

INT. REBEL BLOCKADE RUNNER - HALLWAY

Princess Leia is led down a low-ceilinged hallway by a squad of armored stormtroopers. Her hands are bound and she is brutally shoved when she is unable to keep up with the briskly marching troops. They stop in a smoky hallway as Darth Vader emerges from the shadows. The sinister Dark Lord stares hard at the frail young senator, but she doesn't move.

LEIA

Lord Vader, I should have known. Only you could be so bold. The Imperial Senate will not sit still for this, when they hear you've attacked a diplomatic...

VADER

Don't act so surprised Your Highness. You weren't on any mercy mission this time. You passed directly through a restricted system. Several transmissions were beamed to this ship by Rebel spies. I want to know what happened to the plans they sent you.

LEIA

I don't know what you're talking about. I'm a member of the Imperial Senate on a diplomatic mission to Alderaan...

VADER

You're a part of the Rebel Alliance... and a traitor. Take her away!

Leia is marched away down the hallway and into the smoldering hole blasted in the side of the ship. An Imperial Commander turns to Vader.

COMMANDER

Holding her is dangerous. If word of this gets out, it could generate sympathy for the Rebellion in the senate.

VADER

I have traced the Rebel spies to her. Now she is my only link to find their secret base!

COMMANDER

She'll die before she tells you anything.

VADER

Leave that to me. Send a distress signal and then inform the senate that all aboard were killed!

Another Imperial Officer approaches Vader and the Commander. They stop and snap to attention.

SECOND OFFICER

Lord Vader, the battle station plans are not aboard this ship! And no transmissions were made. An escape pod was jettisoned during the fighting, but no life forms were aboard.

Vader turns to the Commander.

VADER

She must have hidden the plans in the escape pod. Send a detachment down to retrieve them. See to it personally, Commander. There'll be no one to stop us this time.

COMMANDER

Yes, sir.