

[orchestral main theme music begins]

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 Mission to Zyxx.

[theme music comes to a climax, then ends]

PLECK: Hey, C-53.

C-53: Yes.

PLECK: How's the—how's the new bod?

C-53: Um... I'll be perfectly honest, it's taken some getting used to.

PLECK: Yeah. It's take—I mean, it's taken ME some getting used to.

C-53: Even though my skin is gray?

PLECK: Yeah, no, that's the weirdest part.

C-53: Hm.

PLECK: Does it give you any special abilities, or does it just look weird?

C-53: I mean, I can feel sensations more?

PLECK: Oh. It actually has, like, nerve endings and stuff in it?

C-53: Yeah. Like, here, I'm gonna touch your forearm.

PLECK: Ah—ooh. Wo—wow. Clammy.

C-53: Yeah. Uh, here, do it to me?

PLECK: Like this?

[Pleck rubs C-53's arm]

C-53: Yup. I can feel them.

PLECK: Oh.

C-53: I can feel your individual digits.

PLECK: Congratulations.

[C-53's pelvis music starts playing]

C-53: Oh, also there's this.

PLECK: Oh. Does that—that happens every time someone touches you.

C-53: Yeah...

[the door opens]

DAR: Did I hear music in here?

PLECK: Ah, that's...

DAR: Are you two...

PLECK/C-53: No, it's C-5—no./No no no.

DAR: Are you two doing something?

PLECK/C-53: No./No.

DAR: Come on.

BARGIE: Wait, what's happening? C-53 and uh... the pink one are—they're doin' it?

PLECK: No, no no no no no.

C-53: [crosstalk] No, Bargie, no.

DAR: Yeah. Didn't you hear his pelvis playing?

[music continues, voice begins repeating "let's party!"]

BARGIE: I know you all have feelings for each other. I feel it—I know the tension. But you all have to stop.

C-53: If someone could just hit the switch in the back of my...

PLECK: Yeah, sorry, sorry.

[beep sound, music shuts off]

BARGIE: This is a professional place of business.

DAR: Barge, you know—

BARGIE: Keep it professional.

DAR: —I wouldn't juck anybody on this ship.

BARGIE: Good.

PLECK: So wait, hold on a second. Dar—I mean, I don't wanna get too personal right now, but... when Nermut was on the ship, you guys never...

[brief silence]

DAR: I said, at present, I would not juck anyone on this ship.

C-53: Hm. Interesting.

PLECK: Wow. [pause] Hey, Bargie, I've heard you talk a little bit about shipping. Does that—is that when two ships juck, or was that when two people juck on a ship?

BARGIE: It's when you hope two people on a holo get together, is you ship them.

PLECK: Oh, okay.

BARGIE: In a relationship.

PLECK: Oh, yeah. No, that makes—

BARGIE: No, we just call it—we just call it jucking on a ship.

PLECK: Okay. Alright, fair enough, fair enough.

C-53: Uh, Bargie, what do you call it when two people in a holo, who you ship, juck?

DAR: Hm!

BARGIE: It's called too far. You should keep it unresolved. Tension.

[sound of the crew agreeing]

PLECK: Oh, sure, okay. Too far.

C-53: Oh, the tension is part of the fun.

BARGIE: Don't make it go too f—we don't wanna see them really get together. It's all about the storyline. Once that gets resolved, it's not interesting anymore.

PLECK: When would you say that, like, the main character, or like, one of the main chara—like the one who's looking for love, on like, a great show, when would you say that that character should find love?

DAR: When he's had no prospects?

PLECK: Yeah. The whole t—like say, for the first, like, season and a third, no prospects.

BARGIE: Usually—um, usually they die.

PLECK: Sorry?

BARGIE: Usually they just die alone.

PLECK/C-53: They die./Oh, wow.

DAR: Alone.

PLECK: Disappointing.

DAR: Mm-hmm.

PLECK: Huh.

[brief silence]

[incoming transmission sound]

C-53: Emissary Decksetter, I have an incoming transmission from Missions Operations Manager—

DAR: [interrupting] Don't answer it! Don't answer it.

PLECK: Wait, why not?

DAR: I've been avoiding his calls, so it'll be really awkward if you take it now, and I'm standing right here, clearly not busy.

C-53: Well, when's the last time Nermut called you?

DAR: Hmm, maybe... 44:32 on... Friday?

PLECK: That's very specific, Dar.

[incoming transmission sounds continue]

C-53: Emissary Decksetter, I still have an incoming transmission.

PLECK: Oh, yeah, sure, you know what? Let's pick it up, pick it up, yeah.

C-53: Alright.

[Dar growls in frustration]

[transmission start sound]

PLECK: Hey, Nermut.

NERMUT: [slightly out of breath, treadmill sound in background] Hey guys! Hey, guys. Uh... yeah.

PLECK: Wait, are you walking right now, Nermut?

NERMUT: Yeah, I mean, you guys really should do this. A lot of research shows that you really shouldn't sit too much, um... yeah, here at the Rebellion, they just like—they have good ergonomists, and—

C-53: Um, Nermut, our job doesn't involve being at a desk.

NERMUT: Oh, that's a good point, yeah.

PLECK: I mean, honestly, Dar and I spend quite a bit of time running from hostiles.

NERMUT: [hesitantly] Oh, hi... hi, Dar.

DAR: [carefully] Hi, Nermut.

NERMUT: Hi.

DAR: Hi.

NERMUT: So, yeah. Just, um... Uhhh... [Nermut sighs]

PLECK: Everything all right?

NERMUT: Yeah yeah yeah, everything's fine, no, I just—

PLECK: Are you able to concentrate on your job when you're walking on a treadmill?
That seems—

NERMUT: Yes, absolutely. And y'know, y—they have this beanbag chair for me over here, and we have, like, unlimited drinks. It's just like a really—

[Nermut begins pouring a drink]

PLECK: It's a real hip office.

NERMUT: —very good work culture here, so. [proudly] Anyway, we have, uhhh, a pretty big mission. Lemme just spin my camera around to this wall, do you see that blinking light?

PLECK/C-53: Uh, yep, yep./Yes.

NERMUT: Great. That's a distress signal.

PLECK: You seem really happy about that distress signal.

NERMUT: Well, we get to answer it.

PLECK: OK. Yeah, sure. Great.

NERMUT: [crosstalk] You know what I mean?

C-53: Okay. How long has it been blinking?

NERMUT: Let's see, uh, I'm—I'm 22 minutes into my 30 minutes of treadmill, um, uh...

PLECK: Nermut, are you prioritizing your exercise over this distress call that's come in?

NERMUT: If you don't have your health, what DO you have?

PLECK: I mean—

C-53: What if they're running out of oxygen?

PLECK: Yeah! Ask the—ask whoever sent that distress call.

NERMUT: I can't. That's part of the distress signals, we're not getting any communication.

PLECK: Nermut, I feel like—did you change your hair? I don't think I've ever seen you slick your feathers back like that.

NERMUT: Oh, this? Um, I guess so, yeah.

PLECK: I don't I—I gotta say, I don't like it.

NERMUT: Really?

C-53: Yeah, and I don't—I don't like those black frame glasses that you're wearing either.

NERMUT: What? They're—

DAR: Yeah, I have to agree with everybody. I—this new look is really bad, Nermut.

NERMUT: Oh... thanks for telling me, Da—

MEL: Hey Nerm?

NERMUT: Hm?

DAR: What?

MEL: Hey Nerm?

NERMUT: [sound of treadmill powering off] Hey, Mel.

MEL: [indistinct, slurring words] Hi, we're gonna get a drink, orange beer after work, d'you wanna come?

NERMUT: Totally. Thanks for inviting me, yeah. You wanna do it—

DAR: [angrily, chest talons spiking] Disconnect the call!

NERMUT: [still talking to Mel] —um, like 04?

C-53: Disconnecting.

PLECK: Oh no!

[end transmission sound]

PLECK: Dar, is everything okay?

DAR: No, it's fine. [Dar inhales] I'm just going to—

PLECK: You just got really... you—all of your talons stuck out when you said that.

DAR: I'm going to walk out of the room. [Dar begins walking away] If he calls back, I am no longer on the ship.

[door closes]

PLECK: Oh, wow. C-53—

C-53: Alright, I'll have to come up with a rather involved cover story for that to be true.

PLECK: C-53, I think—I think Dar's a little jealous of Mel.

C-53: I think you're probably not wrong, Emissary Decksetter.

[door opens]

DAR: [sound of talons spiking] You're wrong!

PLECK: [laughs] Wow.

[incoming transmission sound]

C-53: I have an incoming transmission from Missions Operations Manager Nermut Bundaloy.

MEL: [laughs] You're so funny.

NERMUT: [laughs awkwardly] You're funny. So I could—I totally got it on my calendar, I'll see you there.

MEL: [slurred] Okaybye.

NERMUT: Okay!

[Nermut's door shuts]

PLECK: Hey, Nermut!

NERMUT: Hey, hey! [Nermut runs back over to the comms] What were we talking about, my, um—

C-53: The distress call?

NERMUT: Oh no, these gla—

C-53: It's probably been a good 25 minutes?

NERMUT: Well, no, I was just—wanted to say that, like, pretty much all the glasses you can choose from here are frames like this, and it's what almost everyone's wearing. I thought it looked okay.

C-53: Are you visually—

PLECK: Do you even—do you even wear glasses?

C-53: Yeah, are you visually impaired at all, Nermut?

NERMUT: I mean—"do I wear glasses," I'm wearing glasses.

PLECK: No, do you HAVE to wear glasses.

NERMUT: Nobody—what do you mean "have to," there's not rules—

PLECK: No—[laughing] plenty of people have to wear glasses!

C-53: [crosstalk] Well, there are people who need to wear glasses, and then there are people who have...

NERMUT: What? No, I have perfect vision.

PLECK: Also, Nermut, your eyes are sort of on the sides of your head, like—the glasses cover up sort of the middle part of your head—

C-53: They stop before they reach your eyes.

NERMUT: Well, yes, that would be a problem if I needed glasses.

PLECK: [laughing] I—yeah, that—okay, good point, fair enough.

C-53: [crosstalk] Fair point, yeah.

NERMUT: Alright, the three of y—Dar's...

PLECK: What?

C-53: Dar had to leave the ship...

NERMUT: Hm.

C-53: To...

NERMUT: Maybe she's leaving to charge her phone. [Nermut sighs]

PLECK: What?

C-53: Yes, that's why she's left. She's charging her phone.

[brief silence]

NERMUT: Great. So anyway, guys, there's a distress signal?

PLECK: No, listen, we're on it.

C-53: Yeah, just transmit the coordinates.

PLECK: Just send the coordinates, Nermut, that's all you need to do.

[Nermut's door opens again]

MEL: [slurred, near incomprehensible] Nermie, get in this photo with me, I'm gonna put it on my Hologram.

NERMUT: I can't understand you, but that sounds awesome.

PLECK: Is she speaking—

MEL: Nerm—

PLECK: Is she speaking Regular?

NERMUT: Yeah, but it's like—she's got—she's so cool that her accent is, like, basically unintelligible.

MEL: Nermie, [incomprehensible]. Hashtag forever! [oddly drawn-out giggle]

[sound of picture being taken]

NERMUT: [Laughs] Mel, I agree, and that's awesome. Do a little high five.

MEL: Yeah.

[Mel and Nermut high five]

PLECK: Oh, wow.

NERMUT: Anyway, the Rebel long haul cruiser Dezel Maschh is sending this distress signal.

C-53: Okay.

NERMUT: That's all we're getting: distress.

PLECK: Listen, Nermut—

NERMUT: Yeah.

PLECK: I—I never thought I would be the one to say this to you, but we gotta go get to work now.

NERMUT: Yeah! Yeah you do! So, guys... you know what? I'm gonna extend this workout ten minutes, 'cause why not.

PLECK: Alright, man.

C-53: O...okay.

PLECK: Talk to you later.

NERMUT: Alright.

[end transmission sound]

C-53: I'm worried about Nermut.

PLECK: I—yeah, I don't like this at all. He's—he's—

[Dar's door opens]

DAR: Don't you hate the new Nermut?

PLECK: I gotta say, he's acting straight up wack right now.

DAR: Yes! Exactly! I'm not jealous of some—I don't know, some creature with marbles in her mouth. I'm—

C-53: Oh, that must've been why it was so strange.

PLECK: Hm.

DAR: I'm... I'm mad that he's... changed.

PLECK: Yeah, I don't know if I like it either. Well, we should probably help whoever sent that distress signal half an hour ago.

C-53: Yes, I've already sent these coordinates to Bargie. Bargie, we need to head over to the Dezel Maschh long haul cruiser.

BARGIE: [crosstalk] Ugh.

DAR: [depressed] I hope whoever we save is a babe.

PLECK

C-53: It's... possible.

[transition music]

AUTOMATED VOICE: You have received an audio transmission from Rebellion headquarters. Playback will follow decryption.

[static noise]

ROLPHUS: [drunk, slurring words] Hello Rebels! This is Commander Rolphus Tiddle, with a few... [enunciating] crit-i-cal announcements. First off, I'm fine. Lotta rumors out there, and ol' Rolphus is straight up okay. Listen, uh, relationships are... a lotta work.

[a glass rolls off the table and smashes on the floor]

ROLPHUS: Okay, okay. More importantly, due to overwhelming demand, I have written a field guide to dealing with C.L.I.N.T.s, which you can find on our official Rebel website, therebellion.space. It's even accompanied by a highly accurate illustration of a couple of stupid C.L.I.N.T.s. So, head over to therebellion.space, the amazing site that we built using Squarespace. Seriously, it's a real site that you can visit. [Rolphus sighs] There's also a brand new post [Rolphus swallows] from our trusted Rebel advice columnist, Hark Tardigast. He's—

[a message alert sounds]

ROLPHUS: W-w-what? W—[more awake] This just in, we've intercepted a new highly encrypted message from the disgusting Federated Alliance! Yeah, we've thrown our best cryptographers on this thing and can't figure out diddly. Maybe you can decrypt it. The message is up at therebellion.space, along with Hark's advice, my guide to neutralizing C.L.I.N.T.s, plus other way cool Rebel stuff. And while you're at it—listen, Rebel—click on “Make a Site” for a free Squarespace trial and 10% off your first purchase when you visit squarespace.com/zyxx, Z-Y-X-X, and use offer code “ZYXX”. That's all at the rebellion.space. [slurring again] Rolphus Tiddle, your totally stable and sober Commander, signing off.

[glass smashes again]

AUTOMATED VOICE: End of message.

[transition music]

PLECK: Wow, that is a big ship. C-53, do you know anything about this ship?

C-53: Well, the Dezel Maschh is, of course, a long haul cruiser—

BARGIE: I know the ship very well. We used to hang out back in the day.

PLECK/C-53: [crosstalk] Oh./Oh, you're familiar with the Dezel Maschh?

BARGIE: Oh yeah, oh yeah. I—I'm surprised to—to see him, you know? He—I thought he—I thought he perished.

PLECK: Well, hey—

BARGIE: He was a hard living ship. You think I go hard, this ship goes hard.

PLECK: Wow, okay. Well, can—

C-53: It does look rather weathered.

PLECK: Bargie, can you like, hail the ship and see if anything's okay?

BARGIE: Okay.

[brief dial tone, comms initiate]

BARGIE: Hey.

DEZEL MASCHH: [groaning, sleepily] Ugh. Hello? What's up, man?

BARGIE: It's me. You remember me?

DEZEL MASCHH: [slow, stoner-esque] Wait... is that the...

BARGIE: That's right.

DEZEL MASCHH: Is that the Bargarean Jade?

BARGIE: [pleased] That's me. You remember me. Wow.

DEZEL MASCHH: Oh man, as I thrust and land, the Bargarean Jade.

BARGIE: Okay.

DEZEL MASCHH: [laughs] Been a while, BJ.

BARGIE: [eager to catch up] I thought you were gone, I thought you—the way you used to live, man. It's crazy. Look at you right now. How are you doing? You look—you look horrible.

[Dezel Maschh sighs]

BARGIE: Where's the left side of your ship?

DEZEL MASCHH: Eh—oh... rodddamn! [laughing] The whole left side's missin', isn't it, man.

BARGIE: Do you still make music? What's—what do you—what's up, what's going on?

DEZEL MASCHH: Oh, yeah, I got together with a couple other ships, and we were... you know how it goes—

[Bargie agrees sympathetically]

PLECK: Hey, I'm so—I'm sorry to break in here, guys. Hey, Dezel Maschh, uh, we got a... distress signal from you, is everything alright?

DEZEL MASCHH: Oh yeah! Yeah, man, yeah, probably from me. Uh, yeah, I'm not really—my—my scanners are fuzzy, and—y'know, as you can see, the left side of my hull is missing...

C-53: Yeah, that seems like something you would take notice of.

PLECK: Seem pretty—seem pretty chill about it.

DEZEL MASCHH: Eh, I mean—come on, man.

[Pleck tries to respond]

DEZEL MASCHH: You know, it's just like, this and that, sometimes you eat the asteroid, sometimes the asteroid eats you.

PLECK: I don't know if either of those things ever happens.

C-53: [crosstalk] Asteroids... don't eat, that doesn't make any sense.

PLECK: Yeah.

BARGIE: [crosstalk] Hmm. Yeah, that's true, that's very true.

DEZEL MASCHH: I've cordoned off the parts that have—you know, that are missing, so you should be able to board and check out what's happening.

PLECK: Oh boy.

C-53: And you have no idea what took the side of your ship?

DEZEL MASCHH: [laughs] I wish I did, gray squishy man, but I do not.

PLECK: C-53, should we just... go?

C-53: I think that's the only way we're gonna get any good information.

DAR: [decisively] We are going on that ship.

DEZEL MASCHH: Yeah, y'know what—

PLECK/C-53: Whoa, Dar./Darn, Dar.

DEZEL MASCHH: I open my hatch to you, fellow travelers.

[Dezel Maschh's hatch begins opening]

C-53: [quietly] This whole guy's vibe just puts me off.

BARGIE: Alright, are you ready for the hatch-to-hatch?

DEZEL MASCHH: Yeah, hatchin' it up.

PLECK: [offput] Oh, man.

DEZEL MASCHH: [very into it] Ohhh, yeah.

PLECK: Y'know, C-53, I've actually never traveled between two ships in space.

C-53: Really?

PLECK: Yeah.

C-53: You've never gone hatch-to-hatch?

PLECK: [laughing] No, I haven't.

C-53: Huh.

PLECK: I guess—I guess I can picture it, but...

C-53: It's pretty simple. Bargie, are we safe to travel through the hatches?

BARGIE: Hold on, let me put this, uh, fabric over my hatch, 'cause I—his is full of—you—I don't trust him. So, just... I need you guys to just... go through this fabric, and take this fabric with you, yeah.

C-53: [crosstalk] It's a nanomesh fabric, yeah.

DEZEL MASCHH: Oh, you're nano-in' on me? Alright. Alright. Are you—

PLECK: So does every ship have—have a compatible ha—okay.

DEZEL MASCHH: Are you in? Or is everything—uh, BJ, is everything—what's up, are you in?

BARGIE: Uh, yeah, you just don't feel anything 'cause you're numb.

DEZEL MASCHH: [laughing] Ohh... okay, okay.

DAR: Alright, let's go, you two! [racking rifle] Hustle hustle hustle! Off the ship, off the ship, let's go, let's go, let's go!

PLECK/C-53: [crosstalk] Okay. Alright. Alright. Yeah./Alright.

[buzzing alarm sound as hatch opens]

C-53: Alright, uh, sort of push through here.

PLECK: Oh.

[crew walks through onto Dezel Maschh]

ALLEN: [extremely friendly, constantly upbeat] Hello, friends! Welcome to the Dezel Maschh!

DAR: [relieved] You're. Not. Terrible. Hello.

ALLEN: Hello! All of you look like my friends!

PLECK: Oh, hi! I—

ALLEN: I'm Allen... Phasehugger, welcome aboard.

PLECK: A-Allen—

C-53: Allen Phasehugger?

ALLEN: Allen Phasehugger, that's my name. All of you guys look like really cool people! Especially you!

PLECK: O-oh—wh—me?

ALLEN: Yeah!

PLECK: [flattered] Thank you!

ALLEN: I mean, I don't even know why you're here, but would you like to just throw the Zi-Ball around, uh, with me later?

PLECK: Oh. Yeah, definitely!

ALLEN: Oh, that sounds like a great time!

PLECK: Well, you know, uh, you know, Zi-Ball grass comes from my planet.

ALLEN: That's amazing!

PLECK: Yep. Yep. That's my planet—Rangus VI!

C-53: [crosstalk] Well—I don't know if that's "amazing"...

ALLEN: I'm a huge Zi-Ball fan!

PLECK: Oh, well, the grass sometimes came from my farm.

C-53: I hate to cut through the pleasantries here, but Allen, your ship's roster says there are over 700 people on board?

ALLEN: Oh yeah, they're all sleeping right now! Shh, everyone be quiet because everyone's sleeping!

PLECK: Oh!

DAR: Oh, great, we'll be very quiet while—uh, C, could you take a couple photos of me and Allen together?

C-53: Uh, sure! I can record now.

DAR: Okay—

ALLEN: Okay! I'm always—

DAR: Okay, Allen, get close.

ALLEN: Sure!

DAR: Okay great, I'm gonna pick you up for this one.

ALLEN: Oh. [laughs] Wow, you're so strong!

DAR: Now I'm going to put you over my head for this one...

ALLEN: Oh my goodness!

DAR: Um... alright, and now just lovingly embrace me.

PLECK: Hey, Dar—

ALLEN: Okay!

PLECK: Okay. Y'know, Dar, listen, I think those pictures are probably good to make Nermut jealous, we can probably get on with the mission.

DAR: I'm sorry, what?

PLECK: What?

DAR: Nermut jealous?

PLECK: I'm just—[stammering] I'm j—I'm not saying that's your goal, I'm just saying, if—
if—

C-53: He assumed you were—

DAR: If I wanted to make Nermut jealous, I would ask that you take a photo... of this!

[Dar and Allen begin making out, Allen sounds like he is choking]

C-53: Oh, wow.

PLECK: Wow.

C-53: I—

DAR: Did you—did you take enough of those?

C-53: I mean, I had to, that's a potential, y'know, SR violation, so.

DAR: Please upload those to Nerlut.

ALLEN: [enthusiastically] Wow, thanks! That was really enjoyable!

PLECK: Eh—wow. That was weird to see. I mean, your mouth is sort of like the size of his head.

DAR: That actually happens a lot with partners.

C-53: Yeah.

ALLEN: Yeah, a bunch of my friends call me Big Mouth, but my name's Allen. You can call me Allen!

PLECK: Hey, Allen. I was actually referring to Dar's mouth, but I—I'm sure that for a Tellurian, your mouth seems...

ALLEN: I have no weird features about me at all!

C-53: That's a... strange statement to make.

ALLEN: My body is perfectly proportional in size.

PLECK: Congratulations.

ALLEN: Thank you!

C-53: Your friends call you Big Mouth?

ALLEN: Yes, my friends call me Big Mouth. My friends that are sleeping on the ship now.

C-53: Yeah, Allen—

PLECK: Yeah, uh, sorry—Allen, can we talk about that? Is everything okay?

ALLEN: Everything's fine!

C-53: Allen, you're missing the side of your ship.

ALLEN: Who's—those are renovations we're—

C-53: The entire port side of the ship is gone.

ALLEN: Those are ren-o-vations we've been making lately. [as if reciting a slogan] Ren-o-vations! Safe for travel, safe for the ship!

PLECK: I mean, I guess that makes sense.

C-53: Okay, well—

PLECK: I gotta say, I don't know how often you communicate with your ship, but like, the Dezel Maschh does not seem to be, like, aware of what's happening.

DEZEL MASCHH: Hey, you guys on the ship now?

PLECK: Oh—hey, yeah, Dezel Maschh.

C-53: [crosstalk] Y-yeah, we came aboard like, five minutes ago.

DEZEL MASCHH: Alright. I guess I better take that hatch out. [dial tone] Bargie, is it cool to take for me to take the hatch out?

BARGIE: Yesss, I—already—I've been—I've been across from you for the past five minutes.

DEZEL MASCHH: Oh, have I not—have I just been havin' my hatch... flappin' in space?

BARGIE: [sighing] Oh boy.

DAR: Flappin' in the lack of breeze.

BARGIE: Wow.

DEZEL MASCHH: Alright, retracting hatch. Sorry guys. Get back to—don't mind ol' Dez.

PLECK: I gotta say, your—your ship's sort of a—like a weirdo.

ALLEN: Yeah, it's a old weird ship. But we have a good time anyway!

C-53: Uh, Allen, perhaps you can answer some questions for us. What do you haul about the Dezel Maschh?

ALLEN: All sorts of raw goods?

C-53: That's a very vague, unspecific answer.

ALLEN: All—a variety of raw goods and materials!

PLECK: Y'know, Allen, I gotta say, I know that we've never met, but you seem very familia—it's something about your voice, or somethi—

ALLEN: I feel like I know you too!

PLECK: Yeah, Allen, I feel like we've met—

C-53: Something about the timbre of your voice. Very familiar.

PLECK: Yeah...

ALLEN: I mean—people say I have one of those faces, one of those voices.

PLECK: Yeah, maybe that's what it is.

C-53: One of those faces or one of those voices?

ALLEN: People say I have one of those faces AND one of those voices.

PLECK: I don't think I've ever said that to somebody. "You have a—you have one of those faces and voices"? I don't know.

C-53: Yeah, that doesn't—that doesn't ever happen.

DAR: Allen, what do you say to another location, and why don't you put this on?

[something unzips and Dar puts a shirt on Allen]

ALLEN: Oh, thank you, a shirt!

DAR: Mm-hmm. Okay, um—

PLECK: Where did—where did you get that other—is that my shirt?

DAR: I'm—I'm improvising here.

PLECK: Okay. Alright.

ALLEN: Hey, we're—we're twins, almost! Ha, couple of good lookin' guys.

PLECK: [pleased, bashful] Aw, stop, come on, Allen.

DAR: Show us another room, Allen!

C-53: Yeah, why don't you show us one of the barracks where all your other crewmates might be sleeping?

ALLEN: Sure! Follow me!

PLECK: So your—your crewmates are slee—why are you the one that's awake?

ALLEN: [in a “you know how it is” voice] It's the night shift.

PLECK: Oh.

ALLEN: [laughs] Drew the short straw.

PLECK: Yeah.

ALLEN: It's just me.

PLECK: That makes sense.

C-53: On a ship of 700 people, only one person works the night shift?

ALLEN: That's right! Everyone's gotta sleep sometime.

C-53: Statistically, that's true, but... [mumbles something to himself]

PLECK: Yeah, a third of the time, probably.

DEZEL MASCHH: Hey, are you guys on the—are you guys on the ship yet, or?

C-53: [frustrated] Dezel, we have been on here for ten minutes.

DEZEL MASCHH: Oh, right.

C-53: And we've had this conversation already.

DEZEL MASCHH: Okay. Hey, Bargie, are you out yet, or are we still...?

BARGIE: I am across from you. We've been talking—

DEZEL MASCHH: Wait, is my hatch still flappin' out there?

BARGIE: [increasingly frustrated] We've been talking about—you forgot exactly what we—what did we just talk about?

DEZEL MASCHH: Alright... what?

[Bargie sighs in exasperation]

DEZEL MASCHH: I'm just...

BARGIE: [muttering] Always with this guy. It's okay...

DEZEL MASCHH: [slurring words] Okay, I'm sorry 'bout that. Don't mind ol' Dez, you guys just get to it.

[the crew continues walking through the ship]

[Dar and C-53 sigh]

PLECK: Your ship is cool, but—oh man.

C-53: Yeah, he's a mess.

DAR: The distress signal makes a little bit of sense now, yeah.

PLECK: [crosstalk] It makes sense, yeah yeah yeah.

[a door opens, the crew walks through]

PLECK: So this is the barracks.

ALLEN: Yep, this is where everyone's sleeping, soundly in their sleeping pods.

C-53: [quietly, out of the corner of his mouth] Ambassador Decksetter, these people are not sleeping.

PLECK: Wait, what? [louder] Uh, sorry, ex—Allen, could you just excuse us for just a—?

ALLEN: Sure!

DAR: Allen, actually, could you join me on one of these sleeping pods?

ALLEN: I—yes, I will!

DAR: Can you continue to take photos?

C-53: I mean, I'll do it, Dar, but just be careful.

ALLEN: Are we gonna make out some more?

DAR: [holding back laughter] Yes.

ALLEN: [excited] All right!

PLECK: C-53...

C-53: Emissary Decksetter, look at these sleeping pods. [C-53 knocks on the glass]

PLECK: Uh...

C-53: Does that person look like they're sleeping?

PLECK: No, it's—they're all covered in some sort of goo.

C-53: Yeah.

PLECK: Is that like, a cryostasis material I'm not familiar with, or...?

C-53: No. Also, you seem to be ignoring this down here. [C-53 taps the glass again]

PLECK: Oh. Yeah.

C-53: The ribcage?

PLECK: Yeah, that's...

C-53: [matter of fact] Completely open.

PLECK: [calmly] Straight up open, yeah. I thought maybe it was a species I wasn't familiar with, but nah, I—

C-53: No, that's a Tellurian.

PLECK: Yeah, yeah. [short pause] This seems—I'm getting a little bit creeped out here.

C-53: Yeah, I think we might be in some actual danger.

[bedsprings creaking]

DAR: Are you getting all of these? I'm giving you gold right now.

[bedspring continue creaking in the background, Allen makes faint muffled noises]

C-53: Dar, I have dozens. Just because I'm not looking directly at you doesn't mean I can't take a picture.

DAR: I just need to make sure.

C-53: Yeah. Listen, Dar, I'll forward all of these pictures to you, I'm happy to do it.

DAR: Not me, Nermut. He needs to see...

C-53: Dar, I'm not sure this is—

DAR: Every moment of this mission.

PLECK: Dar, this feels like maybe the wrong time, this is a bad ti—Dar—

C-53: [crosstalk] I'm not sure this is healthy, yeah, this feels—

DAR: Did you see her? Did you see [disdainfully] Mel?

PLECK: Mel? Yeah, I know. It's the—

DAR: Did you s—did you hear how she sounds?

PLECK: Yeah, I don't—I don't like—

C-53: She had cool earrings.

PLECK: Yeah...

ALLEN: We're all friends right now. Does anyone wanna talk to ME for a second?

C-53: Strange thing t—

PLECK: Yeah, C-53—I think C-53 had something to talk to you about real quick.

C-53: Alright.

PLECK: Dar, can I talk to you for a second?

DAR: [huffily] Fine.

[Pleck and Dar begin walking away]

C-53: Allen, allow me to just put this hand on your chest, and, uh... give you a brief scan.

[beeps and scan noises begin]

ALLEN: Ah, it's like going to the checkup!

C-53: [imitating Allen's cadence] Yes, "going to the checkup."

ALLEN: Going to the checkup!

C-53: Just keep repeating that statement.

ALLEN: Going to the checkup! That's what we... do. We... Tellurians... gooo to the checkup!

[scene shifts to Pleck and Dar]

ALLEN: [in the background] Going to the checkup! Our soft organs inside need to be checked. [Allen continues to repeat "going to the checkup" intermittently]

PLECK: Dar, listen, I—listen. I totally get what you're trying to do with Nermut. I mean, I don't blame you. I think it's actually kinda sweet that you're really, y'know, upset by—I didn't like it either, when we talked to him on holo.

DAR: But now suddenly he's too cool for me.

PLECK: I—

DAR: For ME, Pleck.

PLECK: No. No, Dar. Hey, Dar. That will never happen, okay? Nobody's too cool for you.

DAR: No, no, no. He said so in his phone call on Friday at 44:34. "I just think I'm 'too cool for you,' Dar."

PLECK: He said that?

[Dar pulls a communicator out of their body]

DAR: Yes.

[playback start sound]

NERMUT: [on the recording] Hey, Dar, sorry I didn't call earlier. There's been—the A/C has been on so strong in my office, and I've just been so... like, I've been too cool to call you, and... oh, I'm so cool...

PLECK: Oh. Hey Dar, listen, I don't think that's what he meant.

DAR: No, no, keep listening.

NERMUT: And also, I've just got a lot going on.

[Pleck snickers]

MEL: Hey Nermie? We're gonna go [unintelligible]. Do you wanna come?

NERMUT: Yeah, totally, Mel, yeah, I'm coming. Sorry, Dar. Once this A/C gets fixed and I have, like, less awesome stuff going on, I could totally have time to call.

MEL: You're so cool.

DAR: End.

[playback end sound]

PLECK: Oh, yeah, I don't like that at all.

DAR: [frustrated sigh] Now do you see what I'm saying?

PLECK: Yeah, I get it. But listen, Dar, just real quick—have you noticed something about these bodies?

DAR: What bodies?

PLECK: The dead bodies next to us? [Pleck wipes off the glass] These people were murdered.

DAR: [contemplatively] Oh. Wow, I can see how self-absorbed I've been.

PLECK: I mean, I don't want to call you out like that, but... you brought the ion cannon, right?

DAR: [sadly] Yeah.

PLECK: Okay. Just... just makin' sure.

[Dar begins rooting through their body]

DAR: Wait, no no—wait. No, no! Wait, no. It was inside of me, and now it's not—during our photo shoot, I think it—it fell out? Or...

PLECK: Ohhh no.

[Pleck and Dar head back over to Allen and C-53]

ALLEN: Going to the checkup!

C-53: Alright, Allen, I've just about finished up that scan.

ALLEN: This is like a hug from a friend!

C-53: It's... very unlike that, which is so strange that you'd say that. Uh, Dar, uh, Emissary Decksetter, do you want to take a look at this scan that I just did of Allen?

PLECK: Oh...

DAR: Would love to.

ALLEN: I'm going to busy myself on this computer console on the wall.

[haphazard typing sounds]

C-53: O—okay, you notice how he's just flailing his arms in front of that console?

PLECK: Yeah, the console's off, too.

C-53: Yeah, it's not on. Now let me turn your attention to this scan.

[sound of file opening]

PLECK: Oh. Wow.

C-53: So that's the rough shape of Allen here.

PLECK: Yup.

C-53: Notice anything unusual about the scan?

PLECK: Uh, well, it's full of insects?

C-53: Yeah. Uh-huh. Yep. Got a big ol' body full o' bugs.

DAR: Well, um—hey, fun—fun, quirky fact, uh... He may have... um... swiped the ion cannon that I was storing inside of me.

C-53: [disappointed] Dar... Dar, you have...

PLECK: That's sorta rule number one.

C-53: ...one job as Security Officer.

DAR: [offended] I have many jobs as Security Officer.

C-53: I think all of them fall under the realm of security.

DAR: Fair. However, my chief job today was... get back at Nermut.

C-53: No. Dar, no.

DAR: It was!

C-53: This is not healthy.

DAR: Pleck would agree!

PLECK: I mean—

DAR: Listen to the rest of this recording.

[playback start sound]

NERMUT: [on the recording] So... Mel...

MEL: Mnyam?

NERMUT: We just met, but I just feel like I've known you for a long time, you know what I mean?

MEL: [indistinctly] I know, Nermie.

NERMUT: Y-yeah!

MEL: [indistinctly] I totally feel that. Hah!

DAR: Off!

[playback end sound]

PLECK: Okay.

C-53: Dar, this—this isn't anything.

PLECK: Yeah, I think—I think that was a nub dial. I think the nub of his tail accidentally dialed you.

DAR: That's—that's—doesn't matter! [ominously] She called him "Nermie."

PLECK: [sympathetically] Oh, yeah, that's gotta hurt. Yeah, that's painful.

C-53: [crosstalk] Oh. She did, yeah. Yeah, that's fair.

[C-53 begins walking over to Allen]

C-53: Perhaps we could all discuss this after we've dealt with our new friend Allen?

DAR/PLECK: Fine./Fair enough, sure.

[Allen stops typing]

C-53: Allen, can I ask you to do me a favor?

ALLEN: Sure!

C-53: Just cough?

[brief pause]

[Allen makes a strangled gagging noise]

C-53: Okay, that didn't resemble a Tellurian cough in any way.

ALLEN: That—no?

C-53: Yeah, why don't you try again?

[Allen makes a worse, harsher gagging noise, a couple insects fall out and skitter away]

C-53: Arguably worse than before.

[hacking noises grow more inhuman, more skittering and splatting and tearing]

[something larger emerges, hum of giant wings]

THE GROWER MIND: [deep, menacing voice] Bow before The Grower Mind!

K'HEKK SWARM: [high-pitched, insectoid] We are the K'hekk! We are the K'hekk!

C-53: This is sort of what I was getting at.

PLECK: [crosstalk] Ohh... okay. Yeah, that's sorta what—yeah.

[K'hekk feet marching]

THE GROWER MIND: Future children, prepare to be assimilated!

K'HEKK SWARM: Soldiers! Form a perimeter.

THE GROWER MIND: We're employing perfect battle tactics to assimilate you with all the different units in our perfect caste system.

PLECK: [over it] Okay...

K'HEKK SWARM: Aurochs! Come behind the beetles. Weavers! Form around the royal drones.

THE GROWER MIND: Through millions of years of evolution, we perfected all of our castes.

C-53: Grower Mind—we—

PLECK: Hey, listen, Grower Mind—

C-53: This is not our first encounter with you.

PLECK: Yeah, no. Don't you remember us? I'm Pleck Decksett—C-53?

THE GROWER MIND: No. No.

PLECK: Dar?

DAR: Dar?

THE GROWER MIND: All of you s—look the same to me.

DAR: [offended] What!?

C-53: Wow, that's...

PLECK: No, h—we were—we were on the Bargarean Jade, you used to date.

THE GROWER MIND: The Bargarean Jade?

PLECK: Yeah.

THE GROWER MIND: [hopeful] She's here?

DEZEL MASCHH: Hey, are you guys—are you guys on the ship now, or what?

PLECK: Dez, we're here, man.

C-53: [crosstalk] Dez, this could not have come at a worse time.

DEZEL MASCHH: You guys made it? You guys made it alright?

C-53: We're fine, Dez.

DEZEL MASCHH: Alright, well, let me know if anything weird's happening.

C-53: [sarcastically] Oh, we will.

DEZEL MASCHH: Alright, bye!

THE GROWER MIND: Everyone prepare for egg laying in your eyeballs.

C-53: No...

THE GROWER MIND: Lay down!

PLECK/C-53: No. No, listen—/No, no—

K'HEKK SWARM: [rapid-fire call and response] Workers! (Yes!) Soldiers! (Yes!) Beetles! (Yes!) Aurochs! (Yes!) Bulls! (Yes!) Weavers! (Yes!) Prepare for egg assimilation! (Yeahhh!)

PLECK: Can we j—okay. Listen, Grower Mind—

[sound of an insect emerging and flapping its wings]

THE GROWER MIND: You summon The Grower Mind?

PLECK: I mean, I don't know, "summon," I just—Grower Mind—

THE GROWER MIND: You're w—you're willing to come peacefully.

C-53: [crosstalk] No.

PLECK: No, I—I mean, not really... I just feel like, let's—let's try to find some sort of common ground? Y-you know, you went your way, we went ours, and we decided we were gonna have a peaceful, uh, parting...

THE GROWER MIND: I feel bad, a little, 'cause I just don't remember that AT ALL.

C-53: Not e—not even a little bit?

THE GROWER MIND: Not even a little bit.

K'HEKK SWARM: The weavers don't remember!

DAR: Because it was really significant to us.

PLECK: Yeah, it was a huge deal.

K'HEKK SWARM: The workers don't remember!

K'HEKK SWARM: The soldiers don't remember!

PLECK: Okay, alright...

K'HEKK SWARM: The aurochs don't remember!

K'HEKK SWARM: The beetles don't remember!

C-53: Y'know what, I think "WE don't remember" sort of covers the whole—

K'HEKK SWARM: [interrupting loudly] We are the K'hekk! We are the K'hekk! We are the K'hekk!

THE GROWER MIND: I assimilate beings millions of times per cycle. Of course I would have forgotten you.

PLECK: I mean... sure, yeah. I mean, that makes sense statistically, fine.

C-53/DAR: Sure, okay, fine./Meh.

THE GROWER MIND: But I will never forget... [dramatic pause] the Bargarean Jade.

PLECK: Oh. Okay. Yeah, great! Well, that's us. That was us.

C-53: So that was us, we were the—

DAR/PLECK: Yeah./Yep, yep. Remember?

C-53: We were on the Bargarean Jade.

THE GROWER MIND: Wait. The Bargarean Jade is here?

PLECK: Yeah, that's what we told—we've been telling you that.

C-53: Grower Mind, look out this porthole here.

THE GROWER MIND: [wings fluttering] Oh my gosh, she's here. I felt so bad since the last time. I really kind of cleaned up. I was in a bad place before...

PLECK: Really?

THE GROWER MIND: And... ugh, I was—a-a part of my brain was not in the right brain space.

PLECK: Are you saying you, like, regret... what you said to Bargie last time?

THE GROWER MIND: Yes, I called her a “cantankerous, bitter old ship,” and I feel very bad about it.

PLECK: Yeah, wow. That’s, uh...

THE GROWER MIND: I’ve been taking my frustration out on all sorts of worlds, some pitiful war that you’ve been busying yourself with—I’ve absorbed from both sides.

PLECK/C-53: Oh./Oh.

PLECK: You mean Rebellion and Federated Alliance.

THE GROWER MIND: Is that what you call them?

PLECK: I mean, y-yeah.

THE GROWER MIND: You’re just wearing different clothes.

PLECK: I mean, there are some—

C-53: There are some other...

PLECK: There are some key ideological differences, I think, in my opinion—

THE GROWER MIND: Not to The Grower Mind.

PLECK: Okay. Fair enough. Yep. Great.

[brief silence]

PLECK: Listen, Dar, you know, I feel like you and The Grower Mind are kind of going through the same thing right now, which is that, y’know, you have this thing, you feel a little weird about it, and you’re trying to figure out how to fix it, right?

DAR: I think what I’m going through right now is... I tried to make Nermut jealous by hooking up with The Grower Mind, and... could anyone tell me where the ion cannon is?

THE GROWER MIND: Oh, this ion cannon?

[sound of ion cannon cocking and charging up]

DAR: That's it.

[grotesque chomping and swallowing sounds]

C-53: Well, that is a disappointment.

PLECK: Oh, boy.

DAR: Well.

[The Grower Mind gulps down the last of the ion cannon]

PLECK: We should have more than one weapon.

[transition music]

PLECK: Hey, so listen, Grower Mind. This has been gr—catchin' up again, with you...

THE GROWER MIND: Again, I do—don't remember you at all.

PLECK: Okay, sure. Yeah, well, for us, it's very cool. We're just gonna get back to Bargie. So, um, good luck with the rest of your assimilation?

THE GROWER MIND: That's right, you flew here on the Bargarean Jade. Are you friends with the Bargarean Jade?

PLECK: Uh... That's actually a really good question, yeah.

C-53: Well, that's a... complicated... sort of...

PLECK: Is—is anyone fr—

THE GROWER MIND: If you were in mortal danger, would the Bargarean Jade come to your aid?

PLECK: Yeah, you know what? I've thought about that a lot, and I think, you know, I think she probably would.

C-53: I don't think this line of questioning is gonna end well for us.

[Dar makes closed-mouth "no/uh-uh" sounds]

PLECK: What do you mean?

THE GROWER MIND: My children, seize them!

PLECK: Oh no!

K'HEKK SWARM: Seize them!

[Pleck yells]

THE GROWER MIND: Perform a—

K'HEKK SWARM: Workers, seize the pink one!

THE GROWER MIND: Make a—

K'HEKK SWARM: Soldiers!

THE GROWER MIND: Make a perimeter, soldiers!

K'HEKK SWARM: Yes—what about the aurochs, Grower Mind, what about the aurochs?

PLECK: [crosstalk] What—what does the perimeter do?

THE GROWER MIND: It's a battle tactic that your pitiful mind cannot understand.

K'HEKK SWARM: We are the K'hekk! Royal drones, seize the largest!

THE GROWER MIND: Seize the big one!

K'HEKK SWARM: Seize him!

DAR: [frustrated] Hmmm...

K'HEKK SWARM: Bulls, seize the gray one!

[C-53's "Let's Party" pelvis music starts up again]

K'HEKK SWARM: Ehh...

C-53: [quietly] That's... sorry, I don't have a lot of control over that.

PLECK: Ugh.

C-53: If you could just hit that button... on the... back there, it's...

K'HEKK SWARM: We are the K'hekk!

C-53: Okay.

[pelvis music continues]

THE GROWER MIND: My minions only take orders from The Grower Mind. My children, hit the button.

K'HEKK SWARM: [marching] Weavers! Form a perimeter around the button. Workers! Press the button.

C-53: [crosstalk, mumbling] Okay, they're...

K'HEKK SWARM: Bulls! Form a perimeter around the workers and the weavers.

PLECK: [crosstalk, laughing] Really, anyone...

C-53: Just... yeah, stop this...

PLECK: Just one, you just need one to press the button.

C-53: It's not super hard...

[button beeps, pelvis music shuts off]

C-53: The caste doesn't...

PLECK: Listen, Grower Mind—

THE GROWER MIND: You cannot escape the grasp of The Grower Mind.

PLECK: Sure. Bargie doesn't... have a whole lot of strong feelings for us, I don't think you killing us is going to really help anything.

THE GROWER MIND: As soon as I insert this egg into your skull, the Bargarean Jade will show up and come to your aid.

[insect sounds increase as the K'hekk approach]

[Pleck and Dar both "uh" and "ah" with increasing hesitation and panic]

C-53: Uh, perhaps I should just open a channel to the Bargarean Jade right now.

DAR: [nervously] Mm-hmm! Mm-hmm!

[beeping as comms link is established]

BARGIE: What, whaddya want?

DAR: [strained] Hey, Barge!

BARGIE: You guys done yet?

PLECK: Barge—

C-53: Uhhh, sort of.

PLECK: [nervously] Hey, you know, uh, the ship we're on? Turns out there's a lot of K'hekk here, and we've got some, uh... like, sort of, I would say, "ovipositors" might be the word—sorta heading towards our eyeballs, uh...

BARGIE: You want—y-you're trying to say you want me to come back. The thing is, is, uh, is—as much as we used to be good friends back in the day, it's really hard talking to this guy. It's getting very annoying.

PLECK: Are you talking about Dez?

BARGIE: Yeah, Dez.

DAR: No, no, no—[nervous laugh]

BARGIE: And it's like, ugh, I get it. Y'know, go do your music—

DAR: [panicked] Barge, this isn't—this isn't a Dez thing, this is a K'hekk thing.

PLECK: Yeah, no—

C-53: If you want to look at the video feed, you'll notice there—there's a lot of K'hekk...

BARGIE: Okay, bu... Fine. I'll help you, just promise me that Dez will not talk to me again about the glowing universe.

[brief pause, insect noises continue]

PLECK: What?

DEZEL MASCHH: Hey... BJ, you still there? Here's the thing, it's just that the, uh... the universe is still big, you know what I mean?

BARGIE: [crosstalk] The universe is still big, yeah. You said that.

PLECK: Uh...

DEZEL MASCHH: Did I overhear you say that I have the K'hekk?

PLECK: [ovipositor getting closer] Ahhh!

DEZEL MASCHH: I have the K'hekk?

BARGIE: You have the K'hekk.

DEZEL MASCHH: No—aw, man! Game over, man!

[Pleck yells again]

DEZEL MASCHH: Game over, man!

[ovipositor starts poking into Pleck's eye]

PLECK: [struggling] Ahhhh, I can feel it—going into my eye!

DEZEL MASCHH: Aw, I'll guess I'll have to set my self-destruct.

[Pleck screams]

BARGIE: Know what, can I get a couple people out of you before you do that?

DEZEL MASCHH: Okay.

THE GROWER MIND: No—

DAR/C-53: Well, we—can—/Yeah, Bargie, uh—

THE GROWER MIND: No one—you must be assimilated into the brood!

K'HEKK SWARM: We are the K'hekk!

BARGIE: Okay, hold on, hold on, sorry. I know what this is about.

[insect noises quiet down]

BARGIE: [resigned] Grower Mind, it's good to see you. It's been a while... again.

THE GROWER MIND: Do you know what lengths I've had to go through just to be able to talk to you?

BARGIE: Here's the thing, you uh, you messed up a couple times and I'm not—we're not doing this again. Okay? So just give me back the—the tiny people inside of you and one big one. Plenty of other things you can infest, y'know? Have fun.

THE GROWER MIND: I've infested and I've assimilated and I've destroyed so many things. But nothing's like you. I'm opening my hearts to you!

DAR: Bargie, look—look at this K'hekk's heart. How it glows green... for you. You see this glowing green light? This is—this is the K'hekk pouring his feelings out for you.

THE GROWER MIND: Actually, that—that's not my heart, there's... something inside of me.

DAR: That's my ion cannon.

[Dar jams their fist into the K'hekk, sound of splattering as they grab the ion cannon]

PLECK: [disgusted] Ugh!

DAR: [yelling] Run!

[the crew starts running away]

[more squishing insect noises]

GROWER MIND: After them, my children! After them! Don't let them escape!

[Pleck yelps, Dar fires the ion cannon, humming of K'hekk wings]

K'HEKK SWARM: We are the K'hekk! Weavers, begin to run after the intruders! Bulls, also begin to run!

[ion cannon fire, insect wings, running footsteps]

GROWER MIND: Run strategically!

K'HEKK SWARM: Aurochs, don't run yet. Wait—take up the rear!

C-53: Dar, I must—

K'HEKK SWARM: Weavers, have you started to run yet?

C-53: Dar, I must commend you for that excellent deception on your part.

DAR: Oh, my—[Dar cocks the ion cannon]

PLECK: That was really cool!

DAR: I'll admit, it was very embarrassing to have let my—[ion cannon blasts]—heart get in the way—[ion cannon blasts]—of protecting you guys, and—

PLECK: Good shot!

DAR: —I feel really—I feel alive right now! I-I remember what's important!

PLECK: [impressed] You are shooting those K'hekk as quickly as they can appear in front of you.

DAR: I just imagine they're all Mel! [laughs maniacally]

PLECK: O-oh. Wow.

C-53: Wow.

PLECK: Found some real motivation there.

C-53: It's one of those visualization techniques that can help sometimes.

PLECK: Sure.

[faint alarm sounds in the background, along with robotic announcement that includes "protocol... initiated... override"]

DEZEL MASCHH: H-Hey, guys, Dez here. Uh... so... uh, I started the self-destruct mechanism...

PLECK: You started a self-destruct—

DEZEL MASCHH: [casually] Brother, I started that self-destruct mechanism long ago, baby.

PLECK: Oh. Sure, yeah, okay.

DEZEL MASCHH: Listen, the hatch is open. I don't think I ever—did I ever retract it?

C-53: I would be very surprised if you did.

DEZEL MASCHH: Yeah.

[Pleck sighs in relief]

C-53: Alright, uh, if I may interject here, I think I have an idea that could work out.

PLECK: Uh...

C-53: Uh, let's just go into the hatch, here...

PLECK: Okay.

[the crew walks through]

C-53: Alright. Dez, do you wanna shut the blast door behind us?

DEZEL MASCHH: You got it, gray one.

C-53: Okay. Uh, now, Dar, if you wanna just... take that ion cannon, and fire away.

PLECK: W-what? What are you doing?

DAR: We're just gonna...

C-53: We're just gonna ride the hatch back to Bargie.

DAR: Alright. [cocks ion cannon] And Pleck is...?

C-53: There's air in the hatch.

DAR: Let's do it.

[Dar fires the ion cannon]

[whooshing sound as hatch detaches]

DEZEL MASCHH: Oh, m—oh my hatch, man!

PLECK: Sorry, Dez!

C-53: Yeah, sorry, Dez.

DEZEL MASCHH: That thing—aww, man, look at it go. Just flyin' away. Bye, hatch.

C-53: Dez, you are a... interesting ship, my friend.

DEZEL MASCHH: So are you, man, you're an interesting ship, too.

C-53: No, I am not.

DEZEL MASCHH: You guys are all interesting ships.

[Pleck sighs]

DEZEL MASCHH: [laughs] The K'hekk is really in me right now.

BARGIE: Alright, time for Bargie to go. It was great seeing you. Good luck with everything, um...

C-53: No no—Bargie, no wait, we—

PLECK: No, we're still in the hatch.

C-53: We're in a loose hatch floating in space, you need to open your cargo door.

BARGIE: Alright, it's open, just... hurry up, 'cause I'm getting—

K'HEKK SWARM: Yeah!

C-53: Oh, the K'hekk are making a bridge with their bodies—

PLECK: Oh no!

K'HEKK SWARM: Weavers, become the legs of the ladder!

BARGIE: Wait, I got a w—I got a way to fix it.

[Bargie comes through the speakers inside the Dezel Maschh]

BARGIE: Hey, Grower Mind. One word: commitment.

THE GROWER MIND: I've changed! I'm ready to commit! What—look at what I'm doing, I'm using my children to build a bridge to you!

BARGIE: Okay, okay—

THE GROWER MIND: Workers, convince Bargie that my commitment is going to be strong!

K'HEKK SWARM: We... share silence well together, y'know?

THE GROWER MIND: Now bulls, show them our emotional strengths.

K'HEKK SWARM: We are not afraid to cry!

THE GROWER MIND: Now weavers, lay crystal eggs and imbue them with space magic.

[the weavers groan and begin laying eggs]

[scene shifts back to the crew in the hatch]

C-53: Space magic?

DAR: Gross.

THE GROWER MIND: You can adorn these jewels to your hull.

BARGIE: I'm sorry. It's. Too. Late.

C-53: Gosh, the jewels have reached the ship, we've—we've gotta get outta here!

PLECK: Gah—Bargie!

BARGIE: Alright, everybody in! The jewels look great, I appreciate it, thank you so much. Grower Mind, great seeing you...

THE GROWER MIND: Bargarean Jade, mark my words! One day you will be mine!
[bellowing] Mark my words!

DEZEL MASCHH: This is it, man.

BARGIE: Dez, good times, farewell—

THE GROWER MIND: No! Don't leave me with him! No!

DEZEL MASCHH: I'm becomin'... here's the thing, I'm becoming one with the universe. It just keeps going. Y'know? It just—

[the Dezel Maschh is cut off as he explodes loudly]

PLECK: Whoa. Man, for a old, weird, hippie ship, that was a powerful self destruct.

C-53: Yeah, you gotta be careful around those old reactors.

PLECK: Yikes.

DAR: Hey, uh, C?

C-53: Yeah?

DAR: You didn't... send those photos, did you.

C-53: Dar, I didn't, and I'm gonna tell you why—

DAR: No, no, I—I think that's for the best. Um... could you just send them to me, though? I'm gonna... just, remind myself not to get so caught up.

C-53: Forwarding them to your account now.

[ping sound as images are sent]

DAR: Thank you.

PLECK: You know, Dar, I'm sorry that was such a hard time for you with Nermut and everything, but, uh... I think he'll come around, you know?

DAR: And honestly, it doesn't matter if he doesn't.

PLECK: Really?

DAR: Yeah, I—it's not even really about Nermut, it's just about—having the upper hand, and...

PLECK: Oh. I mean, that's a really good thing to know about yourself.

DAR: Yeah.

PLECK: That's... yeah.

C-53: Hm.

PLECK: Should we get out of this hatch?

DAR: ...Oh.

C-53: I don't know, I was starting to get comfortable in the hatch.

PLECK: Yeah, I feel like—

DAR: Although there is a smell, right?

PLECK: Yeah, we gotta get outta here.

DAR: There's a definite...

C-53: It may still be my frame.

PLECK: [crosstalk] Sure.

[the door opens, and the crew begins climbing out of the hatch into Bargie]

C-53: I've tried to clean it, but there's just a lingering odor that I can't seem to...

PLECK: You gotta remove that skin, C-53.

C-53: I mean, I would feel the pain of removing the skin.

DAR: Ugh.

PLECK: What if we take out the cube, remove the skin, put the cube back in?

C-53: Okay, well, what if I... turned off your nerve endings, tore off all your skin, and then turned your nerve endings back on?

PLECK: Huh.

DAR: Yeah.

PLECK: Alright, fair enough. Well, Bargie, should we get on our way?

BARGIE: Yeah. Why—why wouldn't we? I don't understand the question.

PLECK: I—I don't know, it just seemed like the sorta... segue at the end of a mission.

[Dar giggles]

[transition music]

[incoming transmission sound]

C-53: Emissary Decksetter, I have an incoming transmission from Missions Operations Manager Nermut Bundaloy.

[Dar clears their throat]

[transmission start sound]

[Nermut is still walking on his treadmill]

PLECK: Oh. Hey, Nermut.

DAR: Hello, Nermut.

NERMUT: Hey, guys.

DAR: What happened to your glasses?

NERMUT: Guys, I wanna—[Nermut sighs and smashes the glasses]

PLECK: Oh no! What happened?

C-53: Oh, it snapped.

DAR: Oh snap.

NERMUT: I broke 'em in half. I—I owe you guys an apology. I realized... I just, like—I had become someone I wasn't, y'know what I mean?

PLECK/DAR: Hm./Hm.

NERMUT: Like I—I got excited to be... accepted, and “in,” and—and also the hair gel was really, like, giving me some kinda skin thing. [sighing] And...

PLECK: Hm. You shouldn't—it's not for feathers, Nermut.

C-53: Yeah, it's for hair.

NERMUT: I know, I shoulda read the bottle.

C-53: Hm.

NERMUT: And Dar? [Nermut exhales] I know you were... [Nermut pauses] Like I—I—I'm gonna admit it, I was really excited to hang out with Mel. And Mel was fun, but I realized at the end of the day, like, we didn't have that much to talk about. Mel's cool, but Mel's like, not that deep, so. [Nermut sighs again] I'm just—this might sound crazy, guys, but I'm gonna turn off this treadmill.

[treadmill noises stop]

PLECK: Oh... wow.

DAR: Thanks, Nerm. That means a lot.

PLECK: You know, Nermut, if it helps, we really learned a lot about ourselves on this mission, too.

NERMUT: Yeah?

PLECK: Yeah.

NERMUT: Oh, that's good. Even though I was, like, mired in an identity crisis for hours, I just was happy that I knew that my crew was out there answering this distress call.

C-53: Um... so some bad news on that front...

DAR: Mm-hmm.

NERMUT: Oh.

[short pause]

C-53: Everyone on the ship is dead.

PLECK: Yeah, w—b-but!

NERMUT: What!?

PLECK: The good news is, they were dead when we got there.

NERMUT: Oh. Phew.

PLECK: Yeah. So it wasn't—was not our fault.

C-53: Also, the ship has been destroyed.

NERMUT: Oh.

PLECK: But! The good news is that the ship was sort of a burnout.

C-53: No, the good news is the ship was full of K'hekk, and the K'hekk have also been destroyed.

PLECK: Yes, well, sure, that probably is better news. I'm just saying, like, we shouldn't weep too hard for Dez.

C-53: Dez self-destructed.

NERMUT: The K'hekk are an enemy... of course, the Alliance, but also the Rebellion. So like, essentially, you guys waged war against the K'hekk on behalf of the Rebellion.

PLECK: And sort of won.

NERMUT: Sort of won!

PLECK: I did get an—uh, egg implanted in my eye?

NERMUT: Wh... that seems like burying the lead.

PLECK: I say mitigated success.

C-53: You actually got one in your eye?

PLECK: [casually] Yeah, it got in there.

C-53: Oh. You're gonna have to see a doctor about that.

NERMUT: Yeah, that's, uh... that—

PLECK: Yeah. How long do you think I have?

NERMUT/DAR/C-53: Ehhh.../Not long./Not all that long.

NERMUT: Yeah.

PLECK: [unbothered] Hm. Alright.

C-53: How does that eye feel?

PLECK: Bigger. Tighter? I would say?

DAR/NERMUT/C-53: Ugh./Ooh./Hm.

PLECK: Tighter in its socket.

[Nermut's door opens]

COWORKER 1: Hey, Nermut! Hi.

NERMUT: Yeah?

COWORKER 1: Uh, me and a bunch of the other ones, we're all gonna go get some orange beer. Do you wanna hang out?

COWORKER 2: Yeah, c'mon, get an orange beer with us.

COWORKER 1: C'mon!

NERMUT: You know what, guys? I just—I'm gonna sit this one out.

COWORKER 2: Cool! See you later! I got no problem, bye!

COWORKER 1: Alright, see you later, yep!

NERMUT: Because, like, I thought a lot about—my—

C-53: They're—they're gone.

DAR: They've already left.

C-53: They're not there anymore.

PLECK: But we appreciate the gesture, Nermut.

NERMUT: Yeah, I mean, [sighs] it feels good to know who you are, you know?

PLECK: Yeah. You said it.

DAR: Totally. I agree. It really feels good to know who you are.

NERMUT: Yeah.

DAR: I think that's what I'm going to caption this photo that I'm posting.

PLECK: What are you posting it to?

NERMUT: What? What's the photo?

DAR: Oh, you can just check it out on my Hologram.

NERMUT: Okay, I'm just gonna swipe through... [taken aback] Oh.

C-53/PLECK: Hmm./Hmm.

C-53: Dar, this may be slightly disrespectful to the family of... that host.

PLECK: Yeah, good point. That was—[laughing] that was a dead body. Allen was—

DAR: Eh... Lemme tell you, at the time?

PLECK: Allen had been dead for days.

C-53: Allen Phasehugger.

DAR: At the time, he was VERY alive.

PLECK: No. No, he was like a skin puppet.

[a ping sound]

BARGIE: Dar, I gave it a star. I liked it.

[Pleck laughs quietly]

[end credits music]

This is C-RED-IT5, credits and attributions droid, commencing outro protocol. Emissary Pleck Decksetter was played by Alden Ford. C-53 was played by Jeremy Bent. Security Officer Dar was played by Allie Kokesh. Missions Operations Manager Nermut Bundaloy was played by Seth Lind. The Dezel Maschh long haul cruiser was played by Winston Noel. Bargie the Ship and Mel were played by Moujan Zolfaghari. The Grower Mind of the K'hekk and the animated corpse of Allen Phasehugger were played by special guest John Robert Wilson. JR performs monthly with Thank You, Robot and Science Exclamation Point! at Caveat in New York City, and cohosts The Fifth Eleminute and Unlimited Lives podcasts. Follow him on Twitter, @johnrobertwilso. This episode edited by Seth Lind, with sound design and mix by Shane O'Connell. This episode was recorded at Robert Doggy Jr.'s Puppy Pound in Brooklyn, New York. Music by Brendan Ryan. Opening crawl narration by Jeremy Crutchley. Ship design for the Bargarean Jade by Eric Geusz. Mission to Zyxx is brought to this galaxy by AudioBoom. Thanks, AudioBoom! A very special thank you to our Patreon supporters for making season two possible. Do you have a pressing question for the crew? Send an e-mail to crew@missiontozyxx.space.

[end credits music fades out]

[outtake begins]

JEREMY/C-53: Uh, Allen, perhaps you can answer some questions for us. What do you haul aboard the Dezel Maschh?

JR/ALLEN: All sorts of raw goods? [laughing]

JEREMY/C-53: That's a very vague, unspecific answer.

[someone snorts]

JR/ALLEN: All—a variety of raw goods and materials!

ALDEN/PLECK: Y'know, Allen, I gotta say, I know that we've never met, but you seem very familia—it's something about your voice, or somethi—

JR/ALLEN: I feel like I know you too!

ALDEN/PLECK: Yeah, maybe we—

[JR/Allen begins making various crazy mouth sounds]

JEREMY/C-53: Oh—oh. What's happening?

ALDEN/PLECK: What was that—

JR/ALLEN: [mouth sounds become more strangled] Kill me! [sounds continue]

JEREMY/C-53: What?

[JR's mouth sounds turn into an explosion]

[background laughter]

JR/THE GROWER MIND: [in a menacing voice] Everyone bow before the undying will of The Grower Mi... [trails off into a laugh]

ALDEN/PLECK: [yelling] Oh my Rodd!

JEREMY/C-53: Ohhh. That makes a lot more sense.

WINSTON/K'HEKK SWARM: We serve The Grower Mind! We serve The Grower Mind!

ALDEN: [crosstalk, through laughter] Ohh—hold on, hold on—

ALLIE: Wait, wait. That was so good.

[JR laughing uncontrollably in the background]

JEREMY: Oh man. That was so good.

ALDEN: That's so funny. I—

SETH: Do you think we should—

ALDEN: I think we need to wait on that, 'cause it's—

SETH: [laughing] Yeah, hold it a little bit.

JEREMY: Ohh, I don't know... [laughs]

ALDEN: I mean—I mean, we could—

[Allie bursts out laughing again]

SETH: JR...

WINSTON: I do think Allen is so funny!

ALDEN: Allen is such a funny character—

SETH: Yeah, we might want a little—little more Allen.

JR: A little more Allen?