

AGENTS OF THE EMPIRE

written by

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FADE IN

EXT. AKEEN CITY, PLANET GULON II - HIGH NOON

Camera opens 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 the camera pans over the city, three militaristic troop transports fly past.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL MARKET, AKEEN SLUMS - SAME TIME

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 - SAME TIME

The soliders 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 - SAME TIME

From a second story window across the street, DORUN watches the raid. Specks of grey in his hair, he looks like he belongs in a classroom. He turns away from the window.

DORUN

We have to get off this planet.

Before anyone can answer, TARSIS enters the room. Blaster in hand, nondescript armored vest, scars peppering his grizzled face. He closes the door, leaving it slight ajar to keep watch through.

TARSIS

We got out just in time. We're safe  
for now.

Hands clasped in front of him, ELLIS sits nearby deep in thought. Younger, well dressed, handsome if a bit naive.

ELLIS  
Dorun, if they're raiding our  
safehouse it means-

DORUN  
It means we have to get off this  
planet.

Pensively watching the scene below, EKELLE stands close to the window. Middle Eastern descent; pretty in a determined, makes-the-hard-choices kind of way.

EKELLE  
This is a setback, yes, but you  
can't run now.

TARSIS  
Ekelles is right. If we run now we  
trash months of work setting up to  
cripple the Empires' control on  
Gulon Two.

EKELLE  
The Empire that took my family. The  
Rebellion can help-

DORUN  
The Empire has taken something from  
all of us. And we're not part of  
your Rebellion.

ELLIS  
Do you know 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  
None of which matters if we're  
dead. Look I don't want to run any  
more than you lot do, but we just  
got very lucky. It's only a matter  
of time before they connect the  
dots. I don't plan on being here  
when they do.

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, tools and hardware are strewn about the run-down cockpit of the Crew Freighter. ARIANNE's head pops out from under the console she was in the process of fixing.

Arianne curses as she tries to find the communicator amid the mess. Picking it up she attempts to sound calm and composed.

ARIANNE  
Yes, Dorun. Right away.

She looks around at the mess.

ARIANNE (CONT'D)  
I'll get right on that...

DORUN  
(From Communicator)  
Have you been sleeping on the job?

ARIANNE  
Excuse me? I haven't slept in days.  
I barely got the ignition coil  
working again and now the Nav  
console keeps losing power.

DORUN  
You better not be breaking my ship.

ARIANNE  
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 said you would help us!

DORUN  
I said I *could* help you, there's a  
difference.

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

Pause

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  
Thats... 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  
What I've been saying all along. We  
have to get off this planet.

[ROLL TITLE CREDITS]

INT. AKEEN SLUMS SAFEHOUSE

DORUN  
So we have a planet about to tear  
itself apart, 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'll be shot  
down before we get into orbit.

EKELLE  
I have to warn the others.

TARSIS

I say we 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!

ELLIS

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

EKELLE

We can still save the rebellion but we have to act now!

DORUN

OI!

Everyone's attention snaps to Dorun

DORUN (CONT'D)

I've made my decision. And we're doing it your way.

ELLIS

Uh. Who's way?

DORUN

All of yours.

TARSIS

Huh?

DORUN

We won't get far if we try and shoot our way in, but those uniforms will only get us so far. Tarsis, that means you get to shoot something today.

Tarsis looks pleased.

EKELLE

But the rebel-

DORUN  
(interuppting)  
-The rebellion can help us help  
them. I assume whatever plan you  
had for this uprising includes  
having flyable ships?

Ekelles reluctantly nods.

DORUN (CONT'D)  
Then taking down that Inhibitor  
helps us both.

TARSIS  
So... what are we gonna do?

DORUN  
Ekelles, contact the rebellion. Tell  
them that 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.

TARSIS  
There's an intergalactic army  
between us and that Inhibitor.

EKELLE  
The rebellion doesn't trust you.

ELLIS  
We have no time to prepare for this  
plan.

The camera closes on Dorun, totally confident.

DORUN  
Perfect.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SHIP: WINDSWIFT; MAIN ROOM  
The main room is cramped, lived-in, with a small cluttered  
table on one side and a cylindrical console on the other.  
Open to see Dorun dressed in an officers uniform.



He looks slightly uncomfortable. Ellis beside him is dressed in Imperial soldiers armor. They size each other up.

ELLIS  
You look terrible.

DORUN  
These uniforms never did fit me.

Enter Tarsis, also in soldier 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 number of odd devices, laying the equipment out on the table.

TARSIS  
(Petuently)  
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  
(with a child's wonder)  
I have no idea. I got it off a 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  
He stole it.

ELLIS (CONT'D)  
He stole it.

Enter Ekelle with KURDEER, a Middle Eastern man who looks like he's endured a hard life.

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  
(To Kurdeer)  
We'll see about that. 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 Ryzer, 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.

KURDEER  
We know much, Captain Ryzer-

DORUN  
I'm no captain. Call me Dorun.

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

DORUN  
She's faster than she looks.

KURDEER

I doubt that. 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's more concerning 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 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 rooms/sections.

DORUN (CONT'D)

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

EKELLE

That complex 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. Also, it would have to be installed quite recently, or we would have seen the signs.

ELLIS

Has there been any large construction efforts near the Fortress?

DORUN

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

TARSIS

So we don't know about any changes since it was built. Great.

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; PLANET GULON II

The camera shows a beautiful, statuesque blonde with a clean, commanding uniform. With an aura of absolute authority, Imperial Adjunct STEELA POLIS stands at a console, aides bustling around her. Hologram projections flank the Adjunct showing supply rates, troop positioning and other logistical information.

She taps at the holograms, dismissing some, highlighting others. An Aide, HARPER, approaches with a holographic tablet in hand, saluting Steela.

STEELA

Status Report.

HARPER

Troop positioning planet-wide is underway, as per your orders. The Inhibitor is running sufficiently, but Engineering continues to report facility-wide system failures due to the power required to operate it.

STEELA

Tell them to work with what they have. It is imperative the Inhibitor stays active.

HARPER

Yes, sir. Also, raids against rebel safehouses are complete, but were less successful than projected.

STEELA

Explain.

HARPER

Many were empty by the time we got there.

Steele 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.

Steele 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.

AIDE

Atten-HUT!

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

GOVERNOR KASSUS  
Everyone out!

STEELA  
Halt! Everyone stays.

Everyone in the room shifts uncomfortably, unsure of the protocol. No one leaves, and Kassus snarls- not used to be outranked. He stalks towards Steela.

GOVERNOR KASSUS  
Do you have any idea the danger  
you've put us in? Your orders have  
put my entire defense force in  
disarray. Hell 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. He gives Kassus a threatening look. As the Governor regains control of his emotions, Steela dismisses Otib with a lazy hand gesture.

GOVERNOR KASSUS  
(tightly controlled)  
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  
Let me be clear, I have full authority on 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.

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 lightens slightly hearing his tone.

STEELA  
Your concerns have been noted, Governor. The troops guarding this facility have been moved to reinforce key positions. This Inhibitor protects the Fortress now. Without ships no enemy can approach in force.

A wall to the Adjuncts side is revealed to be part of a very large, complex machine. The Planetary Ship Inhibitor. Engineers huddle near open compartments of the machine at various locations.

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

STEELA  
I don't want to be on this planet any longer than I have to be, 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 attendants. Steela is briefly pleased before returning to her reports.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CREW FREIGHTER: MAIN ROOM

Establishing shot of the Windswift in a crowded public shipyard. Cut to inside the main room of the ship.

KURDEER

(hostile)

You want us to do what!?

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 can't 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".

Kurdeer acquiesces, turns back to group.

KURDEER (CONT'D)

(begrudgingly)

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 - AKEEN SLUMS; GULON II

Open to show Dorun, Ellis, and Tarsis walking through an abandoned bazaar. Stalls are fully stocked, 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  
Psst.

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

EKELLE  
You do not see them?

Ekelle 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  
 complex.

The "checkpoint" turns out to be very large gates surrounded  
 by heavily armed soldiers. Watchtowers, gun nests, barbed  
 wire, a small army defends the area. The gates are closed,  
 guards dot the various watchtowers surrounding the area. A  
 main guardhouse sit behind fortified heavy weaponry.

The disguised trio march the rebel group through to the  
 checkpoint proper, a small outpost in front of the massive  
 metal gates. Soldiers watch 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  
 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 share a look. "Really, that's your Officer voice?"

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

Dorun shares a look with Ellis/Tarsis

DORUN  
Very well.

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

TARSIS  
A lot of troops here for a simple  
checkpoint.

ELLIS  
It must be a staging area for  
whatever the Empire has planned.

DORUN  
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 Checkpoints main office. Red cheeks snarl as he tucks his top into his trousers and marches towards the group. He barks some orders at some nearby troopers as he makes his way to the group.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESTRICTED ZONE CHECKPOINT - CONTINUOUS

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 from the group he puts his hand on the officer's arm.

DORUN  
(quietly, respectfully)  
Perhaps sir, it would be best if we chatted in private.

The officer casts a look of disgust across the rebels

CHECKPOINT OFFICER  
Come.

The Officer leads Dorun his private office in the main guardhouse.

CUT TO:

INT. CHECKPOINT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The office is tastefully furnished. The warm, inviting room is decorated with cultural artifacts and emits a warm glow-stark contrast to the efficient functionality of the rest of the checkpoint. Hand-sized native statues stand on a cabinet on one of the walls. As the officer leans on his main desk, Dorun goes to the statues.

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 and leans back against the cabinet.

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.

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

These fringe planets are all the same. Get the natives under the heel of your boot. Then squeeze.

Dorun shakes off the disgust. Checkpoint Officer frowns, smelling weakness. He shifts off the desk he was leaning against and shifts towards Dorun suspiciously.

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

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

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

DORUN  
Yes... Sir-

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  
Sir... I'd be happy to, 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 remaining 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 swings the statue 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, he goes to the console on the main desk, authorizing a transport.

Task complete, Dorun moves to the Officer, taking a keycard and a communicator. He takes a moment to compose himself before leaving the office, closing the door behind him.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESTRICTED ZONE CHECKPOINT - CONTINUOUS

DORUN  
The transport is being readied now.

Dorun moves to the checkpoint guard.

DORUN (CONT'D)  
The good officer says he's not to  
be disturbed. He didn't seem to be  
in a very good 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  
(quietly)  
I improvised.

CUT TO:



EXT. CHECKPOINT LANDING PAD - CONTINUOUS

Behind the gates a landing port for small ships sits with a number of troop transports. One is being prepped 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'll need this transport to get back to our ship.

ELLIS

The pilot flying us won't like that idea.

DORUN

You'll have to convince him otherwise.

ELLIS

Me?

Dorun nods as the group approaches the ship.

CUT TO:

EXT. TROOP TRANSPORT - CONTINUOUS

Ship technicians check the ship as the group approach. They ignore the group as they disconnect hoses and tap 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, 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 wait for  
us once we land.

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 punches the Pilot hard, then brings his hand back and shakes it off, realizing the stupidity of punching a man with a helmet on in the head. The Pilot looks at Ellis confused. Seeing his gambit failing, Ellis punches the Pilot again, this time on the jaw.

The punch is enough to lurch the transport, a quick camera shot in the main compartment shows the rebels falling over with the unexpected shift in direction. 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. He looks back up to Ellis.

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 amazing 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 roaring like a falling dive bomber. Pulling up, he finally gets the ship back on course and puts on the comm helmet.

CUT TO:

INT. FLIGHT CONTROL CENTER, GOVERNORS FORTRESS - CONTINUOUS

Flight Control isn't a hard job, mostly tedious, but the last several weeks have been particular bad with long days and few breaks. The message that a Troop Transport has just had an ejection event sparks mild interest in an otherwise exhausted Flight Controller.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER

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

[For the remainder of the conversation, the camera cuts to 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.

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

Right after I finish this flight.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER

Sir when Flight Control gives you an order, you follow it immediately.

ELLIS

Sorry maam, I've got work to do.

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... You're 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.