

AGENTS OF THE EMPIRE

written by

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FADE IN

EXT. AKEEN CITY, PLANET GULON II - HIGH NOON

We open to the cityscape of a vaguely Middle Eastern city. Sun-bleached brick slums dominate the majority of the frame, with impossibly high glass skyscrapers in the background. As we pan over the cityscape, three militaristic spaceships fly by.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL MARKET, AKEEN SLUMS - CONTINUOUS

The ships land in the clearing of an abandoned open-air market in the slums. The ship doors open and soldiers with intimidating armored bodysuits storm out, heading down one of the cramped alleys.

CUT TO:

EXT. TENAMENT BUILDING, AKEEN SLUMS - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers come to a door, surrounding it "SWAT" style. They breach and the camera follows as they clear room by room. Empty.

CUT TO:

INT. CREW SAFEHOUSE, AKEEN SLUMS - CONTINUOUS

From a second story window across the street, DORUN SHRIKE and his companion watches the raid. Specks of grey peppers his neat hair, he looks like he belongs in a classroom.

DORUN

We have to get off this planet.

His companion at the window turns to him sharply. Dark hair in a practical haircut frames a deeply tanned face. EKELLE is a Gulonese native, with intense eyes that have seen more pain than her age would suggest.

EKELLE

We got out in time, Dorun. The Resistance can help you.

Dorun gives her a sour look, then turns towards the door. ELLIS enters with TARSIS, both holding laser rifles.

Tarsis scowls, twisting the visible scars that mar his grizzled face. He closes the door, leaving it slightly ajar to keep watch.

TARSIS
We're safe for now. Those are
Imperial Troopers, Dorun, not the
locals we've been dealing with.

Ellis sets his rifle on a small table, the only furniture in the dusty room.

ELLIS
If they're raiding our safehouse it
means-

DORUN
It means we have to get off this
planet.

EKELLE
You can't run now.

ELLIS
Ekelles is right, do you realize how
much we'll be losing if we run now?
Not even counting bribes, we'll be
abandoning contacts its taken
months to establish.

TARSIS
I'm finally making headway with my
black market connections.

Dorun looks out the window again, considering. He shakes his head, firming his resolve.

DORUN
No. We can't afford to be on this
planet when they start connecting
the dots.

Dorun pulls a small handheld communicator out of his pocket.

DORUN (CONT'D)
Arianne, get the ship ready. We're
leaving.

CUT TO:

INT. SHIP: WINDSWIFT; COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Cables and hardware are strewn about a run-down cockpit. A woman's head pops up from below a console, messy blonde hair in her face. ARIANNE hasn't gotten out in a while.

Cursing as she knocks components over, trying to find the communicator. She replies, attempting to sound calm and composed.

ARIANNE

Um, yes, Dorun. Right away.

She looks around at the mess.

ARIANNE (CONT'D)

I'll get right on that...

DORUN

[From communicator]

You better not be breaking my ship.

Arianne scowls as she makes her way to the pilots console.

ARIANNE

Excuse me? I just got the ignition coil back online and now the Nav console keeps losing power. I'm the only reason this junker can even get off the ground.

ARIANNE flips several switches. A negative sounding "WUMP" responds.

ARIANNE (CONT'D)

Or not.

She tries again. Same negative "WUMP".

ARIANNE (CONT'D)

"WUMP"? You're not supposed to "WUMP". When I start primary ignition you go "DEE-DEE-DEEP".

Arianne taps at the panel looking for the issue.

ARIANNE (CONT'D)

It can't be the Nav causing this. We have enough fuel. Ignition coil OK. Oh. Oh that's not good.

CUT TO:

INT. CREW SAFEHOUSE, AKEEN SLUMS - SAME TIME

EKELLE
You're a coward.

DORUN
Oh I'm more than that.

ARIANNE
(*From communicator*)
Dorun, we have a problem. Something
is blocking engine startup.

Beat.

ARIANNE (CONT'D)
All ships on the planet are
affected.

Worried look shared by DORUN/ELLIS.

ELLIS
Imperial Inhibitor Tech.

DORUN
The situation is worse than I
thought.

EKELLE
What's going on?

ELLIS
The Empire has overridden control
of all ships on the planet.

DORUN
Only authorized Imperial ships are
able to fly.

EKELLE
That means-

DORUN
It means that the Empire knows all
about your revolt.

EKELLE
That's not possible.

DORUN
Our safehouse gets raided the same
day all ships on the planet are
grounded? The Empire is making
their move.

ELLIS
What do we do?

DORUN
We have to get off this planet.

[ROLL TITLE CREDITS]

INT. AKEEN SLUMS SAFEHOUSE

DORUN
So we're being hunted by a powerful empire, we have a ship that can't fly, and the most dangerous troops in the galaxy between us and freedom. What do we do?

Silence.

DORUN (CONT'D)
Well don't everyone speak at once.

TARSIS
Can we hack in and clear our ship for launch?

ELLIS
I have access codes that can get us into the Imperial Network.

DORUN
Too suspicious. They'll have cruisers patrolling, we'd be blown out of the sky before we got into orbit.

EKELLE
I have to warn the others.

TARSIS
We should go in blasters blazing.

ELLIS
Tarsis, we won't get far if we just start shooting. We still have those Imperial uniforms from the Ikketar job. We could get into the Restricted Zone without firing a shot.

TARSIS

Ellis, The last time we used those uniforms I nearly got blasted at the first checkpoint!

[The way they say eachothers name implies constant bickering.]

ELLIS

Well if you hadn't called him a drunken Telosin maybe it wouldn't have blown our cover!

EKELLE

We can help the Resistance but we have to act now!

DORUN

OI!

Everyone's attention snaps to Dorun

DORUN (CONT'D)

I've made my decision, and we'll do it your way.

TARSIS

Whos way?

DORUN

All of you. Look, we can't just shoot our way in. We'll use those uniforms to get through the Restricted Zone. The Empire won't be fooled for long, that means you get to shoot something today, Tarsis.

Tarsis looks pleased.

EKELLE

But the Resist-

DORUN

-Your Resistance can help us help them. I assume whatever plan you had for your uprising includes having flyable ships?

Ekelle reluctantly nods.

DORUN (CONT'D)

Then taking down that Inhibitor helps us both.

TARSIS

So... what're we gonna do?

DORUN

Ekelles, get in contact with your people. Tell them if they want to be useful to meet us North of the Bazaar in one hour. We're going back to the ship to get ready.

ELLIS

Ready for what, exactly?

DORUN

The Empire's made their move, it's time we made ours.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SHIP: WINDSWIFT; MAIN ROOM

The main room of the Windswift is cramped and lived-in. A small table is on one side, cluttered with clothes and used food packages. Across the table lies a large cylindrical console.

We see Dorun, uncomfortably dressed in an Imperial Officers uniform. Ellis across him is dressed in Imperial Troopers armor. They size each other up.

ELLIS

You look terrible.

DORUN

These uniforms never did fit me.

Enter Tarsis, also in Troopers uniform. He is heavily armed, comically so.

ELLIS

You must be joking.

TARSIS

What?

DORUN

One gun, Tarsis. You'll raise suspicion.

ELLIS

He'll raise hell.

Tarsis sniffs, but accepts. He pulls out a CAMO ENERGY SHIELD and SENSOR DISRUPTION MINE, laying the equipment out on the table on top of the refuse.

TARSIS
Fine, but I am bringing these. Camo energy shield, sensor disruption mine, and *this*.

Tarsis pulls out an UNKNOWN GRENADE.

ELLIS
What is it?

Tarsis holds the UNKNOWN GRENADE up with a childlike awe.

TARSIS
I have no idea. I got it off an arms dealer back on Ungvar Four.

ELLIS
And he didn't tell you what it was?

TARSIS
He... didn't get the chance.

ELLIS
You stole it.

Tarsis sputters thinking of a lie

DORUN	ELLIS (CONT'D)
He stole it.	He stole it.

The door to the Cargo Bay opens. Ekelle enters with KURDEER, a Middle Eastern man, the stubble on his shaved head reveals early on-set baldness. The trio are surprised to see them.

DORUN (CONT'D)
How did you get on my ship? How did you even know where my ship was?

EKELLE
Perhaps you should give the Resistance more credit.

DORUN
We'll see about that. *[To Kurdeer]*
I don't like strangers on my ship.

KURDEER
I am Kurdeer.

DORUN

Well Kurdeer you can call me Dor-

KURDEER

You are Dorun Pepsis Shrike, owner of the cargo freighter *Windswift* and the legitimate trading business you run from it. Of course, that's a front for the blackmarket and mercenary outfit you run.

DORUN

You know my middle name. Ellis didn't even know my middle name. Perhaps I *should* give your little rebellion more credit.

Arianne enters from the opposite side doors.

KURDEER

We know much, Captain Shrike-

DORUN

I'm no captain. Just Dorun.

KURDEER

As you wish, Dorun. Although now that I see this ship, I do not think *Windswift* is an appropriate name.

ARIANNE

She's faster than she looks.

KURDEER

I doubt that.

Arianne eyes Kurdeer, taking the dig personally. Dorun shrugs, unconcerned of his freighter's honor.

KURDEER (CONT'D)

Regardless, Ekelle has convinced me to meet with you.

TARSIS

Too late, the Empires already sprung their trap.

DORUN

I assume our safehouse wasn't the only one raided?

KURDEER

Many of our comrades have been captured. What is of more concern is our grounded ships. Ekelle says you can help us.

DORUN

We can help each other. Come.

Dorun motions for everyone to gather around the large cylindrical console. After punching a few buttons a 3D hologram appears suspended from the base of the console. The hologram shows 3D blueprints of a large facility. Different sections highlight in a loop, notes pointing to different areas.

DORUN (CONT'D)

This is the Governor's Fortress. Since the Empire took control of Gulon Two, this facility has become the administrative center of the entire planet. If the Inhibitor is going to be anywhere, it will be here.

EKELLE

That facility is huge. The Inhibitor could be anywhere in there.

DORUN

An Inhibitor that can stop ships planet-wide is going to be large. Very large.

ELLIS

It would've had to be installed recently. We would have seen the signs.

TARSIS

Has there been any large construction projects at the Fortress recently?

DORUN

Don't know. We could only get blueprints from the initial construction.

ELLIS

Which means we don't know about any changes that have been made since the Fortress was built.

KURDEER

But we do. We have been watching the Fortress for some time. On the west side, here **[points to blueprint]**, an extension to the spaceport is underway.

EKELLE

Security is high there. Too high for simple construction.

DORUN

That has to be it. I think I might be impressed after all.

TARSIS

So how do we get in?

DORUN

[To Kurdeer] You're not going to like this.

Kurdeer eyes Dorun suspiciously.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. IMPERIAL INHIBITOR; GOVERNORS FORTRESS - SAME TIME

The camera opens to see a commanding woman in a sharp Imperial uniform, long blonde hair pulled back in a severe ponytail. Every detail about her designed to give an aura of absolute authority. This is Imperial Adjunct STEELA POLIS.

Steela stands at a desk, holographic panels flanking her, showing a litany of reports. Aides and clerks bustle around her, but keep their distance.

We pull out to see she is in the Planetary Ship Inhibitor room, a cavernous hanger with a complex machine spanning the length. Engineers huddle near open compartments of the machine at various locations.

We close on the Inhibitor's core, showing the ominous Imperial crest above a rectangular red panel. A low, recurring "WUMP" sounds from the Inhibitor, in time with the panel lighting up a bright red.

Steela's personal Aide, HARPER, passes the core and approaches Steela with a salute, holographic tablet in hand. A young woman, brown hair put up in a quick bun. Attractive, but with tired eyes of someone working an endless, thankless job.

HARPER
You called for me, sir?

[All superior officers are referred to as sir, regardless of gender]

STEELA
Status Report.

HARPER
Planet-wide troop deployment is underway-

STEELA
How long until complete?

Harper stifles frustration, she was just about to tell her.

HARPER
Under six hours, sir. However the majority of troops are ready. Sir, they're getting anxious.

STEELA
Tell them nothing. Most of these troops have been stationed here too long. It breeds complacency. That complacency is the reason I'm here.

HARPER
Yes sir.

STEELA
What else?

HARPER
The Planetary Ship Inhibitor is running sufficiently, but Engineering reports facility-wide system failures due to the Inhibitor's power requirements.

STEELA
They'll have to deal with it. The Inhibitor stays up at all costs.

HARPER
I told them as much, sir. Also, raids against rebel safehouses are complete, but were less successful than projected.

STEELA
Explain.

HARPER

Many of the safehouses we raided
were empty by the time we got
there.

Steela waits a beat, considering.

STEELA

Bad intel?

HARPER

We're interrogating our informants
now, but it appears the targets
were warned by an outside source.

Steela frowns.

STEELA

[to herself] There's an unknown
variable here. *[To Harper]* Get me
the raid debriefings. Something is
off, and we can't afford any
surprises.

HARPER

Yes sir, right away sir.

Harper retreats. As she leaves through the door, GOVERNOR
KASSUS enters. A belligerent man with a receding hairline and
a glib demeanor.

GUARD

Atten-HUT!

Everyone snaps to attention, not Steela. She closes her eyes,
gathering strength to deal with yet another distraction.

GOVERNOR KASSUS

Everyone out!

STEELA

Everyone stays.

Everyone in the room shifts uncomfortably. No one leaves.
Kassus snarls, not used to be outranked. He stalks forward as
Steela switches off the holographic panels at her desk.

GOVERNOR KASSUS

Do you have any idea the danger
you've put us in? Your orders have
put my entire defense force in
disarray. The Fortress is nearly
undefended, rebels could walk right
in!

Steela wait a long beat before answering. Aides and attendants in the room strain to appear uninterested.

STEELA

Kassus, you are simple, weak,
coward.

Kassus face flushes, rage building. Seeing this, Steela's head of security, OTIB, steps forward. Dark skinned, clean-shaven head, a face that speaks to a lifetime of bottled-up rage. The look he gives Kassus prompts the Governor to gain control of his emotions.

Steela smiles at unbalancing Kassus so easily. She dismisses Otib with a lazy hand gesture. Otib steps back, unblinking eyes remaining on Kassus.

GOVERNOR KASSUS

I had hoped, Steela, we could have
a civil discussion-

STEELA

You refer to me as Adjunct, Kassus.
Imperial Adjunct. The only one on
this backwards planet that outranks
you.

GOVERNOR KASSUS

I am not disputing that, but I have
several concerns-

STEELA

I am not disputing that, sir. You
don't seem to be getting the point,
Governor.

GOVERNOR KASSUS

Apologies... sir.

STEELA

Kassus, I hold full authority over
this planet. Troops, supplies, even
you. I could order you to the front
line if I wanted to.

Kassus blanches at the prospect.

GOVERNOR KASSUS

You wouldn't dare!

STEELA

Try me.

Kassus waits before answering, his anger subsiding as he swallows his pride. He steels himself:

GOVERNOR KASSUS

With respect... Sir... It is my duty to raise concerns about your coming offensive. My... Our troops are stretched too thin. This Fortress is barely defended.

Steela considers. Respecting that he didn't back down completely, and having achieved her objective in putting Kassus in his place, her tone lightens.

STEELA

Your concerns have been noted, Governor. The troops guarding this facility have been moved out to help with the Purge. This Inhibitor protects the Fortress now. Without ships, no enemy can approach in force.

GOVERNOR KASSUS

And if the rebels do find a way to attack the fortress?

STEELA

Governor, attacking this Fortress would be a suicide mission.

GOVERNOR KASSUS

But-

STEELA

That is quite enough, Governor. You are dismissed.

Kassus nearly chokes at the abrupt dismissal.

GOVERNOR KASSUS

Yes, sir.

Kassus leaves, walking quickly while snapping at his aides. Steela smiles at the victory, squashes it, then pulls the holographic reports up, all business.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WINDSWIFT - AFTERNOON

Establishing shot of the Windswift in a crowded public shipyard.

CUT TO:

INT. WINDSWIFT MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cut to inside the main room of the ship, the previous conversation continuing.

EKELLE
This is a suicide mission!

DORUN
It's the only way.

EKELLE
It's lunacy.

DORUN
It will work!

KURDEER
Let me get this straight. You want
to us to march up to the Restricted
Zone checkpoint and get arrested?

DORUN
Well, I'll be the one arresting
you, but yeah that's the jist.

KURDEER
Who do you think you are?

DORUN
The only one on this planet that
can get your ships off the ground.

A long beat. Kurdeer and Ekelle share a look.

EKELLE
We'll do it.

KURDEER
What? Ekelle! He cannot be trusted!

Kurdeer pulls Ekelle aside. A hushed, heated conversation ensues, words indistinguishable. Body language shows Ekelle getting the upper hand. It's obvious they're "together". Ellis and Arianne share a look.

Kurdeer acquiesces, turns back to group.

KURDEER (CONT'D)

Fine. We will be at the Bazaar as you ask. If this is some trick-

DORUN

It's not a trick. *[To Ekelle]* Thank you.

EKELLE

Tell me, truthfully. Will this work?

DORUN

It has to.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHECKPOINT BAZAAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Open to show Dorun, Ellis, and Tarsis walking through an abandoned bazaar. Stalls are fully stocked, stray animals feast on unguarded foodstuffs, it looks like the area was abandoned in a hurry. The trio are on edge as they make their way through the bazaar.

TARSIS

Where is everyone?

ELLIS

People smell trouble. Only fools would be out here when the Empire cracks down.

TARSIS

Including us?

ELLIS

Especially us.

As they pass through the bazaar they nearly miss Ekelle and Kurdeer standing inconspicuously near one of the stalls.

EKELLE

Over here.

The trio spin nervously, raising their weapons.

KURDEER

I would ask you to not shoot us.

TARSIS

You scare me like that again I'll shoot you out of principle.

DORUN

Ekelles, Kurdeer. I do hope there will be more joining us?

EKELLE

You do not see them?

Ekelles motions with her hand. Several poorly dressed rebels appear from nowhere, evidently blended in with the area.

DORUN

Very good. Alright, my alias should get us through the checkpoint. With any luck, we'll walk right through.

ELLIS

And if we don't have any luck?

Dorun gives Ellis a look.

DORUN

We improvise. Tarsis, show them how it's done.

Tarsis takes on the demeanor of a drill sergeant.

TARSIS

MOVE IT YOU SLOVENLY LOT. I HAVEN'T SEEN A SADDER DISPLAY OF SLUMRATS IN MY ENTIRE LIFE. MOVE IT!

The rebel group is surprised, some taking offence.

TARSIS (CONT'D)

[Conspiratorially] This won't work if it looks like you're going to jump me, put your heads down and play the part... AND IF I SEE SO MUCH AS A FINGER OUT OF PLACE I'LL PERSONALLY RIP YOUR THROAT OUT.

ELLIS

[Privately to Dorun] He enjoys this a bit too much...

The group, led by the Imperial-disguised crew march towards the checkpoint.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RESTRICTED ZONE CHECKPOINT - LATE AFTERNOON

The group arrive near the end of the bazaar. Abruptly the bazaar ends and the scene opens up to a fortified military checkpoint. The disguised trio and the rebels freeze. You can see the fear on their faces as they take in the "checkpoint".

Large two-story gates are closed, surrounded by heavily armed soldiers. Watchtowers, gun nests, barbed wire- a small army defends the area. A main office sits behind fortified heavy weaponry.

A moment of tension as the group looks at the soldiers and the soldiers look at the group. Tarsis snaps out of it.

TARSIS

MOVE IT!

The disguised trio march the rebel group towards the checkpoint office. The soldiers relax, watching the group pass with a range of looks ranging from boredom to confusion to apathy.

Tarsis stops the group in front of the outpost.

TARSIS (CONT'D)

HALT!

An Imperial Trooper rushes towards the crew. He salutes Dorun.

CHECKPOINT GUARD

Sir! Apologies sir, we do not have your arrival on the order sheet, Officer ____?

DORUN

[haughty, a bit forced] Never mind, soldier. I assume our transport is ready.

Ellis and Tarsis look at Dorun. "Really, that's your Officer voice?"

CHECKPOINT GUARD

Uhh... sorry sir... uhh... let me check with the Duty Officer.

Dorun returns the look to Ellis/Tarsis before answering the guard.

DORUN

Very well.

The soldier turns away and calls it in. Dorun turns to his companions.

TARSIS

A lot of troops here for a simple checkpoint.

ELLIS

This must be a staging area. The Empire has something planned.

DORUN

Something bad. This was a mistake.

TARSIS

Too late now.

The guard turns back to the group.

CHECKPOINT GUARD

One moment, the Officer is on his way.

A rotund officer steps out of the Checkpoint Office. Red cheeks snarl as he tucks his top into his trousers. He barks some orders at some nearby troopers as he makes his way to the group.

Dorun sees the Officer heading his way. He turns quietly to Ellis.

DORUN

[Quietly] We have a problem. He outranks me.

Ellis doesn't have time to react as the officer reaches the group.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER

What the hell is this?

Dorun snaps to attention.

DORUN

Sir. Junior Dominant Reese Karsor reporting.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER

Junior Dominant Reese Karsor what the hell are you doing at my checkpoint? And why the hell do you have these stinking slumrats with you?

Dorun looks at the rebels, seeing flashes of anger. He turns back to the Officer.

DORUN
[Quietly, respectfully] Perhaps
 sir, it would be best if we
 discussed this in private.

The officer casts a look of disgust across the rebels.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
 Come.

The Officer leads Dorun to the main guardhouse.

CUT TO:

INT. CHECKPOINT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The office Dorun is led to is tastefully furnished. The warm, inviting room is decorated with cultural artifacts and emits a warm glow- stark contrast to the bare functionality of the rest of the checkpoint. Forearm-sized carved stone statues stand on a cabinet on one of the walls. Dorun goes to the statues as the Officer closes the door.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
 Well?

DORUN
 These are original Gulonese ritual
 statues, aren't they?

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
 Cut the crap, Junior Dominant.

Dorun turns toward the Officer as the Officer leans back against his desk.

DORUN
 Sir, my orders are to publicly
 arrest and transport those
 informants.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
 Informants?

DORUN
 Yes sir, rebels considered assets
 by the Intelligence Division.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
If they're "assets" why arrest them?

DORUN
My guess, sir, is to maintain their cover?

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
Just like Intelligence to waste my time.

DORUN
Yes sir.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
So you've come to my checkpoint with a dozen rebels on some halfbaked plan to arrest them?

DORUN
Thats... Exactly right, sir.

The Officer eyes Dorun.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
Wasted effort. These Gulon's are cattle. I was posted at Hyrus Seven. Now *they* were something.

DORUN
I heard about Hyrus Seven. Violent.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
Only one thing to do with these fringe planets. Get the natives under the heel of your boot. Then squeeze.

Dorun shakes off the disgust. Checkpoint Officer frowns, smelling weakness. He shifts off his desk and shifts towards Dorun suspiciously.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER (CONT'D)
[Menacing] Where are you stationed out of, Junior Dominant?

DORUN
Central Planets... mostly... This is my first tour on the Outer Rim.

The Officer snorts with derision.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
You soft Centralites. That's what I hate. I've been out here for years.

DORUN
Yes, sir, I-

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
I'm not finished! You Centralites are all the same. Cozy posts on safe planets, only coming out here to sniff out a promotion. I'm bringing civilization to these savages. What have you done?

DORUN
I'm just following orders, sir.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
Well I'm giving you an order to get out of my sight!

DORUN
Yes, sir... As soon as you give us a troop transport.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
[exploding] WHAT? You think I'm going to give you one of MY transports?

The Officer gets closer to Dorun.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER (CONT'D)
You impetuant little man. Do you have any idea who I am?

The Officer is getting closer. A closeup shot shows Dorun's hand groping for one of the statues, his eyes steady on the Officer. The Officer is breathing down Dorun's neck.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER (CONT'D)
I'll have you buried Junior Dominant, you hear me, buried!

Dorun gets a hold of a statue and swings it across the head of the Officer in one smooth motion. He's dead before he hits the ground.

DORUN
Looks like you'll be the one getting buried.

Dorun rushes to the door, listening to see if anyone outside heard. Satisfied, Dorun moves to the Officer, taking a keycard, then goes to the console on the main desk, authorizing a transport.

Task complete, he takes a moment to compose himself before leaving the office, closing the door behind him.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESTRICTED ZONE CHECKPOINT - CONTINUOUS

The Checkpoint Guard waits with Tarsis and Ellis at the checkpoint proper.

DORUN

The transport is being readied now.

Dorun moves to the Checkpoint Guard.

DORUN (CONT'D)

Your commanding officer orders he's not to be disturbed for any reason. He's in a very bad mood, I suggest you listen.

The Guard is well aware of his Officer's temper.

CHECKPOINT GUARD

Yes sir.

The guard leaves and returns to his post, giving the order to open the gates. As the large doors open, Dorun returns to the group.

ELLIS

[Quietly] What happened?

DORUN

I improvised.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHECKPOINT LANDING PAD - CONTINUOUS

The group files through the large open gates to a landing port for small ships. A number of troop transports wait, technicians preparing one for launch. The group approaches the ship.

DORUN

We don't have much time. You still know how to fly those things right?

Dorun motions to the transport.

ELLIS

Well I'm no ace fighter pilot like Arianne, but I can fly it.

DORUN

You'll have to. We won't be able to slip away if we land in the main spaceport.

ELLIS

So what do we do?

DORUN

What do you do? Deal with it.

Ellis blanches, but covers it up quickly. The group approaches the ship.

CUT TO:

EXT. TROOP TRANSPORT - CONTINUOUS

Ship technicians ignore the group as they check the ship, disconnecting hoses and tapping at diagnostic panels. Tarsis pushes the rebels towards the large main door of the transport.

TARSIS

Move it!

The rebels file in and Tarsis orders the doors to be closed. He joins Dorun and Ellis as they make their way towards the cockpit entrance.

CUT TO:

INT. TROOP TRANSPORT COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

The cockpit features four seats two by two, with the entrance to the rear of the cockpit. The pilot is in the left front seat, Ellis takes the seat beside him, Dorun and Tarsis sit in the backseats.

PILOT

Destination?

DORUN
Governor's Fortress.

PILOT
Strap in.

CUT TO:

EXT. TROOP TRANSPORT - CONTINUOUS

The ship technicians scatter before the ship takes off. The ship hovers for a moment before turning in a smooth arc away from the landing pad.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TROOP TRANSPORT - EARLY EVENING

The transport flies in the air, breaking through light clouds.

CUT TO:

INT. TROOP TRANSPORT COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

We see an indifferent pilot, a self-conscious Ellis, an impatient looking Dorun, and a snoring Tarsis.

Ellis is quite busy not looking at Dorun. Fed up, Dorun leans forward and tugs Ellis' shoulder. Ellis gestures "who me?", Dorun "Get on with it". Ellis "Ok, ok, I'll do it.". Dorun "I'm watching you." All this without a sound.

ELLIS
Ah... We... We need you to land
somewhere else.

PILOT
What are you talking about?

Dorun shoots Ellis with a "Not good enough" expression. Ellis considers his options. He moves to speak again, but stops before saying anything. He grows frustrated, then realizes what he's going to do. He looks to Dorun, then the Pilot.

ELLIS
Sorry about this.

PILOT
What?

Ellis rises from his seat and punches the Pilot hard. He immediately brings his hand back and shakes it in pain, realizing the stupidity of punching a man with a helmet on. The Pilot looks at Ellis confused. Seeing his gambit failing, Ellis punches the Pilot again, this time square on the jaw.

The punch is enough to lurch the transport. The rebels fall over with the unexpected shift in direction in the main compartment. The four in the cockpit lurch in their seats. Tarsis wakes abruptly.

TARSIS

[Half-dreaming] What? Aww yeah GUT HIM!

The Pilot tries to grab Ellis, who attempts to strike the pilot again. The Pilot fends off the attack, getting a decent hold on Ellis and pulling him down. From his viewpoint, Ellis sees a red "Eject" lever on the pilots chair. Ellis breaks from the Pilots grip, strikes again, then puts both hands on the lever. The pilot looks down, realizing what Ellis is going to do, then looks back up to Ellis sharply.

PILOT

[Sad and scared] Please no.

ELLIS

I said I was sorry.

Ellis pulls the lever. The Pilots chair explodes laterally from his side of the ship with awesome force. The other seats are unaffected, and Ellis flails to catch his grip. The room roars as air rushes in the cockpit.

Ellis manages to get back into his seat, and struggles to get the ship back under control. The ship is diving, roaring with a rising pitch like a WWII dive bomber. Pulling up, he finally gets the ship back on course and puts on the comm helmet.

CUT TO:

INT. FLIGHT CONTROL CENTER - CONTINUOUS

An exhausted looking FLIGHT CONTROLLER sits in front of a console with a bored expression on her face. A larger woman, Middle Eastern, with a small picture of two young boys sitting to the side of the console.

A bright red warning message appears on the main console. The woman scowls, then gives a look of mild interest seeing the message that a Troop Transport has just registered an ejection event.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER
Transport Three-Seven-Two this is
Flight Control. We just detected an
ejection event on your ship, please
respond.

[Intercut between Flight Control Interior and Transport
Cockpit Interior]

Ellis is startled, not exactly sure what to do.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER (CONT'D)
I say again, we've detected someone
ejecting from your ship. Please
respond.

ELLIS
Uh... Everything is fine here, I
don't know what you're talking
about.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER
Transport Three-Seven-Two your ship
has clearly logged an ejection
event. You're also showing
significant yaw drag.

ELLIS
No, no ejection here. Your sensors
must be off.

The Flight Controller scoffs.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER
Our sensors are working just fine.
You-

ELLIS
Look I don't know what to tell you.
I would know if someone ejected.

The Flight Controller pauses tapping at the console. Mild
interest melts into mild irritation.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER
Your ship must be logging bad
flight data.

Ellis struggles at the controls, the ejection hole has
produced significant drag.

ELLIS
If you say so, she's running smooth
on my end.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER
Transport Three-Seven-Two you're
hereby ordered to Shipyard B-Nine-
Alpha for immediate diagnostics and
repair.

ELLIS
Oh kay.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER
Transport Three-Seven-Two correct
your flight trajectory to Shipyard-

ELLIS
I have, your sensors must be off
again.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER
Why I have never- Transport Three-
Seven-Two I will have you written
up so fast-

Ellis pulls off the helmet. As he speaks he alternates the
helmet from close to far from his mouth.

ELLIS
Sorry... breaking up... Can't...
hear you.

Ellis tosses the helmet out the ejection hole.

DORUN
What the hell was that?

ELLIS
Improvising.

Dorun looks towards Tarsis, who nods his head agreeably.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. IMPERIAL INHIBITOR; GOVERNORS FORTRESS - EARLY EVENING

Steela continues to sift through her hologram reports. She
nods to herself as she makes mental notes from the reports
she reads. Harper approaches.

HARPER
Sir, you asked to be alerted if
there was any odd reports?

STEELA
Yes?

HARPER

A troop transport has gone AWOL.

Steela looks at Harper with raised eyebrows.

HARPER (CONT'D)

We're attempting to determine the cause, it could be an equipment malfunction.

STEELA

Where is the transport headed?

HARPER

At it's current course it will arrive *here* in minutes.

STEELA

Continue monitoring the transport, and find out where it came from.

HARPER

Already on it, sir.

Steela dismisses Harper with a hand wave. As Harper leaves, she puts a hand to her ear as she receives a report. She frowns, realizes the relevance of the report and looks to Steela. She approaches Steela again.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Sir, the transport was found to come from a small checkpoint in Akeen. The officer who ordered the transport has been found dead.

STEELA

That's no coincidence.

HARPER

I'll alert the Fortress Defenses.

Harper turns to leave.

STEELA

Wait.

Steela closes her eyes, doing the math in her head.

STEELA (CONT'D)

I won't give that sniffing Governor the satisfaction of knowing he was right. Otib, take your men and deal with it.

OTIB

Yes, sir.

Otib smiles at the prospect, then gathers his troops with a hand gesture and leaves.

STEELA

Harper, are troop deployments completed?

HARPER

Not yet, sir.

STEELA

We need those troops in place.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GOVERNORS FORTRESS - CONTINUOUS

The stolen transport breaks through the clouds and reveals the magnitude of the Governors Fortress- a length and width that is measured in kilometers. Ships buzz to and fro from the Fortress as bees from a hive. Ellis speeds the transport towards its destination.

CUT TO:

INT. TROOP TRANSPORT - CONTINUOUS

ELLIS

There it is.

TARSIS

Look, you can see the construction on the west side.

DORUN

We can't fly right in, security will be too high.

ELLIS

He's right. Looks like there's an empty service bay just outside the construction zone.

DORUN

Do it.

CUT TO:

EXT. LANDING SITE; GOVERNORS FORTRESS - CONTINUOUS

The small landing site is near the edge of the Fortress, only big enough to allow for two or three transports to land at a time. Construction equipment litters the site. The edge of the landing site is a sheer dropoff, a small outcropping on the massive structure.

Ellis lands the ship near two closed service doors jutting out from the Fortress.

The transport doors open, rebels joining with the crew.

EKELLE

Who the hell was flying that thing.

ELLIS

It's harder than it looks.

DORUN

Kurdeer, get your men behind cover.
Tarsis, go with them. We'll have
company soon enough. Ellis, let's
get this door open.

The rebels spread out, taking cover near equipment and the transport. Dorun and Ellis run to a small console sitting next to the doors. It's mostly red, with bright letters stating "AUTHORIZED ACCESS ONLY"

ELLIS

Can you get in?

Dorun taps at the console, entering an authorization code. "ACCESS DENIED" responds.

DORUN

My access code isn't good enough.

ELLIS

Let me try.

Ellis takes over at the console. He taps for a bit, then reaches behind the console between the panel and the wall. Something short-circuits and the console goes black.

DORUN

What did you do?

ELLIS

Just hold on.

The console sputters to life. Instead of the brightly colored graphical interface seen before, a much more primitive terminal spews text. Ellis taps at the console.

DORUN

Hurry up.

ELLIS

Hold on, hold on.

DORUN

We don't have much time!

ELLIS

Would you let me concentrate? Just have to reroute power and...

Sirens start blaring as an alarm is tripped. Dorun and Ellis share a look.

DORUN

Did you just trip the alarm?

ELLIS

I don't know, that should have worked!

DORUN

Did you just trip that alarm?

ELLIS

Well maybe if you had let me concentrate.

DORUN

I gave you one job.

ELLIS

What? You've given me like seventeen jobs, and pile more on before I can finish any.

DORUN

Really, you want to have this conversation now?

ELLIS

You don't show me any respect, you micromanage everything, and I always get the smallest room!

Tarsis approaches.

TARSIS

What the hell is going on here?

DORUN

Ellis is dissatisfied with my
management decisions.

TARSIS

What does that even mean? You know
what, I don't care.

Tarsis shoots the wailing siren, it stops.

TARSIS (CONT'D)

We're sitting ducks out here-

Suddenly several troops, led by Otib, burst forth from around
the corner. Blasters fire and several rebels go down.

TARSIS (CONT'D)

INCOMING!

Tarsis pushes Ellis towards some construction equipment and
follows, shielding Dorun like a bodyguard. Both the rebels
and the crew are pinned down by the suppressing fire.

Tarsis look past the cover for a second, then turns back,
closing his eyes.

TARSIS (CONT'D)

Squad of fifteen. Elite
mercenaries. Standard tactical
formation.

Tarsis opens his eyes, turns out of cover and fires barely
taking any time to aim. A trooper goes down. Otib yells an
order, the other troopers scramble to get to cover
themselves.

TARSIS (CONT'D)

They're good, they can take us.

DORUN

They won't have to, reinforcements
will be coming.

Otib slides towards some cover. While Imperial Troopers and
Rebels exchange fire, Otib takes out a small sphere. He
presses a button on it then throws it in the air above him.
At it's apex, the device snaps open along its seams,
revealing a two small jets and a camera.

The drone rises in the air. We see from it's perspective it
has an unobstructed view of the rebels and the crew.

Otib expands a holographic screen from his wristband. We see the drones perspective on the screen. They become highlighted in red, able to be seen even behind cover.

Pleased, Otib swipes the screen, and it disappears. On the back of head we see a helmet base (as part of his armor). Otib presses a button on the helmet base and the helmet expands to cover his face. Once fully covered, Otib looks towards the rebels. From his perspective, we see that he sees the red highlighted enemy generated by the flying device.

OTIB

You won't be getting away from me.

Otib fires. With his extended vision he's able to hit several rebels. The other rebels stop firing back, as the Troopers gain the upper hand.

Ellis sees the rebels go down. He looks at Dorun and Tarsus, who are desperately trying to stay out of the line of fire.

Ellis makes his decision and jumps out from his cover. He fires while running towards the transport.

TARSIS

What is that blasted fool doing?

DORUN

Cover him!

Ellis charges towards the transport, while Dorun and Tarsis lean out from their cover to help lay down suppressing fire.

Ellis makes it to the transport. He gets in and quickly turns the ship on. We see the transport hover, then turn towards the enemy troops.

TARSIS

Where the hell is he going?

Ellis straps into the chair, then pushes the acceleration level all the way. The transport scatters equipment in its path as it speeds toward the Troopers. Otib jumping out of the way of the oncoming ship just in time.

Ellis takes hold of the eject lever of his chair. He pauses, timing it perfectly. He pulls the lever. His chair explodes out the side of the cockpit, hitting a trooper and pinning him against some equipment.

The transport takes out a few troopers, then continues to fly past. We follow it as it arcs towards a far tower on the Fortress. It collides in a massive explosion.

CUT TO:

INT. GOVERNORS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Governor Kassus sits at his desk as the building shakes around him. He holds for dear life. The shaking stops. He turns to an Aide on the floor, looking just as confused.

GOVERNOR KASSUS

What what that?

The Aide is dumbfounded.

GOVERNOR KASSUS (CONT'D)

Find out what happened. Quickly man.

CUT TO:

EXT. LANDING SITE - CONTINUOUS

Ellis undoes the straps on his chair and crouches into position, readying his blaster. With the Troopers exposed from the incoming transport and being at a good angle, Ellis fires. He takes out some Troopers.

We turn to Tarsis, who looks at the mess approvingly.

TARSIS

Now that's my kind of improvising.

Tarsis and the rebels start returning, several Troopers going down. We see Otib nearly get hit.

OTIB

Fall back! With me!

The troopers follow Otib, firing as they retreat around the corner they had originally come from.

DORUN

We need to get those doors open!
They'll be back.

The crew and the rebels huddle by the door. Ellis taps at the console. He throws up his hands in futility. Suddenly, with no one touching the console, it lights up in a bright green color showing the words "ACCESS GRANTED". The doors open.

ELLIS
I... I didn't do that.

DORUN
Can't worry about that now. Get in!

The group files into the Fortress proper, Tarsis bringing up the rear. As he follows, Tarsis takes out the SENSOR DISRUPTION MINE, activates it, and tosses it behind him.

TARSIS
This will slow them down.

From Otib's perspective, we see he sees the red outlined rebels have entered the complex. He signals a stop.

OTIB
They've gotten in, attack!

Otib turns around and charges back around the corner in pursuit, his squad following closely. As they reach the SENSOR DISRUPTION MINE, an electric shock bursts. The troops squirm in pain momentarily. We see the red outlined targets Otib could see are gone. Otib deactivates his helmet.

OTIB (CONT'D)
Damn!

INT. IHIBITOR ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Harper quickly approaches Steela.

HARPER
Sir, the transport we were tracking has collided-

STEELA
I know, and Otib has failed to prevent the rebels from getting into the Fortress.

HARPER
We must notify the Fortress Guard.

STEELA
Order them to rally here. These insurgents must be headed for the Inhibitor.

HARPER
Yes sir.

STEELA
And Harper-

beat

STEELA (CONT'D)
Order the Purge to start.

HARPER
Troop deployment isn't finished-

STEELA
I know. We must take back the
initiative.

HARPER
Yes sir.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FORTRESS HALLWAY 1 - EVENING

The crew and rebels enter a junction room with hallways leading in several different directions. They stop, unsure of which direction to choose.

EKELLE
Where do we go?

ELLIS
Where are we?

DORUN
I don't know.

KURDEER
Bad time to get lost.

TARSIS
They won't be far behind, we need
to move.

Dorun pulls up the holographic Fortress Blueprint from his wristband. Several levels zoom in to find the exact floorplan of their location.

DORUN
We're several levels above the
Inhibitor. We are close to a small
armory. They should have
explosives. We get the explosives,
blow up the Inhibitor, get back to
the ship and off this planet.

All eyes are on Dorun as he starts down one of the hallways.

DORUN (CONT'D)

This way.

All eyes continue to follow as he turns around and heads for the exact opposite hallway.

DORUN (CONT'D)

This way.

The group share an amused look before falling in after Dorun.

CUT TO:

INT. GOVERNORS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

An attendant approaches the Governor. No longer sitting, Kassus leans over the desk impatiently.

GOVERNOR KASSUS

Well?

ATTENDANT

Sir, the Fortress is under attack.

GOVERNOR KASSUS

I knew it.

ATTENDANT

Insurgents are responsible for the explosion and we've confirmed they've penetrated the fortress.

GOVERNOR KASSUS

How many?

ATTENDANT

Unknown, sir. The Imperial Adjunct sent her *personal* guard, who managed to lose them. Officially our orders are to rally at the Inhibitor.

GOVERNOR KASSUS

What? We don't even know if the Inhibitor is their target! As if it were the only thing here worth defending.

The Governor raps the table, coming to a decision.

GOVERNOR KASSUS (CONT'D)
It's time I paid the Adjunct
another visit. She's over-extended
herself.

The Governor moves to exit.

GOVERNOR KASSUS (CONT'D)
With me!

Aides and troopers fall in behind the Governor as he
confidently strides out the room.

CUT TO:

INT. ARMORY ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Dorun carefully looks around a corner. Two guards flank a
door marked "ARMORY". Dorun turns back to the group.

DORUN
Tarsis, Ellis, you're with me. The
rest of you follow when we've dealt
with the guards.

The three round the corner, Dorun in front with Tarsis and
Ellis flanking him. Dorun looks imperious in the officers
uniform. The two guards snap to attention.

DORUN (CONT'D)
Any trouble here?

GUARD 1
No sir.

GAURD 2
No sir.

DORUN
You're in trouble now.

The guards look at eachother confused as Ellis and Tarsis
take the butt of their blaster and knock the guards out.

DORUN (CONT'D)
We're in!

The rebels follow down the hallway as Tarsis picks up the
guards keycard and unlocks the armory. The group enters.

INT. ARMORY - CONTINUOUS

The armory contains rows of blasters, grenades, armor and
other errata. The rebels wander slightly awed by the display.

Tarsis squees with excitement as he spots a particular object.

TARSIS
It's so beautiful.

The camera reveals Tarsis looking at a large HEAVY REPEATER, with attached backpack. Tarsis puts it on, laughing manically. Dorun and Ekelle share a look.

EKELLE
I wonder what he's compensating for.

Dorun laughs, shaking his head.

DORUN
There must be explosives here.

ELLIS
Over here!

Ellis inspects a rack of small square explosives.

DORUN
That'll work. All of them.

Dorun grabs a bag from one of the lockers and starts stuffing explosives into it. The others follow suit. While doing this, a small grenade scatters across the floor through the armory entrance.

KURDEER
GET DOWN!

A brilliant flash of light blinds the room and deafens the senses. We see Otib's Squad (sans Otib) charge through the armory entrance. Tarsis is the first to react.

TARSIS
Oh no you don't.

Tarsis sets himself in a strong stance and pulls the trigger of the HEAVY REPEATER. The violent rate of fire is terrifying as Troopers fly back from the awesome force. Large rents in their armor is seen as they get hit with ship-grade laser fire. The rebels jump to the floor as Tarsis wontonly sprays the room. Red light from laser strobes on Tarsis's manic face as weapon racks and other objects are torn asunder. The weapon rips the room apart.

TARSIS (CONT'D)
WHOOO! WHOOO! GET SOME! GET
SOOOOME!

The HEAVY REPEATER finally goes quiet, the multiple barrels still spinning. Tarsis still has his finger on the trigger. A message on the gun stock blinks "CHARGE DEPLETED". Tarsis's doesn't notice, exulting in the carnage. Everything is quiet as debris slowly falls to the ground and equipment racks collapse.

Return fire from the door snaps the spell, and Tarsis dives towards Dorun.

DORUN
Feel better?

TARSIS
That was magical.

ELLIS
Well I hope you enjoyed it, because
we're trapped.

EKELLE
That's the only entrance to the
armory.

Laser fire from the troops outside makes it impossible to approach. Rebels take potshots out the door. Dorun looks around, getting an idea.

DORUN
But it's not the only exit.

The three look to Dorun confused. Dorun takes out the explosives.

DORUN (CONT'D)
Take these and place them around
the edges of the room.

The three carefully place the explosives along the edges of the room. They meet back together. Ellis is flush against the entrance wall.

DORUN (CONT'D)
[To Ellis] Do it.

Ellis tosses a bag of explosives out the door. A large explosion outside the armory is seen as laser fire hits the bag. Dorun rushes to the middle of the room.

DORUN (CONT'D)
Everyone, get as close to me as you
can!

Rebels and the crew huddle together around Dorun.

DORUN (CONT'D)
Closer, closer, get nice and cozy-

Dorun closes his eyes.

DORUN (CONT'D)
This isn't going to be pleasant.

Dorun presses the small trigger in his hand. The room around them explodes. As the explosives blow holes in the floor. All goes quiet. Dorun opens his eyes, looking around slightly deflated.

DORUN (CONT'D)
Well that didn't-

Mid-sentence the floor below the group falls to the level below. The group lands, falling over one another. Dust and debris is dumped on the group as they pick themselves up from the rubble.

CUT TO:

INT. ARMORY ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Otib pulls himself from the floor, shaking off debris. He looks around at the dead and injured troopers around him. Other troopers also pick themselves up and check on their injured comrades.

OTIB
This prey is clever.

Otib walks up to the entrance, which is deformed and covered with large debris.

OTIB (CONT'D)
Fall in. We will not allow them
slip away again.

Otib jogs down the hallway in search of his prey. Troopers fall in behind him, leaving their injured squad-mates.

CUT TO:

INT. ARMORY REMAINS - CONTINUOUS

Dust covered and dazed, the group gets up, patting themselves off and checking for wounds.

DORUN
Everyone OK?

TARSIS
Ellis isn't.

ELLIS
What?

Ellis's armor is clearly ripped.

ELLIS (CONT'D)
Good thing I was just borrowing
this.

TARSIS
Good thing you were wearing it.
Whatever tore through that armor
would have tore through you.

EKELLE
Where are we?

DORUN
Good question.

Dorun pulls up the blueprint, searching for their current
position.

DORUN (CONT'D)
Hmm. There's a detention center
that way.

Dorun points down one end of the room.

DORUN (CONT'D)
But the Inhibitor is this way.

Dorun points to the other direction.

KURDEER
We're close to the prison? Our
comrades must be there.

EKELLE
If we free them, the Resistance
stands a chance.

Dorun thinks for a moment, then nods.

DORUN
Go. We'll destroy the Inhibitor.

Dorun points to a section of the blueprint.

DORUN (CONT'D)

There's a small hanger here. Free the prisoners and there, we'll meet you once the Inhibitor is down.

ELLIS

Let's go.

DORUN

Not you. We need to blend in, you're a dead giveaway with your armor the way it is.

ELLIS

You can't-

DORUN

Ellis, we don't have time. Go with them, they'll need your help.

ELLIS

What about you?

Dorun pauses. He doesn't like this.

DORUN

We'll muddle through.

It pains him, but Ellis accepts the logic.

ELLIS

We better get to it then.

DORUN

Remember, if anything goes wrong, improvise.

Ellis smiles, then turns towards the rebels.

ELLIS

We don't have much time. Come on!

The rebels leave, leaving Dorun and Tarsis alone.

TARSIS

I'm surprised we've made it this far.

Dorun gives Tarsis a look.

DORUN

Let's go.

The two head in the other direction.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. INHIBITOR ROOM - EVENING

Steela stands at her console issuing orders to Aides as Kassus enters the room. Guards and aides flank the Governor.

GOVERNOR KASSUS
Imperial Adjunct.

Steela looks up from her console.

STEELA
Governor.

GOVERNOR KASSUS
I can only assume that your mishandling of this situation is due to your inability to accept I was right.

STEELA
The situation is under control-

GOVERNOR KASSUS
Adjunct, I am shocked how out of control the situation has become. Insurgents able to infiltrate our defenses, explosives ripping the Fortress apart, and what few troopers we have defending the wrong target.

STEELA
The Inhibitor is the target.

GOVERNOR KASSUS
Adjunct, please. They're heading towards the prison. That's been their target all along.

STEELA
And how are they going to escape without ships?

GOVERNOR KASSUS
You give these rebels too much credit. They are a simple people with simple motivations.

STEELA

They've been quite effective for
"simple people".

GOVERNOR KASSUS

Yes, Adjunct. They have. Something
I intend to put a stop to right
now.

Uneasy pause as Steela holds Kassus's gaze. She relents,
assenting with a hand wave. With a smile Kassus turns to
ranks of Troopers in the room.

GOVERNOR KASSUS (CONT'D)

We do not stop until we have killed
every one of them.

The Troopers file out. Kassus eyes Steela as the troops pass.
Steela folds her arms, not giving Kassus a thing. As the last
of the troops file out, Kassus gives a triumphant chin raise
as he follows. Alone, Steela grabs a communicator from her
workdesk.

STEELA

Otib, get back to the Inhibitor
room. Now.

CUT TO:

INT. GOVERNORS FORTRESS HALLWAY 2 - CONTINUOUS

OTIB

Yes, Adjunct. On my way.

Otib puts down the communicator. He flashes to rage, punching
a nearby door console. His squad backs away slightly, but not
so much as to draw attention. Otib returns to normal as
quickly as he exploded. Without a word or a look to his
squad, he turns around to head back to the Inhibitor Room.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GOVERNORS FORTRESS HALLWAY 3 - CONTINUOUS

Dorun and Tarsis walk down the corridor rigidly. Troops,
officers, and various staff walk by without giving the two
any notice.

TARSIS

Looks like it's working.

DORUN
Yes, but I don't have any idea
where we're going. This section
differs from my blueprints.

TARSIS
We don't have much time.

DORUN
I know.

Dorun pulls out his communicator.

DORUN (CONT'D)
Ellis, what's your status?

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Ellis is behind cover, shooting at soldiers in a large room
marked "DETENTION CENTER CONTROL ROOM". Rebels are spread out
behind cover, also trying to blast their way through. Dead
troopers are seen behind the rebels.

ELLIS
We've hit resistance getting to the
control room. We're almost in-

Ellis fires another volley of shots.

ELLIS (CONT'D)
-but they're not making it easy.

CUT TO:

INT. GOVERNORS FORTRESS HALLWAY 3 - CONTINUOUS

DORUN
Well hurry up, you have trouble
coming your way.

Dorun and Tarsis snaps to attention as Governor Kassus and
his troops run past.

TARSIS
There's no way they can survive
that.

DORUN
All the more reason we need to
figure out where that Inhibitor is.

From the where Kassus exited Otib enters with his squad. Tarsis and Dorun remain at attention. Otib and the squad ignores the two, Dorun and Tarsis recognize them.

TARSIS
I'd put credits I know where he's going.

DORUN
Come on, let's follow.

The two match pace with Otib, following.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CONTROL CENTER - EVENING

Now inside the control room we see a trooper go down, Ellis overtop him, breathing heavily. Rebels stream in from the entrance door behind Ellis.

ELLIS
Open the cell doors, and arm the prisoners. We don't have much time.

EKELLE
Here.

Ekelles taps at console.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CELLS - CONTINUOUS

Cell doors open, and cheering prisoners rush out. Kurdeer and rebels pass out extra weapons among them. Ellis and Ekelles meet Kurdeer and the larger group of rebels/prisoners.

ELLIS
Let's get to the hanger.

Laser fire flies past Ellis, nearly hitting him. He jumps to cover. Troopers storm in from the entrance, blasters firing. The rebel group fires back.

ELLIS (CONT'D)
We can't stay. Fall back, fall back!

Rebels start falling back to the far door. As they file out the door Ellis lays down fire from his position. Kurdeer is near him, also firing from cover.

KURDEER

Go. Go now!

Ellis looks back at the rebels, most of them have gotten through the door. Ellis nods, then runs to join them. He reaches the door and looks back at Kurdeer.

ELLIS

Kurdeer, let's go!

Kurdeer looks back, then runs towards the door. Laser fire hits him several feet from the exit.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

EKELLE

Kurdeer!

NOOOO!

Ellis rushes forward shooting at the troopers, who are now swarming the detention center. Ellis grabs the wounded Kurdeer and pulls him back to the door. Ekelle lays down suppressing fire as the two return to the door. They get through as the Detention Center is totally overrun.

CUT TO:

INT. DETENTION CENTER TO EXIT HANGER HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ellis and Ekelle support Kurdeer as they continue their retreat.

KURDEER

Stop... Stop... I can't-

The group sets Kurdeer down. Ellis looks at the wound.

ELLIS

This looks bad.

KURDEER

It feels bad. I am not going to make it, I think.

EKELLE

No. Don't you dare say that.

KURDEER

I can't... keep going.

ELLIS

They're right behind us.

EKELLE

I don't care. You're all I have left. They've taken so much from me, I won't let them take you too.

KURDEER

I love you.

Ekelles is reduced to tears.

EKELLE

I love you.

Troopers are heard coming around the corner. Kurdeer pushes Ekelles towards Ellis.

KURDEER

Go. I will hold them off.

Ekelles resists, but Ellis pulls her away. He gives a nod of appreciation to Kurdeer, who smiles. Ellis tosses an explosive to Kurdeer.

ELLIS

Last one. Take as many of them with you as you can.

Kurdeer nods as Ellis pulls a devastated Ekelles away. Kurdeer lays his head back as he primes the explosive device. Humming softly, troopers reach the hallways.

CUT TO:

INT. EXIT HANGER ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Ellis drags Ekelles around the corner. Ekelles breaks from Ellis's grip.

EKELLE

No. NO! I won't leave him.

Ekelles turns to go back, but a blast is heard from the hallway they just exited. Ekelles stops dead. Her head drops, then shoulders, then crumples to the ground, sobbing. Ellis, at first moving to restrain her, consoles her instead.

ELLIS

I'm so sorry.

EKELLE

[to herself]

What am I going to do? What am I going to do?

ELLIS
Ekelles...

Ekelles shoots Ellis with a scornful look.

ELLIS (CONT'D)
I know this pain is raw. I know it
all too well. There will be time to
mourn, but right now we need to
move.

Ekelles looks away. Ellis grows slightly frustrated.

ELLIS (CONT'D)
He just sacrificed everything.
Don't disrespect him.

Ekelles looks back at Ellis, daring him to continue.

ELLIS (CONT'D)
Lean into that anger. Honor him by
killing them.

Ekelles closes her eyes and nods her head, pulling herself
together.

EKELLE
Let's go.

Ellis pulls Ekelles up and they retreat after the rebels.

CUT TO:

INT. INHIBITOR ROOM ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Otib runs through the Inhibitor Room entrance. Behind, Dorun
and Tarsis follow carefully. Dorun pulls Tarsis to a stop.

DORUN
There it is.

TARSIS
What's the plan? There's a lot of
them for the two of us, and you're
a terrible shot.

DORUN
I'm not that bad.

TARSIS
Dorun, you haven't hit a single
thing today.

DORUN
Well... I'm more of the idea guy.

TARSIS
So then what's your big idea for
getting in there?

Dorun pauses, thinking. He lightens when he gets an idea.

DORUN
We tell them to leave.

Tarsis drops his head, tired of hearing the same terrible
idea over and over again.

DORUN (CONT'D)
What? No, this will work. You have
the explosives, right?

Tarsis shows the satchel he has with him.

DORUN (CONT'D)
Good. I go in and I tell them that
rebels are approaching. The
explosive blows, they run out to
kill the rebels, we get to the
Inhibitor.

TARSIS
That's not a very good plan.

DORUN
Do you have anything better?

Tarsis does not.

DORUN (CONT'D)
Then let's get to it already. Set
the charge, then hang back as I
approach.

Tarsis sets a charge. He looks at Dorun, nodding his head.
Dorun steadies himself to attempt the ruse.

CUT TO:

INT. INHIBITOR ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dorun steps through the entrance and turns into the room.
Otib's squad mills about, some reclining, others in small
groups quietly chatting. The few squad troopers that notice
Dorun don't seem to give him any mind as he walks steadily,
if nervously.

As Dorun approaches we see Otib having a hushed and heat conversation with Steela. Steela is not clearly visible from Dorun's perspective.

Tarsis walks a few paces behind Dorun. From Dorun's perspective we see Otib turn away. Dorun gets his first good look at Steela, and stops dead in his tracks. Tarsis is confused at Dorun's stop. Dorun's face is a stunned expression, a mixture of shame and regret.

DORUN

Steela.

We see a close-up of Steela as she locks eyes with the approaching Dorun. She squints, trying to place him. Eyes widen, recognition. Recognition to love. Love to confusion. Confusion to betrayal. Betrayal to hatred.

Without saying a word, she pulls the gun out of Otib's hands. Amid Otib's confusion, she points the weapon at Dorun. Dorun doesn't react, Tarsis does. Steela fires as Tarsis collides into the stunned Dorun.

Tarsis cries out in pain as the laser fire hits him, barely getting Dorun out of the way. The milling troopers don't waste any time readying their weapons and firing at the two.

Tarsis pulls out the CAMO ENERGY SHIELD and tosses it in front of them. It expands into a rectangular plane a few feet squared, transparent with a slight color tinge. In the center of the rectangle a circular status bar appears along with a legible "100%". As the laser fire hits the shield, the shots ripple on the plane like a pebble thrown in a still pond. Each hit of a laser reduces the the circular status bar and the number slightly.

From Steela's perspective we see the device expand. On her side, the two disappear completely as the rectangle expands.

TROOPER

Where'd they go?

Otib activates his helmet. Once his face is covered, he presses another button near his helmet's viewport. The viewport changes from a dull, uninteresting color to a red glow. From his perspective we see the world transformed into heat-signatures. Dorun and Tarsis are clearly visible heat-signatures.

OTIB

Activate Heat-Seeking Sensors!

The troopers comply, and as their helmets activate with the same reddish glow, they resume firing at the two.

The shield is degenerating quickly, in the mid-thirties percentile and draining fast as laser fire hit it.

DORUN
[To himself]
I didn't see her coming.

TARSIS
I don't think we're going to make it.

Tarsis puts on a grim smile as he looks through the shield. He pulls out the UNKNOWN GRENADE.

TARSIS (CONT'D)
Well, if I'm gonna die, I may as well figure out what this thing does.

Tarsis activates the grenade, then tosses it at the group of enemies. They get behind cover, but nothing happens. Seeing this, they continue firing.

TARSIS (CONT'D)
What? I'm going to kill that dealer!

Suddenly, the grenade 'pops'. Bright purple lighting arcs from the grenade and from it's center a deep blackish-purple sphere starts to expand.

Steela is holding on to her desk. From her perspective we see loose objects from the desk start to shake. The objects shoot towards the sphere, and Steela is alarmed as she starts straining against being sucked in.

Tarsis and Dorun are well out of the sphere's influence, Tarsis amazed. We see Otibs Squad having trouble standing their ground. The Troopers start getting pulled into the sphere.

Otib tries to grab Steela as she starts to slip, but they both get sucked towards the sphere. We see they don't actually enter the sphere, but hover just outside of it. Some are upside-down and at weird angles as they all push uncomfortably together.

Seeing the display, Tarsis jumps up despite his wound. Awed by the novel way to inflict pain, he gloats.

TARSIS (CONT'D)
YEAHHH! HOW YOU LIKE THAT? GET SOOOOME!

The sphere subsides quite quickly, and the enemies drop to the ground. It takes them a moment to register that they have not been injured.

Dorun realizes it, and starts pulling Tarsis towards the entrance they arrived through. Tarsis resists, not quite understanding the point of a grenade that doesn't kill things.

TARSIS (CONT'D)

They're not dead.

The enemy troopers have shaken off the experience and start picking up their guns, realizing themselves they haven't been killed. Dorun picks up the pace pulling Tarsis away.

DORUN

No, no they are not.

The two round the corner and leave the Inhibitor Room. Steela speaks to the troopers.

STEELA

Get them. I want them alive!

The Troopers, still slightly shaken, rush out hesitantly at first, then with more confidence.

CUT TO:

INT. INHIBITOR ROOM ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Dorun is supporting an injured Tarsis. Tarsis is starting to slump against Dorun.

DORUN

You placed that charge?

TARSIS

Uh-huh.

DORUN

Have we passed it?

TARSIS

Uh-huh.

DORUN

Can you trigger it?

TARSIS

Uh-huh.

Tarsis pull up a detonator and clicks it without any hesitation. Dorun is taken by surprise as the explosion at the door makes him stumble.

CUT TO:

INT. INHIBITOR ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Troopers fly back as the explosion hits them. Seeing this, Steela whirls to Harper.

STEELA
Lock down the Fortress. Highest level.

HARPER
Sir, the Governor's troops-

STEELA
Do it!

Harper speaks into a communicator. Steela addresses Otib.

STEELA (CONT'D)
Go him, I want him alive!

Otib rushes to the entrance, and starts pushing away rubble and debris to get through. Troopers join him.

CUT TO:

INT. INHIBITOR ROOM ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Dorun rights himself from the blast, Tarsis still leaning on him, and continues on. The Inhibitor Room Entrance is covered in debris. Dorun leads them down the hall, and as they reach the end, the blast door connecting to the next hallway closes. The console to the side of the door turns bright red: "AUTHORIZED ACCESS ONLY"

CUT TO:

INT. EXIT HANGER - SAME TIME

The Landing Hanger chosen to be the rendezvous point is a large hanger with two large service doors leading into the Hanger and a large gaping hole on the far side, where ships are able to land.

Ellis and the rebels are fighting off the the Governor's troopers entering through the service doors.

The rebels don't have anywhere else to retreat to, and for every trooper they kill two more appear from the entrance.

Suddenly the entrance door slams shut, console going red. The troopers that just passed through turn and slam on the door, unsure why it's closed. They die as laser fire cuts them down.

INT. EXIT HANGER ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

From the other side of the entrance door, we see confused looking troopers looking at the door. Governor Kassus approaches the door, angrily pushing and pulling troopers out of the way.

Kassus types in a key code on the door. "ACCESS DENIED". Kassus hits the console, now enraged. He turns to the troopers.

GOVERNOR KASSUS

Open this door. I don't care how.
Rip the walls out if you have to!

INT. INHIBITOR ROOM ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Dorun tries to enter a code for the door. Nothing is working. Tarsis is leaning against the wall, nursing his wound. Dorun tries a different door. Also fails. Dorun throws up his hands in frustration.

DORUN

Well, that's it. We're finished.

Suddenly, the door he tried last clicks green. Dorun spins, looking at the console.

DORUN (CONT'D)

This isn't the first time today
this has happened.

TARSIS

That leads away from Ellis.

A peice of debris is lifted from the Inhibitor Room. Otib sees the two and fires a shot.

DORUN

We don't have much choice.

Dorun supports Tarsis as the door opens and they pass through.

CUT TO:

INT. FORTRESS HALLWAY 4 - CONTINUOUS

Dorun and Tarsis walk down another hallway. All doors are locked as they go by. As they pass by another door, it clicks green.

TARSIS
It's gotta be a trap.

DORUN
They already had us trapped.

Tarsis looks doubtful as they turn towards the door. It opens into a waiting elevator. The two get in, the door closes, and before any button can be pressed, it's moving.

TARSIS
What the hell is going on?

DORUN
I don't know.

The elevator stops, and the door opens. A small hallway with a single door at the end.

TARSIS
I have a bad feeling about this.

The two approach the door cautiously. The console doesn't click green.

DORUN
Well don't stop now.

After another pause, the console clicks green and the door opens. We see a small room, filled with consoles. Only two people are inside, a trooper and TENNA. She is young, tattoos stark against pale skin, short cropped hair streaked blue.

The trooper turns to Dorun and Tarsis and frowns. He realizes they're enemies and pulls out his gun. Dorun is faster as he shoots the trooper down. He trains his weapon on TENNA.

Tenna pulls away, raising her keyboard in front of her for protection. Dorun pauses.

DORUN (CONT'D)
Is that a keyboard?

TENNA hugs the keyboard defensively.

TENNA
I'm old school.

DORUN
How old are you?

TENNA
Younger than you, old man.

Dorun is slightly taken aback, it's the first time someone has called him an old man.

TARSIS
I like her.

Tarsis groans and slumps lower.

TENNA
Is he gonna die?

TARSIS
I've survived worse. I think.

DORUN
Who are you?

TENNA
Names Tenna, and I just happen to be the best damn hacker this side of the galaxy.

DORUN
I've never heard of you, Tenna.

TENNA
The best hackers are the ones you don't hear about.

DORUN
If you're so good, then what are you doing working *here* for *them*?

TENNA
I crossed that blonde officer you've been pissing off.

DORUN
Ah.

TARSIS
What the hell was that back there, anyways. Who is she?

DORUN

My wife.

Tarsis bridles, Tenna whistles.

TENNA

You're telling me you're married to
Imperial Adjunct Steela Polis.

DORUN

She's an Adjunct now. Of course she
is.

TENNA

Well unless you want to stick
around for a family reunion, I
brought you here for a reason.

DORUN

Oh, and what's that?

TENNA

To deal with him, mostly.

Tenna points to the downed trooper.

TENNA (CONT'D)

They don't leave me alone for a
minute. Scared of what I might do
with the access I have.

TARSIS

If you're as good as you say you
are, I would have killed you.

TENNA

They were going to, until the
Adjunct "recruited" me. I've been
looking for a chance to escape ever
since.

DORUN

Well none of us are escaping
anywhere while that Inhibitor is
active.

TENNA

You mean the Inhibitor that needs
so much power it's overloading core
systems?

Dorun gives Tenna an inquisitive look.

CUT TO:

INT. INHIBITOR ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Otib and Harper flank Steela at her desk. Steela leans against the desk with both hands, head down.

STEELA

What do you mean you lost them?

OTIB

Doors have been locking and unlocking.

Steela shoots a murderous look at Harper.

HARPER

I... I've tripled checked the orders Sir. You're the only who should have access-

Steela and Otib look at each other.

STEELA

Tenna.

OTIB

I told you she could not be trusted.

STEELA

Who says I ever trusted her. Go to the control room-

Alarms start sounding.

Steela looks at the Inhibitor. The Engineers that have continued to work on the machine are now scrambling, running to and fro, upset. Steela stops an Engineer running past.

STEELA (CONT'D)

What's happening?

ENGINEER

We don't know, the Inhibitor's power consumption is rising.

Steela looks at the Inhibitor. The steady "WUMP" of the Inhibitor is increasing pace. The Engineer is horrified and starts to back away.

STEELA

Fix it!

The Engineer shakes his head as he continues to back away. We see other engineers running out of the room, as he turns and runs.

OTIB
Sir, we're leaving.

Otib grabs Steela by the arm. She looks at him, then nods.

OTIB (CONT'D)
Move out, double time!

Steela, her aides and Harper, along with Otib and his squad run down a side entrance and open a door. A troop transport is the only thing in the room, doors already open.

Otib goes to a console and taps at it as the rest of the group files into the transport. Steela stops by Otib.

STEELA
Always have a quick escape planned,
don't you?

OTIB
It's been useful more than once.

Otib finishes tapping at the console, and the ceiling opens above the transport to allow it to exit. Otib gestures Steela to enter the transport. With everyone in, the transport doors close and it takes off.

In the Inhibitor Room proper, the WUMP sound has reached dangerous levels. It suddenly seizes.

As the transport flies off, we see a giant explosion that destroys the entire west wall of the Fortress.

CUT TO:

INT. EXIT HANGER - SAME TIME

Ellis and the rebels see sparks flying from the large service doors the Imperial Troopers are behind. They sit behind cover apprehensively. Suddenly, the room shakes and goes dark.

EKELLE
What was that?

ELLIS
The Inhibitor, I hope.

CUT TO:

INT. WINDSWIFT COCKPIT - SAME TIME

Arianne taps at the pilots console of the ship. Suddenly, the console lights up and Arianne squees with excitement. She starts ignition and a "DEE-DEE-DEEP" sound is made.

ARIANNE
DEE-DEE-DEEP, love it!

Arianne picks up the communicator.

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL ROOM TO EXIT HANGER HALLWAY - SAME TIME

The hallway shakes as Dorun and Tenna supports Tarsis. The lights go out and the hallway is pitch black. Tenna and Dorun activate flashlights.

DORUN
It's a good thing you cleared a path for us.

TENNA
Unlike you people I plan my escapes in advance.

DORUN
We've had to improvise.

TENNA
I was watching. You didn't have a plan.

Before Dorun can respond his communicator squaks.

ARIANNE
[from communicator]
Dorun, we're in business, I'm in the air and heading your way.

DORUN
Perfect. Lock on to Ellis's signal, we'll meet you there.

ARIANNE
On it.

DORUN
[To communicator]
 Ellis, Arianne's on her way. We'll
 meet you at the hanger.

CUT TO:

INT. EXIT HANGER - CONTINUOUS

Sparks fly from the entrance the troops are behind. The hole
 they're cutting through the door is nearly finished.

ELLIS
 Well you better hurry, we don't
 have anywhere else to run. And you
 better not expect all these rebels
 to fit in our little freighter.

INTERCUT DORUN & ARIANNE

DORUN
 Arianne, you hear that?

We see the Windswift mid-air. It's revealed several other
 ships are flying with the Windswift.

ARIANNE
 Way ahead of you. Looks like the
 Resistance is as ready as we are.

DORUN
 This might actually work. Come on!

The three pick up the pace as they make their way through the
 dead Fortress.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EXIT HANGER - EVENING

The sparks coming from the door stop as the door falls away.
 Troopers charge through as the rebels start firing.

Dorun, Tarsis and Tenna are seen running in from an opposite
 door. Ellis sees them.

ELLIS
[into communicator]
 Arianne we need to go now!

CUT TO:

EXT. EXIT HANGER - CONTINUOUS

The Windswift and other ships break through the clouds, approaching the Governor's Fortress. Windswift is in the lead as it heads towards the Exit Hanger.

CUT TO:

INT. WINDSWIFT COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Arianne deftly handles the controls as the ship hurtles toward the hanger.

ARIANNE
I'm coming in now.

CUT TO:

INT. EXIT HANGER - CONTINUOUS

The troops continue filing in and have started to spread out to find cover. Ellis tries to fire, but the blaster beeps. A small holographic message appears above the blaster handle blinking "CHARGE DEPLETED".

Ellis curses, throwing down the weapon. He looks at Ekelle, who also is out of charge. The both cower under cover as laser fire passes overhead.

As the trooper begin to overrun the hanger, the Windswift pulls into the hanger bay and lands gracefully near Ellis and Ekelle. Troopers fire on the Windswift as its doors open.

The other ships follow suit, landing near the Windswift. Rebels storm out of the ships, firing on the Troopers. The troopers head for cover, now outnumbered.

The freed prisoners start running to the transports. Tarsis, Dorun and Tenna head towards the Windswift. Ellis looks to Ekelle.

ELLIS
I guess this is goodbye.

Ekelle looks to the rebels, and back to Ellis.

EKELLE
I'm coming with you. Your crew...
Dorun... This is what you do.
You're trying to bring them down.

Ellis hangs his head.

EKELLE (CONT'D)
You're trying to get revenge.

Ellis looks at her with conviction. He gives a slight nod of his head.

EKELLE (CONT'D)
Then I'm coming with you. Come on.

ELLIS
And them?

Ellis nods towards the fighting rebels.

EKELLE
They fight to for freedom, as I did. But now I fight to bring the Empire down. All of it. And I won't stop until I do.

ELLIS
Then let's go.

The two rush from behind their cover and run to the Windswift. Dorun is waiting as Ekelle enters. He gives Ellis a queer look. Ellis nods his ascent and Dorun rolls his eyes as Ellis enters. Dorun follows in and closes the hatch.

CUT TO:

INT. WINDSWIFT COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

The crew find seats or stand around the cockpit. Dorun is the last to enter.

DORUN
Everyone's in, let's get off this rock.

ARIANNE
What about those rebels?

EKELLE
Do not worry about them, Kurdeer taught them well.

DORUN
Where is Kurdeer?

Ekelle looks down, Ellis looks away. Dorun understands.

DORUN (CONT'D)
Ah. I'm sorry.

Dorun turns to Arianne.

DORUN (CONT'D)

Let's go.

Arianne nods, taps at the console. The viewport from the cockpit shows the hanger shifting, light laser fire passing by.

CUT TO:

INT. EXIT HANGER - CONTINUOUS

As the rebels start pulling back to their own ships, we see the Windswift lift, hover for a moment, then raise and turn towards the exit. Light laser fire follows. The Windswift pulls out of the hanger and away from the Governor's Fortress.

CUT TO:

INT. WINDSWIFT COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

ARIANNE

Ships started fleeing the planet as soon as the Inhibitor came down. Looks like cities planet-wide are being attacked by Imperial Troops. A lot of people are dying.

DORUN

She's trying to purge the planet. Flush out the Resistance and break them in one bloody push.

EKELLE

The Resistance will never break.

ARIANNE

Problem is, as soon as ships get off planet they get fired on. Imperial Cruisers are in orbit and they're not messing around.

TARSIS

This ship can't outrun an Imperial Cruiser.

ARIANNE

It can with me flying it.

CUT TO:

EXT. GULON II LOW ORBIT - CONTINUOUS

The Windswift has broken orbit and is flying through space. We see a larger ship, an Imperial Cruiser, follow in short order.

CUT TO:

INT. WINDSWIFT COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

ARIANNE
Here we go!

The ship shakes from laser fire.

DORUN
Watch it!

ARIANNE
Watch this!

CUT TO:

EXT. GULON II LOW ORBIT - CONTINUOUS

From the Cruisers perspective we pursue the Windswift. Lasers fire just as the ship does a wide arcing barrel roll, barely missing the laser fire.

CUT TO:

INT. WINDSWIFT COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

ARIANNE
We need to jump, now!

Dorun and Ellis move to the Nav console. The panel is still open, wires and hardware exposed. Dorun and Ellis jostle at the panel.

ELLIS
The Nav is a mess!

DORUN
[To Arianne]
I told you not to break my ship.

Arianne doesn't register, focusing on flying the ship. Ekelle sits nearby, dazed as Kurdeer's death sets in. Tenna looks at Dorun and Ellis aprehensively, clutching her keyboard. Tarsis is doubled-over in pain.

ELLIS

[To Dorun]

You can't do that or you'll
overload-

The console sparks and Ellis/Dorun shield themselves. The console looks dead.

DORUN

[To Ellis]

What did you do?

ELLIS

What did *I* do?

ARIANNE

What's going on? We need to get out
of here!

Tenna, without saying anything sets her keyboard down and pulls up a holographic monitor projected from the keyboard. She quietly starts typing away.

Tarsis stumbles towards the Nav console, intent on helping as Dorun pushes past Ellis. They start pulling at the hardware underneath the Nav console. Neither knows what they're doing. Ellis watches, throwing his hands up in frustration.

The cockpit shakes as more laser fire hits the Windswift.

ARIANNE (CONT'D)

I don't know how much longer I can
hold them.

CUT TO:

INT. IMPERIAL CRUISER BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

A Cruiser Captain in a sharp uniform watches the Windswift on the viewport. Bridge crew work at their stations. The clean efficiency of the Imperial ship a stark contrast to the chaos on the Windswift Cockpit.

In the viewport, we see the Windswift dodge another volley of laser fire. The Captain frowns.

CRUISER CAPTAIN

A decent pilot. Shame. Fire a
missile, end this.

BRIDGE CREW

Yes sir, missile locked... and
away.

The MISSILE appears as a bright white light that fires from the Cruiser and heads directly towards the Windswift.

CUT TO:

INTERCUT WINDSWIFT COCKPIT INT. & EXT. - CONTINUOUS

A notification blinks in front of Arianne.

ARIANNE
Missile locked. Hold on.

The three men at the Nav console look up. They've turned the console into an absolute disaster. Tenna continues to type determinedly at her keyboard.

As the MISSILE speeds closer, the Windswift pulls up. Both the MISSILE and the Cruiser follow.

DORUN
Do we have any countermeasures?

ARIANNE
This isn't that kind of ship.

Arianne gets an idea.

ARIANNE (CONT'D)
I can dump the cargo, it can act as a countermeasure.

TARSIS
What? No! Do you know how much that cargo is worth?

DORUN
Do it!

Arianne taps at the console.

CUT TO:

INT. CRUISER BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

From the bridge viewport, we see the Windswift continue to pull up, the MISSILE gaining ground. The cruiser is also pulling up, keeping the Windswift in it's viewport.

As the MISSILE reaches the Windswift, the rear cargo doors of the ship open and small boxes file out.

The MISSILE hits the boxes and explodes in a bright flash that fills the entirety of the viewport.

CUT TO:

INT. WINDSWIFT COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

The crew are propelled by harsh G forces, pinned to their seats as the explosion rocks the ship.

Arianne is the first to recover, laying into the controls to get the ship back on course.

CUT TO:

INT. CRUISER BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The Captain scowls seeing the Windswift recover.

CRUISER CAPITAIN
Lock all lasers. FIRE!

The viewport shows a synchronized volley of laser fire from the many laser cannons equipped to the ship. Just as they're about to hit the Windswift, the Windswift snaps out of existence.

CRUISER CAPITAIN (CONT'D)
Damn!

BRIDGE CREW
Shall we pursue, sir?

The cruiser captain considers.

CRUISER CAPITAIN
No. Our orders are clear. Log the ship type and trajectory. And find me another target.

CUT TO:

INT. WINDSWIFT COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

All is quiet. Everyone still bracing for the coming impact. Ellis opens his eyes, realizing the impact never came.

Dorun slowly gets up, looking around.

DORUN
What... happened?

ELLIS
We should be dead.

ARIANNE
We managed to jump.

DORUN
How? I don't think we fixed the Nav
console.

The console is smoking, wires and hardware from its
compartment ripped apart.

TENNA
The Navigation systems are fine.

All eyes snap to Tenna.

TENNA (CONT'D)
I mean, that console is destroyed,
but the Nav itself is fine. I just
had to reroute controls to my
keyboard.

Ellis looks at Dorun

ELLIS
Who is that?

Before Dorun can respond, a beeping noise is heard.

ARIANNE
We're being hailed.

DORUN
Who from?

Arianne looks at Dorun bleakly. Dorun turns back to Tenna.

DORUN (CONT'D)
Where did you jump us to?

TENNA
I didn't have much time, so I just
chose the last place you jumped
from.

Dorun drops his head. A viewport near the front of the
cockpit blinks on, showing MARCELLA, sitting back in a chair.
Her brunette hair is perfectly set, bright red lips set in a
coy smile.

MARCELLA

Well, well, well. You have a lot of
nerve coming back here, Dorun
Shrike.

DORUN

[To himself]

This has been a very. Long. Day.

Fade Out.