Can you understand me, child?

ZANTU
(confused)
Which one of you is talking?

They both tilt their heads in unison. Leeandra comes over and takes Zantu's hand.

LEEANDRA
So sorry about that.

CHARAN
(in unison)
Your young is curious. That is
admirable.

Leeandra gives them a polite smile and leads Zantu away.

INT. LEEANDRA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The automatic door slides closed behind Leeandra and Zantu. This room has a large bed, a dresser, a small table with two chairs, and a side door which leads to a bathroom. Zantu runs over and jumps on the bed.

ZANTU
This place is great! Look how high
I can go, Momma!

LEEANDRA

My Light, take your shoes off. This bed isn't ours.

Zantu stops jumping and strikes a heroic pose.

ZANTU

Then we'll take it! Just like Paba!

LEEANDRA

(stern)

No. Zantu, we won't be taking anything from this ship. Understood?

Zantu nods sadly. He sits down and hugs the stuffed animal to his chest.

ZANTU

Will we get a bouncy bed later?

LEEANDRA

I... I don't know, My Light. We'll try.

Zantu holds the toy up to his ear.

ZANTU

Bora says that we will. We're going to be super duper rich and live on the biggest ship in the universe and have tawe cake every day!

Leeandra sits on the bed and pets Bora's head.

LEEANDRA

Well, we'll see what Momma and Bora can do, alright?

Zantu nods, kicks his shoes off, and goes back to jumping on the bed.

There's a KNOCK at the door. Leeandra opens it to see Tom standing there with a pillow and blanket.

LEEANDRA (CONT'D)

Captain Leofai.

TOM

Just "Tom" is alright. I brought you two an extra bed-set since there's only one in each room.

LEEANDRA

Will it cost anything extra? I don't want to trouble you, Capt-- Tom.

TOM

It's no trouble at all. I always do my best to make the ride more comfortable. We're going to be taking off pretty soon, so you might want to tell him to sit down for a bit.

Tom gestures to Zantu and smiles a bit. Zantu waves.

LEEANDRA

Of course, sorry about the bed.

TOM

It's alright. I did the same thing as a kid.

A SQUEAK is heard, and Tom looks down to his left. A fluffy, color-changing orb about the size of a house cat, OMBI, seems to appear out of nowhere next to his foot.

TOM (CONT'D)

Oh, hey there.

OMBI

Hello, um, hi, sorry to interrupt. I, uh, I need some help with my room. The stack of containers is too slippery for me to climb up them to put my stuff away.

TOM

Oh, the dresser? I'll grab a hoverdisk for you, right away.

OMBI

Thank you, Breeze!

Ombi scurries off and seems to disappear into thin air.

LEEANDRA

Breeze?

TOM

That's what they call me. I think their translator might be glitching or something. They called the ship a cloud when they first got here.

Leeandra chuckles. Tom hands her the bedding.

TOM (CONT'D)
Duty calls. If you need anything
else, don't hesitate to ask.

Tom walks off and the door closes behind him. Leeandra turns back to Zantu, who's jumping higher. She smiles.

INT. THE STARFALL LIFTOFF ROOM - A BIT LATER

This room is about the same size as the bedrooms, but instead of traditional furniture, it has several rows of seats with harnesses on them. Each row of eight seats is a different size and some look like they're meant for beings with more than two legs. All of the passengers are buckled into seats the right sizes for them. Leeandra buckles Zantu into one of the smaller seats.

LEEANDRA
(to Zantu)
All snug, My Light?

Zantu nods. Leeandra moves over to her seat and starts buckling herself in.

Tom walks into the room. As he speaks, he also signs.

TOM
Alright everyone, before we take
off, a few safety notes. Firstly,
escape pods are in the cargo bay:
bottom floor, they have the
standard arrows pointing to them.
Secondly, please remain buckled in
during takeoff. Once we're safely
out of the range of the port's
artificial gravity, I'll make an
announcement to say that you can
move around the ship. And thirdly,
please do not enter another
passenger's room--or *my* room--

He looks pointedly at B'Scarrei for a second before turning back to the others.

TOM (CONT'D)
Without their explicit permission.
It's a 3 week journey to Alhakkar.
Let's all treat each other with
kindness and respect while we're
all living together. Does anyone
have any questions?

Zantu raises his hand.

ZANTU
Are there gonna be stareaters?

Tom smiles a bit.

TOM
Don't worry kiddo, no monsters of
any kind are gonna get this ship.

ZANTU
Cause if we see a stareater, I'm
gonna blow it up!

TOM
(suppressing laughter)
Then I'm sure we have nothing to
fear. Anyone else? No? Then liftoff
will begin shortly.

Tom exits.

OMBI
(to Zantu)
Um... What's a stareater?

ZANTU
It's a big scary monster that
floats around space and eats
anything that get too close and
nobody knows where they come from
and they can eat a whole star
system if they're hungry enough!

Ombi shakes a bit and then turns invisible.

ZANTU (CONT'D)
Hey, where'd you go?!

OMBI
Sorry! I'm still here! It's just
kind of a reflex! Are you really
gonna blow them up?

ZANTU
Yeah! My Paba told me stories of
when he and our crew--

LEEANDRA
Alright, Zantu, that's enough.
Can't you see you're scaring the
poor dear?

ZANTU

Well, no, I can't see them at all.

LEEANDRA

(to Ombi)

Sorry about that. Kids and their imaginations.

Ombi shifts back to be a similar blue to Leeandra.

OMBI

That's alright. I have a few kids back at home too.

LEEANDRA

Aw, that's wonderful. How many?

OMBI

Eleven. My herd is taking care of them while I'm out here. What about you? Is Zantu your first?

Leeandra's smile fades a bit.

LEEANDRA

Um, yes. It's just me and Zantu.

B'SCARREI

Alhakar is hardly place to raise child. It can be dangerous. Lot of shady characters there, yes?

LEEANDRA

It's just a stop along the way.

B'SCARREI

Be careful to stay inside at night. And keep close eyes on little one.

ZANTU

I'm not afraid! I'll fight anyone who crosses me and Momma!

B'SCARREI

(chuckles)

That is why close eyes must be kept. He will be menace to world if let loose!

TOM (V.O.)

Alright everyone, we're out of Nbello's gravity field. Feel free to move about the ship.

EXT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

The Starfall sails among the cosmos.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE - MEANWHILE

A much larger ship, the Fortune's Nova, which is scarred by battle damage, orbits a star.

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

One wall of this large room is a windshield that shows space.

The interior of the room contains numerous control panels with a different alien at each station.

A large, ornate, rotating captain's chair sits in front of the window, facing it. We see the silhouette of a large, broad-shouldered figure sitting in the chair, but cannot make out any details of him.

KAHLIA, a red, lithe alien with long spiked tendrils twisting from their back, and long, sharp pincers for hands, slinks over to the chair. Their voice is like honey.

KHALIA

Captain...

The figure shifts slightly.

KHALIA (CONT'D)

We have received word of two Ukalai leaving Port Nbello; a mother and child. They were last seen boarding a ship called the Starfall. According to the port manifests, it seems to be headed to Alhakkar.

The figure heaves a breath. Smoke pours from in front of him.

CARRITH

Set a course to intercept.

EXT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Powerful thrusters WHIRR to life and the ship takes off into hyperspace.

INT. THE STARFALL COMMON ROOM - A FEW DAYS LATER

This homey room contains a table, a few chairs, a couch, a kitchenette, and some cabinets.

B'Scarrei lounges on the couch. Leeandra and CHA sit at the table. Cha scrolls through a hologram emanating from their bracer. Leeandra watches Zantu. RAN busies themself at the kitchenette. Zantu wanders about the room looking for something. He holds Bora under his arm.

ZANTU

Hm... Are you under the table?

Zantu checks under the table. He puts a hand on the floor and feels around. He looks disappointed.

ZANTU (CONT'D)

Uh... How about... Ooh!

He runs over to a cabinet and slides it open. Pots clang as he rummages around.

RAN

They are not there.

ZANTU

How do you know?

RAN

I have located them.

Zantu's eyes light up with excitement.

ZANTU

Where? Where are they?

Cha points up to the ceiling.

OMBI

Hey!

Ombi suddenly becomes visible (a similar color to ChaRan) on the spot on the ceiling Cha was pointing to.

OMBI (CONT'D)

That's not fair!

Zantu looks up in wonder.

ZANTU

Wow! How did you find them?

CHARAN
 (in unison)
 When one has two viewpoints to look
 from, it is easy to spot where the
 ceiling warps.

Ombi starts crawling along the ceiling, then down the wall.

OMBI
 (wary)
 Can a lot of other people in the
 stars do that?

CHARAN
 (in unison)
 Only a six other species operate
 alike to us, according to my
 experience.

Ombi turns invisible again.

OMBI
 (afraid)
 Six?!

B' SCARREI
 Ah, yes, Ombi. Even Tom used to
 date hivemind folk. What were they
 called... Veshk, I think, yes?
 Pretty ones with mycelium. They
 were very nice, liked to play
 cards, but cheated often. Multiple
 points of view, not very good for
 hiding your hand.

CHARAN
 (in unison)
 They are fairly common, as are the
 Lougonay. You have never heard of
 them?

Ombi appears on the table (a similar pink to ChaRan).

OMBI
 Oh, no, I've never been star-
 travelling before.

A pause. People look around at each other.

B' SCARREI
 Never? How can that be?

OMBI
 My species uh, isn't exactly... oh
 what's the word... "spacefaring"
 yet.

Another pause.

ZANTU
 So... you're an animal?

LEEANDRA
 (scolding)
 Zantu!

ZANTU
 What? They said they aren't
 spacefaring! Like animals!

Ombi shakes a bit and turns invisible again.

LEEANDRA
 Look, you've upset the poor dear.

OMBI
 We're not animals...

ZANTU
 But--

LEEANDRA
 Zantu, go wait in our room.

ZANTU
 But, Momma!

Leeandra gives him a stern look. Zantu casts his eyes down
 and leaves the room.

INT. THE STARFALL MAIN HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Zantu slumps back to his room. The door opens for him. He
 walks into...

INT. THE STARFALL LEEANDRA AND ZANTU'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Zantu sits on the bed and pouts. He pets Bora for a moment,
 then puts Bora to his ears. A beat.

ZANTU
 Nuh-uh! Captain Tom said no
 monsters can get the ship.

A beat.

ZANTU (CONT'D)
I guess... But I can't go ask him.
Momma told me to wait here.

A beat. Zantu's eyes light up with excitement.

ZANTU (CONT'D)
You're right, Bora! Momma never
said *how long* to wait! You're so
smart!

Zantu hops off the bed and walks out carrying Bora.

INT. THE STARFALL COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Tom sits in a large chair facing a dashboard filled with dozens of buttons and screens. On the dashboard there is also a worn out looking ball and a picture of a human family of six with a dog. Taped to the wall is a pinup of an alien.

Tom turns when he hears the door open.

TOM
Hey, kiddo. What brings you here?

Zantu holds out Bora.

ZANTU
Bora thinks it'll be easy to take
your ship. I wanted to show him it
won't be.

Tom smiles a bit and addresses Bora.

TOM
Well Bora, I built this ship
myself. I put in secret hiding
spots, and an extra set of magna-
thrusters to break out of tractor
beams, and there's a double airlock
system in case there's any breach.
Everyone on this ship is perfectly
safe. So you and Zantu have nothing
to worry about.
(to Zantu)
Alright?

Zantu nods, then puts Bora to his ear.

ZANTU

Bora doesn't have anything to say.
I think you proved him wrong.

TOM

Good. Now uh, where's your mother?

Zantu pouts and holds Bora close.

ZANTU

She's mad at me.

TOM

Why's that?

Zantu takes a big breath before...

ZANTU

Ombi and I were playing hide and seek and then ChaRan found them and then Ombi got scared and then um... oh right, B'Scarrei talked about you dating the Veshk and then Ombi didn't know about the Veshk and then Ombi said they weren't spacefaring and that makes them an animal, right?

TOM

(struggling to follow all that and drive at the same time)
Uh, well, Ombi is just as much a person as we are.

ZANTU

But they're not spacefaring! Paba says "if they can't fly in space they're animals!"

A pause. Tom glances at Zantu, confused.

ZANTU (CONT'D)

I guess it doesn't rhyme in your language, huh?

Tom shakes his head no, then looks back out the windshield.

TOM

Well, alright, so um, your father might've said that, and that's sometimes true. A lot of animals don't go into space. But Ombi is still a person.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

You can talk to them, and play hide and seek with them. They're really smart.

ZANTU

But they're still an animal.

TOM

Well, at the moment they're trying to get their people recognized as sapient by the Intergalactic Union. An animal wouldn't do that.

ZANTU

Why are they going to the I.U.?

TOM

They mentioned something about their home being invaded. I didn't ask too many details, but if all Oms are that small and camouflage when they get scared... Well try to see it from their perspective. Imagine there are big giants stomping around and either they can't see you, or don't care if you get hurt cause they don't know you have feelings. That sounds really scary, right?

Zantu nods.

TOM (CONT'D)

So if you go through all of that scary stuff, and you're smart enough to escape it, how would you feel if people still thought you were an animal?

ZANTU

...Sad...

TOM

Do you think that's how Ombi feels?

Zantu nods and hugs Bora close.

ZANTU

So all the planets that get fired on... are full of *people*?

Tom blinks and looks slightly alarmed.

TOM
Uh... the planets that get fired
on? By, uh, by marauders?

Zantu nods solemnly.

TOM (CONT'D)
You know about all that?

ZANTU
(huffy)
I'm not stupid!

TOM
Right, sorry. Well, uh, people who
fire on planets are bad people.
They don't care if they make other
people sad. But you *do* care, kiddo.
You're a good person.

ZANTU
Even though I made Ombi sad?

TOM
Even good people make mistakes
sometimes. Do you wanna head back
to Ombi and apologize?

ZANTU
Oh, no, I can't do that. Momma told
me to wait in our room.

TOM
...So, uh, do you wanna head back
there?

ZANTU
No it's boring in there. And
Momma's gonna be busy for a while.

TOM
Right...

ZANTU
I think she's having fun being with
all the other grown-ups. She didn't
talk to anyone but me and Paba
before we left.

TOM
No one? Did she have any friends?

ZANTU
No. Paba wouldn't let her.

Zantu looks at the picture on the dashboard.

ZANTU (CONT'D)
Are these your mates?

TOM
No, no, no. This is my family.

ZANTU
But there's so many of them!

TOM
Yeah, I guess. Those three around me are my sisters, and then my mom and dad are the ones sitting down. Oh, and that one that doesn't look like us is Oscar. He was our dog. He's an animal. He was really big too; you could've probably ridden on his back.

ZANTU
Oh wow, that's a lot of people.

Zantu points to the pinup.

ZANTU (CONT'D)
Are they also in your family?

Tom looks where Zantu is pointing. He quickly takes down the picture and puts it in a drawer.

TOM
Uh, he's a friend. But uh, so, is it just you and your momma and paba at home?

ZANTU
Oh no, we got the whole crew. There's Zhenon, and Et'Naak, and Auwre, and Lo, and Cytsy, and Kahlia, and Maggie, and Quohai, and Xetogar, and Puelli, and Trusker, and Nupoyo, and--

TOM
(slightly irritated and trying to focus on driving)
That sure is a lot of people. And they're all in your crew?

ZANTU

They're in *Paba's* crew. He has a really big ship so there's a bunch of us in the crew. And I'm gonna be in the crew when I'm old enough! *Paba's* gonna have *Puelli* teach me how to be a pilot like you! I already know what some of the buttons do too!

Tom's irritation fades and he smiles a bit at Zantu.

TOM

Oh really? What buttons do you know?

Zantu points to buttons as he names them.

ZANTU

That blue one is the autopilot. Aaaaand... um... Oh! That's the shields. Aaannnd... that's the pulsar cannon--

TOM

(surprised and concerned)
Woah, pulsar cannon? No, no, no, everything on this ship is legal. This is just a minigun for getting rid of asteroids.

ZANTU

Oh, is it a Mark 28?

TOM

(wary)
Uh, yeah. You sure do know a lot about weapons.

ZANTU

Paba teaches me all about them. He's an expert! And I'm gonna be an expert too when I grow up! *Paba* thinks I'll be the best pilot in the universe by then.

TOM

(lighthearted)
Looks like I'm gonna have some stiff competition then.

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA BRIDGE - MEANWHILE

Carrith is once again silhouetted in the chair. Khalia stands behind him.

KHALIA
Magna-thrusters, hm? Shall I order
the tractor beam be recalibrated?

Carrith nods.

KHALIA (CONT'D)
You seem upset, Captain.

They move closer and wraps a tentacle around to the other side of the chair.

KHALIA (CONT'D)
(suggestive)
Is there anything I can do to help
you relax?

Carrith pushes the tentacle aside.

CARRITH
She seems to be doing well.

KHALIA
I'm telling you, you're better off
just killing her.

Carrith growls lowly. Khalia retracts their tentacles and backs up.

KHALIA (CONT'D)
My apologies, Captain. Not my place
to tell you what to do.

CARRITH
No. It's not. Now go.

KHALIA
Aye, Captain.

Khalia turns and starts to walk away. Their brow furrows and their tentacles flair in anger.

INT. THE STARFALL LIFTOFF ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Tom waits by what looks like a futuristic microwave. Leeandra walks in. Tom notices her.

TOM

Oh, hey. Didn't think anyone would still be up at this hour.

Leeandra remains quiet, seemingly wary.

TOM (CONT'D)

Don't worry, the ship is on autopilot. I'm just grabbing some dinner before I head to bed.

Leeandra is still quiet.

TOM (CONT'D)

...Are you alright?

LEEANDRA

Zantu said he spoke to you earlier today.

TOM

Yeah, he came into the cockpit and we talked about Ombi's whole thing and about space travel. Zantu's a really bright kid. I think he's gonna make for a great pilot some--

LEEANDRA

He told me you two talked about our old crew.

TOM

Uh, yeah, he listed off a dozen or so names but honestly, I wasn't paying too much attention.

Pause.

TOM (CONT'D)

But, uh, what did catch my attention was uh... he mentioned a pulsar cannon.

Leeandra stiffens.

TOM (CONT'D)

I uh... I heard about the Fortune's Nova attacks in the Aloh'tai galaxy. They displaced a lot of people, killed even more--

The microwave beeps. Leeandra startles.

TOM (CONT'D)

Leeandra, I'm uh, I'm not trying to pry into your past, or anything like that. I'm just your driver, after all. But uh, I've had quite a few refugees on my ship. If you want to talk about it, I'll listen.

He pulls takes out a plate of what look like some form of dumplings.

TOM (CONT'D)

Or if you want me to never mention it again because your business is your own, I can do that too. Distraction's always my favorite way to cope.

Leeandra loses some of the tension in her shoulders and sits down at the table.

LEEANDRA

I'd rather not talk about it. But, a distraction does sound nice.

Tom brings the plate over to the table and sits down.

TOM

Can do. Want some?

LEEANDRA

I wouldn't want to take your food.

TOM

Nah, it's alright. There's more in the freezer.

Leeandra looks puzzled and a bit bemused. She hesitates, then picks one up.

LEEANDRA

What are they?

TOM

Shengibao pockets. They're a street food on my home planet.

LEEANDRA

It's so... squishy. What's in it?

TOM

The outside is mikab dough fried in keura seed oil, and the filling is lauwhe fruit, cabbage, a bit of juun spice, some green onions, and uh... I don't know, probably a bunch of preservatives cause these things last forever. I can grab the box, if you want.

LEEANDRA

Uh, yeah, if you wouldn't mind. Sorry, it's just, I've heard a lot of stories about human food.

Tom gets up and walks over to the freezer.

TOM

(jokingly)

Yeah, we'll eat just about anything.

Tom grabs the box and returns to the table.

LEEANDRA

Is it true what they say about your kind eating poison?

TOM

Well it's not poison to us, but yeah those stories are probably true. There's been a couple of times I had to leave my lunch at security when docking cause it was considered a weapon.

Leeandra laughs lightly.

LEEANDRA

Oh my gods, really?

TOM

Yeah, there was one time I got put in a containment cell on Saquia-5 because I had a hot sauce stain on my pants.

LEEANDRA

What did you do?

TOM

(chuckling)

I just left without my pants.

The two of them laugh for a moment before it dies down a bit. Tom pops a dumpling into his mouth.

LEEANDRA
Is this something your kind just
does?

TOM
(with a full mouth)
Hmm?

LEEANDRA
Eating with strangers.

Tom swallows.

TOM
Yeah... Am I right in assuming you
don't?

LEEANDRA
Yeah, it's uh... it's more of an
intimate thing.

Tom's eyes widen and he starts to stand up from the table.

TOM
I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to
cross any lines--

Leeandra puts her hand on his.

LEEANDRA
No, oh gods. It's not intimate like
that. Sometimes these translators
can be so finicky. It's just that
men and women usually eat in
separate rooms unless they're mated
or children.

TOM
This doesn't uh... mate us then,
right?

LEEANDRA
Right. It's just... strange.

She looks down at the dumpling in her hand, then pops it into her mouth. Tom smiles and takes another dumpling.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. THE STARFALL LIFTOFF ROOM - LATER

The plate is now empty. Tom picks it up and puts it in a small drawer on the wall. He presses a button next to the drawer and it closes with a light BEEP.

LEEANDRA

Those were really good.

TOM

I have a bunch more if you wanna have them some other time.

LEEANDRA

I might just take you up on that.

She stands.

LEEANDRA (CONT'D)

But I should be going to bed.

TOM

Yeah, same here... Uh, would you like to borrow some pajamas while you're here?

Leeandra pauses.

TOM (CONT'D)

I mean, I know you don't want me to bring it up, but you've been wearing the same thing for the whole flight. I can lend you something to sleep in so you can wash your clothes.

Leeandra smiles a bit.

LEEANDRA

You have pajamas that will fit me?

TOM

I have pajamas that'll be slightly big on you but are pretty comfy.

Leeandra laughs lightheartedly.

LEEANDRA

Sounds nice.

INT. TOM'S ROOM - SLIGHTLY LATER

This room is the coziest looking room in stark contrast to the guest rooms. The floor is layered in different area rugs. The bed isn't made. Clothes are strewn over a chair. Posters and knickknacks decorate the walls.

Tom picks up the clothes and tosses them in a hamper.

TOM

Sorry it's a bit messy.

LEEANDRA

That's alright.

Tom looks through a set of drawers and pulls out some sweatpants and a worn t-shirt.

TOM

Here we go. You might have to tie the drawstring a bit tighter but these should fit.

LEEANDRA

Thank you, Tom. You're... this is... you didn't have to help me.

TOM

Yeah, but I wanted to. Seems like you're going through some tough times. I certainly don't mind giving you a break from them.

Leeandra smiles and takes the pajamas.

LEEANDRA

You're very kind, Tom. It's... refreshing. Sleep well.

TOM

You too.

Leeandra walks out into...

INT. THE STARFALL MAIN HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Tom's door closes behind her. She looks down at the pajamas and smiles.

INT. THE STARFALL LIFTOFF ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

B'Scarrei, and one half of ChaRan, CHA, are sitting at the table playing a holographic boardgame. Cha has a plate of what looks to be a stack of raw meat slabs next to him. He rests his hand on top of it and the stack starts getting smaller.

Zantu zooms into the room making Bora fly around like a spaceship with sound effects to match. Leeandra strolls in after him wearing Tom's pajamas. Cha takes his hand away from the meat and we see a glimpse of a mouth in the palm of their hand. B'Scarrei smirks at Leeandra.

B' SCARREI
Have fun last night?

LEEANDRA
What?

B' SCARREI
I have traveled with Tom quite often. You are not first pretty passenger to come out wearing his clothes, yes?

ZANTU
Momma's clothes are in the wash cause they got dirty.

B' SCARREI
Ha! I'll bet!

LEEANDRA
(irritated)
Nothing happened. We just talked.

B' SCARREI
(playfully suggestive)
Ah, yes, Tom has quite a mouth--

LEEANDRA
(stern)
I'm taken.

A pause.

B' SCARREI
(a bit embarrassed)
Ha, apologies.

LEEANDRA

It's fine.

(At Cha)

Where is the other one of you?

CHA

I am with Ombi in my room, teaching them a bit about the Intergalactic Union. Ombi is still a bit afraid of me, so I figured being only partially in the room might ease their discomfort.

Cha moves a piece on the board.

CHA (CONT'D)

It did not.

B'SCARREI

Bah! How do you keep winning this?!
Are you cheating me?

CHA

No, I am simply better at this game than you.

B'SCARREI

Ach!

B'Scarrei swats his hand through the hologram and it vanishes.

B'SCARREI (CONT'D)

Best seven out of thirteen, yes?

CHA

Perhaps a three-person game may be more to your liking?

B'SCARREI

Yes! Three-person game sounds excellent! I know where Tom keeps cards for Redemov.

LEEANDRA

Redemov?

B'SCARREI

Game of chance!

CHA

It is really more of a game of reflexes than chance.

B' SCARREI

Bah! My reflexes are light-speed!
You had better watch out Cha! You
explain rules. I will go get cards!

B' Scarrei leaves the room.

CHA

You snatch the cards when there is
a match of number. The goal is to
collect all of the cards. It is a
game for children, quite simply. If
your young would like to play, he
is also welcome.

LEEANDRA

Zantu, would you like to play cards
with us?

ZANTU

I can't right now, Momma. Bora and
I are about to leave hyperspace!

Leeandra smiles.

LEEANDRA

Very well, My Light. Just tell Bora
to buckle up.

Zantu stops running around, mimes buckling a seatbelt around
Bora, and then continues on his path.

LEEANDRA (CONT'D)

(to Cha)

Sorry if it's a bit forward to say
but wouldn't a game like this be...
I don't know, beneath your
intellect? You know, with two
brains and all?

CHA

It is all part of the pilgrimage.

LEEANDRA

Pilgrimage?

CHA

To my people's holy site, Erestal.
It is our duty to help enlighten
those we meet along the way.

(MORE)

CHA (CONT'D)

And if I can enlighten you on the rules of a children's game, or if I can enlighten B'Scarrei on just how bad he is at board games, then I am certainly doing something right.

Leeandra chuckles.

LEEANDRA

I've been meaning to learn how to sew. Do you know anything about that?

CHA

Well, you have two less fingers than I do on each hand... But I would be happy to teach you all I know. Even if it is a bit difficult.

B'Scarrei comes back in with a large deck of cards.

B'SCARREI

Ha! Let us play!

Suddenly the ship lurches harshly to a stop. Everyone stumbles and looks around, nervously.

TOM (V.O.)

(over the intercom)

Attention everyone. We're caught in a tractor beam. Please stay calm and grab ahold of something. I'm gonna try to break free.

The ship lurches again, but harder. People fall over entirely. The lights turn red.

INT. THE STARFALL COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Tom presses a few buttons, seeming somewhat panicked. A display shows the Starfall's magna-thrusters blinking red.

TOM

Shit, shit, fuck!

INT. THE STARFALL LIFTOFF ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Passenger slowly get to their feet. Leeandra comforts Zantu.

TOM (V.O.)

(over the intercom)

Everyone make your way to the cargo bay. There's a false wall opposite the loading ramp that leads to a hidden room. Stay in there and stay quiet until I come and get you. The ship has taken out the magna-thrusters. With firepower like that, I'm guessing they're pirates, so they're probably just looking for expensive goods. They'll board, they'll look around, they'll leave. I'm sorry if they take your belongings, but it's better your stuff than your life.

The intercom CLICKS off.

LEEANDRA

(horrified)

No, no, oh gods please no...

B'SCARREI

Come, Tom knows what he is doing. I have seen him face pirates before. Let us just move to panic room, yes?

Leeandra nods slowly. She picks up Zantu.

EXT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

The Fortune's Nova pulls the Starfall into her cargo bay with a tractor beam.

INT. THE STARFALL CARGO BAY - SLIGHTLY LATER

Tom closes the door to the panic room and quickly stands elsewhere in the room. The loading ramp opens.

A heavy boot lands on the metal ramp. Then another. The metallic THUDS echo in the cargo bay. CAPTAIN CARRITH, a seven-foot tall, broad shouldered man the same species as Leeandra and Zantu boards the Starfall dressed in an elegant red longcoat. His hair is littered with the same gold rings as Leeandra and Zantu, although in a much higher quantity. He wears a sword, a blaster, and a small box on his belt.

This intimidating figure is flanked on the right by Khalia. On the left, stands XETOGAR, a strong, four-legged being with flesh that resembles rough stone, and no visible face.

CAPTAIN CARRITH
Where are your passengers?

TOM
No passengers, sir. I'm just on my way to the next quadrant to pick up some cargo.

Carrith steps closer.

CAPTAIN CARRITH
I will ask a second time. I will not ask a third. Where. Are. Your. Passengers?

TOM
Sir, please, I don't have any.

Carrith nods to Kahlia. They quickly move up, wrap a tentacle around Tom's torso, lift him off the ground and throw him against the wall.

INT. THE STARFALL PANIC ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leeandra, Zantu, B'Scarrei, ChaRan, and Ombi sit quietly. Leeandra looks terrified. Zantu hugs Bora to his chest.

A loud bang is heard from outside as Tom is flung against the wall, causing Ombi to turn invisible.

CHARAN
(whispered in unison)
We should help.

Leeandra, panicked, shakes her head no.

B' SCARREI
(whispered)
Stay calm, Tom will not give us up.

INT. THE STARFALL CARGO BAY - CONTINUOUS

Tom gets to his hands and knees, coughing and holding his side. Carrith rushes over to him, picks him up by the collar, and slams him against the wall.

CAPTAIN CARRITH
You have something that belongs to me. You could have left this place had you only returned what you stole. But now,

He sneers and pushes Tom further into the wall. Tom reacts in pain.

CAPTAIN CARRITH (CONT'D)
Now, I will make you suffer for
your insolence.

He takes the small box off his belt and tosses it to Kahlia.

CAPTAIN CARRITH (CONT'D)
Find him.

Kahlia hits a button on the box.

INT. THE STARFALL PANIC ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Suddenly, Bora starts making a blaring alarm sound.

B'SCARREI
What's happening?!

CHARAN
(in unison)
Shut it off!

ZANTU
I can't! I don't know how!

Leeandra holds Zantu tight.

Kahlia's spikes pierce through the metal of the wall and wrench the door open. B'Scarrei stands and winds up a punch, but before they can, a SHRILL RINGING is heard.

INT. THE STARFALL CARGO BAY - CONTINUOUS

Xetogar vibrates and emits a SHRILL RINGING sound. Everyone but Carrith and Kahlia rushes to cover their ears. The ringing continues until those covering their ears are all unconscious. Carrith drops Tom, then removes small earplugs from his ears.

He walks over to the panic room. He looks down at Leeandra, moves her arms away from Zantu, and then picks up Zantu and cradles him in his arms.

CAPTAIN CARRITH
(quietly, warmly)
I've missed you, My Light.

He turns to Kahlia and Xetogar. His cold demeanor returns.

CAPTAIN CARRITH (CONT'D)
Bring them.

He looks at Leeandra.

CAPTAIN CARRITH (CONT'D)
Put her in my cabin.

KAHLIA
Aye, Captain.

XETOGAR
Aye, Captain.

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA CARGO BAY - CONTINUOUS

The Starfall rests in a large cargo bay with numerous other ships of the same size. This pirate ship is *massive*.

EXT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Fortune's Nova's thrusters WHIRR to life and the ship blasts off into hyperspace.

INT. CAPTAIN CARRITH'S CABIN - A BIT LATER

This room is decorated in luxurious items: silk sheets on a four poster bed, furniture intricately carved from purple, iridescent wood, a sword rack above the desk with a sword matching the one on Carrith's belt, and a spot for Carrith's sword to cross it. Beyond this, there are two steps down into another section of the room separated by a curtain.

Attached to the bed are two long silver chains with small metal plates at the end. Carrith walks in with Leeandra slung over his shoulder. Leeandra's arms have thick metal bracers around them. Her legs kick furiously, but Carrith holds her knees and doesn't react to the blows. Leeandra yells furiously as they enter.

LEEANDRA
And if you *dare* hurt him I'll break
every damn bone in my body if it
means ending you, you mother--

Carrith takes both chains with his free hand and brings them to Leeandra's bracers. The metal plates magnetize to the bracers. Leeandra struggles against them, but the magnets are too powerful. Carrith throws her on the bed and covers her mouth with his hand. Leeandra reacts in pain.

CAPTAIN CARRITH
(shouts)
You will listen to me!

Leeandra stops struggling and glares at him.

CAPTAIN CARRITH (CONT'D)
 You abandoned my crew. You betrayed
 our bond. You stole my son--

She bites his hand and he pulls it away. Leeandra has black
 blood on her mouth.

LEEANDRA
 Our son! *My* son! You didn't carry
 him, or nurse him, or ask him who
 he wanted to be!

CAPTAIN CARRITH
 I love him! And I loved you! I gave
 you everything, Lee. All the riches
 you could ever want, food reserved
 for elites, the biggest ship in the
 galaxy--

LEEANDRA
 You chained me to a bed!

CAPTAIN CARRITH
 You didn't want for anything!

LEEANDRA
 I want my daughters back!

A pause. Leeandra sits up.

LEEANDRA (CONT'D)
 And I will not have my last child
 be a monster like you! I did *not*
 steal *your* son. I saved mine.

CAPTAIN CARRITH
 Did you now? You're still back
 here. So is he. And soon enough
 he'll learn that he doesn't need
 his mother anymore.

Leeandra lunges at him but he backs up. The chains restrain
 her and he stands just out of her reach. Frills extend from
 behind her ears and she bears her sharp teeth at him.

CAPTAIN CARRITH (CONT'D)
 (snide)
 Ha, so much bark. So little bite.

He takes a knife from his belt, presses a button on it and
 the edge lights up red. He presses the blade against the bite
 wound and it cauterizes. He smirks at the pain.

CAPTAIN CARRITH (CONT'D)
 If it weren't for Zantu's love for
 you, I'd plunge this straight into
 your treacherous stomach right now.

He turns the blade off and puts it back on his belt.

CAPTAIN CARRITH (CONT'D)
 But until he matures, you both will
 stay here. We'll be a family, as
 we're meant to be. And you will
 both be happy under my care.

He turns around.

CAPTAIN CARRITH (CONT'D)
 Auwre will be in with food for you
 shortly. You will be dining alone
 today.

LEEANDRA
 Giving up so soon on "being a
 family?"

CAPTAIN CARRITH
 Zantu and I will be eating with the
 crew. I'm certain he's missed them.

Leeandra pulls on the chains again.

LEEANDRA
 Let me see him--!

He sharply turns back to face her. Frills flair from behind
 his ears as well.

CAPTAIN CARRITH
 (shouts, almost roars)
 Not until you've learned your
 place!

Leeandra steps back and her frills retract. Carrith takes a
 breath and his frills retract as well.

CAPTAIN CARRITH (CONT'D)
 I loved you, Lee. I'd be willing to
 love you again, even after this.
 Things can go back to the way they
 were--

LEEANDRA
 I was *never* happy with the way
 things were.

(MORE)

LEEANDRA (CONT'D)

Ever since you sent our daughters away, I've been *mourning*, Ma'Ashe. How could you ever expect me to love you after that?

CAPTAIN CARRITH

I was being reasonable. Kaseela and Paloa would have been liabilities. They wouldn't be able to find a mate living like this.

LEEANDRA

And what about Zantu? What father would give his daughter to "Dreaded Pirate Captain Zantu," huh?

CARRITH

"Captain Zantu" will be successful enough to buy as many mates as he wants. And they will be provided for, just as I have provided for you, Lee. And when our boy has sons of his own, maybe *then* you'll realize how foolish it was for you to try and steal him from me.

Carrith turns away and heads for the door.

LEEANDRA

And will *your* son have to chain his mates to beds just to keep them near?

The frills behind Carrith's ears flare once more before he leaves, slamming the door behind him.

Leeandra looks down at her cuffs.

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA BRIG - MEANWHILE

This cell's walls used to be white. As did the sheets on the bed. Where the door should be, there's a glass wall with small air holes in it.

ChaRan sits on the bed, B'Scarrei stands by the glass, and Tom paces back and forth.

B' SCARREI

My friend, stop with pacing, save your energy.

TOM
I'm not just going to sit around
and wait to be dissected!

A pause.

B' SCARREI
(nervous)
Ah... ah-ha... Tom... perhaps it is
translation error. What was that?

TOM
(semi-sarcastic)
We're going to be dissected, taken
apart, our organs are gonna be cut
out and sold on the black market.
Is that clear enough for you,
B'Scarrei?

Another pause.

CHARAN
(in unison)
You seem to know quite a bit about
our predicament.

Tom sighs.

TOM
I know this ship.

FADE TO:

EXT. BAZAAR - YEARS AGO

FLASHBACK

This flashback is in a different style of animation than the
rest of the movie.

Many different aliens bustle about the large array of
merchant stalls. Vendors of all kinds sell their goods.

TOM (V.O.)
I've had plenty of passengers who
book me to smuggle goods. It's
dirty work, but they pay better
than anyone... as long as I don't
ask questions.

We focus on a large, bipedal, alien with characteristics roughly resembling that of a snail without the slime. They wear a hood and their stalk-eyes glance about nervously.

TOM (V.O.)
Usually weapons, drugs, exotic animals, whatever contraband they can sell on the black-market.

They duck between a few stalls, turn down a back alley, and come to what appears to be a dead end.

TOM (V.O.)
But there are things far worse than contraband there.

They look around for a moment, then walk through the dead-end wall, revealing it to be a hologram.

INT. BAZAAR BLACK-MARKET - CONTINUOUS

This underground chamber mirrors the bazaar above- vendors hocking their goods, and aliens bustling about.

TOM (V.O.)
Slaves, nuclear material, viral strains that can wipe out entire colonies...

The snail-like alien walks among the crowd, with a clear destination in mind.

TOM (V.O.)
And body parts. And no ship is better known for its "wide selection" than Fortune's Nova.

The snail-like alien comes to a large stall overcrowded with people.

TOM (V.O.)
Scientists, holistic healers, butchers, self-made cyborgs, they all go to Fortune's Nova for their fixes. You two know about adrenaline junkies?

B'SCARREI (V.O.)
Of course.

CHARAN (V.O.)
(in unison)
Yes.

The snail-like alien holds out a gold necklace to a pirate. The pirate takes it and hands them a vial of white liquid.

INT. LABORATORY - LONG AGO

We see the silhouettes of people being operated on. Blood sprays the curtain blocking our view. The person being operated on thrashes their head; they're still awake, but restrained.

TOM (V.O.)

My people are the source of it.
They'll usually keep us just barely
alive and torture us just so they
can get more to sell.

CHARAN

(in unison)
That is horrific!

EXT. SPACE - LONG AGO

Fortune's Nova comes into view over a purple planet.

TOM (V.O.)

The way they get people to chop up
is even worse.

Fortune's Nova fires a powerful beam onto the planet.

EXT. PURPLE PLANET - CONTINUOUS

The beam carves through streets, buildings, and people. The people of this planet rush to spaceships to evacuate. The evacuation ships launch.

EXT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

The ships launch into space but are quickly stopped by powerful tractor-beams emanating from Fortune's Nova. The ships slowly get pulled into the cargo bay. A handful of ships manage to escape, but most are captured.

END FLASHBACK

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA BRIG - CONTINUOUS

Tom looks around at the others.

TOM

Fortune's Nova is a legend
whispered between pilots.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

And unless we wanna wind up an unfortunate part of that legend, we have to get out of here.

A long pause.

B' SCARREI

You recognize ship and you still try to bargain with captain?!

TOM

I had to do something! I had a pretty good shot of not being killed outright, so I figured I could find a way to escape later. I was trying to keep you safe!

B' SCARREI

Well now look where we are! We are to be dissected and sold and no one knows where we are, no one will help, and all because of child's stupid toy!

CHARAN

(in unison)

Do not blame the young for our troubles.

B' SCARREI

(sarcastic)

You are right, oh great sage of wisdom and proverbs and cheating at games!

(serious)

I blame Tom.

TOM

Me? Why the fuck are you blaming me?!

B' SCARREI

Oh, come, Tom! You saw lone female Ukalai with child and think, "Ah, yes, this is normal. Welcome aboard, I won't ask who you run from!"

TOM

(sarcastic)

Oh, I'm sorry, should I start vetting my passengers? How about I start with you?! You want me to ask what's under that tarp?!

B'Scarrei walks over to where Tom sits and towers over him intimidatingly.

B'SCARREI
Choose next words carefully, Tom.

Tom sneers up at them.

TOM
Been a while since I've seen you
from this angle, huh?

OMBI
There you are!

Everyone turns and looks to where the sound came from. Ombi appears visible (same color as Tom's hair) just outside the glass. Tom stands, rushes over to the glass, then kneels to be closer to Ombi's level.

TOM
Ombi! You made it! How?

OMBI
I was camouflaged when they
paralyzed us, and they just didn't
pick me up off the ground.

TOM
Can you hack the lock and get us
out of here?

OMBI
...what does "hack" mean?

B'Scarrei groans.

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA BRIDGE - MEANWHILE

One wall of this large room is a windshield that shows space. Streaks of starlight zoom past as the ship travels forward.

The interior of the room contains numerous control panels with a different alien at each station. A crowd of a dozen other aliens is gathered at the back of the room.

A large, ornate, rotating captain's chair sits in front of the window. Carrith sits with Zantu on his lap.

CAPTAIN CARRITH
These past few weeks have been...
troubling for all of us.

(MORE)

CAPTAIN CARRITH (CONT'D)
 I know I may have been more strict,
 more cruel towards you, less
 forgiving of mistakes. I thank you
 for your patience as we diverged
 from course. I thank you for your
 dedication in tracing the signal of
 the tracker. And I thank you for
 your loyalty, even as I was
 betrayed by others.
 (triumphant)
 My son has returned!

Carrith raises Zantu's hand in triumph. The pirates cheer.

CAPTAIN CARRITH (CONT'D)
 And I think a celebration is in
 order! Maggie has been quite
 attentive on the radio here and has
 caught wind of an Orstan faithship.

PIRATES
 (excited)
 OOOHHHH...

CAPTAIN CARRITH
 So, let's give Maggie a hand for
 the bounty of booze we're about to
 take!

An older human woman with long grey hair and athletic build
 steps forward and the pirates cheer for her.

ZANTU
 No!

The pirates all stop and stare at Zantu.

ZANTU (CONT'D)
 That would make them sad!

A pause.

ZANTU (CONT'D)
 Bad people don't care about making
 other people sad. But you're a good
 person, Paba! You don't want to
 make them sad, right?

Another pause. Carrith laughs half-heartedly.

CARRITH
 Ah, that must be your mother's
 influence.

ZANTU
No, Captain Tom taught me that.

CARRITH
Did he now?

ZANTU
Yeah, he's really nice. He even gave Momma some of his clothes overnight cause she didn't pack pajamas.

A murmur goes through the crowd of pirates.

CARRITH
(to the crew)
I don't pay you all to stand around and chatter. Get back to work!

The crowd quickly disperses.

CARRITH (CONT'D)
Now Zantu...

He turns the chair around to face the window.

CARRITH (CONT'D)
Tell me more about Captain Tom.

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA BRIG - LATER

ChaRan is curled up on the bed, sleeping. B'Scarrei lies flat on the floor. Tom kneels by the air holes in the glass.

B'SCARREI
Tom, we have been at this for three hours.

TOM
We're almost there. I think there's just a few lines of code left.

B'SCARREI
You said that 20 lines of code ago.

TOM
Just let me focus. Ombi, do you have the next image?

OMBI
Yes!

We see now that Ombi has been camouflaged into the control panel. Without shifting his appearance, he scuttles down off the wall and squeezes in through an air hole. Tom reads the code on Ombi.

TOM

Alright, so this part right here,

Tom lightly pokes a part of the code on Ombi. Ombi's fur ripples in response.

TOM (CONT'D)

You wanna change this to say "true" and this to say "false." Got it?

OMBI

Got it.

Ombi moves to slip out the air hole again, but then freezes.

OMBI (CONT'D)

Someone's coming.

TOM

What? Who?

OMBI

Someone with teeth.

Ombi turns invisible. B'Scarrei sits up and shakes ChaRan awake. ChaRan sits up as well. Tom backs up from the glass.

Khalia walks in flanked by LO, a large insectoid cyborg, and TRUSKER, a heavy-set figure covered in matted black fur. Lo has a blaster in their arm pointed at the glass.

KHALIA

Everyone up. Hands against the back wall.

The passengers look to each other for a moment, then comply. Khalia takes a keycard from their belt and holds it up to the lock. The glass retracts into the floor. Trusker walks into the cell and grabs Tom roughly. Tom struggles against them.

TOM

Hey! Let go of me!

KHALIA

Captain Carrith has a few words for you, human. And you had better enjoy them. From how angry he looked, they may just be the last words you ever hear.

They laugh, and Tom is pulled away and down the hall by Lo and Trusker. Khalia recloses the glass, then leans on the side of the window frame.

B' SCARREI

What is happening? Why was he taken?

Khalia laughs in a low reverb.

KHALIA

Your friend has been a bit too... involved in the captain's family. So he's going to make sure that the human never interferes again...

She grins wickedly.

KHALIA (CONT'D)

With anything.

B'Scarrei runs up to the glass and slams all four of their against it. The BANG echoes through the hall.

B' SCARREI

Tell your captain that if he hurts even one hair on Tom's head I will rip all hair from his!

Khalia laughs again.

KHALIA

Aw, so much fire in you. Don't stress too much, big fellow. We want your meat to be tender.

She walks off. B'Scarrei slams on the glass again and again, but to no avail.

B' SCARREI

Get back here!

INT. CAPTAIN CARRITH'S CABIN - A BIT LATER

Trusker and Lo bring Tom into the cabin. Leeandra is still chained to the bed, but is wearing a different outfit that resembles her original one, but much cleaner. She has a dark bruise on the side of her face.

TOM

Leeandra!

LEEANDRA
 (towards the curtain)
 No, don't--!

Carrith steps out from behind the curtain with Zantu close behind. Zantu clutches Bora to his chest. He seems nervous.

CARRITH
 Is this the Captain you told me
 about, My Light?

Zantu nods.

CARRITH (CONT'D)
 And what did this man tell you?

Zantu tries to hide behind his father's leg.

CARRITH (CONT'D)
 (stern)
 Say it.

ZANTU
 "people who fire on planets are bad
 people... and they don't care if
 they make other people sad..."

Carrith walks over to Tom.

CARRITH
 Are you trying to tell my son that
 I'm a bad person?

Tom looks up at him and says nothing.

CARRITH (CONT'D)
 You have more fingers than I do,
 human. I won't hesitate to change
 that if you continue to test my
 patience.

TOM
 I didn't know that he's your son.

CARRITH
 Ah... You didn't know. And did you
 also not know Leeandra is *my* mate?

TOM
 Of course I didn't know. I'm just
 her driver!

CARRITH
 Just her driver, hm?

ZANTU
PABA, NO, PLEASE, I'M SORRY!

Carrith cuts the belly open and pulls out a black box from the stuffing. He lets Bora drop to the ground. Zantu quickly picks him up and cradles him in his arms. He pulls an identical black box from his belt. As he speaks into one, it echoes softly out of the other.

CARRITH
(in a playful voice)
Zantu, I think it'll be easy to take this ship. You don't think so? Well I guess we'll just have to ask the captain huh?
(normal voice)
It was me Zantu. "Bora" is just stuffing and fabric. It's time you grew up and knew that.

Zantu clutches Bora close and tries to run out of the room, but Carrith grabs him. He lifts Zantu off the ground by the front of his shirt. Zantu squirms frantically. Leeandra's frills flair as she charges at him, but the chains restrain her.

LEEANDRA
Let him go! I swear to all the gods if you hurt him, I'll kill you Ma'Ashe! Do you hear me?! I'll kill you!

CARRITH
(to Leeandra)
Silence or I'll rip your teeth out!
(to Zantu, much sweeter)
Now, My Light, you need to learn to respect your father. And if my words aren't getting through to you, I'll just have to resort to other ways of teaching--

Carrith pauses as a shoe hits him weakly in the leg. He turns to see Tom standing with one shoe on. Carrith drops Zantu then picks up Tom's shoe, and walks over to Tom. He gets close to Tom's face and sneers intimidatingly.

CARRITH (CONT'D)
You know, "brave" is a kind word people use for "stupid."

Tom smirks and spits a mouthful of blood in Carrith's face. Carrith recoils and wipes his face with his sleeve.

TOM
Yeah, I know.

CARRITH
You must think you're some hero,
don't you, human?

Before Tom can answer, Carrith pulls out his blaster and shoots Tom in the torso. Tom's eyes go wide and his shirt turns red.

LEEANDRA
NO!

Carrith turns to Zantu.

CARRITH
Remember this, boy. *This* is what happens when people disrespect me.

Zantu grabs Bora and runs out of the room. Leeandra pulls at her chains.

LEEANDRA
You're a monster, Ma'Ashe! You're a fucking monster!

Carrith aims the blaster at her.

CARRITH
Do you want to end up the same way?! Huh?!

Leeandra retreats back to the bed. Carrith turns to Trusker and Lo.

CARRITH (CONT'D)
Leave him. I'll send someone to clean him up later.

LO
What about all the fresh meat, Captain?

CARRITH
Not a scrap of his being gets off this ship. We burn the wretch. Am I clear?

LO
Aye, Captain. My mistake.

Trusker drops Tom and the three of them exit. Leeandra moves as close to Tom as she can. She sees he's still breathing.

LEEANDRA

Tom? Tom can you hear me?

Tom turns his head to her.

TOM

Yeah...

LEEANDRA

Why did you do that?

TOM

(struggling to breathe)

I had to... get him... to let go of
Zantu... Probably not my best plan.

Tom smiles a bit but coughs up blood when he tries to laugh.

LEEANDRA

Tom, I'm so sorry. I never should
have tried to run. We never should
have met.

TOM

No... Keep trying... Get Zantu out
of here... Kill Carrith... If--

He winces in pain.

TOM (CONT'D)

If us meeting means stopping
Fortune's Nova... Then I'm glad we
met... Even if it ends like this.

Leeandra tries to reach out to Tom but the chains keep her
inches away.

LEEANDRA

No, no, it's not going to end, Tom,
please, it's not going to end!

Tom takes off his bracer and tosses it onto the bed. He
smiles weakly.

TOM

Take care of my ship for me...

Tom's head lowers down to the ground and his eyes glaze over
as he stops breathing. Leeandra sits there, stunned for a
moment. She grabs the bracer and holds it close.

Tears roll down her cheeks as she turns it over in her hands.
She finds a hidden compartment on the inside, where the
bracer would be up against the arm.

Inside are a few matches, a small knife, and a small file. Leeandra looks at the file, then at Tom's body, then at the chains holding her to the wall. A look of determination crosses her face.

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA BRIG - MEANWHILE

B'Scarrei slams his fists against the glass again.

B' SCARREI

We must leave this place! You!
ChaRan! You are smart one of wise
words and all that nonsense, yes?
Think of plan!

CHARAN

(in unison)

I have been trying to assess our
options. Your incessant noise is
not helping.

OMBI

Um--

B' SCARREI

Oh, my incessant noise, eh? Well at
least I am doing something as
opposed to you who just sits and
thinks and waits to be rescued!

CHARAN

(in unison)

B'Scarrei, please calm yourself.

OMBI

Uh--

B' SCARREI

I will not calm myself! Tom could
be in real danger! We are in real
danger! How can you not know that?!

ChaRan stands and approaches B'Scarrei.

CHARAN

(in unison)

Your panic blinds you to your
solution! And your voice deafens us
to ours.

B' SCARREI

You are not coming up with
anything!

(MORE)

B' SCARREI (CONT'D)

Tell me, do you in your so-called wisdom know how to hack like Tom does?! Huh? Do you? Bah, I did not think so!

Suddenly Ombi appears in between them on the ceiling and flashes between red and yellow.

OMBI

LISTEN!

ChaRan and B'Scarrei look up at them. They extend a few thin strands of their filament-like hair and we see that they are holding Khalia's keycard.

CHARAN

(in unison)

How did you acquire this?

OMBI

I took it off their belt while they were talking about eating us.

B' SCARREI

Then why have you not used it yet?

OMBI

I've never seen one of these things before. I don't know how to use it! Now if you two will stop arguing, listen to me, and tell me what this is, we can leave!

ChaRan and B'Scarrei look at each other.

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA BRIG HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

B'Scarrei and ChaRan step out of the now open cell. Ombi climbs onto B'Scarrei's shoulder and the three of them start moving down the hall.

They turn a corner only to see more cells of aliens of all kinds. B'Scarrei starts to move past them but ChaRan freezes. B'Scarrei notices and turns around.

B' SCARREI

ChaRan, hurry up!

CHARAN

(in unison)

I require the key.

B' SCARREI

What? Why?

CHARAN

(in unison)

I cannot leave these people to die.

B' SCARREI

We cannot stay here and die! We must find Tom, get to Starfall, and leave this place!

OMBI

What about Leeandra and Zantu?

B' SCARREI

We do not have time to get side-tracked. Not for them and not for these strangers.

ChaRan steps forward to B'Scarrei.

CHA

I will stay here to free these people.

RAN

And I will accompany you to retrieve Captain Tom.

CHARAN

(in unison)

No time will be lost. We will reconvene back at the Starfall.

Cha hold their hand out.

CHA

Now please give me the keycard.

B'Scarrei looks between them for a moment before throwing his hands up in frustration

B' SCARREI

Bah, fine!

They give a nod to Ombi. Ombi scurries down one of B'Scarrei's arms and gives the keycard to Cha.

CHARAN

(in unison)

Thank you.

B' SCARREI
Yeah, yeah, let us get moving.

B' Scarrei, Ombi and Ran continue down the hall.

INT. CAPTAIN CARRITH'S CABIN - LATER

Leeandra has managed to file through a link on each of her chains. She still has the cuffs but can now move freely. She goes over to Tom and kneels beside him.

She unwinds a golden ring from her hair solemnly. She takes Tom's hand and places the gold ring in his palm. She closes Tom's fingers around it, and places his hand on his chest.

She stands and looks at the sword on the wall.

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA HALLWAY - LATER

B' Scarrei, Ran, and Ombi move through the hallways.

B' SCARREI
Can you tell where he is?

RAN
I am not *that* type of psychic.

B' SCARREI
We cannot just keep walking! We will get--

They round the corner and see two pirates, Lo and QUOHAI, a large, horse-like being covered in metallic armor and sporting two large sets of antlers from their head that curl and flex like hands. Ombi turns invisible. Lo and Quohai stare at B' Scarrei and Ran.

B' SCARREI (CONT'D)
...caught...

The cannon on Lo's arm opens up and Quohai's antlers pull a scythe from a sheath on their back. The blade of the scythe crackles with electricity like a taser. B' Scarrei puts on a friendly smile and demeanor.

B' SCARREI (CONT'D)
Ah, ha, I see you favor Puskan
weaponry. Quite good eye you have.
I know fellow on Korkilin who gives
good prices for powercells for--

B'Scarrei stops mid-sentence as they deck Lo in the face and sternum with two hands, while their other two aim the arm cannon away from them and Ran. Lo fires the cannon and it hits the ceiling. Alarms start blaring.

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA BRIG HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Cha stands amongst a crowd of captives. They open the last cell with the keycard before the alarms start blaring. Cha turns a dial on their circlet up as high as it can go, and their voice comes out much louder.

CHA
Your ships are in the cargo bay.
Flee this place!

The panicked people start running towards the cargo bay. Cha stands out of the way and lowers the circlet's volume as they pass. Then, Cha starts running the other way.

CHA (CONT'D)
(whispered)
Allwisened guide them...

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA VENT - CONTINUOUS

Zantu hides in a vent clutching Bora and sobbing. The alarms start going off and red light flashes into the vent through the grate. Zantu looks out and sees boots rush by. He looks at Bora for a long moment.

ZANTU
Please say something, I need your
help, Bora.

Zantu looks at Bora again. He shakes him lightly.

ZANTU (CONT'D)
Say something!

Zantu holds Bora close.

ZANTU (CONT'D)
You're supposed to tell me to be
brave and stay strong and that
everything will be alright!

Zantu looks at the lifeless toy.

ZANTU (CONT'D)
It'll be alright.

Zantu puts Bora in his coat pocket and heads out of the vent.

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA HALLWAY - MEANWHILE

B'Scarrei has torn Lo's arm cannon off and wields it as a club. Lo hisses at them and dodges their attacks while trying to stab B'Scarrei with a dagger in their remaining hand.

Ran is on Quohai's back as Quohai is trying both to buck Ran off and slash at them with the scythe. Ran raises a hand and the mouth on it opens up to reveal rows and rows of small serrated teeth that spin at a frightening speed.

They see a small opening in Quohai's armor and quickly plunge their hand into Quohai's back. Ran's hand starts boring through the flesh. Quohai SCREAMS and thrashes as blood oozes from the wound. A SQUELCH is heard as Ran's hand suddenly goes further into the body as they tear through an organ. Quohai's bucking slows, then stops as they slump to the ground, dropping the scythe. Ran pulls his hand out and it's blood-soaked up to the elbow.

B'Scarrei clocks Lo with the arm cannon, staggering them. While they try to regain their footing, B'Scarrei takes the opportunity to grab Lo's hand with the dagger with one of their own hands, grab Lo's head with another hand, and use the remaining two to lift Lo off the ground and slam them into the wall with a loud THUD. They drop the dagger and fall unconscious. B'Scarrei lets go and looks to Ran.

B' SCARREI

Ha! Good work, Ran! Perhaps I underestimate you, yes?

Ran hands them the scythe.

RAN

You do. Now we must go.

They turn only to see Xetogar at the end of the hallway.

B' SCARREI

Oh shit.

Xetogar starts vibrating and making the SHRILL RINGING noise again and B'Scarrei and Ran fall to the ground, trying to cover their ears (B'Scarrei puts their hands on the back of their head, and Ran puts their hands on where the corner of their jaw would be if they had a jaw). Ombi flashes between colors.

But, just before B'Scarrei, Ombi, and Ran are about to slip unconscious, the RINGING stops.

They both look up to see Xetogar standing very still for a moment, before they slump to the floor, dead. Leeandra stands behind Xetogar's body with her sword drenched in greenish-yellow, viscous blood. Ombi turns blue to match Leeandra.

OMBI

Leeandra!

RAN

You are alive!

B'SCARREI

Where is Tom?

Leeandra solemnly holds out Tom's bracer.

LEEANDRA

He... didn't make it. I'm sorry,
B'Scarrei.

B'Scarrei pauses for a moment. He takes the bracer. It looks very small in his hands.

B'SCARREI

(quiet)

Did Carrith do this?

Leeandra nods.

B'SCARREI (CONT'D)

I hope you do not bear any fondness
towards that man.

LEEANDRA

None at all.

B'SCARREI

Good. Because this is last day he
lives, yes?

LEEANDRA

Yes. I won't let him hurt anyone
ever again.

B'SCARREI

Good. Now come. We go to cargo bay.
I have idea.

LEEANDRA

I can't go without Zantu. Have you
seen him.

RAN

Yes, actually.

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA BRIG HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Cha has both sleeves soaked up to the elbow in a myriad of different colors. They wrench their hand out of another pirate and turn toward a noise they hear at the end of the hallway.

They slowly make their way towards the intersection, their footfalls unnaturally silent as they go. The sound of BREATHING can be heard. We see the mouths on their hands drip blood and viscera as the teeth spin.

They round the corner, ready to attack, only to find Zantu as the source of the sound. They instantly close their mouths.

CHA

Zantu?

ZANTU

You're not gonna hurt me, right?

Cha puts his hands behind his back.

CHA

Of course I will not hurt you. Your mother is looking for you. She is quite worried--

ZANTU

She escaped?! Is she alright?!
Where is she?!

CHARAN

Slow yourself, Zantu. She is safe. She is with my other half, as are B'Scarrei and Ombi. Unfortunately, Tom--

ZANTU

I know.

A pause.

ZANTU (CONT'D)

I saw Paba shoot him.

Another pause.

ZANTU (CONT'D)

Can you take me to Momma?

CHA

Of course. We will meet her in the cargo bay. Come on.

INT. CAPTAIN CARRITH'S CABIN - MEANWHILE

The room is trashed. Sheets are thrown on the floor, papers scattered about, the desk chair is in splinters. The curtain is torn down and we can now see that section of the room contains a dining table and a lot of shattered porcelain and glass. Tom's body is nowhere in sight.

Carrith seethes in the center of the room and slams his hands on the desk hard enough that it breaks the wooden legs of it.

Khalia stands by the door, her tentacles close to her so as to not get hit.

CARRITH

How?! How did that bitch escape?!

KHALIA

Captain, it's pandemonium out there. The prisoners have all been released and they're rioting. We have to focus on the bigger issue here.

CARRITH

I won't let her get away, and I won't let her steal my boy!

KHALIA

We're supposed to get millions of credits from those prisoners. Think of your crew!

CARRITH

Forget the crew! Forget the prisoners! I need--

Khalia steps forward.

KHALIA

You need to listen! I've been trying to tell you that bitch was trouble since the moment you bought her! We would have been just fine if you had killed her years ago once she gave you a son! We could have been happy! I was ready to raise Zantu as my own with you. I tried so damn hard for so many years to be happy with you, but you just couldn't admit that your mate never loved you! I've known it for years and so has everyone else in the crew.

(MORE)

KHALIA (CONT'D)

I tried to tell you over and over
again but you just never listen to
me! You never listen to anyone--

Carrith grabs Khalia by the throat and lifts them off the ground. They writhe as he chokes them. Their tentacles wrap around Carrith's arm and the spikes dig in. His red coat turns inky black as it soaks up his blood. He snarls through the pain. With an unsettling CRUNCH, Carrith snaps Khalia's neck. He drops them, and they collapse into a heap of tentacles on the floor. He steps over their body and walks out.

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA CARGO BAY - A BIT LATER

The other captives all rush to ships and launch them out of the one-way forcefield separating the cargo bay from space. Pirates and captives shoot at each other, causing deaths on both sides.

Leeandra, B'Scarrei, Ran, and Ombi rush in and see the chaos.

LEEANDRA

Where's Zantu? I can't see him!

Ran grabs her hand with their clean hand.

RAN

I can. Come with me.
(to B'Scarrei and Ombi)
Keep up.

B'SCARREI

I can handle us.

They gently pat Ombi.

Ran starts leading Leeandra through the crowd. A pirate lunges for them, but B'Scarrei slashes them out of the way with the scythe. Another charges like a bull, but B'Scarrei catches their horns and uses the strength of their many arms to drive them into another pirate.

Suddenly, a stray shot hits Ran in the leg. He crumples to the ground.

INT. THE STARFALL CARGO BAY - CONTINUOUS

Cha and Zantu are walking up the loading ramp when Cha stumbles, clutching the spot where Ran was shot.

ZANTU
What's wrong?

CHA
I have been shot.

ZANTU
No, nothing hit you!

CHA
Ran was shot. I can feel it.

A few pirates start to come up the loading ramp.

CHA (CONT'D)
Get somewhere safe, Zantu. I will
hold them off.

ZANTU
But--

One of the pirates shoot at Cha but they just barely miss.

CHA
Go. Now!

Zantu runs off.

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA CARGO BAY - CONTINUOUS

B'Scarrei picks up Ran with two hands.

B'SCARREI
Ap, ap, ap, you don't get to rest
just yet, my friend.

LEEANDRA
Where are they?

Ran points.

RAN
That way. We are on the Starfall. I
am under attack; we must hurry. I
do not know how much longer I can
hold them off.

Suddenly Ombi turns invisible.

B'SCARREI
(to Ombi)
What is wrong?

OMBI
Start running!

A long WHISTLE rings out amid the din of fighting. Leeandra looks up.

LEEANDRA
Start running... Come on, start running!

She takes off in the direction of the Starfall. B'Scarrei follows quickly.

B'SCARREI
Why? What is it?

LEEANDRA
It's Spot.

B'SCARREI
What-- Oh...

B'Scarrei looks up and sees, crawling along the ceiling, a creature the size of the Starfall itself. Black chiton covers its body in thick, glossy plates. Ten enormous legs stretch from the central mass of its body, each ending in barbed hooks that dig into the metal of the ceiling. Its head bears a powerful frontal spike like a rhinoceros beetle, as well as six compound eyes. In the center of its forehead, a large red air-sack inflates as it inhales.

LEEANDRA
Spot... Carrith's pet.

Spot releases a sound halfway between the ROAR of a jet and the CROAK of a bullfrog the *size* of a jet.

B'Scarrei picks up Leeandra and starts running as fast as he can to the Starfall. The creature falls to the ground with a thud, landing on its feet. It chases after them.

INT. THE STARFALL CARGO BAY - CONTINUOUS

Three dead pirates lay at Cha's feet as they fight another four. One hand bores into the skull of a pirate as they use the other to fire a blaster they picked up at the other pirates. They aren't the best shot, but they're at least slowing them down a bit.

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA CARGO BAY - CONTINUOUS

B'Scarrei runs carrying Leeandra, Ombi, and Ran. They quickly duck under the wing of a ship on their way through. Spot flips the ship on its side as it barrels towards them.

B'SCARREI
So we get to the ship and then
what?!

LEEANDRA
Still working on that!

B'SCARREI
Are you f--?!

Ran winces in pain and clutches their side.

OMBI
Ran?!

INT. THE STARFALL CARGO BAY - CONTINUOUS

A pirate slices Cha in the side with a heated dagger. Cha shoots them in the head, and then shoots another pirate and who falls backwards down the ramp. The other two pirates still standing turn to see their friend, but their eyes widen and they run back down the ramp and away from the ship. Cha clutches their side as they look out over the ramp. They see Spot hurdling straight towards them.

CHA
Allwisened save us...

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA CARGO BAY - CONTINUOUS

B'Scarrei has just about reached the Starfall's loading ramp, but they can feel Spot's breath on them. They brace for powerful jaws to clamp down on them but then, everything goes quiet. The sounds of the surrounding battle are muffled.

B'Scarrei, Ombi, and Leeandra look behind them to see that the Starfall's shields have been activated and hold a barrier between them and Spot. Spot gnashes and claws at the forcefield, but cannot get through.

ZANTU (O.S.)
(over a speaker)
Now get him!

A shot fires down, hitting Spot in the back. Then another shot from a new angle.

Leeandra looks around to see that some of the other captives' ships have turned around to fire on the beast. They fire again, and again, and finally, Spot collapses in a heap.

B' SCARREI
The other pilots...

OMBI
But how--

They hear a small tapping. They look around for a moment before Ran weakly points upward towards the cockpit window. There, we see Zantu tapping on the glass and waving down at everyone.

LEEANDRA
(overjoyed)
Zantu!

INT. THE STARFALL COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

We see Zantu standing on the captain's chair to reach the buttons. His hand is on the shield button he pointed out to Tom earlier.

INT. THE STARFALL CARGO BAY - A BIT LATER

ChaRan patches themselves up with Ombi's help. They sit on a few crates with the clothes of a few dead pirates surrounding them nearby. Leeandra is kneeling and hugs Zantu close.

LEEANDRA
My Light, My Dear Light, you're
alive! I don't know what I would
have done if something had happened
to you! Are you hurt?

ZANTU
I'm alright. But,

He pulls Bora out of his coat pocket.

ZANTU (CONT'D)
Bora is gonna need stitches.

Leeandra presses her forehead to his affectionately.

LEEANDRA
Here,

She takes another golden ring from her hair. Zantu smiles hopefully.

ZANTU
Really, Momma?

LEEANDRA
You saved my life. You saved all of
our lives. You've earned this.

She puts this gold ring with the others in his top knot.

B'SCARREI (O.S.)
Ah! Here it is!

B'Scarrei wheels out the floating palette he brought onto the
ship.

OMBI
What is it?

B'SCARREI
It is how we make Carrith pay for
what he has done.

B'Scarrei takes the tarp off of the palette to reveal dozens
upon dozens of explosives.

CHARAN
(in unison)
Those are fusion bombs! Those have
been on the ship the entire time?

B'SCARREI
Eh, it is just business. If law
asks, I have no idea what I
transport. But, sometimes I *do* take
small peak, yes?

LEEANDRA
B'Scarrei... There's enough here to
destroy the entire ship... and then
some.

B'SCARREI
Yes. The trouble is in placing
them. If they are all in one
location, blast will be powerful,
yes, but Carrith could still
possibly escape. I do not like this
possibility.

LEEANDRA
How do we get them throughout the
ship? Ma'Ashe and the rest of the
crew are still looking for us.

ZANTU

What if we stick them to the
outside?

B'SCARREI

There is only one spacesuit aboard,
and it is sized for Tom.

ZANTU

I have an idea! Follow me!

INT. THE STARFALL COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Zantu stands on the captain's chair and presses a few more
buttons.

B'SCARREI

You are surprisingly skilled for
your age, yes.

ZANTU

Paba called me a prodigy...

Zantu saddens for a moment, then shakes it off and hits a few
more buttons.

ZANTU (CONT'D)

This is Starfall, can anyone read
me?

PILOT 1

Loud and clear.

PILOT 2

Yes, little one.

PILOT 3

We read you.

LEEANDRA

Zantu, how many people did you
reach?

ZANTU

Seventeen, I think.

PILOT 4

What's the word?

ZANTU

We're gonna blow up the ship!

Cheers come over the communications system.

ZANTU (CONT'D)
But we need your help.

PILOT 1
What's the plan, little buddy?

ZANTU
The plan? Uh... Here wait, let me
put my Momma on for you. She's
really smart.

Zantu gestures for Leeandra to come over.

LEEANDRA
Hello?

PILOT 2
We read you. What are we doing?

Leeandra takes a steadying breath.

BEGIN MONTAGE

- Ships block the entrances to the room.

LEEANDRA
There are six exits to this room. I
need six of you to block them off
with your ships' shields.

- The ships blocking the entrances put up their shields.

LEEANDRA (CONT'D)
Then, everyone needs to send
someone over to get a few fusion
bombs from us.

- Aliens file into the Starfall and carefully exit with two
or three bombs each.

LEEANDRA (CONT'D)
We're going to need you to place
the bombs on the outside of the
hull.

- Ships with small metal arms attach the bombs to the hull.

- Aliens in spacesuits carefully place the bombs on the hull.

LEEANDRA (CONT'D)
Once everyone is far enough away,
we'll detonate them all.

- Ships fly away from Fortune's Nova into space.

PILOT 3
What will you be doing?

- Leeandra, B'Scarrei, and ChaRan place bombs all over the cargo bay.

LEEANDRA
We'll set some of our own in here,
to make sure no one can follow us.

PILOT 1
Roger that.

PILOT 2
Sounds like a plan.

PILOT 4
Stay safe in there.

LEEANDRA
We'll try.

END MONTAGE

INT. FORTUNE'S NOVA CARGO BAY - LATER

The Starfall is the last functioning ship in the cargo bay. Other ships burn and their smoke has triggered a sprinkler system. Water pours down from the ceiling.

B'Scarrei, Ombi, ChaRan, Leeandra, and Zantu are all gathered by the Starfall's loading ramp.

B'SCARREI
Alright. The charges are set. Hoo,
my client will not be happy about
this.

CHARAN
(in unison)
It is better than losing them to
pirates in the traditional sense.

LEEANDRA
Let's get moving-- aah!

A blaster shot echoes through the cargo bay as Leeandra is struck in the shoulder.

Everyone turns to see Carrith standing there with a blaster in one hand, and the sword that matches Leeandra's in the other. His gold rings weigh down his matted grey hair, and his frills are on full display.

CARRITH
You... You wretched viper. Look
what you have done.

He starts coming closer.

LEEANDRA
(to the other passengers)
Get on the ship.

All of the passengers get back on the ship except Zantu.

ZANTU
No, Momma, he's gonna hurt you!

LEEANDRA
Get on the ship, Zantu.

CARRITH
You released my cargo. You set
fires in my ship. You killed Spot!

He gets closer.

ZANTU
He's gonna kill you!

LEEANDRA
Please, Zantu--

ZANTU
(tearful)
I can't lose you!

Leeandra looks down at Zantu.

LEEANDRA
Find a weapon but stay far from
Paba, alright?

Zantu nods and runs off.

CARRITH
And now you've turned my son
against me!

He stows the blaster in his belt.

CARRITH (CONT'D)

The blaster was too quick of a death for your friend.

He draws his sword. She draws hers. Each of these ceremonial swords is an identical curved blade made of black metal that glimmers with a blueish tint. The sharp edge of each glows red with heat.

CARRITH (CONT'D)

I'm going to make you bleed!

He strikes at her, but she blocks the sword with her own. She steps under his arm and tries to slash at his belly. He backs out of the way, and she only winds up cutting part of his coat.

LEEANDRA

I'm not chained up this time, Ma'Ashe. Now I can fight back!

She swings the sword up at him, but he parries to the side as he takes a step back. She swings again, and again another parry and another step back from him. Carrith side-steps her and swipes at her back, cutting her hair. A gold ring clatters to the ground.

She turns around to him, frills out, fury on her face. She feints to left then slices his right coat sleeve. He growls at the pain and black blood oozes from him. He snarls and slashes down towards her face. She turns away but the tip of her pointed ear is severed. Leeandra cries out.

CARRITH

Good! Good! All the pain you put me through I'll give to you ten-fold!

Leeandra bears her teeth.

LEEANDRA

Too late.

She slashes at him fiercely again, and again, advancing each time. He tries to block but is clearly on the defensive. Then, Leeandra slashes his arm and his sword goes flying out of his hand. She points her sword at the center of his chest.

LEEANDRA (CONT'D)

Stand down, Ma'Ashe. Don't make me kill you in front of our son.

Carrith snarls, but puts his hands up in surrender. Leeandra lowers her sword and turns to go back to the Starfall.

Carrith pulls out his blaster.

CARRITH

Always were too weak to finish the
job.

BANG! A shot rings out. Leeandra turns towards the source. It isn't Carrith. The hand Carrith was using to hold the blaster has been shot clean off. Carrith also turns to the source only to see Zantu holding a blaster with tears running down his cheeks.

ZANTU

Do it, Momma.

Leeandra takes a breath, then runs Carrith through the chest with her sword. Carrith buckles, then collapses as she pulls the blade out, soaked in black blood. Carrith turns his head to look at Zantu.

CARRITH

That's my boy...

His breathing slows, and stops. Zantu drops the blaster. He falls to his knees and sobs. Leeandra lets the sword clatter to the ground and rushes to him.

No sound comes from the scene. Instead, the song the alien musician was singing earlier plays.

ALIEN MUSICIAN (V.O.)

(sung)

The stars don't stay fixed in their
places.
The constellations move.

Leeandra picks up Zantu and brings him over to the Starfall. Zantu cries into her uninjured shoulder.

ALIEN MUSICIAN (V.O.)

(sung)

I've seen too many broken faces
to not recognize you.

EXT. SPACE - A BIT LATER

Numerous ships float a safe distance away from Fortune's Nova. The Starfall flies out to join them.

ALIEN MUSICIAN (V.O.)

(sung)

Traveler, lone traveler,

INT. THE STARFALL COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Leeandra and Zantu stand in the cockpit. Leeandra has the detonator in her hand. Zantu has stopped crying.

ALIEN MUSICIAN (V.O.)
(sung)
Adrift among the sea of stars.

Zantu nods to Leeandra.

ALIEN MUSICIAN (V.O.)
(sung)
We're all travelers, lone
travelers.

Leeandra activates the detonator. A small light comes from Fortune's Nova.

ALIEN MUSICIAN (V.O.)
(sung)
But, we weren't meant to be apart.

Leeandra pulls Zantu close as the light gets bigger and brighter, silhouetting them in the window.

ALIEN MUSICIAN (V.O.)
(sung)
No, we weren't meant to be apart.

The light gets brighter as the screen whites out.

FADE TO:

EXT. ALHAKKAR PORT - DAY

Ships, including the Starfall, are docked in a field of green grass just outside a shanty town. Corrugated metal piled up creates the forms of uneven buildings; but the moss, vines and small white and yellow flowers overgrowing it all gives it a sense of cohesion. Aliens of all kinds bustle about.

SUPER: ALHAKKAR: SIX WEEKS LATER

INT. THE STARFALL COMMON ROOM

Leeandra finishes sewing up Bora, who has been washed and given new stuffing. She smiles warmly at the toy, and snips the thread. Her cuffs are gone.

B'Scarrei comes in, and Leeandra sets Bora to the side.

B' SCARREI

Ah, you fix little creature!

LEEANDRA

Yes, it certainly took me long enough. I was never much of a seamstress. I should really send a thank you message to ChaRan soon. Or, at least when they leave their holy site and can use their bracer again. They said they wanted to see the finished product.

B' SCARREI

Ah, yes, to see if you were "enlightened," ha! Their translator make them sound so silly!

Leeandra chuckles lightly.

LEEANDRA

I'm sure we don't sound much better to them.

B' SCARREI

Bah! Nonsense!

Zantu walks in.

ZANTU

Did Ombi come in here--

Zantu gasps in delight when he sees Bora. He rushes over and grabs the toy, hugging it close.

ZANTU (CONT'D)

Bora you're all better!

Ombi skitters out of a kitchen cabinet.

OMBI

You got Bora back!

ZANTU

There you are! I knew you were in here! But look!

Zantu holds Bora out to Ombi. The two are about the same size.

ZANTU (CONT'D)

Thank you, Momma!

LEEANDRA
You're very welcome, My Light.

B'SCARREI
I also have something for you. Or
rather, for both of you.

B'Scarrei pulls out Tom's bracer and hands it to Leeandra.

LEEANDRA
Did your friend change it?

B'SCARREI
I had to pull few strings, call in
few favors, but, yes.

Leeandra opens a hologram on the bracer. It shows her face on what looks like an official document.

B'SCARREI (CONT'D)
Passport and registration for one
Leeandra Leofai. Free citizen,
widow of Thomas Leofai, and next of
kin to whatever he didn't leave for
his family... or for me. It isn't
much, credit-wise, but it will get
you by until you land on feet, yes?

Leeandra closes the hologram and puts the bracer on.

LEEANDRA
Thank you, B'Scarrei. Really, I
mean, this is everything. How can I
ever repay you?

B'SCARREI
Ah, well, you know, free transport
every once in a while you are in
area would be nice.

Leeandra smiles up at him.

LEEANDRA
Gladly. You're welcome aboard any
time.

B'Scarrei grins.

B'SCARREI
You are not the first to have said
that.

They pause a moment.

B' SCARREI (CONT'D)
 Ha... this is usually when Tom
 would ask where we are off to next.

LEEANDRA
 I miss him too...

B' Scarrei takes a breath.

B' SCARREI
 Come. Tom was never one for
 mourning. He was man of action,
 yes? Wherever you want to go, that
 is where you belong. Here, come
 with me.

B' Scarrei gets up and walks out. Leeandra, Zantu, and Ombi
 follow.

INT. TOM'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

B' Scarrei opens the door, and all four of them stare inside
 for a moment before B' Scarrei moves a poster and hits a
 button.

A hologram map of the universe projects onto the ceiling. A
 path is traced in golden light.

LEEANDRA
 What is this?

B' SCARREI
 Tom was... sentimental. Always
 liked to keep track of journeys.

B' Scarrei touches a star and a small hologram video of Tom (a
 few years younger) pops down. His hair is wet.

TOM (V.O.)
 Day one on Balask-6. I had always
 heard of snow but this is the first
 time I've really experienced it.
 It's awesome! Riar and I built snow
 sculptures, and tomorrow they said
 they'll take me sledding!

B' Scarrei selects a different star. A different hologram pops
 down. Tom is very drunk in this one and wearing a lot of
 partially-smearred makeup. A golden holographic string
 connects to a small tiara high on the shelf. Tom wears the
 same tiara in the video.

TOM (V.O.)
 Guess who just fucking won third-
 place best dancer at the Springtide
 Festival at Sarpelor?

He puts a thumb to his chest.

TOM (V.O.)
 (sing-song)
 This guy!

He laughs and ducks off camera. B'Scarrei points to another star. Another golden holographic string extends to a Redmov deck on the desk. It's the same one B'Scarrei had grabbed earlier.

TOM (V.O.)
 So, I'm at Port Frizhur and turns
 out I'm gonna be transporting this
 Akal and his bunches of cargo. He's
 definitely a smuggler, but I don't
 know... He seems pretty friendly...
 for a criminal... He even offered a
 game of Redemov later.

Tom smirks.

TOM (V.O.)
 I think I'm gonna let him win. I
 don't want to spend four weeks with
 a sore loser.

B'Scarrei smiles and lets go of the star.

B'SCARREI
 He did let me win. And then I
 gloated about it for four weeks of
 journey. Ah, start of beautiful
 friendship.

Ombi points up at another star.

OMBI
 What about that one? Look at how
 many times he went there! Do you
 think that's where his family is?

B'Scarrei selects that star. In this one, Tom is outside. A group of dogs cluster around him. Tom looks incredibly happy.

TOM (V.O.)
 (excited)
 They have dogs here!
 (MORE)

TOM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I'm at New Alamov and I didn't even
realize it was a human settlement
and they have dogs here! Look at
all these guys!

A big dog excitedly jumps up at the camera and the recording
ends.

Laughter bubbles through the people in the room.

B'SCARREI
It looks like Tom went to this one
quite often too.

B'Scarrei moves to another star and a different hologram pops
down. In this one, Tom lays in bed grinning.

TOM (V.O.)
(whispered)
I ran into an old buddy from flight
school on Nerisan and--

VOICE (V.O.)
Tom, are you fucking recording
right now?!

Tom laughs and the recording ends.

ZANTU
Where's Tom's flight school?

The others look to him.

LEEANDRA
You want to go to flight school?

Zantu nods.

ZANTU
Look at all the adventures he had!
I wanna do all that too.

B'SCARREI
Let us see... where does this
start?

B'Scarrei traces the path for a bit before finally settling
on one star far from the others. He activates this one and
this hologram of Tom appears much younger (around 19). Many
golden holographic strings stretch out in a beautiful web and
touch every part of the ceiling, lighting up the universe map
in gold.

TOM (V.O.)
Uh, testing, testing, one, two, three? Is this thing recording? Uh, yeah, alright. So uh, recording one, I guess. The Starfall is officially ready to take off from Nighton tomorrow morning.

We focus in on Leeandra looking up with a soft smile.

TOM (V.O.)
She's finally done. After all that hard work, all the blood sweat and tears, she's finally ready to get out there among the stars.

We see Zantu looking up.

TOM (V.O.)
I don't really know where to go together first. But, I'm sure we'll find our way.

We focus to Ombi.

TOM (V.O.)
It's kind of scary leaving my family. But, my mom says she's proud of me for getting out there.

We focus on B'Scarrei.

TOM (V.O.)
She told me not to focus too much on just making money. I mean, that *is* the point of a job, but she said that it's more important to make good friends.

We see the entire group.

TOM (V.O.)
Friends are worth more than any cargo hold could carry. I just hope I make some good ones out there.

A pause. Tom looks at the camera.

TOM (V.O.)
Hm... now how do I stop recording?
Uh... Oh, got--

The recording ends. The hologram fades, as does the golden light. B'Scarrei, Ombi, Zantu, and Leeandra all look at each other.

ZANTU

To Nighton?

Leeandra smiles lightly and takes Zantu's hand.

LEEANDRA

To Nighton.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF FILM