

Welcome anyone! This is one of our unfinished episodes. The script is mostly unrevised, so any grammar check/sensitivity reading will have come after. You may see some highlighted parts, which are usually notes to check accuracy or pronunciation notes for our cast. Here, you get to see our writer's stream of thought, so please be kind and remember that what you see in the final product is never a first draft! With that, please enjoy!

EPISODE 20 - PORT SHI WORKER

This was a bad idea. This was a very bad idea and she knew it. And yet, what else was she supposed to do when her friend had made it clear he wanted to leave Talsoria, and seemed so desperate to do so.

When Viz's friend, SynthBeat, had made an unexpected appearance at her apartment, she wasn't sure what they wanted or why they chose to seek her out. They could have simply messaged her. Then again, they had looked anxious just standing at the front door. Looking back, it should have been the first indication that something was wrong.

The moment she had gotten her friend into the apartment and closed the door, they blurted out that they had to leave. Not leave the apartment, or the city, but leave Talsoria all together. Viz questioned why, and where they thought they could go. SynthBeat wouldn't give her any specifics as to the why, but clearly stated they wanted to go to the Gannon Islands. Viz had understood then why they came to her, because she worked in the port. If anyone could get them out, it was her, so he reasoned.

Viz had been caught off guard by this plea, and had half a mind to deny the request, but hearing the distress in their voice, seeing how they paced around her apartment as they explained made Viz reconsider, feeling pity for her friend. Eventually, Viz gave in and told SynthBeat that while most shipments were domestic orders, as of late

there had been some actually leaving Talsoria, not to the Gannon Islands, but to someplace that's at least closer. She told them that she'd see what she could do.

Now Viz is at her job and now trying to figure out how to smuggle her friend out of Talsoria. It is this thought that distracts her as she is looking over shipping manifests. Viz understood why her friend came to her and asked to do this task specifically, but it didn't change the fact that smuggling was dangerous and illegal. Where does she even start with something like that? How could she make it work?

The answer comes to Viz in the form of the shipping manifest. She'd been doing the job for two years and worked primarily with shipping manifests and logs. She was skilled at reading, studying, and cross-referencing them with shipments that came into port.

Maybe that...

If Viz is to help her friend get out of Talsoria, maybe this is the way to do it. Maybe here is where to start.

If she was to smuggle him out through the port, the easiest, and arguably dangerous, way to do it would be to have him hidden with the cargo. Maybe add something extra to a ship heading out of port. He could do that... but then, in that case, there's the matter of the logs. Sudden changes were usually questioned, or if a manifest didn't match up that was something that needed to be looked into. To avoid that...

Viz knows then what she has to do to get her friend out. She needs to get him snuck in with some cargo. She could try and forge a shipping manifest, but that might not be the best plan of attack. There was one other option; to cause a glitch in the logs that would allow her a window of opportunity to get him into the cargo.

BEGINNING OF SEGMENT [1]

MEMORIE. See, since we're adding an *auxiliary* memory-system chip instead of replacing the base one, we need to find a different way to connect it to ERIS's main command centre. You remember where that is, right?

SOMA. Yeah. Can I go now?

MEMORIE. Don't you want to be able to upgrade your tech? Or what about if ERIS breaks, you should know how to do basic repairs.

SOMA. No one at school knows how to do that stuff. You're the *only* person who cares about robot guts. Everyone else just takes their bots to Quik-Tech.

MEMORIE. Quik-Tech? So I guess you want to get scammed into paying triple-price for unnecessary parts just cause you don't know any better-

SOMA. *[he's heard this rant before:]* I KNOW, I GET IT.

MEMORIE. Well, the whole reason they get away with charging so much for simple fixes is because no one knows an on-switch from a circuit board! And half the time-

SOMA. Shut up, I know!

MEMORIE. -you're paying them to fix known manufacturing issues in their own subsidiary's products.

SOMA. No one else has to learn this boring stuff! I'm missing double-cred hour in Earthshaker Legends because of you.

MEMORIE. I guess no one else has an older sibling who cares enough to-

[A LOUD 'PING' NOTIFICATION/ALERT NOISE SOUNDS]

AI VOICE: Attention. Your headsets and screens are being re-routed for an important message. Thank you for your understanding.

[A SMALL TRANSITION NOISE]

NEWSCASTER. Nexus citizens. On behalf of Centurion security, I regret to inform you of a tragic and dangerous incident that occurred just

moments ago at ThreeLink Central Station. A passenger train exploded in the building, causing immense structural and personal damage. Though rescue efforts are underway, the initial blast has undoubtedly caused fatalities among passengers and employees alike, and left many more in critical condition. We understand individuals- (continue to the next line)

MEMORIE. Soma, go and play your games in your room.

SOMA. But you said-

MEMORIE. Just go do it, bud. Please.

SOMA. Okay...

NEWSCASTER. -may be concerned for friends and family, but until authorities can determine the cause of the explosion, all citizens are advised to remain in their homes and await further information. This is a suspected terrorist attack, and is being taken extremely seriously by Centurion's security experts. Whether or not this is an act of violence from our neighbouring nation of Hardizan, or dangerous factions within our city, we will not let this dampen the proud spirit of Talsoria. Please use the Nexus-Rise app to stay informed as we continue to investigate the situation.

[MEMORIE IS CALLING FAER PARENTS AS THIS IS ON THE TELEVISION.]

VOICEMAIL. The number you're trying to reach-

MEMORIE. Pick up mom!

VOICEMAIL. Is currently unavailable. At the tone-

[A BEEP. CALLING NOISES AGAIN.]

MEMORIE. Pick up!

VOICEMAIL. The number you're trying to-

[A BEEP. MORE CALLING NOISES.]

MEMORIE. Come on dad. Pick up your comm.

VOICEMAIL. The number you're trying to reach is currently unavailable.
At the tone please record your message.

[BEEP]

MEMORIE. Dad, I saw the news. Pick up your comm and tell me you're okay. If you're busy, tell mom to call me. This is important. *Call me back.*

[BEEP. MEMORIE TURNS OFF THE TELEVISION.]

MEMORIE. *(whispered)* Crashes.

[SOFT FOOTSTEPS AS SOMA APPROACHES]

SOMA. Memorie? Is everything ok?

MEMORIE. *(on the verge of a panic attack)* Yeah, bud. Just waiting on mom or dad to give me a call back. Why don't you go back to your room and load our save of Worm Fighter II? I'll be there in a minute, we can play a couple rounds together.

SOMA. Awesome! I'll totally beat you this time!

MEMORIE. You're on!

[SOMA RUNS DOWN THE HALL, EXCITED.]

MEMORIE. Please call back. Please...

END OF SEGMENT

Now Viz had the idea; a plan. She was really going to be doing this...

It was a task easier said than done. She had the idea, but even if she could engineer a glitch to occur in the logs, she had to then deal with making sure SynthBeat got into the cargo. The simplest method was to hide them in a crate or box, but what would be good enough for that?

She thought of this question as she was looking over a manifest and checking the shipment itself. She quietly looked over the shipping containers, considering them for her plan. Considering which one would be safe enough to avoid suspicion.

One thing that Viz did notice as she did this was that once again there was a large number of cargo that was heading out of Talsoria; to the Empire.

It wouldn't be the first time that she's taken note of stuff that was heading to the Empire. This had been a recurring thing for a while now, and the reason why this was strange was because normally anything that came through the port was going to other parts of Talsoria, not exported to other places like the Empire. Viz had asked about it before, but her supervisors had dismissed her questions in a rather ominous way. Viz had quickly taken the hint to stop asking.

The strangeness of it never really left Viz's mind, but she reasoned there must be a logical explanation for it; that maybe Talsoria was just trying to establish trade on an international scale and is trying first with the Empire. That made sense, right?

Still, even if that was true, what was in the shipments that the Empire could want? Just what was Talsoria sending to a place like the Empire?

Viz paused in her inspection, going over to one of the crates that was bound for the Empire. The manifest didn't list what was inside, but she only observed where it was heading, and the size of the shipping container. It looked like it would be big enough for a person to fit inside. If she could find a crate of around this size, it could work. Maybe she could pretend this was a last minute addition to the shipping, because she wasn't sure she could make a glitch occur in the logs.

That might have to be enough.

BEGINNING OF SEGMENT [2]

[THE DOOR TO SOMA'S ROOM OPENS. UPBEAT VIDEO GAME
MENU-SCREEN MUSIC PLAYS SOFTLY]

SOMA. I got it all set up! Are you ready to get your butt kicked?

[A LONG, SILENT PAUSE, BROKEN ONLY BY THE VIDEO GAME MUSIC]

SOMA. Memorie?

[MEMORIE TAKES A SHAKY BREATH.]

[SOMA HITS A BUTTON AND THE CONSOLE POWERS OFF. THE MUSIC
STOPS]

SOMA. Memorie what's wrong?

MEMORIE. Mom... uh... (*fae swallow*) Mom and Dad aren't going to be
home tonight.

SOMA. Oh.

[A PAUSE.]

MEMORIE. Mom and Dad aren't coming home.

[BEAT.]

SOMA. Why not?

MEMORIE. They... there was an accident.

SOMA. What kind of accident?

MEMORIE. A big one. A lot of people got hurt. Mom and Dad did too.

SOMA. (*Blunt:*) Are they dead?

[MEMORIE SUCKS IN A BREATH. FAE ARE REALLY TRYING TO HOLD
BACK TEARS.]

MEMORIE. Yeah. They- (*fully breaking down*) Ghosts... I'm sorry, Soma.

SOMA. It's okay, Memorie. Um. Here.

MEMORIE. (*teary*) What is this?

SOMA. (*quietly*) Mom gave it to me yesterday. It's a Pix Friend. You take care of it. I don't really like it, so maybe you can have it to make you feel better?

[MEMORIE FULLY IS JUST CRYING.]

SOMA. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make you more sad.

MEMORIE. No, no Soma. You didn't. Come here.

[CLOTHING RUSTLES.]

MEMORIE. We'll get through this.

SOMA. I know.

MEMORIE. You do?

SOMA. Mhm. You always take care of me. More than mom and dad do. Um, so, I'll miss them, but... I have you. And you have me, right?

MEMORIE. Yeah. I do.

SOMA. So I know I'm gonna be okay. But. Um. Are you gonna be okay though?

MEMORIE. ...I don't know, bud.

SOMA. Okay. Um. That's okay. I'll look after you too. Just... don't go away like mom and dad do all the time.

MEMORIE. I won't ever leave you, Soma. I'll always come back, no matter what.

SOMA. Promise?

MEMORIE. Cross wires. (*deep breath*) Want to play Worm Fighter?

SOMA. Yeah! Can I play Ether this time?

MEMORIE. You can be whoever you want.

SOMA. Awesome!

[BUTTON PRESS, AND THE CONSOLE POWERS BACK UP. GAME MUSIC BEGINS AGAIN. THE SOUNDS FADE.]

END OF SEGMENT

Viz messaged SynthBeat as soon as she was able, and told them to meet her at in three days time. In those three days that led up to when they were supposed to meet, Viz could only feel nervous about what she was about to do, trying to hide it as best she could. Of course she couldn't let anyone else know about the fact she agreed to help a friend smuggle themselves out of Talsoria, but that didn't stop her from worrying.

The day the two were supposed to meet arrived, and Viz couldn't help but note that this would be the first and possibly last time she would ever meet SynthBeat face to face. She'd only ever known them through the web, though he had always come off as a nice enough person.

Hours before her shift started, Viz finally met up with SynthBeat. They were... well, a bit more quiet than she thought they'd be. She gave them a run down of the plan as well as instructions. She was going to get him into a crate that she had set aside in advance and from there get them onto a ship heading out of Talsoria. Pretty straightforward, but not without risk. SynthBeat understood, giving a nod in understanding.

When the time came to put the plan in motion, it started out smoothly enough. Viz was able to get her friend into a crate relatively around the same size as those going to the Empire. Once that was settled, Viz

attached a label onto the crate and started wheeling it off to the loading dock. So far so good.

She would occasionally glance down at the crate as she made her way to the next stop. She still didn't know the exact reason why SynthBeat wanted to leave, but whatever it was, she hoped they'd be okay on this journey.

Everything had proceeded smoothly so far, of course there just had to be something to trip her up.

Just outside the loading dock Viz ran into a security guard, who asked what she was doing. Viz tried her best to keep her composure and say that she was transporting an additional item to go out on the next shipment. She had to quickly assert her lie about it being a last minute addition when the security guard continued to question it, but unfortunately that didn't stop them from coming over and tapping the lid. Viz didn't have time to think before they opened the top.

She froze, knowing she and her friend were found out. Much to her surprise however, after a long tense moment, the security guard looked up at her and gave her a questioning look. Viz shook her head and let out a sigh, saying in a quiet voice,

"They just want out of here... please."

The guard studied her, and she could have sworn that she recognized something like sympathy in that gaze. The lid was then closed and the guard took a step back.

"Go, before I change my mind or anyone sees you." They grumble.

Relieved, Viz nods in thanks and hurries along into the loading dock. There's no time for goodbyes, not here and not when they just narrowly avoided getting caught. There was no time left. Viz whispered a goodbye, hoping SynthBeat heard her, and retreated away from the loading dock.

Viz proceeded on with the rest of her shift like nothing had happened, although she did keep an eye on the tracking for that shipment, out of concern for her friend.

A few days later, Viz checked back in on the tracking... only to find something strange. The tracking had suddenly gone offline. There was no clear indicator of why; it was just gone. She tried seeing if it was a system error, but she still got the same result. That wasn't good. Viz asked about it in the most nonchalant way she could, but all she got back for an answer was that there was some kind of "interference".

What was that supposed to mean? What kind of "interference"? There had been a ship bound for the Empire- maybe it was something to do with all those boxes and containers that were heading that way. And if that was the case... what about SynthBeat, her friend?

Viz knew there wasn't a whole lot she could do here; it was something that was out of her hands now. She didn't know what had caused this "malfunction" with the tracking or if it was involved with all the shipments heading toward the Empire. All she could really do now, knowing SynthBeat was on board, was hope that whatever had happened didn't stop her friend from finding someplace new to live their life. She hoped they were far away from here, and she hoped they were safe.

BEGINNING OF SEGMENT [3]

[OUTDOOR NOISES. MEMORIE SLIDES A DOOR OPEN TO A LARGE INTERIOR SPACE.]

THESIA. Memorie! You're here early.

MEMORIE. Hey, Thesia.

THESIA. I heard about what happened. Your parents... they worked for M/S, right? Are they okay?

[BEAT.]

MEMORIE. Their names were on the casualty report.

THESIA. Ghosts. I'm sorry, Memorie.

MEMORIE. I need to know if the explosion was a revolution operation.

THESIA. Oh.

MEMORIE. Some people were talking about sabotage at the meetings and it seemed too similar to be a coincidence. Do you know anything about it?

THESIA. I'm not sure I know any more than you. Some people think that it could have been a Hardizanian terrorist attack. There was an Arachne CEO on that train, and that's a big enough corp that they'd be down to take her out despite the risk. Then again, some people around the base have been getting restless, and someone *that* important, from a place like Arachne...

MEMORIE. You think it might have been one of us.

THESIA. I don't want to, but I'm also not one to rule out viable options, no matter how uncomfortable they are. I can't really be sure either way though. There's just not enough info.

MEMORIE. No, totally, I don't want you to tell me something just because you want to make me feel better.

THESIA. You don't have to act so strong. It's hard to lose parents, it'd be nice to know who's responsible.

MEMORIE. Hm. I guess. *(sigh)* Is it bad that after the initial shock, I don't really miss them? Or at least, like, I miss them the normal amount that I usually do.

THESIA. Your feelings aren't bad, Memorie. They're your... natural response to these things.

MEMORIE. It just feels like they're at work again. Not answering my calls. Not coming home for dinner. Except they're never going to come back.

THESIA. Will you and your brother be alright without their income?

MEMORIE. I mean, yeah. The place we live in is technically paid for by M/S since our parents worked there, but we'll have to start paying the debt back when we're old enough. So we've got another year and a half, but I might get a job sooner. The debt is subsidised if I sign with M/S, of course, though I don't know if I want to. In any case, we'll be fine.

THESIA. You're very strong, Memorie. You're handling this news better than most would.

MEMORIE. I don't really know how I'm supposed to handle it. I'm just... going one step at a time.

THESIA. Sometimes that's all we can do.

MEMORIE. *(sigh)* Thanks for always being willing to talk to me, Thesia. It's really nice to have you here.

THESIA. Of course. I'm honoured to be able to talk to you as well.

MEMORIE. *(awkward laugh)* Thanks.

[PEOPLE START TO TRICKLE IN.]

THESIA. I've got to talk to Nikki before the meeting, but I'll be back around before we get started. Are you sure you're alright?

MEMORIE. I will be.

THESIA. Okay. I'll be back.

MEMORIE. No rush. I'll be here.

END OF SEGMENT

- Port Shi Worker

- They package war supplies that Talsoria is selling to the empire. They're not supposed to know that. Just some weird stuff going on, but they don't pay too much attention to it. Most shipments are domestic
 - Any prodding is met with total ominous shut down
- an internet friend wants to get out of talsoria (lyssel) and they smuggle them out.
 - wants to get to gannon islands. They look at the logs are are like, huh, weird that Talsoria is sending so much stuff to the Empire... but yup that's the only international place, wanna go there? It's at least closer to Ganon...
 - they try to explain the empire thing away, maybe Talsoria is trying to start international trade...
- They have to find a way to get the box with Lyssel inside of it. They try to figure out what the fuck to pretend the box is, how to get it into the registry for the boat. Which makes them question even more what the fuck is being shipped on this boat... Trying to figure out what a good lie is.
- Maybe there's a sympathetic security person?
- The friend tries to track the boat, but eventually the boat... is gone? Goes offline? There was like "interference" or something? They're like "what the fuckkkkk"
- They suspect that whatever shady business this was interfered with the ship reaching it's destination. They suspect their friend is probably gone... but hope that they somehow survived, and found a better place ot live.

The friend is Lyssel, but don't use their name. Could put their username in (make that up)