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## **Chapter 23: We Did It to Survive**

MUSIC: (FADE IN) BLIZZARD OF OSBORN THEME

### **NARRATOR**

You're listening to The Blizzard of Osborn by Michael Sheen Cuddy.  
Chapter 23: We Did It to Survive.

MUSIC: BLIZZARD OF OSBORN THEME (FADE OUT)

### **Scene One: Int. Regional Detention Center. Day.**

SOUND: Fluorescent light buzz, footsteps approaching

### **GUARD 1**

Don't let the dark girl's size fool you. Rumour has it she has a vicious body guard.

### **NARRATOR**

Two guards approached Cassie's holding cell.

SOUND: Jailer's keys, padlock unlocking

### **NARRATOR (cont.)**

One guard seized Cassie while the other jabbed a syringe into Jet's neck.

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SOUND: Cassie struggles, cat hiss

**CASSIE** (alarmed)

Hey! What are you doing?

**NARRATOR (cont.)**

Jet went limp and the guard stuffed her into a metal cage.

SOUND: cage rattling

**CASSIE**

Where are you taking her?

**GUARD 1** (menacingly)

Your attack animal will be held until you've made your deposition statement. No need to worry.

**CASSIE**

She's not an attack animal, what's wrong with you?

SOUND: Lock locking, cell door slamming.

MUSIC: (ominous)

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**Scene Two: Int. Tribunal chamber. Day.**

SOUND: fluorescent buzz

**NARRATOR**

They removed Cassie's blindfold only after she was seated in the tribunal chamber so she couldn't have seen the passage on the way there. The chamber was mostly featureless. Plain white walls held an array of video and audio recording equipment. One wall was dominated by a large rectangular mirror, the one-way type found in police interrogation cells. Cassie wondered who was on the other side of the mirror, invisible, and staring at her.

An elderly man wearing small oval spectacles turned and spoke.

**ELDERLY MAN**

In accordance with the laws of the Empire you have been remanded to questioning by your superiors. Your examination panel consists of five experts: an Immigration Officer, a Truant Officer, a child psychologist, a criminologist and an exterminator.

**CASSIE**

Exterminator?

**ELDERLY MAN**

Silence! You are not authorized to ask questions.

SOUND: hubbub among crowd

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**NARRATOR**

Cassie looked from one panelist to the next. The exterminator was most disturbing, sitting stock still, draped in olive green overalls and wearing what looked like a welder's mask with a visor of opaque black glass blocking even the slightest glimpse of his eyes.

**CRIMINOLOGIST**

First of all—the portable data device you arrived with—from whom did you steal it?

**CASSIE**

I didn't steal it! Queen Mavis gave it to me!

SOUND: outcry of crowd ( "You lie!" )

**NARRATOR**

The elderly man with the spectacles turned to a woman in a navy blue jumper with a prim white collar.

**ELDERLY MAN**

How do you, as the child psychologist, evaluate the suspect's credibility?

**CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST**

Her eyes dart shiftily. Her fingers flex nervously. Our proximal sensors indicate accelerated heart rate and increased blood pressure, all signs that she is lying.

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**CASSIE**

I'm NOT lying! If you give me back my necklace I can show you the hologram of Queen Mavis handing it to me.

SOUND: hubbub among crowd

**NARRATOR**

The Immigration Officer stood up and asked Cassie,

**IMMIGRATION OFFICER**

Where do you come from?

**CASSIE**

Osborn, North Dakota.

**ELDERLY MAN**

There is no such jurisdiction in the Empire.

**IMMIGRATION OFFICER**

And how did you get here?

**CASSIE**

We crossed the Sea of Opacity in a megadinka.

SOUND: hubbub among crowd

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**ELDERLY MAN** (shouting)

Objection! Fanciful tales are inadmissible in these proceedings.

**CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST**

You are aware, are you not, that it is physically impossible to cross the Sea of Opacity?

**CASSIE**

All I know is we climbed into the megadinka and it flew over the Sea of Opacity. We drifted for a long time and everyone thought we were lost but eventually we landed on the beach here.

SOUND: hubbub among crowd

**CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST**

Indeed. And what is this *megadinka* you speak of?

**CASSIE**

It's like a giant kite. We got it from the Skirlings.

SOUND: hubbub among crowd

**CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST**

The Skirlings, you say.

**CASSIE**

Yes. The Skirlings are a desert tribe who took us in, fed us, then were going to kill us.

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SOUND: hubbub among crowd

**NARRATOR**

The child psychologist leaned and whispered to the elderly man. Then she stood up and approached Cassie.

**CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST**

How old are you?

**CASSIE**

Ten.

**CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST**

And would you say you have a very active imagination?

**CASSIE**

Yes.

**CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST**

I see. And do you think it's possible that these so-called Skirlings may be a product of your imagination?

**CASSIE**

No.

SOUND: hubbub among crowd

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**CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST**

Really? How can you be sure?

**CASSIE**

Because Sly, Memyselfandi and Assam saw them too.

SOUND: hubbub among crowd

**CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST**

And these are the other interlopers seized along with you?

**CASSIE**

Yes.

**CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST**

And do they also come from—where is it you said—Osgoode?

**CASSIE**

Osborn. And no, I met them on the way here.

**CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST**

Go on.

**NARRATOR**

And so Cassie told them how and where she met Sly, Memyselfandi and Assam. It took a long time to tell the whole story because they kept interrupting with questions. They had so many objections and stopped



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continually to confer among themselves before proceeding with more questions.

The Truant Officer stood up and asked,

**TRUANT OFFICER**

In which training facility are you enrolled?

**CASSIE**

Training facility? You mean where do I go to school?

**TRUANT OFFICER**

Yes, if you like, where do you go to school?

**CASSIE**

Henry Kissinger Elementary.

**TRUANT OFFICER** (scoffing)

There's no such institution registered within the Empire.

**CRIMINOLOGIST**

She's lying again.

**CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST**

Her lying appears to be compulsive, possibly pathological.

**NARRATOR**

The child psychologist leaned over and whispered to the criminologist. After a brief consultation, the child psychologist

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turned to Cassie and asked,

**CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST**

Whose idea was it to steal the megadinka?

**CASSIE**

We didn't steal it! The Skirlings were going to chop our heads off so Memyselfandi got a dinka to help us escape.

SOUND: hubbub among crowd

**CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST**

So you're saying that Memyselfandi stole it.

**CASSIE**

No, he didn't *steal* it! The Skirlings were going to kill us so he used it to get away!

SOUND: hubbub among crowd

**CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST**

I don't know how you define stealing in Osborn—or wherever it is you're really from—but in the Empire, stealing is when someone takes property belonging to someone else without their permission. So according to the law, you—or Memyselfandi—stole Skirling property.

**CASSIE**

But they were going to kill us! It was escape or die! We did it to

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survive!

SOUND: hubbub among crowd

**CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST**

Indeed. Do you realize that is the lamest excuse of the common killer? *I did it to survive!* Furthermore, why should we believe that these so-called *Skirlings* were trying to kill you? Do you have even one shred of evidence to prove this libellous claim?

SOUND: hubbub among crowd

MUSIC: Blizzard Theme (FADE IN)

**NARRATOR**

Next: Memyselfandi is brought before the tribunal where his loyalty will be severely tested.

MUSIC: Blizzard Theme (FADE OUT)

[ end Chapter 23 ]