

## STATION ARCADIA OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT

### Season 2: Episode 4: Waves In the Wastes

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**ELI:** Hey listeners, this is Eli Allan, producer of Station Arcadia. Unfortunately, this podcast stopped production partway through season two. The script for this episode was completed before the halt in production, but the radio booth lines and story were not recorded. In order to bring you this episode, the story's writer, J.R Steele, will be reading for Kass. The season's cancellation is also reflected in lack of background ambiance during the second cutaway segment, and real janky soundscaping by yours truly for the third. Background music was pinched from season One episode 4, cause y'know what? It works! And so does J.R Steele's reading of this piece. So enjoy, season 2 episode 4: Waves In the Wastes.

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**KASS.** Welcome, anyone. You're not waiting to live, you're in the thick of it. And you're listening to Station Arcadia.

#### [THEME SONG]

**KASS.** In a frankly surprising turn of events, I'm pleased to be able to tell you that our first ever disco dance night was... actually super fun! We're thinking of making it a weekly thing. I did accidentally punch Z in the face at one point, which I felt pretty bad about, but given that out of the two of us, she's the one who could actually see where I was and adjust, we agreed it was solidly her fault. And her nose only bled for a few minutes, anyways. All's well that ends well?

#### [TWO CLICKS AS KASS PLUGS IN]

Alright Arcadia, let's see what's happening in the world today.

**KASS.** A man is bustling through a busy airship port, a bag over his shoulder and a determined set to his face. Until recently he

was a worker; someone who did his job with a straight face and an empty mind. But now, he's one of the unemployed. Someone with no cog in the Great Machine. A lost screw buried in the dirt under a wheel-track and a puddle of petrol.

He *used* to work in a steel factory in Tinelock, making railroad spikes day after day until his arms felt like they were going to fall off. Then, one day, one of them did. There was a leak, and let's just say that molten iron tends to cause some pretty nasty burns... he had to get it removed, and with his arm went his job. Now, out of work and faced with the limited prosthetic options in Hardizan, he's searching for a better alternative.

With his soot-stained jacket with one sleeve pinned up and the unwashed hair draped and sticking over his forehead, he goes unnoticed in the crowd. No one speaks to him, no one gives him a second glance as they rush past to catch a leaving ship. And that means there's no one to catch him slipping into a near-empty bar off to one side. As he enters the dimly lit space, he scans the occupants ineffectively for a face that matches the handwriting scrawled on the paper clutched in his hand.

Only a few patrons litter the creaky wooden tables. A small conversation happening at one of them draws the man's attention immediately, but as he squints into a dark corner, he sees a seedy figure. Someone with a cloak drawn over their face, drinking alone. This *must* be the person he's meeting. His feet carry him towards them, but before he can get past the middle of the room, he hears his name.

"Not yet. Waitin' on a guy named Owen to show his face so we can get on the clouds."

Upon hearing his name, the man turns his head back toward the small group at the table, and finds that his gaze is now caught and pinned by a middle-aged woman with a wolfish demeanour. The corner of her mouth tilts as she realises she has his attention; about as inviting as a predator luring in its prey.

Nonetheless, Owen sits down at the table, running his thumb nervously along the edge of the flyer he keeps hidden in his lap. He doesn't speak first, waiting on tenterhooks for one of the group to acknowledge him. His eyes dart around, observing the others. A dark-skinned person with metal rods through their ears watches him curiously through a pair of small spectacles, while a short man dressed like he's from Vanfell checks his pocket watch repeatedly.

"Relax, Bohai." the woman says at last, gesturing for her guests to stand. "We can go now. We've got our man."

Owen blanches as he realises that she's holding the flyer he'd been clutching. She laughs at his expression and hands the flyer and a small sack of coins back to him with a wink.

"Welcome to the crew, Owen."

"How did you know it was me...?" he chokes, his eyes wide. But she ignores him and leads the group out of the bar. Owen stands and finds himself following close behind.

[TRANSITION]

[CLATTERING PLATES, AMBIENT TALKING.]

**CYRIL.** Stop it!

**MARION.** I'm not touching you though, I'm not touching you!

**MARGARET.** Marion, Cyril, settle down.

**ADALAIDE.** Hey mom, you want to see a drawing I did?

**LOUISE.** Mom, Dad, Papa, I'm going to head out!

**ROY.** Be safe!

**EARNEST.** Hold on, you're forgetting this.

**LOUISE.** Oh right, thanks!

**CYRIL.** You're not playing fair.

**MARION.** Yeah I am.

**CYRIL.** Nooo.

**MARION.** Yeeeah.

**LOUISE.** Bye!

**MARGARET.** Have a good day Lousie!

**[THE FRONT DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES.]**

**ADALAIDE.** That one's Peaches.

**PEACHES.** Why am I so tall?

**ADALAIDE.** Because you're older!

**PEACHES.** Yeah, but Louise is way taller than me.

**MARGARET.** It looks great, sweetheart. Go show Dad too!

**ADALAIDE.** Oh, Dad! Dad, look!

**[ADALAIDE RUNS ACROSS THE ROOM.]**

**PEACHES.** Marion, want to help me put away the forks?

**MARION.** Okay!

**CYRIL.** No fair, why does Marion get to help?

**PEACHES.** You want to help too?

**CYRIL.** Yeah.

**PEACHES.** Then why don't you both do it?

**MARION.** Yeah!

**EARNEST.** That looks great Adalaide, I love how the smokestacks look.

**ADALAIDE.** Thanks!

**PEACHES.** Hey ma? I'm going to head to work soon. Do you need anything?

**MARGARET.** If you could pick up some beans for dinner tonight on your way home, that'd be great.

**PEACHES.** Will do.

**ADALAIDE.** Peaches! Are you gonna hand these out today?

**[RUSTLING PAPER.]**

**PEACHES.** Hey! Where'd you get those?

**ADALAIDE.** From your bag.

**PEACHES.** I've told you not to touch my stuff.

**MARION.** Peaches is gonna be a hero! Like Uncle Carl!

**CYRIL.** Fighting against all evils! Bringing good to the people!

**PEACHES.** Guys-

**ADALAIDE.** I want to join the fight! Just like Peaches!

**MARGARET.** Well, you've got to go to school with Dad first.

**ADALAIDE.** Aww.

**EARNEST.** Come on little Laidie, let's get ready to go.

**ADALAIDE.** Can we drive by the cool smokestacks on the way?

**EARNEST.** Of course we can.

**ROY.** I'm going to head out too.

**[HE KISSES EARNEST ON THE CHEEK.]**

See you soon Earnest.

**EARNEST.** Be careful.

**ROY.** I will. See you soon Maggie.

**MARGARET.** Bye Roy. See you tonight.

**PEACHES.** Bye Dad, bye Papa.

**ADALAIDE.** Peaches! Can you put my drawing back in my room?

**PEACHES.** Sure thing, Adalaide. Have a good day at school.

**ADALAIDE.** Thanks!

**PEACHES.** I'll see you tonight, mom.

**MARGARET.** Be safe, Peaches. I don't want you getting into trouble.

**PEACHES.** I'll do my best.

**[TRANSITION]**

**KASS.** Aww, Peaches' family seems nice. I get why they turned out so well. It does feel a bit weirder to listen in on them like this now that we've actually talked, though. I wish I knew how Arcadia does it... *(she thinks for a second.)*

Anyways. Back to Owen.

**KASS.** Owen is handed a stack of crates to carry onto the airship as soon as they arrive, and directed where to put them by a teenager with tightly braided hair and fiery eyes. He follows orders like he's always done, with practised ease, and soon he realises that the ship is taking off. He looks around frantically, trying to catch a glimpse of the woman he'd seen at the bar; his mind racing with questions. Instead, his view is blocked by that same teenager.

He tries to sidestep the girl.

"S'cuse me."

"You look lost," she says accusingly.

"I'm ah, not sure I'm meant to be on this ship."

The girl fixes him with a narrow gaze.

"I mean, I am. I'm just looking for the captain, do you know where—"

"What's your name?"

He hesitates for a long moment, but decides it's not worth overthinking. "It's Owen."

"You're the one lookin' for an arm," she says bluntly. "We're on route to where they make some of the best." She wiggles her fingers. "Talsoria."

Owen feels relief and anticipation pool in his chest. He's finally on his way.

"Hey, new guy." The man from before, Bohai, approaches them and shoos the girl away. "Captain's asked me to show you around." Owen nods, peering over the man's shoulder briefly after the girl, but she's already gone. An arm around his shoulders steers him in the opposite direction.

Owen has never been on an airship before, and he mumbles as much to the crewmate leading him around. Bohai just shrugs and does his best to explain where everything is using layman's terms. Front, back, belowdecks, above decks, etcetera. Bohai informs him of the crew's schedule and where he fits in. He's told he'll be expected to either pay the fee of the trip on the spot, or work on the ship for passage. Owen had already decided on working, which Bohai seemed to know as well.

The airship transports cargo to the Talsorian border regularly, and Owen still isn't entirely sure how they've never been caught by authorities. The border isn't exactly lax on security. Owen has heard tales of high electric fences and monitored surveillance drones on the Talsorian side, and armed guard stations surrounded by dry, unforgiving wastes on Hardizan's. The only way in or out is through eternally-locked gates, or shoddy tunnels periodically dug underneath the fence. Owen thinks he knows which option he'll attempt to seek out.

But smuggling cargo is a different story; there's an entire operation happening over the border. Owen wonders out loud how it

all works, but Bohai simply smiles and says he may be lucky enough to find out during his stay. The man runs down the itinerary for Owen after that; they'll make a few stops along the way, load and unload cargo at a couple more ports, and do their best to avoid unwanted trouble. If all goes well they'll reach the border in a few weeks. Then rinse, and repeat. He does some quick maths: a couple trips back and forth could probably be enough time to pay off his passage and get dropped off at the Talsorian border on the following run. He makes that his goal.

After they've taken off, everyone seems less frantic and more at home. Bohai introduces Owen to some of the other crewmates. Murray, the spectacled person he met in the bar, seems plenty friendly and talkative once they've passed introductions, and the teen who had approached him is called Rhiz. Apparently, everyone likes her, but Bohai says she prefers to be left alone.

Work starts right away. A bucket and sponge is shoved into his hands and before he knows it, he's scrubbing the planks that make up the deck of the ship. Even so, after a few weeks Owen finds a simple enjoyment in the monotony of sweeping, swabbing, and general ship maintenance. With the wind buffeting his hair and the fresh air above the smog, he feels better than he has in ages.

He rarely sees the captain, but when he does it's usually either from a distance or on the rare occasion that she addresses the crew as a whole. He's amazed by how much he feels her presence on the ship even still; the crew are conscientious of her every order, and seem to hold her in equal parts fear and respect. It is clear that, however stern she may be, everyone on the ship would trust the captain with their life. Or more accurately, they are; the job is certainly a hazardous one.

Though she intrigues him, Owen doesn't resent the distance the captain keeps from her crew. She's a bit too intimidating for Owen to want to have a casual conversation with her. Besides, everyone else is fairly friendly, the food is decent, and Owen thinks that



even if he has to spend a couple months here to pay off his passage, or even a year, he'll be content.

Owen gets pretty quick at his duties, so much so that he finds his late afternoons fairly devoid of responsibility. He usually spends them walking the length of the ship or relaxing in the hull where the crew's quarters are, but this morning he saw Rhiz go below decks and she hasn't come up yet.

Her odd demeanour had piqued Owen's curiosity from the start, but now, weeks later, he still knows almost nothing about her. She seems nice enough, but only speaks when addressed and, when she does, her statements are blunt and to the point. While fulfilling his duties as a deckhand he sees her quite often, yet he's not entirely sure what she does on the ship. It seems that she has a hand in a little bit of everything. Owen wonders how long she's been here. She's still so young, and yet she seems to know the ship better than anyone.

Having nothing better to do, he decides to approach her. He finds her sweeping the cargo hold. She doesn't look up at the sound of her name, but makes a small noise of acknowledgement.

"Uh, hi." Owen tries.

"Hi."

Owen leans back on one of the crates, trying to seem more relaxed. He remembers that she usually doesn't talk unless someone else starts the conversation.

"Bohai says we're nearly there. Minutes left, I hear."

Rhiz merely hums in acknowledgement, but it's better than nothing. Owen takes it as a good sign to keep trying.

"How'd you come to work on this ship?"

This question seems to surprise her, but it doesn't keep her from answering. "Captain brought me up."

Owen hums, hoping she'll continue, but she doesn't. He sits quietly for another minute, listening to the sound of the wind against the ship and the creaking of wood and iron as it drifts through the sky. Then, after a moment, he spots another broom and joins the kid in sweeping. She doesn't acknowledge him until they're finished. Owen sticks the broom in a corner, while the girl simply drops it next to her while she cracks open a crate. She reaches in and digs out a bottle of brown liquid. To Owen's surprise, she offers him one. He takes it hesitantly, not wanting to seem rude. He reads the label and determines that it's not alcohol before popping the cap off.

"Have you always lived on this ship?" he asks between sips. The liquid is sweet and bubbly. He decides within seconds that it's his new favourite drink.

"No. I was born in Talsoria."

"Oh." Owen's brows raise. "I thought you said the captain raised you."

"She did. She took me in when I was little, but I still remember my parents." Rhiz gets a distant look, then, and Owen watches her expressions shift. "I don't exactly know what happened. I was, like, 5. But someone took me." She takes a long drink from her bottle, walking over to sit beside him on a crate. "I'm lucky, though. I ended up here pretty quick, and it's not a terrible place to be. I just wish..."

She trails off for a moment, seeming uncertain. Owen lets the silence settle, waiting for Rhiz to collect her thoughts. He keeps sipping the drink, savouring the taste.

"It's not that I don't like it here!" She suddenly says. "It's just that... they don't know what happened to me. There's a family here, sure. But they're also the people I work with, you know?" She gives him a half-shrug. "I think it'd be nice to have something more permanent. Something separate from my job."

"I never got to know my parents," Owen says gruffly. "They died in a factory accident."

She doesn't offer pity or false remorse, only pats his shoulder with a tilted frown. Somehow, it's more than enough.

Rhiz changes the subject and he's surprised by how talkative she is once she gets started. He listens attentively as she describes her life in the smuggling business, and the moments that kickstarted her drive to go on her own adventure. Now, nearly three years later, she's almost saved up enough to head off in search of her parents.

Owen feels the weight of the measly sum he'd received from his previous job as compensation for his accident. It wasn't enough to pay for his passage, much less a decent prosthetic. But it might be enough to help Rhiz finally start looking for her parents. He'd only have enough to feed himself while in Talsoria, but he could find money elsewhere. He wants to help.

Her eyes are wide as he takes the pouch out and silently places the amount in her palm. She stares at the coins for a long time, and Owen wonders if she's going to take them or throw them back at him. Instead, she simply deadpans:

"You know I can't use Hardizan coin in Talsoria, right?"

And, really, Owen probably should have thought of that. He mentally kicks himself, feeling embarrassed for the obvious mistake, but Rhiz offers him a look of condolence.

"Don't worry about it. It's hard to get used to this stuff. I've been here a while, so I know my way around currency. I'd say that lot'll get you a decent sum in Talsorian credits, and the Captain can convert it for you."

A swell of relief washes over the embarrassment. Still, Owen has enough focus left in him to shake his head when Rhiz attempts to hand him the coins back.

"Keep them, please. Have the captain convert them for you, if it'll help."

Rhiz falls silent again, and Owen can practically see the gears spinning in her mind. Finally, she seems to settle on something.

"I can talk to the Captain about getting you to Talsoria faster. We've only got a few minutes till we land, but it usually takes a bit for our ride to get here. Plus, I know how to talk to her. She might even let you leave today."

Owen is surprised by this. "You'd do that for me?"

"In return for this money. And only if you agree to help me. Come with me to find my parents, and I'll help you get your arm."

Owen watches her for a long moment, staring in wonder at the situation presented before him. There's a conviction in her eyes that convinces Owen faster than he expects. And so, they shake on it.

His mind suddenly backtracks a little. "What was that you said about our... ride?"

Rhiz stands with a smirk, just as the ship rocks with impact.

"Get your land legs back." She says, avoiding the question with a glint in her eye. "We've got some walking to do."

**KASS:** This seems like a good place for a break! Arcadia's been bugging me to switch channels to Peaches, so what they're up to.

[TRANSITION]

[OUTDOORS NOISES. PEACHES PULLS UP ON THEIR MOTORBIKE. THEY WALK UP TO THE DOOR AND KNOCK. THE DOOR OPENS.]

**PEACHES.** (*surprised*) Hi there!

**LLEWELLAN.** Hello.

**PEACHES.** I have some mail for a... Llewellyn McAvoy?

**LLEW.** Oh, that's me.

[THEY HAND THE PARCELS OVER. THE DOOR BEGINS TO CLOSE.]

**LLEW.** Thank you.

**PEACHES.** Wait! Um, we haven't met before. Usually when I come to this house, no one answers.

**LLEW.** Well, my parents and I are usually at work around this time.

**PEACHES.** You're not at work today.

**LLEW.** No...

**PEACHES.** If you don't mind me asking, is everything alright?

**LLEW.** I do mind a little.

**PEACHES.** That's ok! Sorry for prying. My partner and I have heard of a little organisation for people who're having trouble with work, so I just tend to be curious.

**LLEW.** What kind of organisation?

**PEACHES.** We try to predict layoffs and offer support for people who are in between jobs. That sort of thing.

**LLEW.** That's really nice of you. Why do you do it? Do you get paid?

**PEACHES.** Ah, not really. Not in money anyway.

**LLEW.** Then why do you do it?

**PEACHES.** To help people.

**LLEW.** Huh.

**PEACHES.** Speaking of work, though, I have to go. Oh, but I'm Peaches, by the way. It was really nice to meet you, Llewellyn.

**LLEW.** It was nice to meet you too.

**PEACHES.** I'll see you around!

**LLEW.** Uh, Peaches?

**PEACHES.** Yeah?

**LLEW.** I'd like to hear more about this organisation, if you have the time. Or a brochure or something.

**PEACHES.** Funny you say that, I do have a flyer I can give you.

[THEY HAND OVER A PIECE OF PAPER. THEY TAP IT.]

**PEACHES.** But, uh, keep this bit quiet, ok? We're trying to avoid unnecessary trouble.

**LLEW.** (*surprised*) I understand. Thank you.

**PEACHES.** Of course. Hope we can talk again soon!

[THEY WALK NEXT DOOR. LLEWELLAN CLOSES THE DOOR. THEY KNOCK ON ESHE'S DOOR.]

**ESHE.** Well hello, courier.

**PEACHES.** Hey Eshe! What's that you're working on?

**ESHE.** I'm glad you asked! So I was talking with your boyfriend a couple days ago and he had an idea for a multi-purpose stopwatch.

**PEACHES.** (*laughing*) That's certainly an idea! What does it do?

**ESHE.** Well, stopwatch things of course. But it also has a small lens that pops out and can be used as a magnifying glass. And check this out-

[\*SPRONG\* CLICK NOISE.]

**ESHE.** Screwdriver.

**PEACHES.** Hah! Cool!

**ESHE.** Right? Now I'm trying to add a hidden set of lockpicks, but I can't manage to design collapsible tools that won't break.

**PEACHES.** I'm sure you'll figure it out. You usually do.

**ESHE.** Anyway, I wasn't expecting any mail. What have you got there?

**PEACHES.** Actually, it's from Charlie and I.

**ESHE.** *(realising)* Oho! Well, let's see it then.

**[PEACHES HANDS OVER THE FLYER.]**

**PEACHES.** We made a few. Not too many, but enough to give to the people we think we can trust.

**ESHE.** *(reading aloud)* "We're Stronger Together. Having trouble finding or keeping work? Not receiving fair compensation? We might be able to help." It looks great, Peaches!

**PEACHES.** Thanks. *(teasing)* I'll tell Charlie you approve.

**ESHE.** Tell him that, and tell him I'm on board, of course.

**PEACHES.** Will do!

**ESHE.** Are you heading next door now?

**PEACHES.** That's the plan. Emmeline and Lavinia mentioned him. I think I'll try and give him a flyer.

**ESHE.** Maxwell's a good guy, but he's a dandy. Raised by rich parents, you know?

**PEACHES.** Mm. Should I avoid him?

**ESHE.** No, no! Not at all! I was actually going to suggest the opposite. The guy's not leaning towards either side, cause he doesn't know better. Plus, he's got money. He'd be a really good ally if you can educate him a bit.

**PEACHES.** How do you know all that?

**ESHE.** I talk to him; we are neighbours after all. He's a really nice guy. I've been doing my best to get him in the loop, and I think he's taking the new ideas pretty well all things considered.

**PEACHES.** Then I'll bring it up to him.

**ESHE.** Good luck! Tell Charlie to take a nap for me.

**PEACHES.** (*chuckle*) Definitely. See you later Eshe!

**ESHE.** Bye!

[ESHE CLOSES THE DOOR. PEACHES WALKS BACK TO THEIR  
MOTORCYCLE AND STARTS IT UP.]

[TRANSITION]

**KASS.** The outskirts of Hardizan's northern border are flat wastes. Dry with salt and unobscured by trees that would shield the land from baking in the sun, Owen can hardly believe it when the crew is ordered to start unloading the shipment *here* of all places. It's a far reach from any city and, more importantly, from the Talsorian border. When he asks about it, some of the crew mutters something about hitching a ride, and Owen struggles to wrap his head around the idea of anyone living out here.

Once the cargo is unloaded, the crew sits in the shade of the shadow cast by the airship. The captain and quartermaster stand side by side in the evening sun, looking out over the land.

Rhiz sits beside Owen, flipping a small blade between her fingers. He asks her what they're looking for, and she merely points in the direction of the horizon. Owen squints and sees nothing but the wavy mirages created by the fading heat. As soon as he opens his mouth to ask again, though, the ground begins to shake. Clouds of dust and salt rise into the air, and Owen begins to see several large shapes.

First, mounds of rock pile up on either side of a growing hill, rising straight up out of the ground. Then, he sees a form barrelling toward the ship. Its massive figure guts the plane, parting it like water. It grows ever larger as it approaches.

Owen stands abruptly, expecting the others to do the same. Instead, the crew just begins to stretch and some pick up crates



while the captain and the quartermaster stand facing the incoming figures.

There are *three* of them now. Owen can see them getting closer. Long, sleek bodies and massive fins protruding from their back, reminiscent of creatures called sharks that he's only seen in blurry photographs. They tower over the crew as they slow to a stop and rise further from the land, shaking off the dust and salt. The crew shields their faces with cloth, and Owen follows suit. Once the air has cleared, he can see them fully.

Owen is first taken aback by the gaping maw of teeth that each creature possesses, but is reassured by the presence of riders sat atop each beast, keeping them in check. The cloths that drape across the sharks are secured with rope and metal, and are so dimly coloured they blend into the land itself. Owen thinks they must have been in use for a long time.

The people descend from atop the sharks using handmade ladders that look fairly sturdy from where Owen is standing. They approach the Captain and some civil words are exchanged. He's too far away to pick up any of the words. The Captain hands them a small pouch (full of money, Owen presumes) and a hand is raised to wave the rest of the crew forward. Owen takes a couple crates in his arms, following the others' lead, and as he passes some of the riders give him curt nods.

*This* must be their ride. They must be borrowing the sharks as transport. Owen wonders why they can't just land the ship near the border, but as if he read his mind, Bohai's voice sounds from Owen's left.

"Can't fly the ship too close, you know? It'd draw too much suspicion."

The crew secures the crates with teamwork and time. The sun is nearly below the horizon by the time Owen realises that there's nothing left to carry over. The people lending them the sharks are climbing back up to sit atop the creatures.

In an instant he realises that he's got to find Rhiz. He scans the heads of the crew, now re-boarding the ship, and finds her standing before the captain at the base of the gangplank. He watches them exchange a few words, and sees Rhiz drop a stack of coins into the Captain's hand. But after a moment, the Captain pushes them back into her hand and pats her head, sending her off toward the creatures with a subtle smile on her lips. Rhiz's face breaks out into a wide grin, and she catches Owen's eye.

He gestures to the land shark and they make their way over. The people on top see them coming. There's a call to the Captain, who merely gives a curt nod. Owen wonders briefly how long they've been working together, to be able to communicate so succinctly. They extend one of the ladders down, and Owen manages to climb up with some assistance, making sure Rhiz can get up as well. They find a place to sit among the secured cargo. Rhiz plops down next to him and shoots him a smirk.

"What's that look for?" he asks as the creature begins to lift up onto its legs.

"We should probably hold on," she simply says, gesturing to the ropes that loop around the crates. Owen has barely enough time to register her words and grasp the rope before the creature surges forward. Owen lets out a shout as the dusk air buffets his face and the creatures move across the land toward the border, leaving the airship behind them. Owen can see the mountains glimmering with an artificial aurora in the distance. He looks beside him at Rhiz, who has a child-like wonder in her eyes as she has this experience for the first time as well. He can't help but smile as they rocket towards their destination across the dusty earth and sand dunes.

When the Hardizan-Talsorian border wall appears as a smudge on the horizon, a member of the smuggling crew tosses him and Rhiz a pair of goggles each. They both don them, though Owen doesn't understand why until the land shark takes a steep dive downwards, and burrows underground. The tunnel was already extant, but Owen

can feel dislodged sand stinging his exposed face and hands as the shark's movement widens the passage. Luckily, it's not too long before they surface in a similar landscape on the other side, and Owen cranes his neck to see his home country growing smaller in the distance behind them. His attention is pulled by a sudden shout, and he and Rhiz watch in awe as one of the shark-riders uses a mechanical crossbow to shoot down a patrolling drone. Soon, they begin to see a large river growing closer, and the desert landscape starts to fade into greenery. The riders slow the sharks to a stop.

Owen feels winded after the ride, and can't keep a stupid smile off of his face as he's helped down from the creature. He hasn't felt that free in...

Well, he's *never* felt that free. The air in the factories was stale, the pace slow and laborious. Each evening around this time he would return to his residence and put bundled clothes over his head to drown out the snoring family that lived below him. Now, he looks up at the sky and sees the stars for the first time in his life.

"Beautiful, right?" Rhiz says from beside him. She smiles a little. "I remember my first time seeing them too."

Owen nods mutely, staring for a while longer. The shark makes a long noise that startles him out of his awe, and he realises that everyone is moving on. He follows Rhiz to where the crates are being unloaded, apparently awaiting later pickup from a corresponding Talsorian team.

"What now?" he asks, looking around.

"Now," Rhiz breathes. "We're on our own."

Owen blinks. This is it. His adventure is just a few miles in front of him, through the mountains.

"You're still coming with me, right?" Rhiz looks up at him with hopeful eyes.

Owen nods immediately, bumping her shoulder playfully. "Of course. You're not getting rid of me that easily."

Rhiz laughs. Owen realises that he's still smiling too.

"Come on, Rhiz," he says, shouldering his bag. "Let's go find your parents."

Rhiz grabs Owen's jacket as he turns away, causing him to stop and look back at her. She hesitates, before pulling him into a hug.

Owen hears her sniff, and a small mumble of "thank you" reaches him.

"Even if we don't find my parents," Rhiz says, smiling up at him. "I'm glad I found you."

And Owen thinks he may have found what he was looking for too.

**KASS.** Wow. That was so much more wholesome than our last airship-centric story. I'm really happy for them. I'm also trying very hard not to imagine all the difficulties they'll face once they actually make it to a Talsorian city... I can't imagine coming from Hardizan and trying to blend in. But Arcadia stopped the story here, so I'm going to just go ahead and assume that everything will run smoothly for Owen and Rhiz from here on out.

Before I sign off for the night, let's tune in for a few more minutes of live audio.

[TRANSITION]

[PEACHES'S BIKE REVS A LITTLE AS THEY TURN A CORNER.]

**PEACHES.** (*preparing herself*) Okay. Oswald's house.

[THE MOTORBIKE SLOWS AND STOPS. FLUFFERS STARTS BARKING.]

**OSWALD.** (*from inside*) Fluffers! Stop that!

[THE DOOR OPENS.]

OSWALD. Oh. I should've known.

[FOOTSTEPS. FLUFFERS IS STILL GROWLING.]

PEACHES. Yep. I bring the mail at the same time every day, Oswald.

OSWALD. *(smiling wryly)* How's your arm, courier?

PEACHES. It's fine. Thanks for asking.

OSWALD. I'm surprised Jebediah didn't get you fired after your little stunt. The lazy rivet.

PEACHES. It sounds an awful lot like you want me fired, Oswald.

OSWALD. It'd make my days quieter.

PEACHES. They'd just put another courier in my place. You might even get someone more annoying.

OSWALD. I don't pay you to stand around and talk, courier. Where's my mail?

PEACHES. *(grumbling)* You don't pay me.

[THEY HAND HIM SOME LETTERS.]

OSWALD. Now get going. Don't you have a job to do?

[THEY TURN AROUND AND START WALKING BACK TO THEIR BIKE.]

PEACHES. *(sarcastically, under their breath)* Yes sir Mr. Oswald sir.

[THE DOOR SLAMS.]

PEACHES. Pretentious gas lamp.

[THEY START UP THEIR BIKE AND DRIVE A LITTLE WAY DOWN THE ROAD.]

PEACHES. It's not like he can do anything to me. He can call Jebediah lazy all he wants, but it's pot and kettle.

[AFTER A BIT THEIR MOTORBIKE WINDS DOWN AND THEY WALK UP TO THE DOOR AND KNOCK. IT OPENS.]

DARYN. Good afternoon, courier.

PEACHES. Hey, Daryn.

DARYN. I don't believe Mr. Mosely is expecting any mail today.

PEACHES. No, he doesn't have any. Actually, this is for you.

[THEY HAND DARYN THE FLYER. DARYN TAKES A MOMENT TO READ IT.]

DARYN. No.

PEACHES. No?

DARYN. I'm sorry, courier. I just don't think it's a good idea.

PEACHES. It'll help people. We're trying to make a big change here-

DARYN. And it's really risky.

PEACHES. Well, yeah. But so is working in a factory. So is standing up to an employer. It's *all* risky. But it's worth it.

DARYN. Look, maybe it is. But I've got a stable job. I've got an okay life. I know there are people worse off, but I can't risk my position for that. It's all I have, Peaches.

PEACHES. *(sigh, but sincere)* I understand.

DARYN. As much as I don't want to see you get hurt, I know I can't stop you. But I *can* keep out of it, and I will.

PEACHES. Okay.

DARYN. Stay safe, Peaches.

[THE DOOR BEGINS TO CLOSE.]

PEACHES. Daryn?

[BEAT.]

**PEACHES.** Think about it?

**DARYN.** Goodbye, courier.

[THE DOOR CLOSES.]

[TRANSITION]

**KASS.** Well listeners, that's all we've got today. That wasn't quite the happy note I hoped we could end on, but it's hard to blame Daryn. I mean, I've seen firsthand how badly things can go wrong with this sort of clandestine operation. But I think Peaches is right to take the risk, even if it scares me. Someone's gotta do something, right?

Listeners, whoever's out there, take a risk or two this week. I mean, who knows. Maybe it'll change something. Above all else though, stay safe, stay moving, and stick close.

You've been listening to Station Arcadia.

[CLOSING THEME]

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**ELI:** Station Arcadia is a podcast by Metal Steve Productions, run by Eli Allan and J.R. Steele. It is produced by Eli Allan, with creative direction by Tovah Brantner, dialogue editing by Leo Zahn, and soundscaping by J.R. Steele.

The radio story for this episode was written by J.R. Steele, with cutaway segments by J.R. Steele, Kass lines by Eli Allan, and copy editing by Eli Allan. It featured theme music by Arps, and background music by Esme originally written for season 1 episode 4. Sound effects for the third cutaway segment were poached by Eli from Becker Hoang's work on season 1 episodes 4 and 8.

This episode featured Caralee Rose Howe as Peaches, Taylor Maimone as "Mama" Margaret Marks, Eli Allan as Cyril Marks, Polina Litvak as Marion Marks, J.R. Steele as Adelaide Marks, Jonaya Riley as Louise Marks, Charlie Deagnon as "Papa" Roy Marks, Bernie Chauvin as "Dad" Earnest Marks, Alex Kingsley as Llewellyn, Faye Holliday

as Eshe, Noel Miller as Oswald, Grace Loerstcher as Emmeline, and Felix Kaisar as Daryn.

The role of Kass was originated by Lady Renaissance, and read here by J.R Steele.

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Today's song recommendation of the week is Out of My Head by First Aid Kit.