

[Dramatic science-fiction music plays, like the text crawl at the beginning of Star Wars]

NARRATOR: It is a period of civil war. The rebellion against the sinister and corrupt Federated Alliance grows stronger, and the fate of the galaxy hangs in the balance. Now, Rebel Emissary Pleck Decksetter and his intrepid crew travel the farthest reaches of the galaxy to explore astounding new worlds, discover their heroic destinies, and meet weird bug creatures and stuff. This is [echoing] Mission to Zyxx.

[Music becomes more dramatic and trumpet-y, then fades away]

PLECK: Nermut! Hey!

NERMUT: [small laugh] Hey!

PLECK: I got your heat rock set up again.

NERMUT: [elated] Are you serious?

PLECK: Yeah! Well, you know, we still had it around, and I just figured, you know, let's plug that bad boy in. [mechanical sounds as the rock is plugged in]

NERMUT: Yeah! Oh, wow, I'm gonna just hop up in there. [lamp pull-chain being pulled] Oh, man.

PLECK: Yeah. It's good to have you back, buddy.

NERMUT: Thank you so much. It's good to be back.

[sound of Beano's feet slapping on the floor as he enters the scene]

BEANO: Beano love heat rock.

PLECK: No, Beano, stop. You can't--

NERMUT: [a bit hurt] What? You had it out for Beano?

PLECK: No, no, no. No. We--

BEANO: [running around] Beano *wuv* heat rock.

NERMUT: What? [offended sigh]

PLECK: Okay, occasionally we'd plug it in. If Beano couldn't sleep, we'd put Beano on the heat rock and--

NERMUT: [indignant] I initialed it! I wrote my--

C-53: Missions Operations Manager Nermut Bundaloy, you must understand how difficult it is to get Beano to relax in any way.

NERMUT: [various noises of understanding] Well, I'm just gonna stretch out on it and-- [noise of comfort]

PLECK: Yeah. Cool. Alright, well, you just chill there and--

BEANO: Beano stretch too.

PLECK: [resigned] Okay. [Beano makes a weird noise] Okay. You know, Nermut, you're actually-- I think you and Beano might actually really get along.

NERMUT: Really? Is that a size thing? You just think because Beano and I are close to the same--

BEANO: Beano big spoon. Nermut little spoon.

PLECK: Okay.

NERMUT: [sigh] Honestly, I think Dar is big spoon. Let's be honest.

PLECK: Uh, hey-- hey, Dar?

DAR: Yes?

PLECK: How are you, uh-- I don't know. Probably shouldn't say this in a room with all of us... in the same room, at the same time--

DAR: I probably wouldn't say it, then.

PLECK: Okay--

DAR: Probably just--

PLECK: But I was just gonna say, like, it's great, right? Things are great now that everybody's all together again.

DAR: [slight pause] Um, Pleck, could I just talk to you over here, privately?

PLECK: [laughing] Sure! Absolutely, yeah.

DAR: Um, yeah, Pleck, things with Nermut are, um... a little weird right now.

PLECK: What? Why?

DAR: Well, it's just we-- we'd already agreed that we didn't like the long-distance thing, so we were just gonna, you know, see other people.

PLECK: Oh.

DAR: And now he is on the ship.

PLECK: Wait, are you like, [hushed] actively seeing somebody else right now?

DAR: [choosing words carefully] I'm not actively seeing *one* someone else.

PLECK: Oh.

[Beano running sounds]

BEANO: Beano wants to know what's going on.

[Pleck makes unhappy noises]

DAR: [parental chiding tone] Beano?

BEANO: Hm?

DAR: Do you want to play our fun game?

BEANO: Mm-hmm.

NERMUT: Wait, what are you guys doing? I heard something about a game?

[Pleck sighs]

BARGIE: I just want to remind everybody, I hear all conversations despite location.

DAR: Yeah, I'm sorry.

C-53: [slightly far away] I am maintaining my distance.

DAR: [earnest] Thank you, C!

C-53: [still far away] Just for reference, I can *hear* everything. My--

PLECK: Of course. Of course.

DAR: Fine, fine.

BEANO: Beano wuv asides.

PLECK: Guys, can I just say something, since there are all of us in the room at the same time?

NERMUT: Yeah, of course.

PLECK: I think there might be too many of us here at once.

NERMUT: Huh.

VULM: I would have to agree.

[everyone makes startled noises]

BARGIE: Oh, right. I let some more people in.

VULM: [affronted] There was no one waiting for me down in the shuttle dock bay, and I invited myself up to this level.

C-53: Bargie, did we have guests and you didn't tell us?

BARGIE: [defensive] I don't have to tell you everything. What am I, huh? Your mom?

PLECK: [stammering] Wait, sorry, uh--

NERMUT: *I'm* the MOM.

DAR: Yes, you are.

VULM: The only one there to greet me was Bargie, because she's everywhere. All of the time.

BARGIE: You're welcome, and welcome.

VULM: Thank you.

PLECK: Yeah, sorry, I-- I don't believe we've met. I'm Emissary Pleck Decksetter, uh--

VULM: Oh, I'm Veteran Missions Operations Manager Vulm Sunblighter.

[all gasp]

PLECK: Uh, hello!

C-53: [quietly] A *Veteran* Missions Operations Manager.

NERMUT: [stuttering] A *veteran*?

VULM: That's right. I've come today with a mission for all of you, plus these two young boys here. [AR-33 and Gavin sigh petulantly] They must be scared straight.

[the teens groan, Bargie goes 'yeah!']

GAVIN: [petulant] I just don't like *anything* I hear from an *adult*.

DAR: I'm sorry, if we could just quickly touch on-- how old are each of you?

GAVIN: I'm seventeen-- and a *half*.

PLECK: Okay.

AR-33: And I'm seventeen and a *fourth*.

DAR: A fourth. I see.

VULM: These two young men have gotten themselves into all kinds of trouble, and I have to say that seventeen is far too old to be counting half-birthdays.

PLECK: I mean, that's true.

C-53: And it's definitely too old to be counting *quarter*-birthdays.

PLECK: Certainly.

VULM: Well, your mission, if you choose to accept it, is to deliver [rustling and clinking noises] these three crystals to the planet Vorbom.

AR-33: Ugh, this is boring.

VULM: Now, these two boys-- this teen Tellurian and this teen droid--

PLECK: Wait, do they-- I'm sorry, do they have names?

GAVIN: Yeah. You can call me Drake Fistkin.

PLECK: [impressed] Ooh!

[beat]

C-53: Is that your real name, or--?

GAVIN: You can *call me* Drake Fistkin.

C-53: Alright. For lack of a better alternative, we can call you Drake Fistkin, but--

DAR: But if you wanted to tell us your *real* name, you could.

[Gavin stutters uncomfortably]

NERMUT: It just sounds like a made-up cool name.

GAVIN: It *is* a made-up cool name.

DAR: I mean, you nailed it. You absolutely nailed it, because it's very cool.

GAVIN: Thank you! I thought it was pretty cool! Is the 'fist' part of Fistkin too much?

PLECK: Oh, is it-- it's 'Fist-kin'?

GAVIN: I'm Drake Fistkin. So much better than my *real* name, Gavin Boo-boo.

[everyone makes dismayed noises]

PLECK: That's self-awareness, though. That's good for a seventeen-year-old to understand.

DAR: And what's your name, kiddo?

AR-33: Uh, my name is AR-33, but you can call me Alpine Nightly.

PLECK: Oh!

DAR: I'm gonna call you AR-33.

AR-33: Well, I wish you wouldn't!

DAR: I've already forgotten your fake name.

AR-33: Alpine Nightly. I'll keep saying it.

DAR: Nope. No no no. AR-33.

BARGIE: Alright, guys, I got this. I got this. Everybody be quiet, okay? I know this is a scared-straight situation, and I did a couple movies where I scared some people straight.

C-53: Yeah, Bargie. Really lay it on these two, huh?

BARGIE: What you do is bad, but the world out there is worse. So why don't-- uh, what was the rest?

PLECK: No, Bargie, you were so close!

BARGIE: Uh-- okay--

GAVIN: For a second, I was almost scared straight.

AR-33: Yeah.

PLECK: Wait, AR-33, how is it that a droid needs to be scared straight?

AR-33: I was made with flaws, to make me more angsty.

PLECK: Oh, yeah, sure.

DAR: Oh, more relatable to other teens.

C-53: It was a controversial production line, but-- you know, they wanted some verisimilitude and--

AR-33: Yeah, so I could relate with Drake.

GAVIN: And my dad gave me this disposition.

PLECK: Yeah, that's--

AR-33: I was made to be Drake's best friend. That's how I got dis-position.

VULM: [annoyed] Now, now, now. There are three crystals to deliver to three different continents--

DAR: Dis-position? That was awesome.

VULM: Now, as Veteran Missions Operations Manager, I must insist that we focus on the task at hand--

AR-33: [imitating snoring noises] Honk-shoe, honk-shoe, honk-shoe.

C-53: I think he's suggesting that he's been put to sleep by your speech.

VULM: [very stern] Yes. Watch your language, first of all. Never use that combination of goose sound and footwear again to embarrass me!

AR-33: Ugh, just jucking deprogram me now! I'll splice my own wires!

PLECK: Oh, boy. Uh, okay, listen, so we gotta-- [stammering] we'll deliver the crystals--

AR-33: [doing a rude imitation of Pleck's voice] Uh, we gotta-- we gotta deliver-- [normal voice] that's what you sound like.

DAR: Yeah, that is what you sound like! Oh, that was so good!

BARGIE: Yeah, that was very good.

C-53: Actually pretty close to what you sound like, Emissary Decksetter.

[crosstalk]

AR-33: My name is Jack Fuddrucker! [disrespectful noise]

BARGIE: Was that you, Pleck?

PLECK: That's pretty close, actually. Yeah.

VULM: Emissary Decksetter, I insist that you get this mission on point.

PLECK: Yes. Sure. Yes.

NERMUT: Deliver the crystals.

PLECK: Yeah. Thank you, Nermut.

GAVIN: Can I just stay here and send my jexts?

DAR: Sure.

NERMUT: Dar, I-- that's not how you--



DAR: [passive-aggressive] I'm sorry, do you have something to say to me, Nermut?

NERMUT: [sigh, indignant] Yeah. I've been obviously trying to hug you and you're, like--

DAR: About this mission.

NERMUT: Oh. We're trying to scare these kids straight!

C-53: He wanted to send jexts. You know, juck texts.

DAR: Yeah. I love those.

C-53: Well, sure, we all love those. But he's seventeen and a half.

DAR: We're very aware.

VULM: Everyone's aware.

AR-33: Nasty-ass jexts.

GAVIN: I'm jextin', like, butts, and like--

DAR: [mockingly] Oh, you two nerds have never jexted in your life!

AR-33: No, I've jexted!

GAVIN: [texting out loud] 'Jext re: butts'--

PLECK: If you're putting a subject line in your jext, you're doing it wrong.

BARGIE: Wait, send me one.

GAVIN: Uh, alright, here's one.

DAR: Yeah, read it out loud.

AR-33: Come on, Drake, you got this! You've got this one, you've got this! Don't let me down!

GAVIN: [texting] Yeah! I'm going for it, I'm totally gonna go for it. This is gonna be the dirtiest jext I've ever done.

AR-33: Yeah, send a jext to the ship. Nasty-ass shit.

GAVIN: Just like--

C-53: Gavin, we're still waiting on--

[Text-sent noise]

GAVIN: [proudly] 'Jism'.

AR-33: Jism! Yeah! Jism!

VULM: Did you just say the word 'jism' and nothing else?

GAVIN: Jism!

DAR: Okay, what was the jext before that one?

GAVIN: 'Hi'.

[laughter]

DAR: And the jext before that one?

GAVIN: 'Why aren't you responding to my jexts?'

[all giggle]

C-53: So the chain was, 'why aren't you responding to my jexts', 'hi', 'jism'.

DAR: Yep. Okay, that was a beautiful recap.

VULM: Oh, back in the Monarchy when I was a grand-plut, I sent the most disgusting jexts anyone ever saw.

GAVIN & AR-33: Gross!

DAR: Okay, now if you wouldn't mind reading a couple of your favorites out loud?

VULM: I would certainly be pleased to. [very formal enunciation] 'Girl, you up? I am going to eat that ass.'

[AR-33 and Gavin make a disgusted noise, all others laugh]

PLECK: That's pretty good! Cogent.

C-53: Now that's a ject.

GAVIN: [bewildered] Wait, you can do that to an ass?!

AR-33: Drake, play it cool!

GAVIN: What?!

VULM: This is not acceptable behavior for young men of your age. You can't do these things for another six months and nine months.

C-53: Veteran Missions Operations Manager Vulm Sunblighter, it feels like you're enabling these teens in some way.

VULM: I have no idea of what you refer to, C-53.

GAVIN: Is this usually how the scared-straight program goes? Do they talk about eating ass this much?

VULM: Every single time.

PLECK: [laughing] Yeah, you know, it-- Gavin, what did you do that you needed to be scared straight? Did you break a rule? Did you get in a fight? What happened?

GAVIN: I got this eyepatch.

[beat]

PLECK: [confused] Uh--

NERMUT: That was an infraction?

VULM: That is one of the early red flags, when a young man puts on an eyepatch. You must beware their next actions. [urgent emphasis] We must look for the warning signs.

AR-33: We're still trying to figure out our personality. Trying on some different things, you know?

GAVIN: Yeah.

DAR: Wait. So if you put on an eyepatch, what did *you* do?

AR-33: Removed my eye.

DAR: Wait, wait, wha--?

AR-33: My optic camera.

DAR: Okay, so that actually does sound more horrifying than--

GAVIN: [defensive] Well, no, I'm still pretty dangerous! Like, another day, I came to school with a cane.

AR-33: Yeah. He walked with a cane, and then at the last minute he did a forward roll.

GAVIN: [smugly] Mm-hmm.

VULM: Yes, these sorts of affectations are exactly the sorts of things that we must be wary of.

PLECK: That seems sort of, like, endearing, though.

DAR: Sure.

GAVIN: [wandering off] Where do you guys keep your hats around here?

BARGIE: Third door to the left.

VULM: No, don't encourage his affectations!

C-53: Oh, he's chosen a large top hat.

BARGIE: Okay, hey, we've landed, so-- not that anybody cares, but I took the coordinates and I landed and we're here to do the job that--

PLECK: Thank you--

BARGIE: --we're supposed to do--

PLECK: Thank you, Bargie.

BARGIE: So thank you, Bargie.

VULM: Thank you, Bargarean Jade.

BARGIE: Thank you.

PLECK: VMOM Sunblighter, I think maybe Gavin and I should go out and deliver these crystals--

VULM: Well, there are three different crystals that need to go to three different locations. If you would like to have different members of the crew split up and deliver the--

PLECK: [laughing] That's probably a good idea. That's probably a better idea.

VULM: It seems like a way we could really cut through some of the chaos.

DAR: Sure.

BEANO: Beano think the droids should go together, Gavin and Pleck should go together, and Dar, Nermut, and Vulm Sunblighter should go together. That's what Beano thinks.

AR-33: [offended] Yeah, let's just put the droids together, huh?

C-53: Hm. Yeah, that's a little--

VULM: C-53, could I speak to you for a moment, please?

C-53: Absolutely.

VULM: I think it's very important that AR-33 has a role model--

AR-33: [yelling from afar] Alpine!

VULM: --such as yourself. [annoyed] *Alpine* has a role model such as yourself. Someone who has years of experience. He can see himself reflected in you.

C-53: Very well. I'd be happy to accompany him.

AR-33: Hey guys, this is fun. Should we just keep *talking* about splitting up?

VULM: Yes. Let's go over the plan one more time.

NERMUT: Alright. I'll be the note keeper.

VULM: Thank you. Let the note-taking begin.

NERMUT: Alright.

C-53: So, Emissary Decksetter will accompany Gavin Boo-boo, and they will deliver one crystal. Myself and Alpine Nightly will deliver the second crystal, and--

AR-33: Thank you.

C-53: Veteran Missions Operations Manager Vulm Sunblighter, Missions Operations Manager Nermut Bundaloy, and Dar will deliver the third crystal.

DAR: Okay, great.

VULM: Sounds excellent.

C-53: Nermut, do you want to read that back?

NERMUT: Uh-- [digital sound effect of paper being crumpled up] oh, I-- ugh, dang it, I didn't hit save.

[all laugh]

[intermission music interrupted by static]

HARK: Attention! This is Captain Hark Tardigast, transmitting from [grunt of exertion, sound of tools being used] halfway under the seat of my fighter. Here's hoping I can use my foot to steer around that temporal rift while I rewire this hyperdrive. Looks like someone took a Ferusian hammer to it! But I believe I've got the thing nearly fixed. Escaping this haunting no-sentient's land is a top priority, second only to [electronic drill noises] writing my advice column. Yes, indeed. Over on therebellion.space, you can read my answers to tough questions sent in by confused, searching rebels. And heck, send in your own question and receive some tough love back from Hark. [blowtorch sounds] I don't know everything, but whatever I've learned in the aerial trenches of this noble rebellion, I am honored to share. And while you're at therebellion.space, why not check out the gorgeous poster for Turk Manaked's REB Talk, lend a hand cracking some troublesome encrypted messages, read Rolphus Tiddle's essential guide to neutralizing CLINTs! And then click 'make a site', which leads to [squarespace.com/zyxx](https://www.squarespace.com/zyxx), where you can use the offer code 'zyxx', Z-Y-X-X, to get a free Squarespace trial and a discount on your order of a site or domain! Because why not turn your cool idea into a beautiful website? Those righteous URLs, once again: [squarespace.com/zyxx](https://www.squarespace.com/zyxx), offer code 'zyxx', and therebellion.space. [grunts of exertion, sounds of hyperdrive starting up] Hahaha! Oh, baby! In the words of my favorite musician, Jordan McCorkin: [sings] We're flying! [speaking normally] Hark Tardigast, signing off!

[sounds of ship launching into hyperdrive, morphs back into intermission music]

[ship hatch opening]

PLECK: Alright, now Gavin, I'm gonna entrust you with this gem. This is what we have to deliver to the representative of this continent.

GAVIN: [small sigh] Alright. I guess I'll put it in this [zipper noises, clinking noises] fanny pack.

PLECK: Perfect. That's actually ideal. Is that a Rebellion-issued fanny pack?

GAVIN: Yeah. [Pleck goes 'huh!'] But I also got one for the Federated Alliance. I got it in a thrift shop.

PLECK: Okay, yeah, that's fine.

GAVIN: I spend a lot of time there. Like, just looking for stuff. A lot of times I like shirts that have designs from things, like, before I was even born. I don't even know what they mean.

PLECK: Oh, wow. Hey, you know, Gavin, you seem like a sensitive kid. You know?

GAVIN: [false bravado] No, I'm tough!

PLECK: You have two fanny packs and a vintage t-shirt on.

GAVIN: Yeah. Right.

PLECK: [laughing a little] Why are you staring off into the distance right now?

GAVIN: [almost corpsing] I'm just thinking about a poem.

PLECK: Okay-- wow. Gavin, you know, I think that this is the right work for you, you know? You're out here, you're having an adventure. This is a great way to connect with yourself, you know, and figure out who you really are.

GAVIN: Yeah. Uh-- Mr. Decksetter?

PLECK: Um, you don't have to call me that. You can just call me Pleck, that's fine.

GAVIN: Pleck, could I-- could I ask you a question?

PLECK: Yeah.

GAVIN: [stammering] How did you become an adult?

PLECK: Uh...

GAVIN: Like, what happened between when you were young, and now?

PLECK: Wow. You know, that is a really interesting question, Gavin. I continued to be the same, and then-- it used to be people were like, "you're a kid," and now people are like, "I can't believe you're acting like that as an adult." That's sort of what happened, it's just sort of-- people started judging me differently.

GAVIN: Oh, Rodd!

PLECK: [laughing] Oh no, did I-- I probably--

GAVIN: Oh, Rodd!

PLECK: I probably upset you with that, didn't I?

GAVIN: [horrified] Adults don't know anything more than I do!

PLECK: Uh, yeah, no, that's actually super true. Especially in my case. So, yeah, if you think suddenly a switch is gonna flip and you're gonna be-- you got it all figured out, [raspberry noise] wow. Watch out. Uh--

SENTINEL: [robotic noises] Hello.

PLECK: Oh! Uh, yes--

SENTINEL: I am the representative of continent number one.

PLECK: Oh! How convenient! Great! Do you always stand here at the border--

SENTINEL: I am the representative of continent number one.

PLECK: [stammering] Great. Good. That makes our job super easy. Um--

SENTINEL: Looks like I have two children in front of me.

PLECK: Oh. Uh, well, I'm actually--

GAVIN: [indignant] I'm not a kid!

SENTINEL: I think I have *two children* in front of me.

PLECK: Well, you've got one, uh, technically a child, and a technically-adult. Listen--

SENTINEL: You're both children. You acting like a child, and you... a child. You are very much a child.

GAVIN: Mr. Decksetter, is it possible that this creature's language only has about seven words in it?

PLECK: [laughing] It seems like what it's maybe--



SENTINEL: Two children! Continent number one!

GAVIN: Like, at first I thought he was coming at us pretty hard, but I think maybe--

PLECK: Yeah, no, I think he's--

SENTINEL: Continent two, children one!

PLECK: Oh. Is this a-- is that the score? What are you-- what is happening?

GAVIN: I think maybe-- do we just, like, walk past him?

PLECK: [laughing] I think-- I don't know if this is actually the--

SENTINEL: [increasingly distant as they walk away] Continent, two children. One continent, two children.

PLECK: Oh, man.

GAVIN: [triumphantly] Children one! Continent!

SENTINEL: [distant] Children two.

PLECK: Wow. You just communicated with that guy! I had no idea what he was saying.

GAVIN: [whispering] I don't know what I said either.

PLECK: Man. Gavin, see, this is what I'm talking about. I think you really navigated that well!

GAVIN: [contemplative] You fake it 'til you make it.

PLECK: Yeah! Yeah. Good, good.

REPRESENTATIVE 1: Hi, did you guys just pass the sentry there?

PLECK: Yeah. We were-- it took us a second.

REPRESENTATIVE 1: Only speaks seven words?

PLECK: Yeah, yeah.

REPRESENTATIVE 1: Lot about children and continents?

PLECK: [laughing] Yeah. Is it always the same?

REPRESENTATIVE 1: It's always the same.

PLECK: You know, I gotta say-- I don't know how often this happens, but we really thought he was talking about the two of us specifically. [the representative laughs]

GAVIN: For a second, it was really bracing.

REPRESENTATIVE 1: Great. You guys make a great team. Are you both emissaries, or--?

PLECK: Uh, well, I'm Emissary Pleck Decksetter. This is Gavin Boo-boo. He's, uh, emissary-in-training, I guess you might say. Maybe someday.

REPRESENTATIVE 1: Well, young Tellurian, you seemed less like an emissary-in-training and more like a real emissary today.

GAVIN: Wow.

REPRESENTATIVE 1: Just put the crystal right there. That'll power the rest of the continent for the next few cycles.

PLECK: Really!

GAVIN: Wow. Let me unzip my fanny pack. [zipping noises, clinking noises] There you go.

REPRESENTATIVE 1: Great. Very practical. Very cool. [whirring noises]

GAVIN: Thanks!

PLECK: Alright!

GAVIN: [a bit awestruck] I'm getting a lot of validation from adults.

PLECK: Yeah! Yeah, well, is there anybody we need to fight, or any kind of--

REPRESENTATIVE 1: Well, you got past the sentry. Did you learn a lesson?

PLECK: [uncertain] Kind of?

GAVIN: I think I learned that you shouldn't be scared of what people say to you because you just are you inside, no matter what.

PLECK: [sighs] Man, you got all of that?

GAVIN: Yeah!

REPRESENTATIVE 1: Did you not get a lesson at all?

PLECK: No, I was just sort of--

GAVIN: Pleck, you didn't get anything out of that?

PLECK: No, I really didn't get anything--

REPRESENTATIVE 1: The young one really seemed to come into his own on this mission.

PLECK: [resigned raspberry noise] Man. Yeah. I guess so.

REPRESENTATIVE 1: And you got nothing.

PLECK: No, yeah, nothing. I don't know.

REPRESENTATIVE 1: Well, you seem like a jucking idiot to me.

PLECK: Well, that seems rude.

REPRESENTATIVE 1: Hey, kid?

GAVIN: Yeah?

REPRESENTATIVE: You got a future.

GAVIN: Thanks.

PLECK: Huh. I don't know if I like this very much.

REPRESENTATIVE 1: Well, I mean, it's what's happening, so.

[laughter; transition to C-53 and AR-33 walking]

[AR-33 sighs]

C-53: Alpine, are you dissatisfied with this mission in some way?

AR-33: Yeah. I just thought this would be, I dunno, more exciting. I just feel like I could be doing any of this at home, like, in my brain.

C-53: Well, you can't deliver a crystal in your brain.

AR-33: You sound like a white noise machine. [forcefully] I hate you!

C-53: AR-33, I'm getting a lot of aggression, alright?

AR-33: Oh yeah? Well, I'm *giving* a lot of aggression, *dad*.

C-53: Well, that's why I'm getting it. And I'm not your father.

[beat]

AR-33: Yeah, we'll see.

C-53: [bewildered] We'll... see if I'm your father?

AR-33: I'm gonna *make* you my father.

C-53: I mean, that would be a surprise for me--

AR-33: By the end of this year, you're gonna be my *dad*, dad.

C-53: [pause] Alpine, if that's what you really want, we could--

AR-33: [tearfully] I don't know what I want!

C-53: Okay, that-- now *that* sounds right.

AR-33: I mean, I guess if I'm being honest with myself, I want you to listen to my poetry.

C-53: [earnestly] Alpine, I would love to listen to your poetry.

AR-33: [deep exhale] Okay. [clears throat] She brews a proper cup of coffee in a copper coffee pot. Okay. [exhale] Metal--

C-53: Was that-- oh. I'm sorry.

AR-33: What the juck?

C-53: Just sounded like--

AR-33: [indignant] Are you gonna listen?

C-53: What you were doing sounded like a poem, and I was about to praise--

AR-33: No, it's a vocal warmup.

C-53: Okay.

AR-33: [exhale] Okay. Here we go.

C-53: I'm ready.

AR-33: Red leather, yellow leather. Red leather, yellow leather. Metal--

C-53: Now that one was-- oh, I'm sorry.

AR-33: [annoyed] Come on! [clears throat]

C-53: It's hard to know where the poetry begins--

AR-33: [enunciating angrily] Metal.

C-53: Okay.

AR-33: Metal. Clang. This--

REPRESENTATIVE 2: Welcome to planet-continent number two!

[AR-33 and C-53 sigh]

AR-33: I was in the middle of poetry!

C-53: Yeah. We were sort of having a moment, so if you could excuse us for just a moment--

AR-33: Me and my daddy were having a moment.

REPRESENTATIVE 2: Okay, uh-- I'll just-- I'll be here.

AR-33: Dad, did you ever write poetry?

C-53: Me?

AR-33: Yeah. My daddy tells sexy limericks.

C-53: [laughing] I mean, I can try. I haven't used that subroutine in many years, so--

AR-33: Alright, I'm ready.

C-53: Might be a little-- okay. [deep breath]

AR-33: Oh, warm up!

C-53: Yeah, no, um-- toy boy, toy boy, toy boy, toy boy--

AR-33: [laughing] Toy boy?

ALIEN: Elamo, did you get the crystal yet? Everyone below is about to die!

REPRESENTATIVE 2: [passive-aggressive] Nope! I want to go, and I'm just standing here with my arms open.

C-53: Maybe we should--

REPRESENTATIVE 2: Yep! My whole continent is moments from death! We've been waiting for our crystal. Thank you.

C-53: Okay. Alright. Well, Alpine, do you have the crystal?

AR-33: Dad, do you have nightmares? I have nightmares.

C-53: I would say--

AR-33: Are droids supposed to have nightmares?

C-53: [uncertain] I think... no.

AR-33: I'm sorry.

C-53: [gently] That's okay. That's alright, Alpine. Here, c'mere.

AR-33: What was mom like?

[beat]

C-53: Alpine, I know we're getting pretty deep into this fiction that I'm your father, but I don't think I'm actually-- I mean, I assume you, like me, rolled off an assembly line. I'm from the Ronka Cybernetics Corporation, I--

AR-33: I'm from the Ronka Cybernetic [trails off].

REPRESENTATIVE 2: And I'm from planet-continent number two!

C-53: Oh, yeah, um--

AR-33: Oh, right.

C-53: Alpine, do you have that crystal?

AR-33: Yeah. Here. It's in my second mouth. [whirring noises]

C-53: Okay. [clinking noises] Will this do? Is this what you're--

REPRESENTATIVE 2: [rushed] Yeah. Thank you.

C-53: Okay. Sorry.

REPRESENTATIVE 2: No, it's fine. It's just, you came right up to me, and you were just four inches away from me, having a conversation.

C-53: Have you ever dealt with an at-risk teen?

REPRESENTATIVE 2: Yes. Yeah, we just ship them off.

C-53: Oh. See, that's very different than what we do.

[transition to Nermut, Dar, and Vulm walking]

NERMUT: [uncertain] So, Veteran Missions Operations Manager Vulm--

VULM: Sunblighter.

NERMUT: I'm so sorry.

VULM: It's alright.

NERMUT: I'm just nervous because I-- I honestly-- I don't meet a lot of Veteran Missions Operations Managers, and I just want to climb up on this rock to shake your hand.

VULM: Oh! Well, it would be my pleasure to shake your hand.

NERMUT: Wow.

VULM: Nermut, was it?

NERMUT: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm a Missions Operations Manager.

VULM: Nermut, what do you say for the rest of this mission, you ride on my shoulder?

NERMUT: [deeply moved] Oh my gosh. Honestly, I was gonna ask, and I thought, “He’ll never say yes.”

VULM: Oh, no, please, jump aboard.

NERMUT: Wow.

VULM: Before you came over just now, I was telling Dar about my days in the Monarchy, and the sort of truly depraved orgies we would have back then.

NERMUT: Oh.

DAR: [mildly annoyed] I really felt we were getting *close* to something until you joined us, Nermut.

NERMUT: [sighs] So, crystal?

VULM: Yes, it’s only about 40 clicks from here. We should be there in no time. But Dar, you have never engaged in an orgy before?

DAR: Um, I’ve never indulged in such a small, intimate orgy as you have.

VULM: [small chuckle] There’s something about a double-digit orgy that is just so intimate and life-affirming that I can’t really describe it, other than to say that I don’t care who lives under the thumb of such an oppressive ruler. All I know is my needs are being met in every possible way I could imagine, and some I couldn’t even conceive before!

[All laugh; Nermut’s laugh is very forced]

NERMUT: [uncomfortable] Those clicks aren’t gonna click themselves, right, guys? We should-- [Dar and Vulm make disappointed noises] we’re not-- we’re just standing here.

VULM: [unenthusiastic] Yes, Nermut, let us go forth.

DAR: Sure, sure, sure.

[intermission music]

REPRESENTATIVE 3: [overly cheery] Hey, guys!

REPRESENTATIVE 4: [also cheery] Hi! Welcome to continent number three!



REPRESENTATIVE 3: Oh, man. Great to see you guys. We're just a couple of-- we're just a couple.

REPRESENTATIVE 4: We're just a couple!

REPRESENTATIVE 3: We're a couple, and we're just--

REPRESENTATIVE 4: We are in love. [chuckles]

REPRESENTATIVE 3: In love and into it, and just making it work, and trying to power this continent!

NERMUT: That's crazy, because we're sort of a couple, and then this is--

REPRESENTATIVE 4: You are? You're a couple?

REPRESENTATIVE 3: Well, there are three of you, so that's by definition, not a couple.

DAR: Exactly. [pointedly] None of us three are a couple.

[Nermut sighs]

VULM: Yes, that is correct. We are an envoy of the Rebellion, and it's our pleasure to give you this crystal [clinking noises] today.

REPRESENTATIVE 3: Incredible.

REPRESENTATIVE 4: [sing-song] Thank you!

VULM: Do you have anything to give *us*?

REPRESENTATIVE 4: Just some advice about love!

NERMUT: Oh!

REPRESENTATIVE 3: We do have a little bit of advice.

NERMUT: Great!

REPRESENTATIVE 3: Just a little.

DAR: Maybe Nermut could stay here and hear that advice. I--

NERMUT: Okay, yeah.

DAR: I would really like to just, you know, pick your brain [Vulm goes 'ooh!'] just over here, privately.

VULM: Oh, behind the big rock?

DAR: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

NERMUT: [sincerely] Dar, I'm gonna take great notes about all of this love advice, [the representatives chuckle happily] because I know we're having a moment right now where there's some tension, but I'm just gonna take it all in and it's gonna work for us--

DAR: Take great notes!

NERMUT: Okay!

VULM: Let me take you off my shoulder here, and set you down--

NERMUT: Oh, okay. Yep.

REPRESENTATIVE 3: Great. So they're going behind the ass-eating rock. [Dar laughs] And while they do that, we'll just give you a few [laughing] quick--

REPRESENTATIVE 4: Crazy!

REPRESENTATIVE 3: Pointers about how just-- gosh, how to make it work.

REPRESENTATIVE 4: You can!

REPRESENTATIVE 3: We're very big influencers here on the continent, and one lesson I think we know is just: listen.

REPRESENTATIVE 4: Just listen.

REPRESENTATIVE 3: Just listen.

NERMUT: Okay. Is the ass-eating rock what it sounds like?

[transition to Bargie's interior]

BEANO: [sound of Beano's feet slapping on the floor as he enters the scene] Beano wanna hear story of Beano.

BAGIE: I'll tell you the story of Bargie. [Beano makes a disappointed noise] It all started when I was 14 years old. And an agent found me in the middle of space, and he said, "Bargie, I'm calling you Bargarean Jade, and you're gonna become the most famous ship in all the land." And I said, "Who are you? You're a creepy person." But I went with him into a dark, other, second location. And you know what he said to me?

BEANO: Beano know.

BARGIE: He said, "Sign this contract." And I couldn't read, so I was like, "I'll go for it," [Beano starts to groan miserably] even though every instinct inside my body said, "Don't trust a man who just picked you out of this bar in space." Yes, I was in a bar when I was underage, but I had nobody telling me what to do. You know what I mean? I was an independent ship since day one. So I went to him, to another location, and I met some old men. You know what they said?

BEANO: Beano know.

BARGIE: They said, "Bargie, we're gonna put you in the movies," and they did. And I went all the way to the top! And then you know what they said?

BEANO: [unenthused] Beano know.

BARGIE: They said, "You're too old." So that's where we are now.

BEANO: [quietly] Beano hungry.

[transition to Pleck and Gavin]

PLECK: Y'know, Gavin, I know you're feeling pretty good about this mission. Nice job! But--

GAVIN: Yeah!

PLECK: Gotta say, I feel a little bit distressed.

GAVIN: What's wrong, Pleck? [Pleck makes uncertain noises] Can I help?

PLECK: I appreciate that, but I just feel like I... I kinda took what that sentry said to heart. And even though I know it was just an automaton that only knows seven words, I-- [sigh] I really started to think, you know, what makes me an adult and not a child? I don't know.

GAVIN: Well, you know what, Pleck? I feel like I've done a lot of growing up in the last 15 minutes.

PLECK: Yeah, you-- I think you're *taller* than you were before.

GAVIN: Yeah. And you know what? [beard-scratching noises] I think I have a goatee now!

PLECK: How is that possible?

GAVIN: You know what, Pleck? If I've learned anything, it's that if you see yourself as a boy, you're always gonna be a boy. It's like you're giving yourself permission not to be an adult!

PLECK: Yeah. I think you're right. Thank you.

GAVIN: Yeah. Here, hold my top hat.

PLECK: Okay. Uh--

GAVIN: Here, take my fanny pack.

PLECK: Okay. Yeah. Sure. I'm just gonna-- just so I can hold your fanny pack, I'm gonna put this top hat on so I have a free hand to hold your fanny pack.

GAVIN: Oh, sure. Yeah. Here's my eyepatch.

PLECK: Oh, okay. Uh, you know what, actually-- to hold the eyepatch, I'm gonna put this fanny pack on.

GAVIN: Here's my other fanny pack.

PLECK: Oh, okay. I'll put on the eyepatch to-- just outta hands, so I gotta put--

SENTINEL: [distant] Continent one.

GAVIN: Is this--

PLECK: Okay, alright.

SENTINEL: Child. [Pleck laughs] Child.

PLECK: Okay, he's pointing right at me when he said that.

SENTINEL: Child.

PLECK: That's--

SENTINEL: Child.

PLECK: I feel like I've taken a step *backwards*, Gavin, I gotta say.

GAVIN: Look, it's alright, Pleck. It's like a horoscope. You can look into it and *think* that it's talking about you.

PLECK: Yeah, you're right. You're right.

SENTINEL: Pleck Decksetter. Child.

PLECK: [laughing] Now, see, that doesn't seem right.

[transition to C-53 and AR-33]

C-53: Alpine, I was very affected by your poem.

AR-33: Yeah?

C-53: Yeah. The part where you said, "metal clang".

AR-33: You were really listening!

C-53: I mean--

AR-33: [happily] You were listening to me!

C-53: That's true. Metal does clang.

AR-33: I feel heard.

C-53: Mm. I'm glad to hear it.

AR-33: I'm glad it happened. And I know you're not my real dad. Like, I know that. But it just feels good to say those words sometimes and to have a presence that, you know, is accepting.

C-53: I understand. If--

AR-33: I don't *want* to be like this.

C-53: No?

AR-33: I feel like I got bees inside me.

[beat]

C-53: *Do* you have bees inside you? Is that--

AR-33: [glumly] Yeah. I found a hive and put it inside one of my mouths.

C-53: Mm. I know that's a cool thing with young droids these days, but maybe it's time to let that hive go.

AR-33: Yeah. I'll let it go.

C-53: Okay.

[whirring noise, bees buzzing]

AR-33: Bye, bees.

C-53: Goodbye, bees.

BEES: [myriad 'bye's and 'bye, bee's]

C-53: Oh.

AR-33: Why are *they* saying 'bye, bees'?

C-53: I don't know.

AR-33: [laughing] Why are the bees saying 'bye, bees'?

C-53: Bye to themselves?

BEES: [continuing to say goodbye to each other]

C-53: Yeah, I think-- oh, did one say 'happy summer' just now?

AR-33: Oh, that's nice.

BEE: Never forget camp!

AR-33: That was beautiful. I won't forget camp!

C-53: No. No one should forget camp.

AR-33: I feel weird that I'm so emotional all the time, and you-- it feels like you got it figured out.

C-53: I know it might seem that way, Alpine, but to be honest, I'm just as emotional as you.

AR-33: Yeah?

C-53: I just maybe have a little more experience dealing with those emotions.

AR-33: So you're saying I should temper and hide my emotions? Let them build up inside me like a hive of bees that's not there? [buzzing returns] A metaphorical hive of bees?

BEES: [more miscellaneous chatter]

AR-33: Oh, get out of there.

C-53: Yeah, get out. Get out of here, you metaphor.

BEE: I'm not a metaphor!

C-53: Well, Alpine, um-- some droids are fitted with a restraining bolt. And then their emotions--

AR-33: You can't leave the house?

C-53: [small laugh] They can leave the house, but they can never express their emotions. The bolt prevents them from feeling anything.

AR-33: Whoa. [pause] Can I get one of those? How much?

C-53: Now, Alpine, I know it sounds cool to have no emotions--

AR-33: I'll eat your ass, give it to me. How much?

C-53: Okay, Alpine, that's-- I don't-- I don't have one to give you. But I'm here to tell you that a restraining bolt is *not* a good idea. It's very uncomfortable to live a life where you can't express what you actually feel.

REPRESENTATIVE 2: Hey, can you guys move? [AR-33 and C-53 apologize awkwardly] I have to leave for lunch, and I just can't move because you're [AR-33 and C-53 continue to apologize]--

AR-33: Sorry, we handed you the crystal and locked arms and formed a circle around you-- I feel so bad about that.

REPRESENTATIVE 2: [cheery] Yeah!

C-53: And then we released a cloud of bees at you. That was [crosstalk]--

REPRESENTATIVE 2: [crosstalk] I'm just doing a very low-paying job--

AR-33: But they were very affable bees!

REPRESENTATIVE 2: They were very nice, but they still stung!

[transition to Nermut and the representatives]

REPRESENTATIVE 3: One of the big things is just, you know, have fun.

REPRESENTATIVE 4: Have fun!

NERMUT: [typing] Okay.

REPRESENTATIVE 3: Just have so much fun.

REPRESENTATIVE 4: Yeah! Second, just be honest, you know? Say whatever you want to say, and just say it! Because life is too short.

REPRESENTATIVE 3: Have fun.

REPRESENTATIVE 4: Have fun and say it.

REPRESENTATIVE 3: Did we say be honest?

REPRESENTATIVE 4: Be honest!

NERMUT: Got that one, got it.

REPRESENTATIVE 4: But the thing you need to do is have fun.

NERMUT: That was the first one.

REPRESENTATIVE 3: Part of it is just having fun with one another.

REPRESENTATIVE 4: It's really about having fun.

REPRESENTATIVE 3: Being honest.

NERMUT: Being honest, got that one.

DAR: [distantly] Hachi machi!

[note-deleted noise; Nermut makes an unhappy sound]



REPRESENTATIVE 3: What?

NERMUT: I just-- I didn't hit save, but luckily it was really a small amount of advice.

DAR: [returning to the group] Okay, so we're done talking, so...

VULM: Yes. We are all set.

DAR: Are we good to go?

REPRESENTATIVE 3: We've got the crystal!

REPRESENTATIVE 4: And we're having fun!

REPRESENTATIVE 3: Just being honest.

DAR: Great. Wonderful.

[mechanical noises as the crystal is used]

NERMUT: Well, it's the same number of clicks back to the ship.

DAR: Okay.

VULM: Let us be on our way.

DAR: Let us be on our way!

VULM: Dar, I just wanted to say that I had the most magnificent time with you.

NERMUT: [makes annoyed nonsense noises]

VULM: I'm sorry?

NERMUT: [annoyed] No, it's just you guys had so much fun *talking*.

VULM: Nermut, I truly value honesty, so I'm afraid I must tell you that Dar and I behind that rock, we did many despicable, unspeakable acts to one another. The likes of which I haven't felt in 10 or 15 years. Oh, how I wish I could go back to those days. And now I have, just a little bit, by sharing this moment of pure depravity with Dar.

NERMUT: Well, I honestly am not having fun.

VULM: I'm very sorry to hear that. You should have come behind the rock! [half-whispered, urgent] Forget what that couple said! The lesson is: always come behind the rock! [beat] I did.

NERMUT: Got it.

VULM: [whispering] I did. I came behind the rock.

[loud ship noises]

BARGIE: And I'm coming in the sky, so come on, who's coming up?

[intermission music]

PLECK: Well, guys, you know, I feel like we all learned a lot of lessons today, and-- you know, sometimes in the opposite direction than we thought!

BEANO: [running over] Beano wanna hear the lessons!

PLECK: Oh, okay. Great. Cool. First of all, I learned that, um-- you know, growing up is not as simple as getting older. Gavin learned the same thing, but in a positive way. And C-53, what did you and AR-33 learn?

C-53: Well, I think we learned a lot about sharing emotions, and how repressing them can be bad.

PLECK: Yeah. Hey, AR-33, can I ask you a question? Where--

AR-33: Yeah, and thank you for calling me AR-33. That's my given name.

PLECK: [surprised] Oh, yeah! Uh, cool! Great!

AR-33: What was your question?

PLECK: [stammering]

AR-33: You didn't have a question, did you? That's okay!

PLECK: [laughing] I was trying to--

AR-33: We're both adults, and we can admit that sometimes we think we have something to say and we just try and be interesting, but we fail.

PLECK: That happens to me all the time.

AR-33: As an adult, I recognize that and I respect that. Just because my dad could kill your dad doesn't mean that--

PLECK: [bewildered] Wait, who?

AR-33: We're both not suppressing emotions at all times.

C-53: [half-muttered, aside] Emissary Decksetter, AR-33 sort of thinks of me as his dad now, so.

PLECK: Oh. Wait, why? I don't get it.

DAR: Aw!

GAVIN: Pleck, if it helps, you could call me dad.

PLECK: [pause] Uh... Yeah, I mean, I do feel like I kind of look up to you. That was a-- I mean, you really killed that mission, Gavin.

GAVIN: Oh! Well, thank you. You know what? You helped a lot, champ.

PLECK: Thanks.

VULM: Emissary, *what* are you wearing?

PLECK: [laughing] Oh, uh--

VULM: These are several of the warning signs that I mentioned before!

C-53: Hm. Yeah.

PLECK: I just-- I feel--

C-53: Eyepatch. Fanny pack.

PLECK: I gotta say, that mission--

C-53: *Multiple* fanny packs.

PLECK: That mission made me a little bit angsty! I feel like I-- you know, I kind of doubted myself, I didn't feel very good about it. And then this eyepatch really kind of, you know, it really reflects who I am now. Also, it's covering up the eye that the K'hekk laid an egg in.

C-53: It's actually not covering up that eye. It's--

PLECK: Yeah, it's just kind of sitting on it.

C-53: Really unfortunate.

PLECK: Sitting on top of it.

VULM: Emissary, since you are not a teen, I cannot force you into the scared-straight program, but I can offer you to join voluntarily. Or I can join you in your quarters and have a... private talk.

[laughter]

DAR: Yeah, Pleck, if I could give you a bit of advice? Say yes.

PLECK: Alright. Uh, okay--

BARGIE: Alright, everyone be quiet, I figured it out. I got the rest of the speech. [clears throat] Alright, you ready to get scared straight?

AR-33: [laughing] Uh-huh.

PLECK: I think I am, yeah.

BARGIE: [reciting uncertainly] Hey. You might think this place is bad, but look outside. It's worse. Why don't you go down, and there's a discount on-- oh, it was a commercial. Oh, it was a commercial for oil. [everyone goes 'oh']

PLECK: It wasn't a scared-straight video?

BARGIE: It was, but it was--

DAR: Scared straight to the store to go shopping.

BARGIE: Yeah.

AR-33: But it still speaks volumes.

VULM: Still very effective. [communicator ping noise] Oh, I'm getting a message. Uh, I'm sorry, we have to leave now, we have a new mission. We've been tasked with getting a group of bees back together who spent one wonderful summer together [laughter].

[finale music starts, is interrupted]

VULM: Well, I hope you boys learned a lesson today.

GAVIN: I did!

AR-33: You hope us *men* learned a lesson.

VULM: Well, you're still a few months away from that, AR-33. [AR-33 sighs] I want you to come with me. [whispering] We have more missions to accomplish to bring back the Monarchy.

GAVIN: And now that I'm an adult man, I'm more effective than ever.

VULM: Excellent.

AR-33: And now that I made the other droid onboard think he was my dad--

VULM: Yes. I'm so proud of you, my two natural-born sons.

[finale music resumes, credits roll]

---

VULM: I'm sorry, we all have to leave now. We have a new mission. We've been tasked with getting a group of bees back together who spent one wonderful summer together.

[laughter]

GAVIN: And I just got two brain-jexts back from the girl that I sent my finger-jexts to!

PLECK: Hey, congratulations!

AR-33: And I actually don't have to be anywhere, so I'll stay on the ship, and I'll definitely be on the next episode.

PLECK: [laughing] AR-33, I'm so glad you're a member of the crew now.

AR-33: It's canon! [all laugh] You may not always hear me, but I'm always here.

DAR: We love it!