

STAR WARS: EMPIRE RISING

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EXT. SPACE

TITLE ZOOMS BY.

TILT DOWN to Alzoc III, a whitish planet. A modified Corellian light freighter rockets toward it.

EXT. ALZOC III - DAY

The ship touches down in an icy canyon near an abandoned mining colony. A loud wind storm whips around them.

The boarding ramp comes down and first on the ground is Captain VENTURE SOLSTICE (35), dressed in heavy winter gear and carrying an AR-1 blaster rifle.

Behind him is RO (27), a rebellious-looking soldier girl, and Aelrik, a tall, bulky Gotal with short brown fur covering his face and two short horns on his head.

Aelrik understands Basic but speaks all his lines in Gotal, a grunting sort of language accompanied by wide hand gestures.

AELRIK

Are these two the last of the Jedi?

VENTURE

I don't know. I hope not.

SPANGLER (38), burly and intense, appears on the ramp, carrying a large repeating blaster cannon.

SPANGLER

So this mining colony is deserted?

VENTURE

Yep. Sorry, Spangler.

Spangler slings the cannon over his shoulder disappointedly.

VENTURE (CONT'D)

(into his comm piece)

Injee, keep 'em hot. We shouldn't be long.

The ship, the Tempest III, lifts off and glides away.

VENTURE (CONT'D)

Ro, take us there.

Ro pulls out a scanner and leads the way into the building.

INT. DIIRENG MINING COLONY - LATER

The four Rangers walk down a long, tall hallway. At the end of it they see a figure kneeling, facing away from them.

RO

That could be one of them.

VENTURE

Wait... Something's not right--

The young Jedi turns towards the Rangers, and gets SLASHED by a green lightsaber blade. Aelrik growls loudly.

A large group of stormtroopers appears in the mouth of the hall, and the commander, BRIGGS (37), holds the lightsaber.

Spangler laughs roughly and readies his huge blaster, and the team takes cover behind large struts in the walls.

Briggs switches the lightsaber off.

BRIGGS

Venture Solstice. Why you picked that name I'll never understand.

VENTURE

Why are you here?

BRIGGS

I want to help you.

VENTURE

You know I'm never going back.

BRIGGS

Then I have to kill you. You know that.

SPANGLER

Are you done?

Spangler's finger is ready on the trigger. Venture takes a breath and then nods. Spangler howls and opens fire.

The whole hallway erupts in blaster fire. Aelrik tosses a grenade and clears the way for the team to advance to the end of the hallway, looking out into the hangar bay. Inside is an imperial shuttle, with more stormtroopers pouring out of it.

SPANGLER (CONT'D)

Spast!

Behind them down the hall more stormtroopers approach.
Venture looks around for options, sees none.

VENTURE
No, not like this, not yet!

BOOM. The hangar bay is rocked by two huge explosions.

EXT. DIIRENG MINING COLONY - CONTINUOUS

The Tempest III is outside the hangar bay, blasting the open shielded entrance with turbolasers and a couple rockets.

INT. DIIRENG MINING COLONY - CONTINUOUS

The stormtroopers begin to scatter a bit.

VENTURE
Injee!

INJEE (O.S.)
(over comm)
Yes sir!

Venture takes advantage of the commotion to move into the hangar, toward the ship.

BRIGGS
Deactivate the shield and return
fire!

The shuttle powers up as the hangar shield goes down, and the shuttle's turbolasers hit the Tempest hard.

Venture watches the ship retreat back around the corner, and tries to think quickly.

VENTURE
Ro--where is Ro?

Venture, Spangler and Aelrik are hunkered down behind some large crates, but Ro isn't with them.

RO (O.S.)
(over comm)
I'm in a ventilation shaft, I'm
fine. What's the plan?

VENTURE
Good idea, we'll come to you.
Spangler, open the floor please.

Spangler pulls a thermal charge from his pack, activates it and tosses it on the ground nearby. It vaporizes a circle of floor, and the team drops down through the hole.

INT. DIIRENG MINING COLONY - LOWER LEVEL

Venture and the team look around--this level is filled with machinery and turbines, all inactive and iced over. They run between huge drills as blaster fire sparks around them.

VENTURE

Ok, they've followed us.

RO (O.S.)

I'll meet you at the extract point.

Venture and crew race through the lower level and emerge in

INT. DIIRENG MINING COLONY - SERVICE BAY

Where the Tempest is waiting for them. They make it to the ship just as the stormtroopers arrive and start shooting.

Finally Ro pops out of a panel in the wall and runs for the ship.

Venture watches from the boarding ramp.

VENTURE

Injee, give her a hand?

INT. TEMPEST III - COCKPIT

Injee (28), a large, smiling man with tattoos on his face, looks out the windshield at Ro.

EXT. DIIRENG MINING COLONY - SERVICE BAY

The Tempests' rear-facing turbolasers power up and blast the snot out of the doorway the stormtroopers are coming from.

Ro makes it to the ship, and it takes off.

INT. TEMPEST III - CREW HOLD

The crew all looks at each other, breathing heavily. Spangler grabs a bottle of something.

EXT. DIIRENG MINING COLONY - SERVICE BAY

Briggs runs out to see the Tempest flying away.

BRIGGS

Shoot them down!

But the Tempest disappears into hyperspace, and Briggs stewes for a moment. He spins around and storms away.

INT. TEMPEST III - CREW HOLD

After taking a deep swig, Spangler throws his bottle down and rounds on Venture.

SPANGLER

Another Jedi dead. Who was that imperial? How do you know him?

Venture unstraps his pack slowly, thoughtfully.

VENTURE SOLSTICE

Commander Briggs... was my brother.

Spangler's eyes go wide. Venture moves as if to walk out, but stops, and turns back reluctantly.

VENTURE SOLSTICE (CONT'D)

We both joined the Republic Navy ten years ago. He rose quickly, and when Palpatine founded the Empire my parents couldn't have been prouder. He was making history...

SPANGLER

Now we're changing it.

VENTURE SOLSTICE

No... We're not changing history. We're not going to topple the Empire. Probably no one will ever remember the things that we do. Anyway, when the Emperor issued Order 66 I... couldn't do it. I left. He tried to get me to stay but... That's where he belongs, and this is where I belong. Guns pointed at each other. Hoping to miss but knowing that someday we'll have to take proper aim.

Spangler takes a step closer.

SPANGLER

I'll shoot him for you, Venture.

Venture claps a hand on Spangler's shoulder. Turning away, he touches the comm piece on his neck.

VENTURE

Injee, thanks for the quick getaway.

INJEE (O.S.)

Where are we headed, captain? The other Jedi may still be--

VENTURE

Wait--

Spangler pokes around a large locker, reacting to a noise. He suddenly reaches for his guns, but before they clear the holsters he passes out with an unmanly sigh.

A pair of eyes appear from behind a crate--MIRA SOLL (14), a slight girl with dark hair and the robes of a Jedi.

Ro and Aelrik raise their weapons, but Venture stops them.

VENTURE (CONT'D)

This is our missing Jedi. This is Mira Soll. She... wants our help.

Mira Soll steps fully into the light. Venture steps forward.

VENTURE (CONT'D)

How did you get on board here?

She looks him in the eyes, and he's sucked into a VISION:

- Mira Soll is meditating
- Stormtroopers come in
- She gets shot in the throat

Venture blinks his eyes. He sees a scar on Mira's throat.

VENTURE (CONT'D)

She doesn't speak... She--we need to go to Zonju V. Past the end of the Corellian Trade Spine, it's in Wild Space.

INJEE (O.S.)

Wild Space?

VENTURE

Her master had a safe house there.
He may still be alive.

RO

Wait Venture, how do you know this?

Venture looks away from Mira for the first time in a minute.

VENTURE

I don't know, I just... she--

RO

Is it some kind of mind trick?

VENTURE

She's right. We protect Jedi, it's
what we do. If there's a chance her
master is there we have to go.

EXT. SPACE

The Tempest flies through hyperspace.

EXT. SPACE - ALZOC III

An imperial shuttle approaches a star destroyer.

INT. IMPERIAL COMMAND SHIP

Briggs marches out of the shuttle and is met by ROTH DAN (29).
They walk together across the hangar bay.

BRIGGS

Did you get a lock on them before
they jumped to hyperspace?

ROTH DAN

Their ship was very difficult to
track. They must be using a shield
modifier. But our asset is in play,
and will give results.

BRIGGS

We must find them.

ROTH DAN

If you'll forgive me sir, when we
find them, can you kill your own
brother?

Briggs looks sharply at Rothdan. He takes the padawan's lightsaber from his belt and hefts it as they walk.

BRIGGS

I enjoy lightsabers not because they're a flashy prize but because you have to be close to your enemy. You see his eyes and he sees yours. You understand one another. The better you understand your enemy the easier to defeat him. My brother... We'll hope it doesn't go that far.

They stop just before reaching the hangar door.

BRIGGS (CONT'D)

But if it does... I understand him better than anyone.

Briggs wheels around and disappears through the door.

EXT. SPACE

The Tempest zooms toward a brownish planet.

EXT. ZONJU V - TEL MARAMAR - AFTERNOON

The crew disembarks on a desertish planet, a little outside a bustling space port. Mira Soll impatiently leads the way into a single tower built into the canyon wall.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Once inside, Mira looks around frantically for any sign of her master. Not seeing anything promising, she goes to a control panel on the wall and flips through security holos.

Injee and the crew look around at the dingy walls and messy floor.

Venture approaches behind Mira, watching her holos.

VENTURE

The most recent log was well over a year ago. I'm sorry Mira, but this--

He leans in, eyes wide. Mira puts a hand to her mouth but doesn't notice Venture staring at the man in the hologram.

Ro walks up behind them.

RO
Who is that?

Mira looks at her sadly. Venture just rips his eyes away with a shudder and walks out.

RO (CONT'D)
Venture?

Spangler and Aelrik exchange glances. Mira looks down, thinking. She touches the desk, feeling with the Force...

EXT. ZONJU V - SUNSET

Mira Soll slowly walks along the edge of a deep chasm towards Venture. He stands on the rim, watching the sun set. Mira stops next to him and quietly faces the sun. A moment.

VENTURE
(with some pain)
I used to serve the Empire. Does that bother you?

She doesn't move.

VENTURE (CONT'D)
I was an officer, decorated, successful. Then when Order 66 happened I was required to kill a Jedi. I killed one of the best.

Mira turns her head slightly.

VENTURE (CONT'D)
When he died I felt... his life leave him.
(turns to face her)
Why do I understand your thoughts?

MIRA SOLL
(silent; subtitles only)
Through the Force.

VENTURE
I don't have the Force. I'm no Jedi.

Mira faces him completely.

MIRA SOLL
The Force moves us all. Though most don't notice it.
(pause; timidly)
(MORE)

MIRA SOLL (CONT'D)

Why do you fear the man in the holos?

VENTURE

Your master... is the Jedi I killed.

Mira's eyes go big and unfocused. Venture turns bitterly and walks away.

Mira slowly sinks to her knees, tears forming in her eyes.

Venture's step is unsteady, but he keeps walking away.

EXT. SPACE

Briggs' command ship zooms over us.

INT. IMPERIAL COMMAND SHIP - BRIDGE

Briggs stands at the forward window, and Rothdan approaches.

ROTHDAN

Commander Briggs, we've located them.

BRIGGS

Good, good. Where are they?

ROTHDAN

The transmission was interrupted, but the signal came from Zonju V.

Briggs turns on his heel.

BRIGGS

Take us there immediately.

ROTHDAN

Sir, Zonju is in Wild Space, it's outside of Imperial--

BRIGGS

Take us there.

Rothdan clicks his heels and gestures to an officer below.

EXT. SPACE

The command ship and its entourage burn their thrusters.

EXT. ZONJU V - TEL MARAMAR - NIGHT

Venture approaches the safe house, and he sees lights on inside. As he nears it he hears shouting, and suddenly a blaster goes off inside. He sprints inside.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

Venture bursts into the room to see Spangler, Aelrik and Injee trying to tie Ro to a chair.

VENTURE

Whoa whoa whoa, what's going on?

Ro bites at Spangler, and he punches her in the stomach.

SPANGLER

I caught her sending an encoded message to Briggs!

VENTURE

No, Ro?!

Injee tosses a smallish device over to Venture. He catches it and checks the settings--then groans.

Ro struggles for her life, but Aelrik jabs her back with something like a taser, but it hurts more. She passes out.

Venture drops the transmitter on a table and looks at Ro's limp body, pity and anger battling in his eyes.

VENTURE (CONT'D)

(quietly)

Oh Ro, what have you done?

AELRIK

Briggs could be here as soon as daybreak.

INJEE

We can use this to our advantage.

Venture looks up at him.

INJEE (CONT'D)

She told them to lock onto that transmitter, so if we take it someplace far from where we are we could miss them completely.

Venture reaches out and touches Ro's chin.

VENTURE

Ro... you could have helped us.

He snatches the device off the table and whirls around.

VENTURE (CONT'D)

There's a swoop below, I should be well enough away before they get here.

AELRIK

Where is Mira Soll?

Venture pauses, looks around. He's at a loss for words.

VENTURE

We set out a year ago to rescue Jedi... But it never works. All we have left is to run and hide.

EXT. TEL MARAMAR - NIGHT

Venture races through the city on a swoop bike. The streets are mostly deserted, but a few people have to dodge out of the way as he passes.

Venture stops in front of a tavern, full of lights and noise. He gets off the bike and goes inside.

INT. TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Venture glances around at all the people, the lights, and walks to a booth. He pulls out the device and drops it behind the seat, completely out of view.

He rubs his tired face, then walks to the bar and sits down.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

Spangler and Aelrik check their weapons and ammunition. Ro is still tied unconscious in the chair.

INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

Venture slowly drinks a glass of purple liquid. He pulls out his comm piece and sets it on the bar, and rubs his ear.

LATER

He stands up stiffly and walks out.

EXT. TAVERN - DAWN

Venture stops by his bike and notices the light about to break over the horizon. He reaches to touch his comm piece, then remembers he left it inside.

INT. TAVERN - DAWN

He snatches the comm piece off the bar and sticks it back in his ear, and is suddenly met with lots of chatter from Spangler and Injee.

SPANGLER (O.S.)
Venture? Venture where are you?!

He stops dead.

INJEE (O.S.)
They've got us pinned down. It
didn't work, the Empire is here!

Venture dashes back outside to his swoop bike.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - MORNING

Two dozen stormtroopers advance on the safe house.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - MORNING

Spangler is restless by the window, while Aelrik and Injee crouch against the wall. Ro is awake but calm.

SPANGLER
Come on, come on.

INJEE
We're running out of options...

SPANGLER
How did they find us here?

He looks back at Ro, tied and gagged, but looking smug. He strides over to her and frisks her.

SPANGLER (CONT'D)
They weren't locked onto that
device were they? They're tracking
something else!

But her pockets are empty. She grins awkwardly through the gag and looks at Spangler's vest pocket. He follows her eyes and reaches in the pocket--and pulls out a small beacon.

SPANGLER (CONT'D)

SPAST!

He throws it hard against the ground, shattering it. He grabs Ro by the front of her shirt, but Injee intercedes.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - MORNING

Briggs and Rothdan stand near their shuttle, watching the troops advance. They've won.

EXT. ZONJU V - MORNING

Venture rides his swoop as fast as he can through the canyon.

VENTURE

(via comm)

Has Mira come back yet?

INJEE (O.S.)

No, no one's seen her.

VENTURE

Injee, any way you can get back to the ship and give us air support?

INJEE

Negative. There's too many of them.

Venture punches the handlebars.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - MORNING

Venture zooms up on his bike, but doesn't stop at the house. He rockets past the stormtroopers, through their blaster fire, straight for Briggs.

Briggs' eyes go wide as Venture flies up and leaps from his speeder, sending the bike directly into Rothdan. Venture lands a hard flying tackle directly on Briggs, and they both go sprawling.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - MORNING

Aelrik grunts at the window, watching Venture and Briggs fight. Half the stormtroopers are facing away from them.

AELRIK

Venture is here. We have to move.

Spangler kicks Ro's chair backward and grabs his guns. He and Injee follow Aelrik out the door.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - MORNING

Venture and Briggs are locked in a vicious fist fight. Two stormtroopers run up to separate them, but Venture draws his sidearm and shoots them both down.

He turns his gun on Briggs, but Briggs already has his lightsaber in his hands.

Venture hurls his blaster at Briggs, and just after Briggs swings at it, he jumps and tackles him to the ground.

SPANGLER

and the crew rush out the back door. Injee beelines for the ship while Spangler and Aelrik lay thick covering fire.

INT. TEMPEST III - COCKPIT - MORNING

Injee slides fluidly into the controls and fires up the ship.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - MORNING

Spangler's concussion rifle keeps the stormtroopers on their toes while Aelrik picks them off individually, but they keep coming.

Dust blows over them from behind as the Tempest takes off and pivots around. The turbolasers charge and the stormtroopers scatter.

INT. TEMPEST III - COCKPIT - MORNING

Injee watches the stormtroopers disappear behind cover. He lets out a disappointed sigh.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - MORNING

Venture and Briggs are fighting by themselves now as the stormtroopers are turning to face the ship. They're both bloody.

Briggs takes a step back.

BRIGGS

Why are you doing this? Is it arrogance? You can't win. The Empire will always be here.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ro gets loose from the chair and picks up her rifle. She goes to the window and takes careful aim at Venture. He's too close to Briggs though, so she watches through her scope.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The stormtroopers regroup behind the shuttle and pull out their heavy anti-air weapons.

They set up a couple heavy cannons.

SPANGLER

and Aelrik sneak around behind the stormtroopers, and see what they're up to.

SPANGLER

Injee! It's a trap!

INT. TEMPEST III - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Injee glides effortlessly towards a group of retreating stormtroopers, and opens fire on them before they can make it behind the shuttle. He's ripping them apart.

SPANGLER (O.S.)

(over comm)

Injee! Get out of there!

Just as he clears the corner of the shuttle and comes in view of the heavy guns they rip into him.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Spangler watches the Tempest III get blasted hard in the cockpit and engines. The ship starts to drift, away from the stormtroopers, and explodes on the canyon floor.

Spangler and Aelrik both give their best battle cry and charge the stormtroopers. But Spangler is shot from above, and falls to the ground. Aelrik dives for cover.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ro scans the ground for Spangler's body and for Aelrik.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Aelrik tosses a grenade and stays down, a bit shell-shocked.

VENTURE

had seen Injee and Spangler go down.

BRIGGS

Don't make me kill you.

Venture and he sinks to his knees, looking tired and haggard.

VENTURE

I used to look up to you, you know
that? You were the greatest man I
ever knew.

Briggs ignites his lightsaber.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - MORNING

Behind Ro, in the shadows, a pair of bright eyes glisten.

Suddenly Ro convulses, her eyes roll back. She falls
unconscious to the ground. Mira Soll stands over her.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - MORNING

Spangler pulls out a thermal detonator and arms it.

SPANGLER

You go help Venture. I'll buy you
some time.

He holds it, beeping, near his chest and closes his eyes.

Aelrik looks over at Spangler. In one quick move he kicks the
thermal detonator out of Spangler's hands towards the
stormtroopers.

SPANGLER (CONT'D)

Hey!

It explodes splendidly, and Aelrik picks up the concussion
rifle and pulverizes several more stormtroopers.

Satisfied, he drops the gun next to Spangler.

SPANGLER (CONT'D)

Huh. Okay.

VENTURE

and Briggs face each other, waiting for the other to move.

Quietly Mira Soll appears nearby and tosses Venture her lightsaber. That's all it takes for the brothers to tear into each other.

They both swing furiously, missing as much as hitting. Mira kneels to meditate, focusing her Force energy on Venture.

Briggs has more skill with a blade though, and he's starting to beat Venture back. Venture is barely surviving.

SPANGLER

watches Venture fight, and takes careful aim with his pistol.

VENTURE

is getting thrashed, and any second he will miss and get decapitated. But suddenly Briggs cringes--he's been shot.

It's all the break Venture needs, and he plunges his saber into his brother's chest. Briggs falls over Venture's shoulder, and Venture holds his brother for a long moment. The last embrace they will ever share.

Finally he lays his body on the ground.

SPANGLER

lies back and holsters his weapon.

VENTURE

turns to face Mira Soll and goes to hand her lightsaber back.

MIRA SOLL

Keep it. Please.

Venture is confused.

MIRA SOLL (CONT'D)

If I am to be safe, I can no longer be a Jedi.

He fingers the hilt thoughtfully.

MIRA SOLL (CONT'D)
I've never actually used it anyway.

VENTURE
Why did you come back?

Mira Soll stands and gives Venture a sort of of-course-I'll-come-back look.

She turns and walks to Spangler and Aelrik. She crouches and stretches out her hand to begin Force-healing Spangler.

Venture looks at the lightsaber in his hand. He grips it firmly, then looks up to the stars.

FADE OUT.