

A N D O R

"Someone Else's Future"

*(This spec episode occurs in Season 1,
between episodes 10 & 11)*

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EXT. NARKINA 5 - SHORELINE - NIGHT

TWO FIGURES move swiftly across the coastline.

White prison uniforms caked with dirt.

Bare feet kicking up sand.

It's CASSIAN AND MELSHI.

They slow to a stop.

Before them --

A MASSIVE, LOOMING CLIFF FACE

No way around. Far too treacherous to scale in the dark.

Behind them --

PATROL SHIPS

rove ever closer, searchlights sweeping every inch of land.

No way forward.

No way back.

Melshi collapses to his knees, exhausted. Cassian leaves him, pressing ahead to examine the perimeter of the cliff face.

ON MELSHI

Exhaustion gives way to despair. He grips the sand, hopeless, when suddenly --

CASSIAN (O.S.)

Over here!

Melshi glances up to see Cassian disappear into a narrow opening in the cliffside.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

TWO PALE HANDS RUB TOGETHER FORCEFULLY to rotate a long wooden stick, which Cassian bores down into a notched log. A makeshift fire-starter.

His teeth chatter. His hands tremble against the task. The log is damp. But he's determined.

Melshi sits off to the side, slouched, shivering. Staring with detached gloom at Cassian's boy scout routine.

MELSHI

We won't last the night.

Cassian ignores him. Keeps working the stick.

MELSHI (CONT'D)

Do you hear me? Those ships are gonna find us.

CASSIAN

You don't know that.

MELSHI

You saw what happened to the others.

At this, Cassian falters ever so slightly. Then just as quickly gets back on task. Gritting his teeth. Breathing hard. Putting his whole body into lighting the damp stick.

Off his stubborn determination, we FLASH BACK to...

EXT. LAKE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Mere hours ago. Underwater. Peaceful.

Cassian, having just plunged in, paddles up towards the shimmering surface. Emerges to --

A THOUSAND THRASHING LIMBS!

A growing swarm of escaped prisoners kick their way across the vast lake, away from the towering Narkina 5 prison complex. Churning calm waters into a hurricane of bodies.

The freed men let out celebratory YIPS and CHEERS as they swim, their spirits revived by the water.

Cassian gets his bearings. Checks the faces of men rushing past. Searching for someone, he calls out into the chaos.

CASSIAN

Kino! Kino!!

Cassian flits between passing swimmers.

CASSIAN (CONT'D)

Have you seen Kino?... Kino?...

Have you seen Kino?

They ignore him to a man, until he queries a burly, blunt, mean-looking fellow named LANZAC CORROS (38), who pauses from his frontstroke. Looks Cassian up and down.

LANZAC

Swim on, bloke. We're not free yet.

A CRY from nearby -- they both turn to see a YOUNG MAN a few yards away getting PUMMELED in the face by wild kicks.

With that, Lanzac continues on his way.

CASSIAN

Hey!

Cassian watches him go, then speeds over to the boy's aid.

Wraps his arms around the flailing prisoner. Carries him away from the main stream of bodies towards the calmer outer edge.

CASSIAN (CONT'D)

Can you float?

The boy is clutching his nose, which leaks blood.

CASSIAN (CONT'D)

(repeating)

Can you float??

The young man nods, buoys himself on his back.

CASSIAN (CONT'D)

Wait here.

He turns to the crowd.

CASSIAN (CONT'D)

Help! I need a hand over here!

Nobody stops. Unclear if anyone can hear him, Cassian swims further into traffic.

CASSIAN (CONT'D)

Someone, give me a han --

FWOOSH!!! The lake behind him yawns open, and --

-- a HUMUNGOUS MOUTH surfaces from the depths to swallow the injured man whole.

For a flash, Cassian can see the gaping jaws of a ravenous SPIKESHARK -- a hammerhead the size of a bus, skin covered in razor-sharp quills that jut out like malformed teeth.

The horrifying maw recedes back underwater, leaving only ripples where the young man's body was.

Nearby swimmers freeze in shock, till --

More SPIKESHARKS begin to crest, emerging from every direction, all at once.

A feeding frenzy. Cassian takes in the horrific scene, as we PRE-LAP a HAUNTING CHANT:

CHANTING GIRLS (PRE-LAP)
*...Yielding in acceptance, safe in
 the braid of the old ways...*

He speeds away, the lake around him turning red.

INT. MON'S HOME - DINING ROOM - DAY

Leida leads a study group of devout GIRLS (ages 12-15) in the monotonous CHANDRILAN CHANT.

CHANTING GIRLS
*...True and steady, and braided in
 trust. The old ways hold us, safe
 in the knot, in the binding, the
 old ways teach us...*

Leida briefly spies her mother and Tay passing through the --

FOYER --

Mon leads Tay past the dining room. He bristles at the eerie chant, momentarily meeting Leida's gaze.

CHANTING GIRLS
*...Bound against the wind, to ride
 the shore. Tethered in
 permanence...*

Mon, noting his curiosity, ushers him past.

INT. SITTING ROOM - DAY

They sit. From the hallway, we can still hear the girls' faint chanting.

TAY
 She takes to the old ways.

MON
 How much time do we have?

Not enough for small talk, evidently. Tay takes her cue. Lowers his voice.

TAY
 Very little, I'm afraid.

MON
And... my options?

TAY
I'm putting out feelers. Carefully.

MON
Can't exactly take out an ad.

TAY
"Four-hundred-thousand credits
needed to fund subversive
activities." No, I'd imagine we
can't.

Mon pours two cups of tea, slides one over to him. He stares
at the glass, anxious. Mon waits for him to speak.

TAY (CONT'D)
The list you gave me. Perrin's
old... from his gambling days...

MON
Somebody bit. Who?

TAY
I think it's best, the less you
know.

MON
(disbelief)
A month ago I was nervous to meet
with Davo Sculdun, and now I'm
taking bids from loan sharks. I can
imagine the terms are --

TAY
-- Favorable.
(off her skepticism)
Mon, there's no interest. No
repayment at all.

MON
(souring)
Ah. So it's political.

TAY
The trade bill...

It hits her like an arrow.

TAY (CONT'D)

...It runs contrary to their interests. I know what that bill represents to you. I know how long you've been... well... I know you. But I had to present the option, even if I already know the answer.

Mon goes quiet. Actually considering. He can't believe it.

TAY (CONT'D)

Mon. I want you to think about where this leads --

MON

-- The alternative is marrying off my daughter.

It lands sharper than she intended. Almost accusatory.

TAY

Sculdun isn't an option. On that we agree. But can you afford to start down this path? You, of all people?

They both startle -- from the other room, the girls have erupted in GIGGLES. They go quiet, til the distant laughter dies down. Mon collects herself.

MON

Soon she won't need my permission. To marry.

Finally, what's really on her mind.

TAY

True. She's not much younger than you and Perrin, when you...

MON

Don't remind me.

TAY

Worried she'll run off with the first Chandrilan boy who looks her way?

(beat)

Or perhaps the second?

Mon flashes a curt smile. A hint of ancient history.

MON

What do you think about the Futures Program for Girls?

TAY

A boarding school? For Leida?
 (he considers)
 I suppose it would stave off
 marriage for a few years.

He sighs. Holding his tongue.

MON

What is it?

TAY

You can't hold on forever. Once she
 makes up her mind to take a
 husband, I doubt if anything will
 stop her.

MON

Why do you say that?

TAY

She takes after her mother.

MON

Stubborn.

TAY

Unyielding, in her ideals.

She doesn't like it. But he's not wrong.

INT. FERRIX - MAARVA'S HOME - NIGHT

Brasso waters Maarva's large collection of wall-hanging
 plants. Maarva lies in bed. Watches him impatiently.

Though frail, a fire still burns in her.

MAARVA

You're not a prisoner here, you
 know.

BRASSO

The doctor said you should rest.

MAARVA

And what's that got to do with my
 plants?

Brasso sets down the watering can. Musters his resolve.

BRASSO

Have you thought any more about...
 what we discussed?

MAARVA
I'm not dead yet, Brasso.

BRASSO
Far from it. But the other
Daughters, they thought you might
want something prepared... for
when...

He trails off.

MAARVA
I won't waste what little time I
have left writing my own eulogy.
Not while I have strength left in
my fingers.

Bee wheels over to interject.

BEE
You're a D-D-Daughter of Ferrix!
It's customary that you --

Brasso puts a hand on Bee's shoulder to silence him.

BRASSO
The funerary stone ceremony is a
high honor. You're a hero to these
people.

MAARVA
The heroes I knew weren't turned
into bricks. They didn't die in
their beds.

She rolls over in bed, facing away.

MAARVA (CONT'D)
While you *water plants*, Bix is
being held against her will.
Waiting for someone to --

Her diatribe gives way to a COUGHING FIT. Brasso moves in,
concerned, but she waves him away. Stubborn as ever.

BRASSO
Not a day goes by, Maarva...
(he trails off)
But there's nothing we can do for
her. Not while she's in Imperial
custody.

She stares daggers at him, disgusted by his passivity.

MAARVA

If you want me to rest, then let me rest.

Brasso sighs, gives Bee a pat, then moves to exit. He takes one last look at Maarva from the front door.

BRASSO

There are limits to what one person can do.

Maarva remains turned away. Won't meet his gaze.

He exits. Bee solemnly watches him go.

Maarva waits a few beats. Turns, to make sure he's gone. Then dramatically throws off her blankets.

MAARVA

(to Bee)

I thought he'd never leave.

She gets to her feet. Somewhere to be.

EXT. FERRIX - STREETS - NIGHT

Maarva, dressed in a black cloak, hobbles through the desolate nighttime streets of Ferrix. Bee rolls alongside.

BEE

Sh-sh-shouldn't you be resting?

MAARVA

Don't start with that.

They pause at a corner. Peer around the edge of a building. Spotting patrolling STORMTROOPERS, she waits.

BEE

But Brasso said --

MAARVA

Hush.

She glances around the wall again to make sure the stormtroopers haven't heard. Then kneels to Bee's level.

MAARVA (CONT'D)

One way or another, I'm going out fighting.

BEE

It's n-n-not safe.

MAARVA

I don't want to be safe. I want to be useful.

She points to the building being guarded by the stormtroopers -- once a hotel, now Ferrix's temporary Imperial garrison.

MAARVA (CONT'D)

Bix needs us. And we need her. Can I count on you to stick to the plan?

Bee lets out of mechanical WHIR of uncertainty.

MAARVA (CONT'D)

Bee?

BEE

(reluctant)

Yes. You can c-count on me.

Maarva nods, satisfied.

EXT. AROUND THE CORNER - IMPERIAL GARRISON - MOMENTS LATER

The two patrolling stormtroopers stand guard in front of the building, blaster rifles at the ready.

Suddenly, under an archway between two nearby buildings, Bee ZOOMS LOUDLY PAST in the shadows.

They turn to look, but he's already gone. *What was that?*

One stormtrooper moves out to investigate, and the other stays put, when --

BEE ZIPS BY under another nearby archway.

Our remaining stormtrooper turns, raises his rifle. Moves to investigate.

The passageway now cleared of its Imperial presence, Maarva hobbles in from around the corner.

Kneels by a STORM DRAIN.

Its grate is bolted to the frame. No matter: she produces a rusty old ratchet from her cloak and fits it to the bolts.

But, try as she might, she can't break the seal. Her strength just isn't there. Not anymore.

She takes a pause to massage her bony fingers.

BEE (O.S.)
M-M-Maarva...

MAARVA
(half-turning)
Not now, Bee. Keep them distracted.

BEE
Maarva.

She turns to see Bee flanked by the menacing stormtroopers. One has his gun trained on Bee -- the other on Maarva. She drops the ratchet, which CLANKS down the storm drain.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Cassian swims for his life, alongside hundreds of others.

All around him, men are torn to bits.

A quill surfaces to SPEAR the man in front of him. Cassian veers right as another spikeshark PULLS THE IMPALED MAN UNDER. The animals are working together.

Cassian sets his sights on a floating BARGE.

A hunk of rust, big enough to hold about ten shipping containers. But in these waters, it's an oasis.

A handful of prisoners have already boarded, and a few are helping swimmers up. Including --

MELSHI
Over here!

Cassian spots his friend and co-conspirator, who reaches a hand down for him.

He takes it, and Melshi hoists him to safety.

EXT. BARGE - SAME

Cassian throws a leg over the aft of the barge.

Safely aboard, he now turns to see hundreds of other men thrashing through the water for the rusty ship.

Cassian reaches over the edge and begins muscling others aboard. He, Melshi, and other do-gooders pull men up as fast as they can -- the carnage in the water inspiring urgency.

Lanzac, the burly fellow from earlier, appears behind Cassian. He's nearly dry, having arrived before them.

LANZAC
You the pilot?

CASSIAN
Huh?

LANZAC
Heard you was a pilot.

Cassian's attention is split between Lanzac and the swimmers.

CASSIAN
I fly ships, not boats.

LANZAC
Close enough. Follow me.

CASSIAN
(re: desperate swimmers)
They need all the hands they can
get.

LANZAC
I'm not asking, friend.

Cassian ruffles. He won't be intimidated out of his duty.

CASSIAN
We're not in prison anymore,
friend.

Lanzac steps forward, casting a shadow over the hunched Cassian. Sets a huge hand on Cassian's shoulder.

LANZAC
Do you feel like a free man?

Cassian looks up at the muscly Lanzac, who towers over him. Then back down to the desperate swimmers. More than he could ever save.

Melshi, who's clocked the exchange, nods: "You'd better go."

EXT. BARGE - DECK - MOMENTS LATER

Lanzac leads him across the deck, where Cassian spies the ship's cargo: a tremendous haul of assembled components.

CASSIAN
Those are the things they had us
building.

LANZAC
One foot still in the slammer.

Cassian can't help but marvel at the prison-made machines, affixed to the deck with massive flat-rope ties.

Lanzac ushers him past, towards the bow (front) of the barge.

EXT. BARGE - BOW - MOMENTS LATER

A steering wheel juts out of rusty control panel. Old school dials, buttons, and switches. Cassian bends to examine it.

CASSIAN
This thing is a relic.

LANZAC
Can you make it move?

Cassian runs his hands over the controls.

CASSIAN
I don't even know how to turn it
on--

BOOM!

The barge lurches sideways, and men lose their balance. One unlucky prisoner is sent flying over the side.

Cassian takes a guilty beat -- *what the hell did I touch?*

But it wasn't him. He follows Lanzac to peer over the edge, where the MAN OVERBOARD is torn apart by a school of rabid spikesharks.

Another two spikesharks line up, then charge the floating barge with their massive bodies, making contact --

BOOM!

Again, the barge lurches violently. The sharks have a strategy. Lanzac turns to Cassian.

LANZAC
Make it move.

Cassian nods. Heads back for the control panel.

INT. MON'S HOME - FOYER - NIGHT

We're PEERING into the dining room from the foyer. Spying on a heated, yet hushed, argument between Mon and Perrin.

PERRIN
She has a future *here*. She has
friends here.

MON
It's not as though she'll be on
another planet...

INT. DINING ROOM - SAME

The argument continues, closer now.

MON
...Think about the doors this could
open for her.

PERRIN
What doors? She's the daughter of a
senator, and a wealthy one at that.
What could a new school possibly --

MON
The Futures Program is not just a
school. It's an elite academy. Half
of the politicians on Coruscant
already send their children there.

PERRIN
Well, they're not Chandrilan.

MON
What does that have to do with it?

Perrin scoffs. It has everything to do with it.

PERRIN
I've seen how you look down on her
friends. And so has she.

He pours himself a drink from the bar. Turns to stare out the
large bay window at the city below.

PERRIN (CONT'D)
She's coming up on marriage age,
and suddenly you want to send her
to boarding school.

MON
She can still find herself a
husband.

PERRIN
What, after she graduates? In five
years time? She'll never agree to
it.

MON
She doesn't have to.

Perrin downs his drink.

PERRIN

This isn't about her. Is it. You married young because you thought it'd be good for your political --

MON

-- we --

PERRIN

-- *for your political career.* And it was. The youngest senator in Galactic history.

(sizing her up)

Pushing high-minded legislation from the comfort of your glass tower.

MON

What are you trying to --

PERRIN

-- You can pretend to be charitable... but don't pretend this is about Leida's future, when it's really all about you.

Mon has no retort.

INT. FOYER - SAME

We reveal Leida, spying from the foyer, unseen.

Having heard enough, she slinks away.

INT. IMPERIAL GARRISON ON FERRIX - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Maarva, handcuffed, is led down a hall by the two stormtroopers. Bee trudges alongside, also in their custody.

They reach a fork in the hallway. One stormtrooper drags Maarva straight ahead, while the other splits off with Bee down a connecting corridor.

MAARVA

Where are you taking him!? Bee!!

Maarva struggles against the stormtrooper's grasp. Futile.

INT. HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Maarva is set down on the floor. Exhausted, yet defiant.

MAARVA

You won't get anything out of me.

The stormtrooper evidently doesn't care. He exits, slams the door, and locks it behind him.

Maarva sits in silence for a moment, processing.

Suddenly, a WEAK, QUIVERING VOICE comes through the wall.

BIX (O.S.)

M... Maarva?

Maarva snaps to.

MAARVA

Bix? Is that you?

INT. NEIGHBORING CELL - SAME

Bix lies in bed, despondent. The two rooms share a thin wall, and we intercut between them.

BIX

What are you doing here?

MAARVA

I came to break you out.

No response.

MAARVA (CONT'D)

Bix, did you hear me?

BIX

You shouldn't have done that.

Maarva lowers her voice.

MAARVA

Listen to me. I'm putting together a crew. A resistance. I need someone with mechanical skills, and brass. I need you, Bix.

Bix begins sobbing softly.

MAARVA (CONT'D)

Bix?

BIX

Please, Maarva. Just do whatever they say. Whatever they want to know, just tell them.

Maarva grows concerned. This isn't the Bix she knows.

MAARVA
Bix. What've they done to you?

All she can hear is Bix's sobbing.

Then, from the hallway, the faint MECHANICAL WHIRS of Bee -- before the CLANK of a distant metal door cuts off his sounds.

MAARVA (CONT'D)
(sotto)
Bee.

What nightmare has she dragged him into?

EXT. BARGE BOW - DAY

Cassian is hard at work on the rusty control panel. Flipping switches, turning dials, pressing buttons. Guessing.

After each permutation, he slides forward the throttle -- a big lever at the center of the console.

Each time he does, a glass indicator BUZZES and flashes an X. The barge doesn't budge.

BOOM!

Cassian is knocked aside again as sharks continue to pummel the barge. He recovers, continues working, when suddenly --

The engine RUMBLES to life.

Cassian can't believe what he's feeling. Gives the console a once-over. No idea what did it. Who cares?

He slides the throttle up.

The ship lurches forward. Men CHEER!

But the cheers die down as they realize the barge is barely crawling towards the distant shore.

Cassian tries to force the throttle forward even more, but it's as far as it goes.

Lanzac approaches.

LANZAC
What are you waiting for? Hit the gas!

CASSIAN
This is full throttle.

Lanzac shoves him aside to check. Finds only frustration.

CASSIAN (CONT'D)
It's a barge, not a starfighter.

LANZAC
Imperial piece of --

He KICKS the side of the control panel -- his foot goes right through the rusty thing.

MELSHI (O.S.)
Guys... what does that mean?

Cassian and Lanzac swivel to follow Melshi's gaze...

Behind them, the huge prison complex is now lit up with FLASHING RED LIGHTS. Some sort of emergency protocol.

LANZAC
Means the word's out. They'll have patrols here in no time.
(turning to Cassian)
At this pace, we're target practice.

Cassian stares out at the shoreline. About half a mile away.

CASSIAN
We'll have to swim.

LANZAC
Are you mad?

CASSIAN
I'm not going back to prison.

Lanzac's mind races. His eyes sweep the ship: scared MEN (of all ages and builds) slowly take note of the prison complex's flashing red lights.

LANZAC
Fine.
(lowers his voice)
The weaker ones. The worse swimmers. We throw them in first.

MELSHI
What??

LANZAC

Give the sharks their fill, then
the rest of us make a break for it.

CASSIAN

You can't be serious.

LANZAC

Since when is this a discussion?

For a second time, Lanzac steps forward to intimidate. But Cassian's gaze shifts past him, to the assembled machinery strapped to the barge's deck.

CASSIAN

Those things we were assembling in
prison. They must weight twenty
tons.

MELSHI

(catching on)
That's what's slowing us down.

CASSIAN

We have to ditch them.

Cassian raises his voice, calling out to all the men.

CASSIAN (CONT'D)

We have to ditch the load!

He and Melshi make haste for the deck. Lanzac watches them go, skeptical.

INT. MON'S DINING ROOM - DAY

Mon, Perrin, and Leida eat breakfast in silence.

Tensions high between Mon and Perrin. Leida toys with her food, staring unseen daggers at her mother.

Perrin glances between them. Says something -- anything -- to break the icy silence:

PERRIN

What's this I hear about you
jumping sides on the trade bill?

How'd he know?

MON

Who've you been speaking to?

PERRIN

News travels fast when you're married to a senator.

MON

Bad news even faster.

PERRIN

Don't let me dissuade you. I say it's about time. All this petty legislation, while the real issues--

MON

Petty? The bill would combat the illegal slave trade, among other --

LEIDA

-- so why are you voting against it?

Mon flashes a glance at Perrin. They're both surprised to hear Leida engage on a political issue.

LEIDA (CONT'D)

What.

MON

I've never known you to take an interest in my work.

LEIDA

Answer the question. If you believe in the bill, why are you voting against it?

MON

Sometimes adults have to make sacrifices. When there's a greater good --

PERRIN

-- Your mother is jockeying for support on some other cause, I'm sure.

LEIDA

Don't you always say to follow your conscience?

PERRIN

She does, doesn't she.

Mon tilts her head at Perrin, "really?"

PERRIN (CONT'D)

You do.

LEIDA

Do you know what that makes you?

MON

Leida --

LEIDA

-- A hypocrite.

MON

Leida!

Too late. Leida is already up and storming off.

Mon looks to Perrin, who smugly returns to his meal.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE LEIDA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mon knocks on Leida's closed door.

LEIDA

(through the door)

Go away. I'm packing.

MON

Packing? For what?

LEIDA

What do you think?

Perrin. Dammit.

MON

Did your father speak to you?

LEIDA

I know how desperate you are to get rid of me.

MON

Leida. I'm not trying to get rid of --

LEIDA

Of course not, you only want to send me away!

Mon pauses. Her daughter has a point.

What's worse, she can't possibly explain the whole situation. She sits on the floor, her back to the door.

MON

I don't want to send you away.
Trust me, if I thought there was
any other option...

(beat)

I just want you to have the same...
opportunities as I did.

LEIDA

Well I don't!

MON

Leida, I promise you, when you're
older, you'll understand.

A moment of silence. Then:

LEIDA

When I'm older, I hope I'm nothing
like you.

That settles that. Mon, resigned. The truth finally aired.

MON

(sotto)

I know.

She rests her head against the closed door.

INT. FERRIX - HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Maarva's windowless cell.

She uses a small scrap of metal to chisel away at the wall
separating her from Bix.

Morning light peeks in from the mouse hole she's carving.

MAARVA

I could use a hand with this.

BIX

Wherever we go, they'll find us.

MAARVA

You're not yourself right now.

BIX

It's a different world, Maarva.
This isn't the Empire you fought
against. You have no idea what
they're capable of.

Maarva's filing slows to a stop.

BIX (CONT'D)
 There's no room for resistance
 anymore.

Maarva considers this. Then starts up again, not willing to give up the fight.

Suddenly, her door BURSTS open!

The blinding daylight from the hallway silhouettes a figure standing in the door. Maarva is caught red-handed.

The figure moves towards her at an alarming pace.

Maarva recoils as he grabs her. But when her eyes finally adjust she sees... Brasso!

He's embracing her. The two stormtroopers stand in the doorway behind him, accompanied by CAPTAIN VANIS TIGO (one of the Imperial guards we've met on Ferrix).

MAARVA
 Brasso! They got you too?

Brasso glances behind him at the stormtroopers.

BRASSO
 No. I'm here to bring you home.

JEZZI (a friendly Daughter of Ferrix we've met before) steps inside the room.

MAARVA
 I don't understand. Where's Bee?

JEZZI
 He's safe at home. We explained to them how you must've forgotten your medication.

MAARVA
 My medication?

Jezzi rattles a bottle of pills. Shoots her a furtive "go with it." Helps her to her feet.

CAPTAIN VANIS TIGO
 (to Brasso)
 You're lucky they didn't mistake her for a real threat. Next time I won't have so much patience.

BRASSO
 There won't be a next time.

CAPTAIN VANIS TIGO

See to it.

Jezzi helps Maarva out of the cell, steadies her by the elbow. As they pass the stormtroopers and Vanis:

CAPTAIN VANIS TIGO (CONT'D)

A confused old woman and her junkyard droid. Ferrix never ceases to amuse.

He snickers. So do the stormtroopers.

Hearing this, Maarva wriggles out of her friend's grip. She prefers to walk on her own.

EXT. BARGE DECK - DAY

Cassian and Melshi rush to undo the huge straps that tether the high-piled machines to the boat.

It's a seemingly impossible task. There are hundreds of clasps, and each one takes both their efforts to unstrap.

Lanzac appears behind them.

LANZAC

We don't have time for this.

Cassian looks at the heap of machinery. Lanzac is right.

Then Cassian looks to the surrounding prisoners. Most are standing around, or sitting -- their dread-filled eyes locked on the flashing-red prison complex.

CASSIAN

Come and give us a hand!

No one listens.

LANZAC

(to Cassian)

It's no time for a group project.

CASSIAN

(ignoring him)

We need help over here!!

He glances back at the prison, takes in its flashing red lights. Considers... then, in a last-ditch effort:

CASSIAN (CONT'D)

On program!!!

Suddenly, the men hop to attention. Their Pavlovian response to this dire prison command still burned in.

All eyes on Cassian. Even Lanzac is impressed.

Cassian musters his confidence. Speaks with conviction, as though a Narkina-5 floor manager speaking to his crew.

CASSIAN (CONT'D)

I don't know what unit you're all from. I don't know whether you're day shift or night shift. But I do know that if we work together like we did in there, we can get free out here.

He looks to Melshi, who nods encouragement.

CASSIAN (CONT'D)

These engine blocks are slowing us down. We need to unlatch them.

No one moves a muscle, till --

LANZAC

Oy! You heard the man! Get to work!!

At Lanzac's command, men move in to assist. Cassian looks to Lanzac -- may have underestimated him.

INT. MON'S HOVERCAR - NIGHT

Mon and Perrin sit side-by-side in the back seat. Dressed for a party neither of them are in the mood to attend.

In the front seat, Mon's DRIVER (whom we know to be an Imperial spy) shuttles them, separated by a "soundproof" glass divider.

Still in the wake of their domestic squabble, the couple sits in mutual silence. Mon cracks first.

MON

It wouldn't suit her.

PERRIN

Hm?

MON

The Futures Program.

Perrin turns to make sure he didn't mis-hear.

PERRIN
Are you admitting I was right?

MON
I'm admitting I was wrong.

He raises his eyebrows, "good enough."

PERRIN
Always the politician.

IN THE FRONT SEAT --

The driver eavesdrops on their conversation, piped in via a secret speaker.

MON (to Perrin)
Do you know the name Davo Sculdin?

At this, the driver perks up ever so slightly. Mon flashes an almost imperceptible glance his way -- she knows he's listening, though he's unaware of this fact.

PERRIN (to Mon)
Vaguely, I think...

IN THE BACK SEAT --

PERRIN
...He's a banker of some sort?

MON
Any thoughts on his... his lineage?

PERRIN
His--?

Perrin slowly puts the pieces together.

PERRIN (CONT'D)
He has a son...?

MON
It would only be an introduction.

Perrin processes this. It's unlike Mon. Which pleases him.

PERRIN
Have you told her?

MON
I've been waiting to ask your approval.

PERRIN
Of course.

He chews this over. Failing to conjure of any objection:

PERRIN (CONT'D)
An introduction, then.

MON
Good.

She stares stone-faced out the window. The yellow lights of Coruscant at night roll past her face.

MON (CONT'D)
(softer)
Good.

Trying to convince herself, perhaps? No matter. There's no turning back now.

EXT. BARGE BOW - SUNSET

Another prison-made component careens down the deck, and off a ramp into the water.

Men work together to systematically loose the dead weight.

Cassian pauses from the job to glance ashore. The sky darkening. But they're getting closer.

MELSHI
Can we make it?

Cassian glances back at the flashing prison complex. Unsure.

That's when he spots them -- three floating lights, zipping about the distant skyline. His face goes pale.

MELSHI (CONT'D)
What is it?

CASSIAN
Patrol ships.

Lanzac joins them.

LANZAC
They're minutes away, if that.

Suddenly the shoreline doesn't feel so close.

LANZAC (CONT'D)
Well, lads, you've had your go.

CASSIAN

No, don't --

But Lanzac is already in motion. He reaches the bow, and hops up to mount the rusty control panel.

LANZAC

Listen up, lot!

Everyone stops their work to listen.

LANZAC (CONT'D)

That right there...

He points skyward, and men follow his finger to the distant lights.

LANZAC (CONT'D)

...That's the end of us.

The men react to the lights. No longer concerned with the task at hand, they drop their ropes.

LANZAC (CONT'D)

If you wanna live, you'll grab the
closest man and throw him over
before he does the same to you!

Blank stares. What the hell is he on about?

As though to demonstrate, Lanzac jumps down from the panel. Grabs a nearby unassuming, SKINNY PRISONER.

SKINNY PRISONER

What are you --

Lanzac effortlessly lifts him overhead, and chucks him over the side of the boat.

A SPLASH, his fast-dying SCREAMS, then silence.

LANZAC

Feed the sharks, and give
yourselves a fighting chance of
swimming to shore.

The men turn to each other.

Some shuffle away, to create distance. Others look around suspiciously, bracing for a fight.

Finally --

ONE MAN YELLS and rushes ANOTHER, whom he takes off guard and pushes over the edge.

With that, the barge breaks out into chaos.

Everyone begins fighting. SPLASHES are heard as men are pitched overboard.

Cassian is shoved to the floor by a PRISONER, who is then tackled by ANOTHER PRISONER.

Melshi moves to help him up. But Cassian's attention is caught by the skyward lights -- one in particular -- which now approaches at an alarming rate.

CASSIAN

Hey!! Incoming!!! Hey!!

Over the chaos, nobody hears. Not that it would make any difference.

He and Melshi share a glance. Then, together, they move to the edge of the barge. Melshi peers over to see: THE SILHOUETTES OF SHARKS circle just beneath the surface.

Then he looks back up at the patrol ships overhead. Closer now. Too close.

MELSHI

No going back.

Cassian nods.

And just as the patrol ships enter firing range -- the HUM of their engines loud enough that even the fighting prisoners turn skyward --

-- Cassian and Melshi LEAP OVERBOARD.

EXT. OPEN LAKE - NIGHT

They land in the dark water. Seeking, in a blind panic, to flee unseen spikesharks. When --

THE PATROL SHIP LASER BLASTS THE BARGE.

The hit lands like a bomb, sending prisoners flying over the edge. The rest jump willingly, fleeing the crumbling barge.

The sharks' dark shadows retreat from the wreckage.

The patrol ship circles back, and begins to zap swimmers like ants, vaporizing men and the water around them, whipping up PLUMES of steam that coagulate into a thick, war-like fog.

Enveloped inside this noisy hurricane are Cassian and Melshi, who look for a way through as the world around them is churned into a tempest of blood and gunfire and cries.

The way forward is unclear. They yell to each other, but nothing is audible over the cacophony.

All they can do is pick a direction and swim.

INT. FERRIX - MAARVA'S HOME - NIGHT

Maarva enters.

BEE
M-M-Maarva!!!

Bee greets her with ceremony. She bends down and embraces the droid.

MAARVA
Did they hurt you?

BEE
They let me go last night. I've
been so worried about you.

She breezes past him, towards her plant collection.

BEE (CONT'D)
Brasso already watered them.

But to Bee's surprise, Maarva begins unearthing the plants from their potters. Throwing stems and dirt to the ground.

He wheels over, concerned.

BEE (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

MAARVA
They're going to regret ever
letting us go.

She continues trashing her plants -- til, finally, buried in one of the pots, she finds what she's looking for: a dirt-covered LASER BLASTER. Hidden for a long time.

BEE
What is that?

MAARVA

A relic.

(examining it)

When tiptoeing doesn't work...
sometimes you need to blast the
front door down.

BEE

M-M-Maarva -- If you show up with
that --

MAARVA

-- So be it. Back in the day, back
when Clem was around --

BEE

(suddenly firm)

Clem is not around!

Bee turns and rolls swiftly to the other room, in a huff.

Not used to such audacity, Maarva calls after him.

MAARVA

(strict)

Bee!

But she is left alone to examine the mess of broken plants
and dirt scattered across the floor.

The dirt fades to SAND, as we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NARKINA 5 - SHORELINE - NIGHT

Water LAPS against the sandy banks of an uninhabited
shoreline. Three patrol ships are visible in the distance,
their searchlights combing the lake.

This still, calm landscape is intermittently punctuated by
the distant FLASH of a downward-firing laser, no doubt
vaporizing any poor remaining prisoners who managed to
survive the first wave.

We HOLD on the landscape for a while, the looming presence of
these sky predators.

After a few moments, TWO DARK FIGURES emerge from the inky
black lake and wade ashore.

Once safely on land, Cassian and Melshi collapse on their
backs. COUGHING as the tide washes over them, depleted.

When Cassian finally musters the strength to stand, his
waterlogged prison uniform drips heavy.

He takes a few steps. Then turns back to find Melshi still collapsed on the ground.

ON MELSHI

Staring at the roving lights. Afraid to look away.

Cassian appears above him, not a shred of hope in his eyes, no secret answer. All he knows is they must keep moving forward. He offers a hand, and we FLASH FORWARD TO:

INT. CAVE - NIGHT - LATER

Cassian stands near the cave's entrance, listening... not daring to peek out.

Melshi remains where we left him. Sitting, staring dead-eyed into space.

CASSIAN

I haven't heard a patrol ship for fifteen minutes...

Cassian moves to the fire, his step quickening. Takes the sticks he was rubbing together and tosses them to opposite corners of the cave. Melshi doesn't move.

MELSHI

That doesn't mean it's safe.

CASSIAN

...Probably a new shift. Rotating pilots...

MELSHI

Let's rest here tonight. Till they're done searching.

Cassian is already spreading sand with his feet to cover up any trace of their presence.

CASSIAN

They might drag the shoreline. We have to cover our tracks and keep moving.

Cassian clocks Melshi's stagnancy. Grabs him by the shoulder.

CASSIAN (CONT'D)

We need water. We need food. We need to get out of here.

Melshi shakes loose his friend's grip.

CASSIAN (CONT'D)

This might be our only chance.

Melshi is unmoved. Cassian grabs him again.

MELSHI

Let go of me.

Melshi shakes him off even more forcefully.

CASSIAN

You were the one who said we have to get the word out. About what the Empire is doing. To tell people --

MELSHI

Tell *who*? For all we know there's hundreds, thousands, of prisons just like ours. Nobody cared while we were locked up. Why would they care now?

Cassian can see that Melshi has made up his mind.

CASSIAN

After everything we went through, I'm not waiting around to get caught.

He crosses to the cave entrance.

EXT. CAVE - MORNING

Cassian emerges. Stops cold.

We don't see what he sees. Instead, we HOLD ON HIS FACE.

Dirty. Disheveled. Sleep-deprived. Yet suddenly softening.

A slight breeze tousles his hair. Whatever he spots out there is mesmerizing.

Then, with a blink, he turns and...

INT. CAVE - MORNING

He re-enters the cave.

CASSIAN

(half to himself)

She told me one day I'd understand.

Melshi regards him with curiosity.

CASSIAN (CONT'D)
My mother. Back on Ferrix. She
chose to stay. To fight. I told her
fighting was hopeless.

He addresses Melshi directly now.

CASSIAN (CONT'D)
The truth is, I was afraid. Not to
fight. But to lose.

Cassian crosses and sits beside Melshi.

CASSIAN (CONT'D)
You're probably right. No one cares
what goes on in all the dark
corners of the galaxy.
(a beat of recollection)
But we both know how it felt. Cut
off from the world. Our sentence
ticking up.

He turns to Melshi, who can't meet his gaze.

CASSIAN (CONT'D)
Like being buried alive.
(a somber beat)
And now we made it out. And all
those people in all those...
thousands of dark corners. They
need a voice. Even if no one's
listening. It's better than
silence.

A long, quiet beat. Driving home the overpowering silence.

CASSIAN (CONT'D)
I used to be afraid of losing. But
now I'm just afraid I'll never see
her again. That's why I have to
keep going. So I can tell her she
was right, to show her that I'm
ready to fight. I am fighting. So
don't pretend it doesn't matter.
Because you're not just fighting
for yourself...

Melshi finally meets his gaze.

CASSIAN (CONT'D)
...Are you.

Melshi doesn't answer. Doesn't have to. There's someone on
his mind, and that's all we need to know. He rises.

Offers Cassian a hand up.

EXT. CAVE - SUNRISE

They step out to see what Cassian saw moments ago -- only this time, we see it too...

SUNRISE OVER NARKINA 5

They take a moment to appreciate the sight. It would be impossible not to.

The sky is dappled pink and purple and yellow. Against the glassy surface of the massive lake, it's hard to tell where the water ends and the horizon begins. As though they've been swallowed by a vortex of color.

They stand there, spellbound. The future uncertain.

But no matter what it holds, it's bigger than either of them.

INT. MAARVA'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bee is projecting a video hologram of Clem. As soon as Maarva enters, he switches it off. Drops his robotic head.

BEE

I'm s-s-sorry, Maarva.

MAARVA

It's me who should be apologizing.
Please, understand, Bee... I just
wanted so badly to, to do
something. Anything. But as much as
I want it...

(setting down the blaster)

...maybe it's not my fight anymore.

This admission lingers in the air. She settles inside it, her eyes growing wet.

MAARVA (CONT'D)

(lightly, to Bee)

Go on, let's see him.

Bee resumes projecting the Clem video hologram. A happy memory plays silently on loop. Maarva stares into it, and loosens. Never once taking her eyes off of it:

MAARVA (CONT'D)

I never really wanted a funerary
ceremony.

(MORE)

MAARVA (CONT'D)

Being turned into a brick, becoming
a part of Ferrix, a part of its
foundation, it always seemed so...
inert.

(she sighs)

But now I think I'm starting to
understand. The power it can have.
To leave something behind.

BEE

W-w-what would you like to leave
behind?

Maarva's eyes float downward, and land on Bee's holographic
deck. She considers what he's just asked her...

Realizing it's the most important question of her life.

END OF EPISODE