

SCENE 1 - The *Cormorant*

[we hear the sound of the *Cormorant* landing and the hatch opening.]

TARA: I still don't understand why you're doing this.

ZAYNE: Because she's my mom, Tara. And because you'll all have a better chance with a Captain who knows what she's doing.

EDDIE: A better chance at what? The parts she'll need to get that ship flying are gonna cost more than the *Cormorant*. We'd have to work for years just to pay this off.

ZAYNE: Obviously. I'm banking on you all finding another way out of this. But if you can't-

TARA: What?

ZAYNE: My life isn't worth everyone's livelihood. If you can't find some way to cheat her into letting me go, give up on me and go live your lives.

LOUISA: Mom's never gonna agree to that.

TARA: To hell with her, I'm never gonna agree to that.

ZAYNE: I might be able to find some way to escape...

TARA: If you do, there's a portable radio in your toolbox. We're leaving a microsat in orbit which can relay a message back to the *Cormorant*. Using this frequency, you can send us a message.

ZAYNE: Alright. Let's go. We wouldn't want to keep our new friend waiting.

[opening credits music]

Announcer: Sonomancy Productions Presents- Shelar and the Scavengers, "Episode 2: Behold, Breakfast"

SCENE 2 -The Battlecruiser

[A beep]

ZAYNE: (muffled through speaker) I'm outside.

SHELAR: Alright. I'm going to pressurize the outer chamber.

[air hissing] [door opens]

SHELAR: Hands on your head.

ZAYNE: I'm unarmed.

SHELAR: What are you carrying?

ZAYNE: Luggage. If I'm going to be here for weeks or months I'm going to need clothes, medications, toothpaste- that kind of thing. Plus I thought if I was going to help you fix your ship I would want tools made for human hands.

SHELAR: Set it down in the corner over there then put your hands on your head and come through the door. Click, please scan that bag and make sure it doesn't contain any weapons.

CLICK: Well, technically anything's a weapon if you're creative enough, boss. Lotsa stuff in here that could be used for stabbing -

SHELAR: I don't care about stabbing, Click, just make sure he didn't hide a pulse pistol in there. Now, you go to that side of the room and face the wall. *You* are free to go back to your shuttle. This concludes the prisoner exchange.

MARISSA: Can I have a moment with my son-

SHELAR: You may not. Go now before I change my mind and decide to blow up your ship after all.

MARISSA: Zayne, I-

SHELAR: NOW.

[door closing] [air hissing]

SHELAR: You can take off the mask now. Different as our peoples may be, we breathe the same air.

ZAYNE: We do? I always thought Roshid air had heavier concentrations of-

SHELAR: We have been a multiplanet species for far longer than you have and we have adapted to different atmospheres. I breathe an oxygen-nitrogen mix similar to the one found on Earth, hence why this ship is pumped full of it.

CLICK: Luggage is clean, boss. I mean, any number of ways he can kill you with what's in there, but he'd have to get pretty close.

ZAYNE: No one's killing anyone.

SHELAR: Hmm. We'll see. Lumo!

[Hologram activation sound]

LUMO: Yes, captain?

SHELAR: For the last time, I'm not the- oh never mind. This is Zayne. Get him checked in as a passenger. No privileges. You can put him up in the guest quarters on C deck.

LUMO: Certainly, Captain. Passenger Zayne, please come with me.

[footsteps, door sounds]

ZAYNE: So, you're-

LUMO: My name is Lumo. I am a sub-personality of the ship's artificial intelligence. I am designed to serve as a liaison between the passengers and the crew.

ZAYNE: Why does a warship have passengers at all?

LUMO: This vessel was not designed to be a warship. It was repurposed when the humans became aggressive. It was originally designed as a luxury transport, and was even retrofitted to accommodate humans in the hopes of continued peaceful relations between our peoples. That is why I speak English, and why we have guest quarters in the human style.

ZAYNE: Are you serious? You think we're the ones who became aggressive?

LUMO: The cause of the war is well-documented. The Roshid only wanted peaceful coexistence. Conflict became necessary when the humans attacked Lantas 2.

ZAYNE: Lantas 2 was retaliation for your unprovoked attack on Yeedanne.

LUMOS: Please, let's not discuss politics. I can see you have been raised on human propaganda, and it is not in my programming to try and deprogram you. Program. Deprogram. I am not programmed to deprogram to program to deprogram to program to program to.

[hologram appearify] [Lumos keeps babbling during the next line]

CLICK: Sorry, he gets like this. Pro tip- never ask him to repeat a tongue-twister. I think his memory core was damaged during the crash. Nothing for it but to reboot him.

[Lumos vanishes]

ZAYNE: Uh, thanks?

CLICK: No problem. I don't really know why he's affected by it and I'm not, seeing as we're stored in the same memory core. Maybe you can figure it out. Between you and me the boss doesn't know much about computers.

ZAYNE: Sorry, and you are?

CLICK: Call me Click. I'm what's left of the ship's general-purpose AI, but like I said, the boss isn't big into computers and she had to cobble me together from the systems that survived the crash, so I'm kind of a disaster.

ZAYNE: Yeah, um, see, I'm more of a.. mechanical engineer, I guess you'd say. Tara is our computer gal.

CLICK: Well, what can you do? We should leave him turned off for a few more minutes. Let me check you in. Name?

ZAYNE: LaMarque. Zayne LaMarque.

CLICK: And your occupation is- starship mechanic?

ZAYNE: Uh, sure, I guess that's as true as anything.

CLICK: Reason for visit we'll just put... hostage? Ok, sure. And your privilege level we'll set at zero, as per Captain Shelar's orders.

ZAYNE: Shelar? That's her name?

[we hear a printer during this line]

CLICK: It is, though you'd safer calling her Captain or just Sir, she's not the type to be too familiar. She doesn't even really like it when I call her boss although back when we had a crew I used to call everybody boss. Alright. Take this badge, it lets the ship know where you are so it can make sure there's air and such. And it lets Lumos answer basic questions in case he forgets the Captain's override when we turn him back on, which honestly there's a 50/50 chance he will. Uhhh... let's try it now.

[hologram appearify]

LUMO: Oh. Hello. A new passenger? This is exciting!

CLICK: What's the last thing you remember, old boy?

LUMO: Hmm. I was going to try to make a new dessert for the Captain using some of the frozen mishpak fruit in the galley. You said not to bother because, well, you know how she feels about-

CLICK: Ok, so you're missing about three weeks. That's fine, nothing exciting happened for most of them but you have got to start backing up your memory files more often.

LUMO: Oh, I see. Well that is embarrassing. Fortunately the new passenger has a badge, so I don't have to admit that I don't remember his name. Hello [as if reading] Mechanical engineer Zayne. Welcome to the *Rithshathi*. How long have you been aboard?

ZAYNE: About 15 minutes?

LUMO: Oh that's a relief. I was afraid you and I had a whole history I'd forgotten.

CLICK: Captain Shelar told you to take him to the guest quarters on C deck.

LUMO: Oh, excellent. Right this way.

SCENE 3 - Shelar's quarters

[we hear ominous music and several voices speaking in a guttural alien language. There is some swelling music behind them. This is a dramatic scene. We hear the hologram appearify sound. The voice and music stop.]

SHELAR: What is it, Lumo?

LUMO: Are you sure it's healthy for you to keep watching that one, Captain? There's some lovely comedies in the media library that I think would put you in a much better mood-

SHELAR: Lumo. What I do with my time is my business. What do you need?

LUMO: Sorry, sir. I just wanted to double-check about the accommodations for our guest-

SHELAR: Prisoner.

LUMO: Prisoner? Oh, I'm sorry I didn't realize. You see I apparently forgot to backup my memory circuits again and-

SHELAR: Please tell me he is secure?

LUMO: I was not aware he was a prisoner, so I didn't feel the need to secure him-

SHELAR: Is he still in his quarters?

LUMO: He... is not.

SHELAR: Where is he?

LUMO: Uh...it looks like he's on his way to the reactor control room.

SHELAR: Dammit.

SCENE 4 - The Reactor control room

ZAYNE: Is there a way to shift this to a language I can read though?

CLICK: There might be, but I'm not sure how the boss is gonna feel about that one.

ZAYNE: Well if she wants me to fix her ship, I'd hope she would feel-

SHELAR: HUMAN!

ZAYNE: My name is Zayne-

SHELAR: I do not care what your name is. Perhaps I was unclear about how this arrangement will work. I will assign you tasks. When you are not working on an assigned task, you will be in your cell.

LUMOS: You mean my quarters?

SHELAR: Call them what you will, just get back to them and stay there until I send for you.

ZAYNE: I don't think I like your tone.

SHELAR: I do not care about that either. In the morning, I will dispatch you to-

ZAYNE: Hey. You think I'm afraid of you just because you're, what, eight feet tall with a very serious-looking tail and an unnecessary number of pulse pistols on your vest?

SHELAR: I would expect you to be, yes.

ZAYNE: Well I'm not. And you know why? Because you need me. If you knew how to fix this ship you would have done it years ago. But you don't. So if you want this to get done, you gotta to start treating me with at least the bare minimum of respect.

[beat]

SHELAR: You have courage. That's an admirable quality among our people. But you're wrong. I don't need you. I've managed just fine here on my own, and if you're more trouble than you're worth I'm happy to pull the plug on this whole operation. Return to your... *quarters*. If you sufficiently impress me, perhaps we can discuss renegotiating the extent of your liberty.

Click, see that he returns promptly. Use a security bot.

CLICK: Sorry, kid. You heard the boss.

SCENE 5 - Zayne's Quarters

[we hear the hologram sound again]

ZAYNE: What...

LUMO: Good morning Mechanical Engineer Passenger Prisoner Zayne. It is time for breakfast.

ZAYNE: That's... a mouthful. Can you just call me Zayne?

LUMO: Certainly, Zayne. Please dress and proceed to the dining hall where breakfast is available.

ZAYNE: Wow, okay, can you just... give me a few minutes, ok?

LUMO: Certainly. However, the Captain is expecting you for your first assignment in approximately one hour, and you must leave ample time for-

ZAYNE: Breakfast, yeah, I know, I got it.

[Sound effects indicate Zayne is getting dressed, brushing his teeth, shaving, etc. A door opens]

LUMO: Ah, there you are. Please follow me. Please ignore the security bot, it is only there to make sure you do not get lost and go someplace else. In the future should I allow more time for your morning ablutions?

ZAYNE: What? No, this is fine.

LUMO: Can I tell you a secret, Zayne?

ZAYNE: Uh... sure?

LUMO: I am programmed with much knowledge of human culture, food and recreation, but the *Rithshathi* has never had even one human guest. I am excited to finally put this knowledge to good use.

[door opening]

LUMO: Behold... breakfast.

ZAYNE: Uh, you do know there's only one of me, right?

LUMO: I know. I got a little carried away I think. It's just been so long since I've had anyone to cook for and there are so many human recipes I had to try. Over here we have Oat Meal, and something approximating avian eggs with vat-bacon, and over here we have my take on the Earth breakfast delicacy known as Captain Crunch.

ZAYNE: Wow. Uh. Is there... coffee?

LUMO: I have information about coffee in my database, but I'm afraid whoever assembled it never managed to get a genetic sample of the plant. I have made a bitter, hot drink but I do not know if it resembles your "coffee" in any meaningful way.

ZAYNE: You know what, that's already better than I expected. Bring on the bitter hot drink.

[coffee pouring sounds, various munching sounds.]

ZAYNE: Lumo?

LUMO: Yes, Zayne?

ZAYNE: This tastes absolutely nothing like coffee but I love it.

LUMO: Thank you. It's ground Lisep bark with added stimulants.

ZAYNE: Actually, none of this tastes like it's supposed to. Well the oatmeal does. I guess that's hard to get wrong.

LUMO: There is a very similar dish in Roshid cuisine, but I used authentic human spices to-

[door crashes open]

SHELAR: What the hell is this?

LUMO: This is breakfast! A meal eaten by humans prior to the start of the work day, which has a particular set of unique cultural-

SHELAR: Lumo, this is an absurd amount of food to waste on a single meal for a single human.

LUMO: My apologies. I did not know what he would prefer, so I wanted to present various options.

SHELAR: He. Is. A. Prisoner! He will eat what we serve him and be happy with it. And if I see you wasting resources on this nonsense again I will crack into that memory core of yours and do some reprogramming. Am I understood?

LUMO: Yes sir.

SHELAR: Good. Now back up your memory files so we don't have to go over this again next time you glitch out. Human!

ZAYNE: Again, my name is Zayne-

SHELAR: I do not care to know your name, human. When you are finished stuffing your face with several days worth of the ship's food reserves, meet me in airlock four. I need you to take a look at this transceiver array.

[Shelar exits]

ZAYNE: Well, you know, if I have to be stranded here I sure am glad for such pleasant company.

LUMO: Please forgive the captain, Zayne. The isolation has been particularly difficult for her. She was just a hatchling when the ship crashed.

ZAYNE: Was she really the only survivor?

LUMO: I shouldn't speak about it. It's a complicated matter.

[beat]

ZAYNE: What *happened* here?

LUMO: You do not have clearance for strategic information.

ZAYNE: I know about the battle. Why else would we have been out here scavenging? But how does a ship go down this intact while losing its whole crew except one kid? Inertial dampener failure?

LUMO: The crew did not die. They abandoned ship. They believed a catastrophic reactor failure was imminent.

ZAYNE: But it wasn't?

LUMO: I was not active when these events occurred. You would have to ask Click for more information.

ZAYNE: Why was Shelar left behind?

LUMO: She was undergoing the metamorphosis. There was no way to get her cocoon to an escape pod without killing her. Anyway, Roshid do not value the lives of juveniles in the same way humans do.

ZAYNE: So she came out of her cocoon, and everyone was just... gone. Her family, her friends- damn. That would mess anyone up.

LUMO: I am glad you understand, Zayne. You should proceed to the airlock now. I will clean up.

ZAYNE: Yeah, you're right. Hey, thanks for the breakfast. It was amazing.

LUMO: You are most welcome. I was happy to have an opportunity to use my skills.

[End Credits Music Plays]

Announcer: This episode was written and sound designed by Nathan Comstock, with music by Thomas Dwyer and additional music by Maksym Malko and DKFilms. It featured the voices of:

E. Marie Davis as Shelar

Grayson Teals as Zayne

Dave Yang as Click

Nathan Comstock as Lumo and the Roshid film stars

Angela Yih as Tara

M. Elisabeth Allen as Marissa

August J. Bull as Eddie

and Marnie Warner as Louisa