

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Grey, cold metal walls and floors are dimly lit by flickering lights. It is only through the spaces between the bars of the cell door, immovable and absolute, that one can see anything outside of the desolate chamber.

In this cage sits KAYLEE, alone, but not for long. Calm footsteps echo steadily throughout the halls. In the flickering of light and dark, a figure comes closer. He stops in front of the cell door. The lights above him cast shadows across JACK's face, unamused, disdainful, resolute. He stands tall and proud before his prisoner.

JACK
Kaitlyn, was it?

KAYLEE
Kaylee.

JACK
Kaylee. Cute name; when your parents gave you that name, do you think they'd ever expected it to be attached to a kidnapper?

KAYLEE
No. But I think they'd be pretty glad its attached to a rescuer.

JACK
So, you were stealing a baby away from its own father. True or untrue?

KAYLEE
His mom asked us to.

JACK
True or untrue?

KAYLEE
He deserves better than this!

JACK
TRUE?! OR?! UNTRUE?!

His roars fills the echoing halls and chamber, silencing Kaylee. Eyes bulge and lips curl. His expression reverts back to neutrality.

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JACK

The answer, is true. His mom asked you to, well what about me? Aren't I his parent too? Don't I get a say in this? I would love my boy. I would raise up my boy right. What gives you the right to take him away from me?

KAYLEE

...Do you really love your boy?

JACK

Of course.

Kaylee comes closer to the bars.

KAYLEE

You want what's best for him?

JACK

Yes. Yes, yes, I do.

KAYLEE

Well, I mean, you've lived outside of this place, haven't you? There's a whole galaxy out there, full of beautiful planets, beautiful cities, and all those beautiful, shining stars. You want what's best for him, right? Well, don't you think...don't you think he deserves a better life than a wrecked colony ship?

Kaylee has her hands on the bars now, face inches away, smiling hopefully. Jack whips out a shock prod from his belt. He jams it into Kaylee's nearby chest, causing her to scream out in pain. She falls back.

JACK

A better life?! What are you, blind? Haven't you seen our community, our society, our way of life?! It works just perfectly, and far away from your alliance, your bandits, your reavers.

KAYLEE

Agh...You want him to be stuck here? F-forever?

JACK

He won't be stuck, he'll be safe!
Safe from the chaos of the outside
world, my boy will be SAFE from the
danger of your so-called freedom!

KAYLEE

I...I don't think you understand. I
can't just let a baby live like
that. Stuck. Trapped. Knowing I
could have helped such a cute baby
grow up in a galaxy full of
infinite possibility, of
freedom...ha...I couldn't not help
him.

JACK

Heh. Freedom, huh? Freedom only
causes trouble. You give people a
little freedom, they start messing
things up, start thinking they can
do whatever they want, just like
you and your worthless crew did.
I'm gonna put everything back in
order, make everything work just
right again.

KAYLEE

Like your captain did?

Jack hesitates, clearly caught off-guard. He stammers for a
bit, then kicks the bars with a shout.

JACK

YOU SHUT YOUR MOUTH!

KAYLEE

Didn't you say he was a paragon of
order? Didn't you say he was making
everything work alright? Didn't you
-

Jack jabs his shock prod several times through the bars,
narrowly missing Kaylee.

JACK

YOU WANT ANOTHER SHOCK, HUH?! YOU
WANT ME TO COME IN THERE AND BEAT
YOU TO DEATH WITH THIS?!

KAYLEE

...Wow. Not father-of-the-year
material. Why did you even come
(MORE)

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KAYLEE (cont'd)

here? Are you here just to yell at me?! I could have gone to Mal for that. What do you want?

JACK

I want you to beg. You crossed me, you stole my child, so I want you to tell me that you were wrong. That you were an idiot. I want you to beg me for forgiveness. To say, through tears and sobs, that you should have never crossed Jack Kenning, Ruler of the Olympic!

KAYLEE

...You're not a very good role model for a baby.

JACK

...Wow. You're lucky that today's such a busy day for me, Kaitlyn. A lot of work has to be done for a captain on the first day of the job. But i'll be back. And you can bet that next time, i'm gonna bring something a lot worse than a little shock prod.

Jack storms off, leaving Kaylee in her cell.

KAYLEE

...My name is Kaylee.