

The Strange Case of Starship Iris

[Report One: Violet Liu](#)

AGENT

The Strange Case of Starship Iris

Report Two: Checkpoint Osiris

Note: this is an ongoing investigation. All agents reviewing this case should begin with Report One: Violet Liu. In accordance with regulation, a brief summary follows.

(Note: this is our “previously on.” All italicized purple lines are from Episode One.)

VIOLET

This is the Starship Iris [...] We had—we had a catastrophic shuttle failure as the rest of the crew was returning from their final scouting trip on planet uh, 5925, cause unknown, and—um. I’m the only survivor.

VIOLET

OH MY GOD, ROBOT VOICE, NOW IS NOT THE—

KAY

Uh, living breathing human being here.

KAY

Kay Grisham, I sat in your row. Hi.

KAY

Put the ship on autopilot to our coordinates, cut the atmo reg, you’ve got enough residual air and heat to get you into the cryo chamber, we pick you up, you turn in the samples to our station...

VIOLET

I’m not the best scientist out there. I’m not even the best scientist out there named Violet Liu.

KAY

Well you’re the Violet Liu I wanna meet. And not just because you’re about to owe me a drink.

VIOLET

You’re not the captain of the Philadelphia. Your name isn’t Kay. You didn’t fight in the war—

KAY

Yes. I have an agenda. At present, that agenda is to keep you from dying.

VIOLET

And then?

KAY

Get in the chamber. Find out.

AGENT

Our audio resumes approximately six days after the previous transmission. Transmission two, begin.

(FX: minor static transitions us into the Rumor, the spaceship currently housing Violet.)

VIOLET

The Captivity Diary of Violet Liu. Entry One. Upon request, I've been given a small audio device which I intend to use to record my experiences as a prisoner aboard this as-yet unidentified ship. Definitely not military--human *or* Dwarnian. It looks like it was built out of scraps. (Almost to herself) Is that a *submarine door*?

I'm sitting in some kind of central room, I think. Smaller than any room in the Iris. Six doors visible, jury-rigged with what look like standard keypad setups. Not sure where they lead. Chairs, a table—this may be a mess hall? Quiet in here, though. Mostly empty. Let's try to pretend that's a good sign.

I've been told that nobody else will be listening to these recordings. However, this is coming from the same—*person* who first lied to me about her name, posed as a government captain and war hero, gained my trust, and then manipulated me into abandoning my samples and thus rendering my team's entire mission totally in *vain*—so *expectations remain low*.

ARKADY (a.k.a. KAY)

Ship's log, First Mate Arkady Patel. Right now I am sitting literally five feet away as Violet Liu pretends to record an audio diary about me, in what may be the single most passive-aggressive move I've ever seen.

Just what's going with this chick? Is this what they teach kids at fancy regime-approved schools? Given we popped her out of cryo ten minutes ago, can we excuse this as a side effect of brain thaw? When is she gonna remember we saved her goddamn life?

(Pointedly) *Does she realize the voice recorder's not even on right now?*

VIOLET

Then what's this green light—

ARKADY

Oh hey! Are we back on speaking terms? Ah. No, we're just—glaring sullenly. Gotcha. (Pause.) You know, hero's pretty subjective, but the "war" part of that wasn't a lie, if we're keeping score. (Pause.) Also, you can lose the 'captivity diary' thing. We didn't—you're not a prisoner.

VIOLET

Right. In that case, can I go?

ARKADY

We are floating in a freezing vacuum full of very pointy space debris, days from anything beginning to resemble solid ground. You wanna go take a stroll through the crushing void of space, great, lemme go pop open the airlock for ya.

VIOLET

If your goal is to build trust—

ARKADY

It's not.

VIOLET

(Trying to put on a tough, sarcastic front, but real fear is seeping through by the end) If your goal is to get me to complain a little less—Maybe don't joke about throwing me into a dark, cold, endless waste.

ARKADY

(A little unclear whether or not it's sarcastic) You want a blanket or something?

VIOLET

What?

ARKADY

(Phrased like Violet is being stupid) You were a human popsicle for six days. Do you want a blanket?

VIOLET

I don't care. (Pause.) You said you were going to answer my questions.

ARKADY

Sure, but by then, you already knew I was a liar, so. That one's on you, sweetheart. (Pause) (FX: A few steps, less echoey because the ship is smaller than the Iris.) Here.

(Optional FX of Violet scooting back a little; she doesn't have that far to go)

VIOLET

Don't come near me!

ARKADY

Okay. (Somewhere between sarcastic and exaggerated patience) I am gonna put this blanket on the ground. And then I'll just—(slowly, like she's doing it while walking) (FX: slow steps) back away, hands up, like you're robbing me.

Look, I wasn't kidding about the no torture part. We're not savages. We're not—pirates. When the rest of the crew gets back—

VIOLET

(tense) Where are they now?

ARKADY

(knows exactly how this is gonna sound) ...looting your ship. Scrapping it for parts. Frying the remains to destroy any evidence. Look, we're not pirates. I never said we were totally above board.

VIOLET

You're—

ARKADY

Smugglers. We're smugglers. That's not a secret. You're bound to put that together anyway, from all the, y'know. Smuggling.

VIOLET

Why aren't you out there scrapping the ship with them?

ARKADY

Tripathi's the most qualified, Jeeter volunteered first, somebody needed to keep an eye on you, and Krejhh is the one flying this thing.

VIOLET

Krejhh is your pilot.

ARKADY

Yeah.

VIOLET

And Tripathi's your—?

ARKADY

Captain. Before that, she was a mechanic. (There is a note in her voice like maybe there's a story here. Captain Tripathi is one of very few people Arkady really respects)

VIOLET

And you're First Mate?

ARKADY

Yup. (Pause.) You look skeptical.

VIOLET

You're just, uh. Very—armed.

ARKADY

(Arkady is heavily armed so often that she genuinely hadn't noticed) What? Oh. Well, you know, on a small ship, it's a job with a lot of—facets.

VIOLET

And—Jeeter?

(FX: somewhere in the background, a ship door opens and closes, and footsteps approach)

ARKADY

I'll be honest, I don't really know what Jeeter does all day? It is unclear to me what we pay him for. (unconcerned) Oh hey, Jeeter.

BRIAN

(Heard all of that but by this point it no longer phases him) Captain needs you, Arkady. I can watch our new friend for a bit. We're trying to leech the fuel but the Iris keeps giving us the runaround.

ARKADY

And your advanced study of Linguistics didn't prove helpful? Just a sec, lemme scoop my jaw off the floor.

BRIAN

Hey Arkady, how'd she get my blanket?

ARKADY

(half speaking over him) Well, later.

FX

(Footsteps outta there, spaceship inner door opens and closes)

VIOLET

If you want your blanket back—

BRIAN

Nah, that's what I get for leaving it out. Hey. Brian Jeeter. Ship translator and cook, kind of. (Somehow in that "kind of" it is clear that the height of Brian's cooking skills is like, pizza bagels.) I just wanna apologize for Arkady's—general...way of...being.

VIOLET

Violet Liu. Are you the good cop?

BRIAN

Man, if there's one thing we are *not*, it's cops. (Considers this.) Welllll, there's a lot of things we're not, but cops is high on that list.

VIOLET

You're—smugglers.

BRIAN

Pays the bills, you know? Hey, so when Arkady hacked the Iris's personnel files, she saw you went to Harmony? Class of eighty-seven, right?

VIOLET

Eighty-five.

BRIAN

Oof, your first year was the purge? Freaky, right? Watching them arrest half the faculty?

VIOLET

It was a—they had a duty to—

BRIAN

Ah, you've never been allowed to call it what it was, that's fair. So you—one sec. Brian Jeeter to Arkady Patel. (FX: comm system activate noise) Hey, quick question.

ARKADY

(through a speaker) Brian, I'm busy

BRIAN

When Violet came out of cryo, did you sweep her for bugs?

ARKADY

(through a speaker, sarcastically) No *Brian*, because I am an utter novice with no idea what I'm doing and the trusting brain of a *child*. (Pause) Yes, I swept her. *Obviously*.

BRIAN

Nothing on deck that could be transmitting back to our pals at—?

ARKADY

No live mics right now except the secure one on your collar. She wanted to make an audio—captivity—thing, so I gave her the battery to the coffee maker and told her it was a recording device, but other than that, nothing.

BRIAN

She can hear you.

ARKADY

Don't care. Arkady out.

(FX: comm system disconnect noise)

BRIAN

(Almost to himself) Did kind of wonder why you were clutching that battery. (Serious again.) So. You knew Alvy?

VIOLET

No?

BRIAN

Alvy Connors? Probably went by AI if he could help it. He was an engineer.

VIOLET

(knows exactly who he's talking about) AI Connors...

BRIAN

Yeah, he was your nav man on the Iris, right? Look, it's not a coincidence we found your ship. We were looking for it. For him.

VIOLET

(Doubtful) For Connors?

BRIAN

He sent me this very weird transmission, two weeks ago—

VIOLET

You're asking me to believe he was in contact with your ship?

BRIAN

He and I tended bar together on Ryedell one summer, kept in touch after, helped each other out when we could.

VIOLET

Connors did favors for smugglers?

BRIAN

Connors did favors for his friends. Nothing illegal.

VIOLET

It's illegal to provide aid to criminals.

BRIAN

Okay...a little illegal.

VIOLET

Why are you sharing this with me? If you're telling the truth, you have every reason to think I killed your friend.

BRIAN

What?

VIOLET

Everybody on that mission died but me.

BRIAN

Nah. If you were some slick professional assassin, you would've found a way to trigger that explosion in the jump pod without also damaging your ship and coming so close to dying yourself. And you never would've let Arkady trick you the way she did.

VIOLET

Yeah, that was. (Wrenchingly painful and humiliating) A rookie move.

BRIAN

I figure, either you're on the level, *or* you're a brilliant secret agent who's like, dead-set on infiltrating our tiny operation in the most chancey, convoluted way you could think of, for, like, maybe a dare or something?

VIOLET

But you asked if I was transmitting.

BRIAN

The Intergalactic Regime has a history of bugging people without their knowledge or consent. Fun little hobby of theirs.

VIOLET
Republic.

BRIAN
What?

VIOLET
You said "Regime," you mean "Republic."

BRIAN
Yeah, I really don't.

VIOLET
It's the largest human government in the universe. You can't change the name just because you don't like it.

BRIAN
They don't get to change the basic meaning of words just because they got sick of being called a military coup.

VIOLET
That's--there were extenuating circumstances. We were fighting *aliens*.

BRIAN
Dude, look me in the eye and tell me you really think that's all it was about. (Pause, remembers his actual point.) Sorry, I'm not actually angry at you, man. I just don't think you believe what you're saying.

VIOLET
...You know, I have no reason to trust you, either.

BRIAN
Yeah, I get that.

VIOLET
So you're saying Kay--Arkady--lied to me because you thought the IGR could be spying on me. You knew Connors was dead by that point, why even get involved?

BRIAN
Well, beyond the fact that saving your life kinda felt like the right thing to do, we were hoping we could learn more about whatever happened with the Iris.

(FX: comm system incoming message noise)

ARKADY (over comm system)
Jeeter.

BRIAN

Yeah, Kady?

ARKADY

Ask Liu if—

BRIAN

Ask her yourself, dude, she can still hear you. 'Sides, I'd thought you two had kind of a fun rapport?

ARKADY

(Very serious, in a way she hasn't been before.) Quit being an ass. We don't have time. Liu. What are the odds you know how to shut down your ship's failsafes?

VIOLET

The whats?

ARKADY

The *failsafes*, Violet! It's a security measure built into the system!

VIOLET

I don't know. You conned me into resetting the password, that didn't get you in?

ARKADY

No. You need deeper clearance to screw with the—it's hard to override, once the sequence starts.

GRATUITOUSLY PLEASANT VOICE

(distantly behind her) Authorization code not accepted. Would you like to try again? Authorization code not accept—authorization code not accepted. Would you like—

VIOLET

I don't know. Why would I have any clearance at all, I'm a *biologist!*

ARKADY

We only have your word on that. Your word, and some personnel files that are not that hard to fake.

VIOLET

I don't—

BRIAN

(Reasonable) Arkady, dude, she doesn't know. Find another way.

ARKADY

(Curt) Yeah. Arkady out.

(FX: comm system disconnect noise)

VIOLET

...should we. Be worried?

BRIAN

Mm, not yet, I don't think.

VIOLET

Then when?

BRIAN

Uh, trust me, it'll be—pretty apparent.

VIOLET

Is this ship even safe to be on?

BRIAN

Why? Oh, because of the whole--Frankenship thing? Trust me, the Rumor looks a lot better from the outside. Besides, the Iris was state of the art, so, y'know. That's no guarantee.

VIOLET

Um.

BRIAN

Yeah, you're new-ish to life in vacuum, right? *Everything's* high stakes, man. All the time. To the point where it kinda equalizes back out, and you learn not to get so worked up about things. Like that old saying.

VIOLET

"It's not a crisis until you're actively on fire"?

BRIAN

I mean, that works.

VIOLET

Before, were you trying to imply that what happened on the Iris wasn't an accident?

BRIAN

Look, Connors knew something was up two weeks ago.

VIOLET

(still a little skeptical) Is that what his transmission said?

BRIAN

Hard to tell exactly what he was trying to say. But it's gotta mean something, because it's—very odd.

VIOLET

How.

BRIAN

10

You wanna hear it? Is that gonna be weird for you?

VIOLET

It's fine.

BRIAN

Okay, let me just—cue this up:

CONNORS

(A recording) Jeeter, my man, my pal! What is up? No doubt this message will be unexpected. Get in line! Surprise assignment. A short vacation from the lab. Safe to say I'm living large. Of course, the mission's secret but: exotic locales? Limited work? Seems almost designed for me.

We're passing near your neighborhood: sector two eight four three two five. The schedule's gonna eliminate any chance of a reunion, tragically. You'll miss us by days. We'll be there in two weeks. But maybe next time, yeah?

The bossman's pissed, but wrong or right, I am enjoying a break! The violet nebulas! The dark quiet skies! Thought I might find it a little creepy or something but damn, right? Sometimes you gotta enjoy the ride.

So, in one or two days we will be soaring as she flies through checkpoint Osiris, Ryedell style!

Well, everyone knows goodbye's bad luck in space, so. (A pause. A weird, poignant shift) Later, friend.

VIOLET

Wow, that. I'll admit that does sound like him.

BRIAN

Yeah, it's not—an imposter, or anything. But do you notice how his eyes keep moving back and forth as he talks, like he's nervous, or—

VIOLET

Reading something? Yeah, but. Are you seriously suggesting someone pulled a gun on him and forced him to send you *that*?

BRIAN

I dunno, man. Ryedell style, that's a joke we had, although it doesn't—really make sense here. And he knew we weren't heading anywhere near that part of space.

VIOLET

He probably just—forgot, or wasn't paying attention.

BRIAN

That wasn't Connors.

VIOLET

Look, he was your friend and—not to speak ill of the dead but—that was absolutely Connors. Uh, he seemed nice? He was the only person on the ship who made an effort to be friendly to me, but he was scattered. Checked out. And—maybe the laziest person I’ve ever met.

BRIAN

Did you know him at all before the mission?

VIOLET

I didn’t know any of them before the mission. It was last minute for me, too.

BRIAN

That guy *loved* his work. The summer we met, he was writing this program on the side. He’d pull a double at the bar and then go write code for six hours, just to wind down. It was ridiculous. Made us all look bad, but man, you couldn’t hate him for it. Work ethic like you wouldn’t believe.

VIOLET

People change.

BRIAN

Checkpoint Osiris doesn’t exist. (pause) Searched every map I could find.

I don’t know. It’s freaky, hearing him. The voice is right, but the cadence, the syntax is just—off. There’s no way he wasn’t trying to tell us something. I mean, he gives us coordinates and a date, talking like we’re gonna pass each other when he *knew* my ship was on the other damn side of space. We were on our way to try to intercept you when—yeah. Guess you guys ran ahead of schedule.

VIOLET

The checkpoint thing—

BRIAN

There’s this story about Osiris, in Egyptian mythology. He was a god, right? So his evil brother chops him up, and then his wife’s gotta go around, gather the pieces, stick him back together. Seemed like a warning, maybe? Or a “come find us.” Or, passing through a gate that doesn’t exist, like death, or—

VIOLET

Yeah, (a little embarrassed) I figured it was a math joke.

BRIAN

What?

VIOLET

Checkpoint Osiris. There were plans, but it never got built. Some kind of local unrest or—anyway, it fell through. It wasn’t something you talked about, but that’s why the route in that region goes straight from O-9 to O-11. I lived near O-11 for a few years, people whispered about it there a little. I could see a programmer joking about it. ‘When is ten an imaginary number?’ Something like that.

BRIAN

Osiris was number ten?

VIOLET

It would've been.

BRIAN

Huh.

VIOLET

What?

BRIAN

Ryedell style. The joke was, management was real stingy with mixed drinks, how much liquor you could put in, so we started saying "Ryedell-style" to mean "the same, but minus an ounce." Or, like, "the same, but one less." Like, a bike, Ryedell style, is a unicycle. So, Osiris, Ryedell style—

VIOLET

Checkpoint nine?

BRIAN

Wait, I think I know what we need to do!

ARKADY (over walkie talkie)

Liu.

BRIAN

Arkady, we're kinda busy right now.

ARKADY

Violet Liu, if there is the slightest chance you have any clue how to bypass the failsafe—

VIOLET

I already told you—

ARKADY

Yeah but your safety's on the line here, too. We are working on a countdown now, and I do mean a *countdown*.

VIOLET

What? No, it's a science vessel. No way would it have those protocols!

ARKADY

Yeah, well. Tell that to your science vessel.

GRATUITOUSLY PLEASANT FEMALE VOICE

Termination sequence commencing in—five minutes.

BRIAN

So the Iris is gonna self-destruct?

ARKADY

Unless Liu's got something to share with us.

VIOLET

I don't know! I've been conscious for half an hour, and I don't know what's going on! I don't know what happened, I don't understand what Connors was trying to do, and I have no idea why they built war protocols into my ship! This is just—not the sort of thing we're told, okay? *I don't know!*

ARKADY

Well, shit. Plan B?

SANA (Also over comms)

(An aside) Plan B's being generous, but yeah. (A little more formal, spoken quickly but with authority)
Captain Tripathi to all crew.

(FX: Comm connecting noise, the sound quality improves as Sana is no longer using Arkady's mic.)
Guys, it's hard to spin this in a positive way. In about four and a half minutes, the Iris is gonna explode. Now, we are currently tethered to the Iris, and Arkady's sense is, cutting the tether might also trip the failsafe. No way to know.

Arkady's sense is also that it's still our best course of action. If detaching doesn't set the Iris off, we want to be as far from that ship as we can when it does blow, so time is of the essence. If there's no objections, we're gonna untether. (Pause) Nobody? Violet, you get a say, too. This really is all our lives in the balance.

VIOLET

Uh. No, no objections.

SANA

Good. Brian, let me and Arkady back in. Violet, you too, we could use an extra pair of hands.

BRIAN

This way, come on!

(FX: Two sets of footsteps, running)

SANA

Krejhh, are you listening?

KREJJH

Captain Tripathi!

SANA

Krejhh, how do you feel about outrunning an explosion?

KREJJH

Oh, I'd file it under—"lifelong dream."

SANA

That's what we like to *hear!* Alright, power to full and stay ready. The second we are safely back in, I'll give you the signal. Brian, Violet? You guys almost in place?

BRIAN (running)

Almost! (To Violet) This way—so the thing, with Alvy's code--

VIOLET (running)

Brian, no offense, but is this the time?

BRIAN

Point taken. (to SANA) Alright. Captain, we're here. (FX: running ceases, like an abrupt stop) (to Violet) Violet, you know how to work the airlock?

VIOLET

┌—

BRIAN

Those three buttons, okay? I'm gonna help them get back in.

VIOLET

┌—

BRIAN (running forward)

Those three buttons!

SANA

Alright, we're here. Violet, now!

(FX: Sound of three buttons being pressed, airlock opening. Airlock closing)

BRIAN (Dragging SANA to safety)

C'mon, here, up. You okay, Captain? Haha, yeah, thumb's up. Arkady?

ARKADY

I'm fine, Jeeter. Let's move.

KREJJH

Crewman Jeeter, Captain Tripathi! Everybody in?

SANA

(FX: Some sort of switch operated) Remotely cutting the tether in ten.

GRATUITOUSLY PLEASANT FEMALE VOICE

Disconnecting in ten...nine...eight...(the countdown continues in the background, stopping at "one" where indicated)

SANA

Krejhh, get ready to live the dream.

KREJJH

(This is the best day of Krejhh's life) Strap in, hepcats and moondoggies!

VIOLET

...what?

(FX: When Gratuitously Pleasant Female Voice hits one, the entire ship shakes for a sec and then absolutely takes off; it is going so so fast)

KREJJH

WOOOOOOOOOOO! Ha HA!

(FX: The spaceship is just really really going.)

VIOLET

Ahhh Jesus!

BRIAN

It's cool, Krejhh is the best.

VIOLET

Is this really—whoa—how “best” feels?

BRIAN

Anybody else and we'd be hot mash right now.

SANA

Aren't there supposed to be emergency harnesses down here?

ARKADY

Captain, you took them apart to make that hammock in the mess hall. For morale.

SANA

In retrospect that was a poor call.

(FX: Everybody is kind of thumping around in the ship.)

KREJJH (while flying dangerous stunts)

Folks, I wanna apologize for the turbulence. We are currently fleeing that smoke cloud at—downright unsafe speeds through a debris field that is—taking some damn impressive stunts on my end. Gonna advise that you all make your way to the nearest secure spot and—WOO!!! Yeah! (triumphant laughter)

If conditions persist, you might wanna take a sec and pray. Deity of your choice; I figure, cover as much ground as we can. And if conditions get much worse, I'm gonna need Crewman Jeeter up here, pronto, for a little good luck kiss. Can't hurt, right?

In the meantime, I advise you to remember that the closer we are to danger, the more clearly we can hear the elemental thrum of our own vitality! In this moment we are *living!*

Kids, you are gonna want to hold onto something.

BRIAN

Krejjh, dude, it is—ugh!—kinda hard to navigate the hallways right now.

SANA

Okay, we just—ahhh!—need to get to the end of this hall, there's a safety—whoa—safety railing we can brace against, it should hold our weight!

VIOLET

Who designed this thing?

SANA

...I did. But point taken. Alright, count of three, we run hard as we can for the railing. One, two--three!

(FX: Everybody grabbing hold of the railing.)

ARKADY

Hah.

SANA

Everyone secure?

BRIAN

We're good, Captain.

SANA

Krejjh, how are we looking?

KREJJH

We are not in the clear just yet.

Danger, I feel you but I will not bow.

Fear, I taste you but I will not relent.

Mortality, I see you but I will not follow.

YEAH! EAT IT, MORTALITY! *EAT IT!* EAT IT WITH SAUCE! WOO!

ARKADY

Jeeter, make them stop.

BRIAN

I can't. It's cultural.

SANA

Krejjh, how's our rearview?

KREJJH

No cloud in sight. That exploding varmint has been left to make a meal of our dust.

SANA

Not to put too fine a point on this, but is it safe for you to—slow down a little?

KREJJH

I—yeah. Actually, we can start to—Everyone hold tight while I decelerate and—ha!—maneuver around—was that a chunk of *space station*?

ARKADY

(Irritated) Nobody can see it but you, we're nowhere near the screens. We're just outside the airlock.

KREJJH

Why would you—*fellas*, there aren't any safety harnesses back there. Captain Tripathi used 'em for—

SANA

Yup. We covered this.

BRIAN

In your defense, Captain, it was a pretty good hammock. Not great, but.

SANA

How's everyone feeling?

ARKADY

Pretty sure I died for a moment, but here we are.

BRIAN

Feels like this does put another check in the column for "something weird going on."

VIOLET

Uh.

ARKADY

It's okay, it's over, Liu. You can open your eyes.

VIOLET

It just—doesn't make any sense. Why would you rig a science vessel to explode?

ARKADY

God, it's *almost* like the so-called Republic isn't to be trusted. Imagine. *Just imagine.*

VIOLET

Look, I don't know everything Connors was involved in, but I *know* they had no reason to go after me.

ARKADY

None? Perfect little lapdog of the regime? They've got a lot of rules. You've never broken any of 'em?

VIOLET

Nothing worth all this. Do you know how much money and resources it takes to mount even a small expedition? That's a lot of trouble for a deathtrap.

SANA

I hate to say it, but—we are talking about a regime that won a war because it was willing to accept collateral damage. No offense, but just because they had no reason to target you, doesn't mean they wouldn't—write you off as a loss.

VIOLET

No, of course that occurred to me, but—

ARKADY

It *occurred to you* and you're standing here defending them?

VIOLET

I'm not defending them, I'm saying it doesn't make sense. I can acknowledge the Republic isn't—ideal in all respects, without automatically siding with a bunch of *criminals*—

SANA

Arkady, you told her we're just smugglers, right?

VIOLET

Why do you all keep saying that like it's comforting?

ARKADY

(Actually angry now) We break the law. We don't go around killing people as a matter of course. Unlike your *less-than-ideal, ALLEGED Republic*—

SANA

Arkady, stand down.

ARKADY

Sana—

SANA

Yeah, I know. I know, and I am telling you to stand down. Listen, we'll do a full debrief later. In the meantime, Brian, I wanna thank you for hauling me back in here. You might've saved my life.

BRIAN

Don't mention it.

SANA

Krejjh, I feel like anyone watching our flightpath from the outside would've seen a true work of art.

KREJJH

You're right. I am *incredible*.

BRIAN

Seriously, do you know how few pilots could've pulled that off?

KREJJH

Very few. Incredible. Going off comms for a spell, I'll be in the cockpit if anyone wants to join me for a drink. Or if Crewman Jeeter wants to join me for a congratulatory kiss.

BRIAN (laughing)

Dude.

KREJJH

Krejjh out. (Comm hangup noise.)

SANA

Arkady, as always, when the chips are down, there is nobody else I'd rather have on my side. I am proud to know you.

ARKADY

What if we maybe skip the feelings corner this time?

SANA

Hey. Don't make me start a group sing-along.

ARKADY

Ugh.

SANA

Violet Liu. Good to finally meet you. I'm Sana Tripathi, captain of the Rumor. How long have you been out of cryo?

VIOLET

I'm not sure? Less than an hour?

SANA

Well *hey*. (At a loss for words for a second.) Would you like a cuppa?

VIOLET

Sorry, what?

SANA

A cup of—

VIOLET

Oh my god, sorry, sorry, just. After everything that's happened, you're seriously, uh. (Maybe some hysterical laughing) Standing there in a space suit, offering me *tea*.

SANA

Oh, I meant a cup of moonshine. We brew it in the engine room. It's gruesome. But I thought, the day you've been having, maybe you could use a nip of something?

VIOLET

What...time is it?

SANA

On this ship? Half past thirteen hundred.

VIOLET

It's...only one-thirty in the afternoon?

SANA

Yeah, but. Space-time relativity sorta brings new meaning to "it's five o'clock somewhere." (Sana likes her joke, even if nobody else does!) Arkady? You wanna join us? You and I can get out of these suits and dump our stuff, meet back up with Krejjh and—hey, where'd Brian go?

ARKADY

Jeeter? Pretty sure he's uh. *Congratulating*. Liu, seriously, you can let go of the railing.

VIOLET

I'm just...thinking about the physics of what we just did.

SANA

There's better ways to get a headache. Oh, before I forget: we retrieved a bunch of stuff from the ship, including what I assume are your extra clothes. In case you were worried what you were gonna do on laundry day.

VIOLET

(understatement) Gonna go ahead and admit that had not yet occurred to me. I—is brain thaw, is that an actual thing?

ARKADY

Aren't you a biologist?

VIOLET

I didn't specialize in the freezing and unfreezing of human brains.

ARKADY

Well, brain thaw is a thing. I told you it was a thing.

VIOLET

Yes, and then in basically the same breath you called yourself a liar, so—great, now I can't tell if it's really happening, or just a combination of adrenaline shock and confirmation bias.

SANA

Either way, I'm sure it'd do you good to take a moment, get off your feet. Right, Arkady?

ARKADY

Guess that depends how much Liu really wants the opinion of some evil criminal smuggler.

VIOLET

Uh. To be honest, I think—I think I would like that drink.

SANA

Lovely! You know, we *could* probably scare up a kettle, if you want tea.

VIOLET

No thank you, Captain, moonshine sounds—just fine.

SANA

Violet, I appreciate your can-do attitude. Now if we can scrounge *cups*—oh hey, Brian!

BRIAN

We need to talk.

SANA

Great, we're just organizing a little group bonding, you're welcome to join us.

BRIAN

No, I mean, I found the key to Alvy's code just before we lost the Iris, and now I've got his message. His real message.

VIOLET

That quickly?

BRIAN

The guy wasn't exactly a cryptographer. It was easy once I knew what I was doing.

VIOLET

What does it mean?

BRIAN

Why don't you tell me?

ARKADY

Brian, what the hell.

BRIAN

(Heavily) Violet Liu, I think you owe us an explanation.

AGENT

End of transmission two.

We have verified the identity of Violet Liu, referred to elsewhere in these files as Cindy Chu.

We have verified the identity of Arkady Patel, a.k.a. Kay Grisham, a.k.a. Ishani Kanetkar. She is a known con artist, a registered subversive, and a suspected army deserter. Too many other crimes to detail here. See attached file.

No documentation yet found on Brian Jeeter. Independently verified by Agent Oliva that Alvin Connors worked at several establishments on Ryedell station in the summer of '87, chiefly at a bar known as Jamie Price's. Following the collapse of Ryedell in early '89, few employee records have survived.

Sana Tripathi is a name associated with the uprising on Cresswin Landing, in conjunction with possible alias Rukhmani Desai.

No documentation yet found for Krejhh. For the sake of clarity and consistent spelling, in this report they will sometimes be referred to as Brittony LeFever.

This report has been transcribed by Ensign Best. If you need to review a written version, please access procyonpodcasts.com. That's p-r-o-c-y-o-n podcasts dot com.

This is Agent Park, codename Apollo, thanking you for reviewing this report. Additional thanks to Agent Cross, Agent Baumann, Agent Gleason, Agent Finnegan, and the specialists at Procyon for their assistance.

The Starship Iris Case is currently classified as priority six. Due to the involvement of the criminal known as Arkady Patel, it is strongly recommended that this be revisited.

Thank you.

Long live the Republic.