

SEAS 5 - Trawl

Content Warnings

- Sickness & Nausea
- Emetophobia
- Food & malnutrition
- Discussions of: Medical care & medicine, animal death
- Mentions of: Guilt
- SFX: Sustained high pitched SFX, continuous low tones, retching, stomach noises, metallic clanking, squelching (fish), wind & waves, creaking

[Show Theme - Intro]

ANH

Rusty Quill Presents: Trice Forgotten. Episode 5 – Trawl.

INT. NETAOANSOM - CAPTAIN'S CABIN - EARLY MORNING

ALESTES

Please.... I'm sorry..... Whoever you are..... Whatever I've done to you..... I can make it right. Just please.... Stop this.....

The cabin door rolls open with a resounding SLAM.

ALESTES

(weakly) Baker..... Baker.....

NOOR

Baker's not coming.

ALESTES

Please... I need to see him.....

NOOR

Drink this.

ALESTES

Baker!!! Baker.....

NOOR

He's in the sick bay with Siva.

ALESTES

He should be here with me.....

NOOR

Come on, Captain. Take a few small sips for me.

ALESTES

How do I know it's not more poison?

NOOR

If I wanted to poison you, I'd have done it while you were still delirious so you didn't know it was me.

ALESTES

Did you do this to me?!

NOOR

Why would I poison everyone I work with?

ALESTES

To steal my treasure!

NOOR

What treasure would that be, 'ukhtaa?

ALESTES

Oooohhhh tricky trickster. Trying to steal your bracelets back!!

NOOR

I didn't poison you, Captain.

ALESTES

If it wasn't you, then how come you're fine?

NOOR (gently)

Probably because I'm the only one that did not eat the fish that was slimy and smelled bad.

INEZ (O.S.)

Hellloooooo?

NOOR

I'll go see who that is.

ALESTES

Whoever it is, tell them I can still shoot fine and I won't be...

NOOR

Drink your medicine, Captain.

2 INT. NETAOANSOM - GALLEY - DAY

NOOR

That's Siva, he's Baker.

INEZ

Uncle! How was the fish?

NOOR

That's a raw subject.

INEZ

Listen, I'm not the kind of person who says "I told you so".

BAKER

Did you need something?

SIVA

You two know one another?

INEZ

We met at the market!

BAKER

The concerned traveller was giving unsolicited advice.

INEZ

Make a nice kinilaw, did we? Squeeze of kalamansi to cut through the smell? If you have any left I'd love to study it.

NOOR

You said you had a proposition?

INEZ

Yes! Let me be frank. I've been watching your crew come and go.

BAKER

You've been watching us? For how long?

INEZ

Enough time to assume we're all family here.

SIVA

Oh, no, we're not related.

INEZ

Ay no, the other kind of family.

SIVA (still has no idea)

Riiiiigghht yes, of course, I completely understand.

NOOR

Let's say we are.

INEZ

Perfect. I thought about asking one of these other fishing boats, you know, but it gets exhausting, explaining every time: "My name is Inez de Luna, I am sometimes a man, sometimes a woman, sometimes nothing, sometimes everything, and I come with a job offer." So I say to myself: Inez, where else is a girl like you to go with a goldmine like this?

ALESTES

Did someone say gold?

INEZ

Jesus, where did you come from?

ALESTES

Where did you come from?

NOOR

You should be in bed, Captain.

ALESTES

Took the medicine. Feeling better. Tell me about the money.

INEZ

... So there's this fish -

ALESTES

Nope.

INEZ

But

ALESTES

Fish are forbidden from my vicinity until- ... until I say so.

INEZ

This is a boat. How can you forbid fish.

ALESTES

It's a ship, and as Captain, my word is final.

INEZ

(sizing Alestes up) ... All right.

ALESTES

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All right.

INEZ

(sighs) I suppose the soldiers on the Exchange will appreciate an extra grand or two.

SIVA

The Exchange? That's Mr. Blair's ship!

ALESTES

Mr. Blair?

SIVA

He's a naturalist. He works for the Queen's Museum in London!

ALESTES

Did you get kidnapped again?

SIVA

No!

NOOR

His brain did.

SIVA

He was very nice and he gave me a book!

INEZ

There are people from the Queen's Museum on the Exchange?

SIVA

Uh-huh! He's on a field expedition collecting samples.

INEZ

Hm. ... They won't even want the money. Well, it was a pleasure meeting you all.

SIVA

Likewise!

BAKER

Good riddance.

ALESTES

Wait.

INEZ

... Wait?

ALESTES

Exactly how much money did you say this fish was worth?

3 EXT. NETAOANSOM - DECK - DAY

The NETAOANSOM is sailing - wind in the sails, wood creaks, chains rattle and rope pulls.

SIVA

This was the last coil of rope I could find in the hold.

INEZ

Let us hope it's enough.

NOOR

A fish is a fish, no? Why must we make such a device.

SIVA

Yeah! Noor taught me how to catch Stingrays with my bare hands! I'm a dab hand at it!

NOOR

You certainly showed improvement.

INEZ

No, no, the real money is in the data. See these weights? They ensure that the trawl isn't just trailing behind the ship but goes to a specific depth. Doing it this way, we mark the exact location.

NOOR

And this, ah....

SIVA

Coelacanth! From the Greek: koilos, hollow, and akantha, spine! Though they've clearly gone with the modern Latin adaptation *Cœlacanthus*, hence the "see" sound!

NOOR

They'd really pay that much money for a fish?

INEZ

If found alive, confirmed alive, it would be an unparalleled scientific discovery.

NOOR

But... it's a fish.

INEZ

Here, look.

SIVA

Did you paint these?

NOOR

They're beautiful. This one - we catch them in Aden. The scale pattern... you have it perfectly.

INEZ

Thank you! It took many attempts - the angle, counting the blasted finrays... but it's not right. I can't make the paint shimmer the way the scales do in reality, you know?

SIVA

Can you not ... varnish it? With some sort of lacquer?

INEZ

The whole piece would be shiny and stiff, not just the scales.

SIVA

Ah. Right. Yes.

NOOR

...I have seen, long ago, a painter who would visit the silversmiths, asking for the dust and scrapings. He would grind it into his paint, and then he would finish the work with a glaze of honey. He painted hummingbirds. The light would shine from their feathers, in a way I have seen no other artist's work capture.

INEZ

Honey and silver? Huh. I'll attempt that next time. Thank you, Noor.

NOOR

(A moment of budding friendship.)

My pleasure.

SIVA

Didn't you have something you wanted to show us? About the coelacanth?

INEZ

This is a reproduction of the fossil they discovered recently. With a hollow spine, as you observed Siva. ...If the fossil evidence is correct, the coelacanth is the missing link between the fish and the four-legged land animal.

SIVA

The "missing link"?! They believe it's still alive?

INEZ

They don't! They think it as dead as the dinosaur - They haven't even considered it might have living ancestors, let alone

SIVA

So we're on a wild goose chase?

INEZ

No no, my friend. This is where naturalist-extraordinaire Inez de Luna comes in. Men like your buddies on the Exchange, they pick about in rockpools and markets, then they order their "local boys" to keep their eyes out for anything special while they go have their high teas in their lodgings. But me? I saw one.

SIVA

You did?

INEZ

I swear it. A flash, before my very eyes. Large, two yards at least - and a beautiful, matt dark, covered in white specks... like stars in the clearest night sky. It was stunning.

NOOR

Why not catch it then?

INEZ

I was not in a position to do so.

SIVA

Why not?

INEZ

Because I wasn't.

INEZ

Right. This should be tight enough. Let's give this net a trial run, shall we?

4 EXT. NETAOANSOM - DECK - AFTERNOON

INEZ

Heave! ...Heave! ...Heave! Last spurt, let's go. And, heave! Heave! Heave

ALESTES

Anything?

INEZ

Give me a moment

ALESTES

It's a big bugger isn't it? Can't you tell on sight?

BAKER

The process would go faster if we had the whole crew hauling.

ALESTES

I am, unfortunately, indisposed at the moment.

NOOR

Would you like me to prepare you another dose of stomach medicine, habibti?

ALESTES

No, no. I'll just stand back here and let you all do the heavy lifting while I recover.

INEZ

If she's injured, it'll only slow us down.

SIVA

What does she even do on this ship?

INEZ

No. Not here.

BAKER

Right, let's pick out the best eating fish and throw the rest back.

NOOR

We have already filled two barrels... may we not free this load?

BAKER

Who knows when we'll have a bounty like this again?

NOOR

And who do you expect to gut and salt a hold's worth of fish?

Awkward silence.

NOOR (CONT'D)

Come on Siva, let's throw them back while Baker and Inez prepare the next trawl.

SIVA

Could we, perhaps, take a tea break? My hands... they're not used to this kind of work.

INEZ

We've only done three trawls... But if you need the break... Baker? Noor?

NOOR

...I could keep going.

BAKER

It's a bit early to start a fire, just for tea...

SIVA

Right. Yes. Of course. ...A couple more rounds.

5 EXT. NETAOANSOM - DECK - EVENING 5 Later.

BAKER

HEAVE. HEAVE.

SIVA

My blisters are growing blisters.

BAKER

Another few days of this and you'll have muscles like mine and Noor's, Siva.

SIVA

Cartographers don't need muscles, they need working fingers...

NOOR

I didn't think I would miss this. But it's nice. ...Familiar.

BAKER

Your family would use nets in their fishing?

NOOR

Yes. ...In Aden, we would take out our four boats, and we would create a square between us. The net would go down and all of us would pull as one. You had to make sure you had the right balance - Amr akhi would never think and always pulled too hard, too soon. Half the time I thought he was doing it on purpose, trying to get us to fall in.

BAKER

I've been on many ships with the same type. So eager to prove his worth, he shows how inexperienced he is. Hell, as a young man, me and your brother would have got along very well.

INEZ

It's not here.

BAKER

We're losing light, let's go again in the morning.

INEZ

But

BAKER

We'll work better after food and rest.

INEZ

... fine.

6 EXT. NETAOANSOM - DECK - DAY 6

INEZ

Steady... steady...

NOOR

Baker? Why is the ship called The NETAOANSOM? Does it have a meaning?

BAKER

Mm. In Mi'kma'ki, where I grew up, the Elders there tell us the Creation story. Upon the Earth, Ootsitgamoo, all life is given to us from our Mother Earth we call Oetsigitpogoin. Not too long after everything was created, the Life-Giver caused bolts of lightning to strike and hit the earth. It formed the shape of a person - Gellulaskiv; Glooscap. After thanking the creators, Glooscap now started to explore his world around him. Glooscap one day decided he would walk down to the water. As he was walking along the sweet smelling grass, a young man stood up in front of him. He was tall and he had long hair and white sparkling eyes. "Who are you, where did you come from?" He said: "I am you sister's son, Netaoansom. Far out in the ocean, Widjosin the whirlwind caused the water to foam up, and foam began to form on top of the water, and finally was blowing along the sand, and it rested on this tall, sweet smelling grass. And with the help of the Life-Giver and the ShadowGiver and Mother Earth, they gave me a life of a young man. I have strength in my arms and my legs. I can run and help Grandmother and you. I have vision. With my eyes, I can see far away into the future. You will be able to be guided by my strength, my vision. And I also am gifted with the spirit to guide you." So Glooscap was happy that his nephew came into the world. He called upon the fish from the waters to come ashore. And he told his nephew: "Gather the fish and bring them to Grandmother, because it's the fish that will give us food and medicine and tools." So, they had a feast of fish to celebrate Glooscap's nephew's arrival to the world. Our ship, the Netaoansom, has the speed, the strength and the vision of the young who follow us. He is a reminder: how one lives their life has its great effect on those who come seven generations after you.

A respectful beat of silence.

NOOR

You blessed the ship with a beautiful name.

BAKER

I didn't name the ship. ...Alestes did.

SIVA

The Captain?!

BAKER

She has a good heart in her, as much as she likes to pretend that she doesn't.

INEZ

Come, friends. On my mark... And, HEAVE. And...

7 EXT. NETAOANSOM - DECK - NIGHT

ALESTES

HELP! HELP!

BAKER

Noor, Inez, you go! Siva hold the line with me.

ALESTES

(absolutely delighted) It's the motherload!!

INEZ

You've been over here rod-fishing?!

ALESTES

Come on, help me!

INEZ

I can't believe- I thought you were ill!!

NOOR

Captain, lean into me, here, I'll anchor you while you pull. Inez, you grab a net!

ALESTES

This is it! I can feel it! Oh we're feasting tonight, crew! It's a tuna for sure!

NOOR

Reel!

And now some slack - Some slack

Reel!

Reeling. Slack. Reeling - grunts of effort -

INEZ

I see it, I see it!

ALESTES

YES! YESS!

INEZ

Oh my God.

ALESTES

What an ugly bastard!

INEZ

Cosmoid scales, three-lobed caudal fin

NOOR

Baker, Siva! Drop the trawl! Come help

ALESTES

What are you doing?!

NOOR

Come on, you too - lift!

ALESTES

My fish!! My catch, my dinner! Where are you taking it?!

SIVA

Matt dark, covered in white specks like stars...

NOOR

Let's go, down to the aquarium, quick!

8 INT. NETAOANSOM - AQUARIUM - NIGHT

SIVA

It's definitely not two yards.

INEZ

But the patterning - definitely the same, or similar

BAKER

A child, perhaps?

ALESTES

(babytalking) Little baby's gonna bring mummy the gold, yeah? Beautiful money baby!

INEZ

A shame it's not an adult, but I'm sure the insides will be just as valuable

SIVA

Insides??

INEZ

Tomorrow we do a full anatomical dissection. Who's to say, we might even find some amphibious quirks - **(realising)** Did any of you notice whether it seemed to have lung capacity on deck?? And the rod!! We have to note the depth your line went - but, agh, without the weights, who's to say the line was fully perpendicular

SIVA

We can't kill it!

INEZ

What? Why?

SIVA

Look how cute it is!

INEZ

"Cute"? Siva, you understand what this specimen will mean to the development of our understanding of human lineage, yes?

NOOR

I think it would be a shame to kill such a creature.

INEZ

Oh come on!

BAKER

If they are a child... we should return them.

INEZ

It's not a baby we've orphaned! It's an adolescent at least - perhaps - who knows, hundreds of years old.

BAKER

You know that? For certain?

INEZ

Baker, that Glooscap story. They had a feast of fish.

BAKER

That's...

INEZ

Different? I'll offer anything that'll appease you. Tobacco, sweetgrass - and I'll use every part of it, and I'll give thanks to whichever Creator you want me to thank.

BAKER

You do not take the first you find, in case they are the last.

INEZ

Uh-huh. That ethos work out in your previous jobs?

BAKER

(uncharacteristically dark) What would you know about

ALESTES

(changing the subject) It wasn't that hard to catch. I caught it in an hour on the line.

SIVA

We were trawling for four days!

ALESTES

I go out there, catch another, make them breed, we raise the eggs, BAM.
Money maker, guaranteed.

INEZ

If we don't kill it, we can't dissect it to count its bones, look at its organs, see what it has in its stomach, see what it's eaten in the wild.

SIVA

What if it's one of the last of its species? One of the last and we just... cut it up like it's nothing. **(clearly projecting onto the fish)** ...Maybe it has a family that loves it more than anything in the world.

The crew consider the fish, and one another for a moment.

ALESTES

Keep it alive.

INEZ

But

ALESTES

I caught it, you didn't. It's mine to make do with as I see fit, and we're keeping it until I know whether it's worth more dead or alive.

INEZ

Do none of you understand what

NOOR

Inez, your drawings... The scales, the colouration... that will take a while, no?

INEZ

...it will.

NOOR

Why not make a start with those?

INEZ

Fine. But I'm not leaving this ship until I'm satisfied.

ALESTES

And here I thought, as Captain, I chose who stayed aboard.

INEZ

I get a wage equivalent to Baker's for any labour undertaken on the ship, I demand my own compartment, and I will have this documented in a written contract.

SIVA

Should... should we have contracts like that?

NOOR

We very much should.

INEZ

And Alestes? **(darkly, to Alestes)** Unlike the rest of your associates, I won't be gutted in an alleyway over a fight about prices.

ALESTES

(smiling threat) Welcome to the crew, Inez.

9 INT. NETAOANSOM - CAPTAIN'S CABIN - NIGHT

ALESTES

Enter.

The door rolls open, BAKER enters.

BAKER

I've come to apologise.

ALESTES

For...?

BAKER

... I noticed you kept yourself distant, this week. More than usual.

ALESTES

You expect the Captain to be out there hauling nets and singing folk songs?

BAKER

And you've been eating badly.

ALESTES

Can you blame me?

BAKER

And your colour's been off.

ALESTES

What's your point, old man?

BAKER

I'm sorry. I acted with pride at the market, and made you ill. But you don't need to protect my feelings. You must punish me in front of the crew.

ALESTES

Why would I do that?

BAKER

To uphold your image. You heard Inez, she doesn't see you as a Captain.

ALESTES

No. She doesn't.

BAKER

Because you've been lenient on me.

ALESTES

... I'm glad she's choosing to join us.

BAKER

...You are?

ALESTES

I am. She pisses me off, and I'm sure I'll want to gut her by the end of the week, but... it's entertaining, isn't it? The challenge? I think I understand that desire, better. Him better.

BAKER

... That sounds like something someone building a permanent crew might say.

ALESTES

Does it?

BAKER

... is that something you want?

ALESTES

A real crew... might not be so bad.

BAKER

A real crew, a real future... Not so bad at all. But we've got plenty of time for conversations like that. Right now, you look tired. You get some rest, and I'll make you something warm, all right?

ALESTES

No slime this time, Baker.

BAKER

I can't promise you much, but I can assure you we're never eating mystery slime fish again.

ALESTES takes the plate out of her desk drawer. She hums ZHU ANRAN's lullaby as she and places it on the table.

ALESTES

A real crew, huh.

[Show Theme - Outro]

SIVA

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Trice Forgotten

SEAS 4

Trawl

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