

Kyle

Previously on Quest Friends...

[Intro song begins, "Friends" by Miracle of Sound.]

Tom (as Xoc)

You think I can make a scrape...?

Hallie (as Hopper)

What are you doing?

Tom (as Xoc)

For us to find our way back.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Oh. That's not a bad idea.

Tom (as Xoc)

Breadcrumbs!

Hallie (as Hopper)

Breadcrumbs.

Tom (as Xoc)

[Pleased.] Breadcrumbs.

Kyle

In the center, with these black spiders just crawling over this, stands a figure with large imposing armor, and the tiles start moving faster, and faster, and faster and faster and faster.

The Apocrita is a database of memories. Whoever uses Redd's Blessing sacrifices themselves to the cloud but unlike the other victims is able to keep free will and able to fight it from the "inside" inside.

Ari

I don't know what else I added, but I can flex and say that I have 30 Intellect total and then 18 Might, so even though I don't have the wizard powers of Xoc I do have 18 Might so I won't be knocked down immediately.

Tom

Double my durability in combat.

Ari

Yes.

Hallie (as Ness)

I think that beating up the cloud is gonna be a lot harder than that rope-climbing thing that you were really bad at, and I'd like to stress again you were really bad at it, so um... be better this time. Okay?

Tom

[Emotional.] Oh...

Tom (as Xoc)

I know I can't convince you of anything, there's nothing I could say that will change that, but for what it's worth... I am still glad we met, Loell.

Kyle (as Loell)

Yeah. Well... just know, when you all come, I... I won't hold back. After all, you're the only one I need alive.

[Intro music swells and carries into the episode.]

Kyle

This is the point of no return. From this point onward you will not be able to perform side quests, adjust your load-outs, or return to previous story locations. Please confirm that you are fully prepared before continuing.

Tom

Fuck you.

Kyle

—is, if this were a video game, the warning that you would get. We are currently probably near the beginning or midway through the NPC fight episodes we had. You are all currently in the Ladybug driving towards the cloud and it is in your sights.

Before we actually get to the combat in the cloud, I wanted to see what final things we wanted to prep. For example, who has Redd's Blessing? What is Hop's Flex Skill? Hop, I'm assuming, is declaring everyone innocent. Stuff like that.

Hallie

All of—everybody, except for the bad... the ones who aren't innocent. They're the guilty ones.

Tom

That is in fact how the concepts of innocence and guilt work.

Hallie

[Smiling.] That's accurate!

Kyle

So Hallie, let's start with you, because the two things I do need are who has Redd's Blessing and what your Flex Skill is.

Hallie

Yeah.

Kyle

So let's start with the Flex Skill. What is your Flex Skill, Hop?

Tom

[Excited.] Yes.

Kyle

And how did you get it?

Hallie

[Smug.] You wanna know Hop's Flex Skill and how he got it?

Kyle

Yeah.

Hallie

Okay. Well, his Flex Skill, his final Flex Skill, is lassoing. He got it... by practicing lassoing.

Kyle

Do you have anything with which to lasso?

Hallie

Well, okay! I assume we still have like rope and stuff. We've all got our little kits, like the beginner kit that you get.

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Hallie

And your Tier 1 level-up has rope and other basic things in it.

Emily

Mm-hmm. It's listed in the explorer's kit.

Tom

We've had it since Tier 1. We've had rope since Tier 1, Kyle.

Hallie

And we have three tarps! So surely—

Ari

He could also use the snake in his boot that every cowboy has, even if it hasn't been stated, and use it as a lasso.

Hallie

[Laughing.] He's got the snake. 'Snaaaake!' He can use that to lasso.

Tom (as ghost snake)

Sssnaaaake.

Hallie

He's got plenty of lassoing material, and his final Flex Skill is lassoing. I'm really excited about it because it's like mid-tier which is the best that I've come up with for any Flex Skill this whole campaign. Like, it's not pottery or something like that.

[Laughter.]

Kyle

So, Hop is just sitting in one of the seats of the Ladybug while getting ready, doing boy scout knots on multiple different lassos.

Hallie

Yes, though I'm sure he has a book somewhere.

Tom

Are you disparaging knot-tying skills, Kyle?

Hallie

Yeah, like Hop knows this stuff.

Tom

Do you wanna start some shit?

Hallie

You were gonna ask how he knew it and I was gonna say he read a book and practiced a little bit with cans in the backyard of the Weal and then he's doing that now.

Kyle

So Hop is sitting there, he's tying knots, getting ready for the battle that's about to happen. If we look up at the front of the Ladybug, Misha is sitting there driving, and I believe, Ari, you also wanted to do your Datasphere thing for the day to get a skill. Did you want to do that now or later?

Ari

I mean, I can say it now if you want.

Kyle

Yeah-yeah-yeah. What are you summoning into your brain for skills?

[00:05:00]

Ari

I am summoning Flea Circus Expert so that I can more easily handle my ants if it is needed into various tricks that flea circus people do, make fleas do, but instead it's ants and crabs. Because they're like small enough, they probably can learn the same way that a flea.

Hallie

So, arguably worse.

Ari

[Laughs.] Yeah.

Tom

No, exquisite. These are both exquisite skills. We've prepared endlessly for this day.

Emily

[Giggles.]

Hallie

We have.

Kyle

Let me just look, because I believe Misha's already trained in Bug Handling.

[Laughter.]

Ari

Yeah.

Kyle

So you are now specialized in Bug Handling, and Crab Handling. I will include them.

Tom

Arthropods.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Ari

Yeah, I just want to be able to justify doing some potentially non-bug things with my bugs, within the realms of reason.

Kyle

Alright. While Misha is driving—You should never drive and watch a movie, but that's what's happening here.

[Static SFX and the opening music to a Bug's Life]

Because the static comes in, and normally here I do a bunch of royalty-free sounds and things like that to really get the vibe of it,

[SFX/Music ends abruptly.]

but Ari's just describe A Bug's Life, and Disney's gonna come after us if we do that. So just imagine the movie A Bug's Life, go and watch that, come back... Isn't that a good movie?

Hallie

It's such a good movie~

Ari

Oh, what a good movie we just watched.

Kyle

And Misha is now trained in the flea circus which—

Hallie

P.T. Flea!

Emily

I have something I wanna do.

Kyle

Yeah, go ahead.

Emily

I want to use my skill Deep Reserves. I have never used this skill, and I didn't think that I ever would because I thought it was trash, but—

Hallie

[Laughs.] Good start.

Emily

You can transfer up to 5 points a day between pools, so I would like to transfer to make me even buffer, because I'm already not gonna be able to do anything related to Int, so why not.

Kyle

Fuck you. Fuck you.

Tom

[Clapping as he chants.] Glass cannon. Glass cannon. Glass cannon!

Hallie

Yeah!

Tom

[Menacingly.] Join me!

Kyle

But she isn't a glass cannon. Like, you're—

Emily

I'm a cannon! *[Laughs.]*

Kyle

Yeah, you're a glass cannon, Tom, because the two things that prevent you from being useless are low. Elee's super-high thing is also the thing needed to keep her at peak performance.

Tom

You may not like it, but this is what peak performance looks like.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Tom

Elee giving someone the chair.

Kyle

So, Hopper is doing knots, Misha is watching and/or showing their balls of ants the movie a Bug's Life, Elee is just (strained effort sounds). What are you doing to move these stats?

Emily

Um... Elee took a little bit of time a while ago to do some more reinforcing of her frame, and it finally healed.

Kyle

Okay. Finally, Xoc. Is there any prep that you're doing? And since you're the one who originally got it, I want to know who has Redd's Blessing. Because a reminder of what we're doing here today, you are leading a full-frontal assault into that glass cloud in the sky, and once you get inside of it you are going to find Aegon, you are going to fight him, and you're gonna stick him with Redd's Blessing, a tool that lets you fight the Apocrita on the battlefield of memories and destroy it from the inside.

Now, a small shard of the tip of Redd's Blessing was kept back at the Weal. That's what was used in the generator and what Ness used to heal everyone at the end of the session. But the rest of the spear, the main weapon, is still with all of you.

So, your objective this session, this episode, is to get to Aegon, stick him real hard with the staff, and use the staff to enter the Apocrita on your own terms.

Tom

So, Elee has Redd's Blessing, for starters.

Kyle

That's the one she's doing the weight training with. It's like the things that you have the... ugh, the strings that you pull on. I forget how they work exactly.

Hallie

Oh, the rowing machine?

Kyle

Yeah, it's like a rowing machine.

Hallie

Yeah.

Kyle

But with the strings or threads on the end of the spear.

Emily

No. She's terrified she's gonna break this thing. She's holding it like a baby.

[Laughter.]

Hallie

Cradling the spear.

Kyle

Which, you're trained in Babysitting, so—

Emily

[Excited.] I'm trained in Babysitting!

Kyle

You're very good at it.

Tom

Oh boy.

Ari

That's what I was gonna say.

Tom

Yeah, Elee, definitely the person to go up and stab Loell with something. My prep...

[Calming ethereal music begins.]

Xoc has gathered all of the magical powers and spells he could possibly use for this very moment. The only thing that I'd like as a background prep is that Xoc, because it only lasts for 1 minute, is going to be constantly renewing Resonance Field on himself, so his staff is going to be constantly floating around him. Every time it starts to slip he'll just boop it back up.

Kyle

That gives you Int defense instead of Might?

Tom

Yes, I can substitute Int when I'm making Speed defense rolls.

[Music ends.]

Kyle

Sounds good. For a note, just for anything for time-based, because we're so loose with time—and I'm only saying this because this is the only combat that arguably will probably last longer than a "minute," quote-unquote.

[00:10:00]

Let's just change lasts 1 minute, 5 minutes, 10 minutes, to "lasts an encounter."

Tom

Yeah, works for me.

Kyle

So when you cast it for the first time, or have it pre-cast in this case...

Tom

We don't need to be like "well, time to waste a turn shielding yourself so you don't fucking die."

[Chuckling.]

Kyle

Exactly.

Tom

Yeah.

Kyle

I want it to sound fun, and "Xoc spends another turn casting—"

Tom

Recasting my buffs.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Kyle

Yeah.

Tom

We're not D&D. We're not about this life.

Ari

God... Thank god.

Kyle

Alright. So, that prompt from the beginning of the episode, that point of no return prompt... still hanging out there. You ready to say, press OK?

Tom

[Solemnly.] Yeah.

Hallie

Mm-hmm.

Ari

OK, click. Save Progress, click.

Emily

[Giggling.] Can we save, though?

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Kyle

Well, in that case... Misha, give me a driving roll.

Ari

A driving roll? Okay.

[Rolls.] I'm not putting any Effort. What is this? This is a... 14. This is a 14.

Kyle

No Effort, right?

Ari

No.

Kyle

But it's 2 steps easier.

Ari

I drive good.

Kyle

So, to set the scene for where we're at...

[Howling wind SFX begins.]

The sun at this point has almost fully set. You're essentially racing its beams to find that blank hole in the sky, and you're close to it now. The Apocrita is now no longer just a small blip in the sky, it is a pulsing, moving, breathing thing in front of you.

Inside of this cloud are a bunch of Pryliman ruins, the ones from Obsidian Bay, but you can't see them because surrounding the cloud is this black shell, this cocoon of obsidian glass, and surrounding that is the storm. Shards harshly tearing into each other and moving in a dangerous defense of the cloud.

It's the thing that most resembles weather, that is except, of course, for the bottom of this sphere out of which tons and literal tons of shards of glass and spiders rain down upon the Weal of Baz, which at this point is the thing that you can barely see.

[SFX ends.]

Do we all have a clear idea of what this cloud looks like? Because that changes as you get closer.

[Prowling music, like a predator, begins..]

The haphazardly dangerous shards that are tearing around the outside of the obsidian protective shell start moving in a pattern, a spiraling swirl-like pattern. Instead of evenly covering all of the outside of the cloud, all of the pieces have now turned towards the side facing you, and they start spinning, and spinning, and they spiral themselves inwards to a mass in the center of them which grows bigger and bigger, and a harsh...

[Dragon roar SFX.]

...turns into the gaping maw of a Xi-Drake. Misha, you go to dodge this large Obsidian Inuki as it charges towards you, and the maw misses you, but everyone else

[Scraping SFX.]

you hear a terrible screeching, and you can feel the cold open air...

Hallie

No~

Kyle

...as a large obsidian talon tears into the top of the Ladybug at the very front and tears its way all the way through the roof to the very back. Because Ari failed the dodge roll.

[Music ends.]

So who wants to have one last chase?

Hallie

[Whispering.] Chase! Chase! Chase!

Tom

Is this a rhetorical question?

Kyle

This is a rhetorical question. How this chase is going to work is it's less of a "Inuki gets to you or you escape Inuki," because she is currently attached to the Ladybug right now. It's more of a "you escape Inuki, the Ladybug survives, you don't escape Inuki, that may be the first casualty of the night."

Because Ari failed her roll, out of the 5 degrees of distance—5 is all the way away, 1 is you are caught—you are currently at 2. So, Inuki just needs to get a little bit closer to you on her turn and she will have succeeded. Unfortunately, it's still Inuki's turn.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Tom

[Grinning.] Oh no.

[Rock chase music begins.]

Kyle

So you can see that she's got one of her claws buried into the back of the Ladybug. It stopped right before the tarp. Hop, you jump to the side as the side of the Ladybug is impaled with another dragon-like

claw. So Inuki is now holding onto the top of the Ladybug and she's got her claws in the side of the Ladybug. You can all see this Xi-Drake fan her wings out to stop you from moving further.

[00:15:00]

Ari

I have an idea. Shock to the System, because I could just try to fill the mind of Obsidian Inuki with disturbing images and ideas and try to make it enough so that she lets go of the...

Kyle

How much Effort are you gonna use to that?

Ari

I am doing... 3 levels of Effort, which then would be—I want to do this right and I'm nervous because you're looking at my sheet.

Kyle

No, it's fine. I just— *[Chuckles.]*

Ari

[Smiling.] Like, get away from my sheet!

[Music ends.]

Kyle

I wanna make sure I'm making the right calls.

Ari

Are you gonna see me lower the thing wrong, and now I'm so nervous about doing it wrong.

Kyle

Fine, I'm out of the sheet. I'm out of the sheet.

Ari

Okay. Alright. I want to do 4 levels of Effort. I'll do that.

[Rolls.] That was a 10.

Kyle

By 1 point... you succeed. So, you fill Inuki's thoughts. Do you have any thoughts that you particularly choose?

Ari

I probably would just choose all of the angst that Misha felt in the past arc, just all of the bad angst that Misha has but applying it for a good purpose instead of just...

Kyle

[Smiling.] Didn't you do this the last time you did Shock to the System?

Ari

Yeah, but it was different, because Misha was feeling that angst and now Misha is not feeling that angst. It's just being like, "yeah, this is a thing, this is a part of me."

Tom

Shock to the System is just Misha oversharing with people.

Ari

Yeah. "Allow me to tell you my life story as I remember it now." Like all of the bad Collodi shit, just like, here it is.

Kyle

Alright.

[Ethereal music begins]

Obsidian Inuki has three parts to her. Inuki, Aegon, and binding them, the Apocrita.

[Static SFX and muffled Inuki and Commander TJ voices.]

Inuki and Aegon each feel your memories intensely. They feel that feeling of angst, that feeling of immense betrayal from someone who was close to you. And because of that, the dragon lets out something much less fierce than its obsidian exterior suggests, a much more pained:

[Pained dragon SFX.]

And the metal scrapes on the side of the Ladybug slightly as Inuki's hands start to drift and then fully let go.

Ari

Yeah boy.

Tom

Perfect.

Kyle

Here's where the GM Intrusion comes in.

Hallie

Oh.

Ari

Oh no.

Hallie

That's quick.

Kyle

Because we can't just let you get away for 2 turns.

Hallie

You sure?

Kyle

You'd fully get away at that point. So Misha, take a GM Intrusion point. Who do you want to give your other point to?

Ari

I wanna give it to Xoc.

Tom

[Quietly.] Yes!

Ari

Because this is a very personal Xoc thing, and also I think Hallie is all full with her XP, so I want to give 1 to—

Hallie

I only have 3! Only 3 XP.

Ari

[Laughs.]

Tom

Well I only had 1, so this is beneficial to me.

Kyle

Inuki's claws let go from the metal of the Ladybug.

[Action chase music begins.]

But then you hear a tearing of fabric, or not fabric, of... What are tarps made out of?

Hallie

Canvas?

Kyle

Canvas. Because one of her claws gets stuck in the three tarps on the back of the Ladybug.

Hallie

Oh, oh no.

Ari

She broke a nail!

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Kyle

Obsidian Inuki hasn't been injured yet, so she's still asleep, but it is weighing down the Ladybug.

Hallie

Tom, I know you also had an idea, but I have also one.

Tom

You go first.

Hallie

I wanted to wrap Inuki up in the tarps.

Ari

Oh.

Hallie

And then just push her off.

Ari

Oh!

Hallie

[Laughing.] So that we can get away.

I don't want the tarps to go, because I like them.

Emily

She's kind of big, though.

Kyle

She's a big dragon, Hallie.

Hallie

But she's a big dragon that's already stuck there.

Emily

With one little finger.

Kyle

Yeah. For reference, Hallie, only the hand is caught in the tarp, because that takes up like half of the tarp, the single claw.

Hallie

Okay, well...

Kyle

I mean, you can still do it, I'm not stopping you, I just find it funny. If you take the three tarps and extend them all out, you probably have enough surface area to wrap up Inuki in a nice little, like...

Hallie

No, if, just... *[Laughs.]*

Ari

I just imagine tiny Hopper Scotch just waving his arms.

Hallie

[Laughing.] Tying the tarp. Isn't it easy?

Kyle

In a nice little dragon wrap.

Hallie

Okay. I didn't realize. I don't know, I have a hard time with Inuki's size because she's baby to me, so I always envision her as baby size.

Kyle

That's fair. Inuki in reality is probably about the size of the tarps. Obsidian Inuki is just meant to be absurdly large, because—

Hallie

Yeah. I'm just getting my Inukis crossed.

Emily

Actually though, if her claw is stuck in it, if we could immobilize her claws, that would be good for us.

Hallie

Just wrap them up, like when you wrap up a kitten's paws so they can't scratch you when they go to the vet.

Emily

Aww.

Hallie

Or how I had to have baby mittens so I didn't do that to my face.

[00:20:00]

Emily

[Giggles.]

Ari

Oh no~

Hallie

When I was an infant. Because I fucking loved scratching my face, so they needed to get little baby mittens for me.

Ari

"Let me tear my skin, mother!"

[Laughter.]

Tom

I mean, I'm fully on train of just cutting the tarps free while "If You Love Me Let Me Go" plays tragically in the background.

[Laughter.]

Emily

I mean, this is all about how we have to move on from the past. Maybe we have to move on from the tarps, Hallie.

Hallie

Let's... Let's tag-team tie off the tarps. You get one side, I'll get the other one.

Emily

Okay. We'll be tarp buddies.

Hallie

We'll be tarp buddies!

Kyle

So, I will say, Hop is the one doing it. Elee, you're giving him an asset on that.

Hallie

[Hums a jaunty tune.] Here I go!

[Rolls.] Twenty!

Emily

[Yelps.]

Hallie

It's my first roll of the night, and it's a 20!

Ari

Oh!

Tom

Holy shit.

Hallie

Ah-ha-ha!

Kyle

So you get a major effect with that. What do you want it to be?

Hallie

Woohoo!

Ari

You look so happy.

Emily

What if, like, she's got her hand stuck in it already but then it gets stuck on her horns?

Hallie

What if she becomes slightly entangled in the tarps because they're all connected together and there are three of them and you said that might be the approximate size to do my original plan?

Emily

[Laughs.]

Kyle

And with a (fwip)...

[Music ends abruptly. Wind SFX begins.]

You can hear the screaming wind as the scream of the dragon gets further and further away, not only because Inuki is falling but also because it is muffled by her being completely enveloped in the tarp.

Tom

Xoc was getting ready to cut this dragon loose and then just beholds all of the amazing work of the rest of the party.

Tom (as Xoc)

[Stammering.] You did it! Gun it, Misha. We can get out of here.

Ari

Misha will do a thumbs up and floor it.

Kyle

And you are now 4 steps away. It is Inuki's turn. ... And now it's back to you.

[Laughter.]

There is one obstacle in your way. You have gunned it. Inuki is now, assuming things go alright, but a distant memory. But you're not out of the woods yet, because while most of the shards that made up her are falling, a few have been picked up by the air and returned to this shell surrounding the Pryliman ruins where Aegon is hiding, and you're gonna hit it this turn if you don't do something about it.

[SFX ends.]

Tom (as Xoc)

I've got this.

Tom

Xoc's going to pull out the cylinder from Don. A gift to us from another adventuring party from all those years ago. Years real life time not years in game time.

Kyle

It's like two months in game time.

Tom

It's been two months. But all those years ago, the very first bonus episode that I edited, we were given this as one final item for the finale. I've always just been imagining it as a jar that you open up and then the energy just shoots out, so my vision was to have Xoc lean out one of the claw holes, unscrew the cap, and just aim it at the side of the shell and watch it just blast a hole in it. Unless that is not at all how you wanted that to work.

Kyle

You have a knotted jar full of nearly infinite energy. You can use it how you like.

Tom

Okay.

[Inspiring violin music begins.]

Tom (as Xoc)

Um, Elee Badge, you may want to hold onto me so I don't accidentally fall out. I don't know how violent this is gonna be.

Emily

Elee will grab onto the side of the Ladybug and then grab onto Xoc's waist and clamp her fingers down as tightly as she can onto the Ladybug.

Kyle

Elee, give me a Might roll, and Ari, give me a driving roll.

Ari

Oh, okay. I'm gonna do 1 level of Effort for Int.

[Rolls.] And I didn't need that, because I rolled a 20, because I rolled my actually good purple die and not the one that Hallie gave me.

Emily

Woo!

Kyle

Jesus Christ!

Hallie

[Laughs.] Wow.

Ari

And now that one isn't cursed, so I'm keeping the blue.

Hallie

Mine are good!

Ari

You cursed the die you sent me.

Emily

Let me roll before you pick your major effect, because you might need to save me. I'm gonna do 1 level.

[Rolls.] A 13.

Kyle

Xoc, you grab this jar full of the energy of the Heart of Charmonde, something you haven't thought about in what feels like years.

Tom

[Laughs.]

Kyle

You lean out of the window just being grabbed by Elee...

Ari

Aww.

Kyle

...who probably does not look nearly as determined as you do.

Emily

Elee's terrified.

Kyle

And you pop open the jar. Raw, nearly infinite energy pours out of this knotted jar like a giant flashlight. Some of it does reflect but only enough for the setting sun's light to be completely enveloped by this harsh blue which singes the edges of the sphere of obsidian glass. Through this hole, Misha, you just expertly dive through the cloud.

[00:25:00]

Inside of it the bright light continues, fully illuminating the inside of this sphere, and you see... Obsidian Bay, and all of the mines underneath which look like the uprooted roots of a tree. After swirling your way around, the blue light starts to fade and it's instead replaced by the green lights of Prylima, the things that help it flow.

[Music ends.]

The light that was Bee. Bee is this green energy, and this energy powers all of the ruins, and by this green light you're able to park yourself on this small patch of square ceramic somewhere in the roots of the ruins.

Ari

Parkour!

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Ari

I don't know why I thought that, but I did.

Hallie

As you just normally park a car, you're like "parkour!"

Ari

Parkour. The little step legs of the Ladybug do some parkour.

Kyle

Flip, flip.

Hallie

They're skittering over the building.

Kyle

There's just this really bad hard rock intro to Infinite's theme from Sonic.

Ari

Oh my god.

Kyle

Just BWAH-WAH [*electric guitar sounds*], super cool parkour! ... Carkour!

Ari

Carkour!

Hallie

[*Laughing, loud and distraught.*] AHH!

Ari

God. I was doing a pun on parking and now it's becoming way more cursed.

Hallie

I peaked. I'm so sorry. It's just dread.

Kyle

"What's up, bros?" It's just the Ladybug in a jacket. "What's up, guys? Today we're gonna do some tricks on the Pryliman Ruins."

Hallie

Misha did so well that the Ladybug gained sentience.

[*Laughter.*]

Ari

Yeah.

Tom

Misha's done so well that we all have skateboards now and this is a skate park. Just gonna shred down through the mines.

Kyle

You know we're having a shred competition. This has turned into Tony Hawk's Pro Skater.

Tom

Very serious finale.

Hallie

[Squeaking in delight.]

Ari

Every single leg of the Ladybug has a little skateboard so that it can individually...

Hallie

That is such a hazard and I hate it.

Tom

Hundreds of wheels.

Hallie

That is so many fucking wheels. I hate it.

Ari

Okay, every other one so that the other one can do it.

Kyle

But if you have skateboards on each of your legs, that just makes them roller skates.

Tom

[Laughs loudly.]

Ari

Well, even better. That's where the Heelys—

Hallie

Just the Heelys. They have— *[Loses it.]*

Ari

That's where the Heelys we have came from.

Hallie

As God predicted, here they are, on the Ladybug!

Tom

[As a big delighted sigh.] Oh god.

Hallie

[Laughing.] I'm sorry. You can continue. You can continue!

Tom

I'm not sure we can, because I was about to say something serious when we landed.

Hallie

[Stammering.] Okay. Go ahead. No, I'm serious. No, I can... Say it.

Kyle

So, you have all landed, is the last thing that happened.

Tom

As we land, Xoc is of course hauling himself back in, putting aside the jar, making sure that he has everything on his person. He's ready to hop out the now gaping open back of our Ladybug. Just looks back to the party and says:

Tom (as Xoc)

I... I love you all. Let's go save everybody.

Ari (as Misha)

I love you too, Xoc.

Hallie

Hop will just smile and nod and adjust his little shield like he's getting ready to go.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Let's go.

Emily

Elee's gonna go for the group hug, just real quick.

Tom

Yeah.

Emily

I know we're in a rush, so she's not gonna draw it out or anything. She's just gonna pat her children on the back.

Hallie

Aww.

Tom (as Xoc)

Thanks mom.

[Heartfelt guitar music begins.]

Emily & Hallie

[Sobbing loudly.] Aww~!

Hallie

Oh god!

Emily

Elee's definitely not tearing up. She's cool and collected and composed and very tough... and not squishy. She's just so buff that her eyes are sweating.

Ari

Oh gross.

Emily

[Laughs.]

Tom

Alright. With the hug concluded, I'm guessing we all just storm out the back and make our way to the weird archway elevator place.

[Music ends.]

Kyle

Yeah.

Ari

Yeah.

Kyle

It's still here. There is no wind. You see the green lights which—running through the ruins and powering them, keeping them afloat—looks like still lightning. There's no hum, no sound, just the color reflecting off of the obsidian shell surrounding and protecting this place from... time, reality, everything else.

[Sad, ethereal ruins music begins.]

It takes you a second to recognize where you are, because last time you were in here it was walled in, it wasn't an open-air space, but you eventually recognize certain things. You recognize a few of the eight-foot tall panels as well as the six tubes which are connected in the center of the room around where used to be a pod. Next to all of it you can see, in this corner, a long since decommissioned disassembler. The room where you fought MARSHAL and reawakened the Apocrita.

[00:30:00]

Now, as you remember, the way back was not super clear, but Xoc, you remember and can uncover a little scuff in the ground, a line where you had left a trail of breadcrumbs to lead you back out of this place.

Tom

It was a good plan.

Ari

Yeah.

Kyle

It was a good plan, and it's gonna help you when you most need it. So, you follow the trail of breadcrumbs. You walk past the wooden shed where you had found a few cyphers and the MARSHAL box. You walk over this archway which at the time was this perilous pit, but now everything's a perilous pit because it's all open-air.

You eventually make your way to a three-by-three configuration of tiles which, as you walk up to them, rise up like a circular staircase. You make your way up the stairs, you make your way into the patio space that was kind of in the back of Obsidian Bay, and you walk forward past these large columns that when you first saw them were built into the mountain, to see the space where everything began.

[Music ends.]

Before we continue, I have another kind of point of no return thing. Before we go into this, I'm assuming, Xoc, you're recasting Resonance Field.

Tom

Yes.

Kyle

Hop, I'm assuming you are recasting Punish the Guilty which makes you do 2 extra damage to anyone you declare guilty.

Hallie

As well as Defend the Innocent which is an automatic applier.

Kyle

Yeah. We had misunderstood the rules and given Hallie a better version of her Tier 6 ability all the way back at Tier 4.

Hallie

Oops! My bad.

Kyle

So all you need to know is that all Speed defense is 2 steps easier automatically for everybody except for Hop. Well no, including Hop, because you have—they're getting your bonuses.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Kyle

Is there any final prep you want to do? Any action heals or any last words to each other?

... Alright.

[Oppressive ambience begins.]

You walk past these columns and find yourself back in Obsidian Bay, and it looks the same as it did all that time ago: a rectangular courtyard with two trapezoidal buildings at the side, a fountain in the center, and a misplaced ceramic pod lying near the edge. Pretty sure that one hit Hop, I can't remember. It hit somebody.

But, when covered by the green light reflected in the glassy obsidian sky, all of those features look so alien, so unnerving... or maybe that's Aegon.

[Music ends.]

He's hard to spot at first.

[Echoey, dragon-like ambience begins.]

The armor of the courtyard's knight blends in so perfectly with the infected obsidian ground, and he stands next to the center fountain with such a deadly stillness that you could confuse him for part of the scenery. In the end it's the eyes, the only part of Loell visible underneath Aegon's armor, that give him away. In those eyes lies no friendship or hesitation, only fierce unyielding determination.

Ari (as Misha)

It sure is nice to finally see you face-to-face, Loell.

Kyle

He doesn't respond.

Tom

Xoc isn't going to say anything, but he'll slowly start to get closer. Not like—he won't walk right up to Loell, but he'll get a bit closer and glance around the arena to see if there's anything else hiding or any traps or anything that's been set.

Kyle

I won't have you roll. The obsidian glass which was kind of haphazardly on the ground earlier is now perfectly in place. It is locked together. What was a cobblestone courtyard is now all obsidian. When you get closer you can see things moving around his armor and occasionally passing his eyes.

It was weird, you hadn't found any spiders here, and that's because all of the spiders were either being sent to the Weal or being kept close to the person who needs them. Beyond that, nothing. It is just you, and him, and the Apocrita.

[SFX ends.]

Emily (as Elee)

So... I'm just supposed to stab him, right?

Tom (as Xoc)

That's right. I'm not gonna waste my time by asking him to surrender.

Ari (as Misha)

I do believe stabbing and other methods of harm are the best choice at this point, things that I have frankly wanted to do for a while.

[Giggling.]

Kyle

The scarf pulls out your dagger which it's been holding this whole time and waves it in agreement.

Ari

Yes.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Look, I know you all know this, but be careful. I'm not sure how much closer we should get. Something about this is really off.

Tom (as Xoc)

Hmm. We should stick close together when that happens. It should be all of us that go in.

Hallie

Hopper nods.

Tom (as Xoc)

But, if he's just going to stand there and let us...

[00:35:00]

Tom

And Xoc will start warming up the left glove with the Cutting Light.

Tom (as Xoc)

...we can always burn off some spiders.

Kyle

So who makes the first move?

Emily

I do.

Kyle

Okay. Elee, I want you to roll me Speed defense.

Hallie

Which is 2 steps easier for you.

Emily

[Rolls.] A 7.

Hallie

Well...

[Chuckles.] Good thing you've got Armor.

Emily

[Chuckles.] I have Armor.

Hallie

[Weakly.] Hey~

[Apocrita theme begins.]

Kyle

You didn't see it at first, not fast enough to respond to it. As you go to stab him with Redd's Blessing, Elee, you are instead hit first by a massive Warhammer knocking you a dozen feet backwards and dealing 12 points of damage before Armor.

Aegon stands there for a second in his new pose before slowly shifting back and slamming the Warhammer on the ground causing, from its bottom, a ripple of obsidian glass to extend outwards. It's time to roll initiative.

[Music swells and carries into the announcements.]

Kyle

Hello and welcome to the announcement break for Quest Friends, Episode 81: The Obsidian Cloud, Part 8. I am Kyle, your GM, and our intro song is Friends by Miracle of Sound.

Remember last episode when I mentioned that Hallie is GMing a ghosty game called Afterlife: Wandering Souls on the Twitch channel [twitch.tv/thecritshow](https://www.twitch.tv/thecritshow)? Well, she's still doing that every Monday from now through the end of October 2021. It is an absurdly fun game with a great cast and with Hallie playing a whole bunch of fun NPCs, most notably The Boat Man, a super cool reaper with a completely unidentifiable accent. Is he Italian? Is he Russian? Yes! Also no.

So, if you'd like to catch up on old episodes and watch new ones every Monday at 7 PM Central Time, you can check out [twitch.tv/thecritshow](https://www.twitch.tv/thecritshow) or just click the link in the description.

Down in the description you're also going to find a link to our Twitch page, because we are going to be live-streaming our final episode which... is next. There's only one session left in the campaign after this. The episode will be releasing on our four-year anniversary, Saturday, September 25, and the time will be publically revealed on social media and in an additional post on this feed next week.

The stream will be split up into a listen-along of the final episode, a half an hour or so break which has some really fun stuff going on there, and then a live-stream Q&A. So keep an eye out on this feed and on our social media in the upcoming week and follow us on [twitch.tv/QuestFriends](https://www.twitch.tv/QuestFriends) so you'll be informed exactly when we go live.

Finally, if you'd like to submit a Q&A question for the Q&A portion of that stream, our end of campaign survey is still open and will be open until 11:59 PM Central Time on Friday, September 24. So please, if you haven't been able to take the time to look at that yet, it'd really mean a lot if you could give any feedback you have.

Alright, that's all I've got for you today. As I said, the next episode, the final episode of this campaign, The End, will be releasing on Saturday, September 25. I'll see you then.

[Apocrita theme carries out of the announcements.]

Ari

[Rolls.] I rolled a 5!

Emily

[Rolls. Staggered.] I rolled a 20.

Tom

Whoa.

Ari

Ooh.

Hallie

Oh~!

Emily

I don't know that I've ever rolled a 20 on initiative.

[00:40:00]

I may have, but I do know that this is probably the only 20 that I will roll. *[Laughs.]*

Tom

This is my first ever roll with the special die you got me, the d20.

Ari

Oh my god! Let's see if it's cursed, because mine was cursed.

Hallie

[Smiling.] Oh! It's your dice!

Tom

[Rolls. Dejected.] I got a 4. Cursed.

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Ari

No! I wanted you to be before me.

Tom

Cursed.

Ari

Be-four. Eyy.

Tom

Eyy.

Kyle

Hallie, what did you get?

Hallie

An 8! I thought I was gonna be last, but here I am, second in the order.

Ari

It's fine. We didn't account initiative into our plan.

Emily

We just have to revise.

Tom

This is fine. It's a new die. It just needs to be broken in.

Hallie

[Laughing.] Oh yeah. This kind of fucks up our plan, doesn't it?

Tom

Look, It's fine. If I go last in the order, then that means I'm just setting up for next turn. You know? It's great.

Hallie

Okay.

Ari

Okay. Okay.

Hallie

Yeah.

Kyle

Alright, so that puts you, unsurprisingly, first in the initiative order, Elee.

[Climactic battle music begins.]

You have now been pushed back. I'm gonna say he threw you against one of the trapezoidal buildings, the one that was previously named the Coltrane Bar. I will also be outright with you. For this phase, at least, Aegon is Level 8 and he is very ready to fight.

Emily

[Weakly.] Great. Well...

My most useful things are currently not applicable, but that's okay. I can still hit him.

Hallie

[Giggles.] Hit him good.

Emily

[Grinning.] Hit him good.

Kyle

What are you gonna hit him with?

Emily

My chair.

Hallie

Nice. Classic.

Ari

Yeah boy. Bringing back the chair.

Hallie

Yeah!

Kyle

Alright. Aegon has pulled out his Warhammer and then similarly Elee unsheathes her chair, as like “here is MY weapon.”

[Laughter.]

Hallie

Yeah, it's so cool!

Ari

Like, “aw man, you have a hammer? I have a chair.” That would be a trailer from an action movie of Quest Friends.

Kyle

[Laughs.] Give me a roll to whack him with your chair.

Emily

Okay, okay, okay. I should have put all my Edge that I have built up into one pool.

Kyle

I'm honestly surprised you didn't.

Emily

I was trying to balance things out better, but...

Tom

I showed you the way and you did not listen.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Kyle

Are you trained in any attacks?

Emily

Y-Yes.

Tom

Specialized, I think.

Emily

[Laughing.] I'm specialized in heavy bashing weapons.

Kyle

Okay, so you have 1 free level of Effort and you have your specialization, so it's already 3 steps easier for you.

Emily

[Rolls.] I rolled a 16.

Kyle

Okay~ So you do hit.

Emily

[Gasps.]

Kyle

And you do—it looks like 7 points of damage.

Ari

Oh~

Emily

Yeah.

Kyle

How do you whack him?

Emily

So, he threw Elee back and then she staggers to her feet ungracefully, holds up her hand.

Emily (as Elee)

[Strained.] I'm good.

Emily

Unsheathes her chair, and then just books it and whacks him across the head.

Kyle

It hits him for 5 points of damage total, so an Armor of 2, and it knocks his head to the side. Then the head slowly turns back to you...

Ari

Oh god.

Kyle

...and you can see the dead eyes staring.

Emily

Not a fan of that.

Kyle

Instead of moving his Warhammer hand he moves his other hand and you can hear a rustling underneath before just a gush of obsidian tiles is shot at you. I need you to roll Speed defense.

[Music ends.]

Emily

Okay. I'm gonna do another 2 levels.

[Rolls.] I rolled another 16.

Ari

[Hopeful.] Oh?

[Climactic battle music begins.]

Kyle

He shoots the glass at you, but this time you're prepared for unexpected attacks and you are able to duck out of the way as he shoots the obsidian shards at you. They hit and stick to the trapezoidal wall you were

previously on. That is one of his two actions, because each turn he gets an Apocrita action and he gets a hammer action.

For his hammer action, he is going to take his hammer and he is going to swing it in a semicircle fashion at anyone who is standing directly in front of him, which from what I understand is all of you. I'm gonna need everyone to roll Speed defense.

Ari

[Reluctant.] Okay.

Emily

[Indignant.] Because nobody would have moved back at all when he just chucked Elee?!

Hallie

Well, we all...

Tom

We're all assumed to be in immediate range, I guess, for this fight, so it...

Hallie

Yeah. Yeah.

Emily

Yeah...

Ari

Yeah, no... This is fair.

Tom

That's just how the game works.

Hallie

We're all up there.

Ari

I'm gonna spend 1 level of Effort at the Speed.

Tom

Going to be...

Ari

[Rolls.] Uh, what is this? This is a—Oh, this is a 7. It's not good, but I thought it was a 1, but it's not.

Emily

[Rolls.] I got a 15 and I applied 1 in it again.

Tom

I will apply 6 levels of Effort.

Ari

Jesus.

Kyle

Right, because you have your staff that will block you, right Xoc?

Tom

Yep. I can take that all from Int.

Kyle

What did you roll, Hallie?

[00:45:00]

Hallie

Twelve, with 1 level of Effort from me, and then I'm trained in my, uh...

Kyle

And Xoc?

Tom

I rolled a 14.

Kyle

Okay. He swings past Elee, and at first you're like "oh man, I'm perfect at dodging him," but you realize you aren't who he's targeting anymore, Elee. It hits Hop, it hits Misha, and then it goes and it hits your staff, Xoc, and locks for a second before you knock it away.

[Music ends.]

Tom (as Xoc)

[Severe.] Don't you dare hurt them.

Kyle

He did hurt them, for 8 points of damage.

Hallie

Ow.

Ari

Alright.

Emily

My babies!

Kyle

Alright Hop, it is your turn.

Hallie

Okay. So, question. Warhammer very big, right?

Ari

I assume it is very big.

Kyle

Yes, Warhammer very big. I would say it's probably twice as big as his head. Like, the top part of it.

Hallie

Right. Okay, so... disarming him via lasso, probably not an easy thing to do.

Kyle

No, probably not.

Hallie

And is he—? So, Obsidian Loell. Not normal sized person? Very big person.

Kyle

So, this is not Obsidian Aegon, this is just Aegon.

Hallie

Oh.

Kyle

He's just in a suit of armor. He doesn't have obsidian plating or anything. He's just in his Angulan Knights armor, and the only thing different about him than usual is he's got all those spiders on him and he can shoot glass at you real good.

Hallie

Mm-hmm. Real good. Okay, I'm either going to try disarming him or I'm gonna activate Analytical Combat which takes a round to study movements, so I want to study how he holds the hammer, etc., to see if there's a certain part of his swing maybe that his grip is looser or if I can predict which way the hammer's gonna go based on his stance.

Kyle

Yeah. How does Hop see the world when he does this Analytical Combat?

[Thoughtful electronic music begins.]

Hallie

Alright. So he's just been knocked back by this giant Warhammer, and then he looks up and it's just the hammer coming back up from the hit, and he is watching Aegon's feet to see if the ankles shift a stance, and he's watching the hand especially. He doesn't look super like he's studying anything because he doesn't want to give away his plan, but he is very focused on just watching Aegon's movements.

Kyle

Yeah, absolutely. So, I don't know how the best way to swing a Warhammer is, but also, the Angulan Knights definitely wouldn't know either. So what I'll say is, based on his motion, he kind of... he puts everything into his swings, and as such he kind of loses control over the swing the closer to the end of it he gets. Like, right when he's about to hit somebody the hammer slides out a little bit, his ankles twist. The hammer at the end of his swing is moving more of its own control rather than he is. So if you were able to try to yank it out partway through the swing it would be 2 steps easier.

Hallie

Okay.

[Music ends.]

Kyle

If you tried to do it normally, I'd still make it 1 step easier for you because you did some analyzing. You saw some other things. But you really wanna get it when he's attacking.

Hallie

Okay. Thank you~

Kyle

Alright. It is Misha's turn.

Ari

Okay! I am thinking of using Concussion, but I don't know how close everybody is. I don't know, maybe you can take—

Kyle

They're all right next to him.

Hallie

Splash damage! Splash damage!

Tom

We're all in the blast.

Hallie

Do it!

Kyle

You're all in the blast zone.

Ari

Well, I mean, you know, what is like 5 points of damage, right? You all hopefully can take it. I don't know. But!

Emily

[Small.] It's over half.

Tom

[Nervously.] Um...

Ari

Hear me out. I wanted to do it specifically at the hand, because “a pulse of concussive force from a point you choose,” so what if the point I choose is his hand? If it extends in all directions and his hand is lifted upwards, it might hit somebody but it’s not like in front of him, you know?

Hallie

[Laughs.] “Somebody.”

Ari

[Grinning.] It’s in his hand which is raised. You know what I mean?

Hallie

It’s raised. It’s in the air.

Kyle

Yeah, let me look up the details of Concussion so that you don’t have to say it out loud.

Tom

You were like “what if we just put the point in his hand” instead of like away from the fight, off to the side, so it just clips him on the edge.

Ari

I guess that is also a possibility.

Kyle

That’s outside of the spirit of things and you know it, Tom!

Tom

I know. I know. But it does say a point you choose.

Ari

Okay. Alright. I want to spend 3 levels of Effort for this, so let's, let's, let us...

[Rolls.] That's a 14! So how about that?

Kyle

How do you let off the concussive blast?

[Intense, understated action music begins.]

Ari

I mean, basically Misha is just super fed up with Loell at this point, obviously, but now more so that he has just hurt their friends. At this moment, even though he has done it in the past, too, and everybody else and whatever. So like, they are just focusing all of the anger they feel towards Loell, like "I've been waiting for this!" They've been waiting for this specific moment where they can actually punch Loell in a way that's significant, and they're focusing all that pure rage and excitement at his hand.

[00:50:00]

Kyle

All of this fury, this anger, is combining in this massive concussive blast that's focused on his hands...

[Music ends abruptly.]

...and none of you hear it. You just see a singular finger of his hand twitch...

Ari

Oh, what?!

Kyle

...as he takes 1 point of damage...

Ari

What?!

Kyle

...because the attack fails.

Ari

Oh no~!

Kyle

Welcome to Level 8 times, my friends.

Ari

Oh no.

Tom

Oh god. It was missed by 1 point, wasn't it?

Hallie

Don't like that.

Tom

Because with 3 steps lower that was a 15 target. Oh...

Ari

Oh, so if I had just rolled 1 higher than 14... Oh man.

Kyle

Welcome to what a real Cypher System boss fight looks like, kiddos. I'm so sorry. *[Laughs.]*

Ari

It's okay. I'll try again later.

Tom

It's Effort time.

Kyle

Alright Xoc, what are you gonna do?

Tom

Xoc is going to stare Loell right in the eyes and just say:

[Time slowing down SFX.]

Tom (as Xoc)

No.

Tom

Like that, everything is going to freeze around him as I activate Freeze Time.

[Plotting electronic music begins.]

You cause time to stop flowing everywhere within immediate range for 1 minute. The effect immediately ends if you leave the area or use an action to end it early. This affects everything in the area except me. Affected creatures are frozen in the moment of the esotery, and when it ends they resume what they were doing as if no time had passed. Affected creatures and objects are impervious to all damage and cannot be moved or manipulated. You and everything outside the area act normally.

This is a difficult power to use. It specifies that you can't move anything in the target area, you can't harm anything in the target area. I can't just freeze time and whale on Loell. I can't freeze time and push Loell off a cliff or take his hammer out of his hand or do any fun shenanigans like that. So I thought for a while on how I could best use this. I, and my items, can be moved, which means I can set up the environment in a way that works better for us.

So while this all happens, everything is frozen, Xoc is going to walk behind Loell and take out an artifact I have had for a very long time. At long last, saved for this moment, the String of Binding, an artifact that allows me to bind together any two limbs of the target who then cannot use an action with bound limbs. The string can continue to extend and bind two additional limbs on each subsequent turn.

Kyle

A tricky thing about that, though, is that you won't be able to put them close together. It's gonna have to be a loose knot, because you can't move any parts of his body.

Tom

Yes. That's essentially where this gets dicey. It can't complete the binding until time unfreezes. My understanding is that the artifact itself is animate. It's not like I am tying a literal rope around him. It's like a living piece of tech that goes out and tries to tie itself tight, so it will presumably try to constrict once time unfreezes again. So, I'm going to start by just tying right arm to right leg, right leg to left leg, and then should I be allowed a third turn, left leg to left arm.

[Music ends.]

Kyle

Give me a roll.

Tom

Alright. Is this something where Effort would be applicable or is it just a straight d20 roll?

Kyle

Let's just do a straight d20 roll because we're just kinda, like...

Tom

Sure. Sure.

Kyle

We're flavoring how things are going, you know?

Tom

Just to get the tension up, what sort of numbers am I looking for here?

Kyle

I am going to say... We're gonna do a three-three-three. If you get under 7, bad times. If you get between 7 and 15, you get two of the limbs. If you get 16 and above, you get all three.

Tom

Okay. Okay. Works for me.

[Rolls.] Can I use an XP to reroll that?

Ari

God damn it.

[Laughter.]

Hallie

No!

Tom

It's not a 1. It's not a 1. It's a 7.

Kyle

Yes, you can reroll that with an XP.

Tom

Alright. This die is fucking cursed if I roll another bad thing.

Hallie

Use a different one! Agh.

Tom

You sure you want me to use a different one?

Hallie

No. Don't listen to me about dice. Don't listen to me.

Tom

I mean, I've been planning this move since the start of the campaign. It's all been building up to this one singular moment.

[Giggling.]

Kyle

How do you reroll using Experience?

[Gentle ambient music battles with threatening ambient music.]

Tom

I can feel Loell, or the cloud, or something, fighting back. Xoc might have tapped into the powers of Argent and made time itself flow according to his whim, but something is stirring against that. It is taking extreme focus, and Xoc is drawing upon many warm memories to maintain clarity in this moment, focusing on just this moment. No time is passing. No time is passing. No time is passing.

[Rolls.] Phew... 14.

Ari

Okay.

Tom

This die is going off to the side for now. We're bringing out the classics.

Kyle

You're speaking, you're speaking, you're speaking. You're projecting that thought out into the world. There is no time, there is no time, there is no time.

[00:55:00]

But you're right, you are plugged into all of this, but the Apocrita is plugged into you. So as you're saying...

[Repeating clip of Tom saying "no time is passing" with reverberation.]

...you could swear you see Aegon's eyes turn towards you.

Tom

[Whispering.] I was afraid of this.

Kyle

Before time returns, you just hear a voice respond:

[Music ends.]

Kyle (as Loell)

Then why don't you let me make it so?

Tom (as Xoc)

[Exasperated.] Fuuuck!

[Laughter.]

Tom

That is where time resumes and everyone else just sees Xoc now suddenly behind Loell, binding an arm and two legs, just screaming "fuuuuck!"

Kyle

His arm hits his right leg, his right leg hits his left leg, and he flops to the ground.

Tom

[Hushed.] Yes!

Ari

Oh, perfect.

Tom

[Smiling.] Yes.

Kyle

I will say it will be 2 steps easier to hit him while he's like this.

Hallie

Nice.

Tom

[Grinning. Claps.] Yes!

Kyle

Elee, it is your turn.

Hallie

Yes!

Emily

Yes!

Tom

"Here's our chance for an all-out attack!"

[Laughter.]

Time for Operation Thanos. This is what we've been planning in the other chat.

Emily

Okay! Okay, okay, okay.

[Upbeat funky music begins.]

Elee doesn't even have a second to think about the fact that Xoc is saying bad words again. I have a new skill that I have not used before. It is called Finishing Blow. If a foe is stunned or prone or disarmed or bound in some way, you can inflict—I wrote down 6 on here, but I think it's actually 8.

Tom

What?!

Emily

Yeah, 8 additional points of damage. Then I'm going to add an extra level of Effort to hit.

Kyle

Okay. Give me a roll.

Emily

[Rolls. Yelps excitedly.] Nineteen! Nineteen!

Tom

Ooh!

Hallie

[Screams excitedly.]

Ari

Oh, yes!

Emily

[Claps.] yay! All-out attack!

Kyle

So, you by default are gonna do 15 points of damage. Now, you can either have a minor effect or you can do an additional 3 points of damage on top of that.

Emily

I think I'd like to do extra damage, because I feel like he has a lot of health.

Kyle

He has a lot of health. He has a LOT of health.

Emily

Yeah.

Ari

Oh Jesus.

Hallie

Okay.

Ari

Okay. That's good to know.

Kyle

Alright, so Aegon has had his arms bound, his legs bound, and there's a little bit of worry in his eyes as he realizes what's happening, and then he gets clocked with a chair. How do you hit him and do extra damage?

[Laughter.]

Emily

Very rarely do people look up at Elee, but today Aegon looks up at Elee, and she looks down at him, and smirks, and raises up the chair straight back over her head and just brings almost her whole top half of her body down with it as hard as she possibly can.

Kyle

You hit him with the chair, not hard enough to poke a hole in it but hard enough to dent.

[Music ends.]

In response to it, he looks back at you, determined and filled with rage, but he can't swing his Warhammer on one side. He can't move it. But he can use his other hand. So, you see his hand on the

left side start to twist and move and eventually it pushes down. I need everyone to roll Speed defense again as a wave of tiles emerges from around him and tries to hit all of you.

Ari

Alright. I'm gonna spend 1 level of Effort.

Hallie

Samesies.

Ari

[Rolls.] That was a 12.

Tom

I'll spend another 6 levels of Effort.

Hallie

[Rolls.] Mine was 11.

Emily

[Rolls.] Mine was a 13.

Tom

[Rolls. Groans.] Ugh, a 3.

Hallie

Boo.

Tom

Am I getting anything from Hopper at this point?

Emily

Yeah! You're getting stuff from Hopper still, right?

Hallie

You're all, yeah. Hopper's—

Kyle

Yeah, you get 2 defense automatically. So Xoc, how do you dodge this wave?

[Dramatic action music begins.]

Tom

Xoc is just going to do a classic platformer boss jump. The wave of tiles comes and Xoc just like... I think he even uses the String of Binding as a bit of tension and springs up over the tiles as they sweep by.

Kyle

Meanwhile, the rest of you aren't quite prepared for that. Time has just come back for you and you're still getting used to it a bit, still trying to register what's happened, so all of you get hit by this wave of tiles causing 6 points of damage but more importantly gluing all of your feet...

Hallie

Oh...

Kyle

...and Elee up to probably her legs, in place.

Ari

Oh no.

Hallie

Oh, that's not good. That's no good.

Emily

Good thing you can lasso?

Kyle

Hop, it is your turn.

Hallie

[Pouts.] Alright. Well, I'm gonna lasso, but whether I'm gonna get the Warhammer out of that one prone hand, just to get it away...

[Music ends.]

I'm debating whether I should do that or try to lock down the other hand with my lasso. But if I try to do that, the thing at the other end keeping that arm tethered is Hop, and that's probably not as strong.

[01:00:00]

Kyle

I'm just gonna tell you flat-out, that's a bad idea.

Emily

[Laughs.]

Hallie

No, I'm just gonna lasso the Warhammer, please.

Kyle

Okay. Give me a roll to lasso the Warhammer. It's 2 steps easier in general, and then it is 1 step easier because he can't swing, and then 1 step easier from training. So by default all of it together without any Effort is 4 steps easier.

Hallie

Okay. I'm gonna put 2 levels of Speed Effort.

[Rolls.] Eleven.

Kyle

You successfully—

Hallie

Yay!

Kyle

How are you doing the lassoing? Are you throwing it or are you more carefully getting it on and pulling?

Hallie

Carefully.

[Upbeat country music begins.]

Hop was actually going to get up a little bit closer, try to do some parkour to try to get the hammer to swing in his direction so that he could do his thing of getting it mid-swing, but things changed very, very, very quickly for him. Suddenly he's stuck. Xoc is over there. Aegon is incapacitated, so he'll shake himself out of the moment because the chief thing he sees is that the Warhammer is easier to grab. He'll pat around for his lasso, whip it out, swing it around, and just do a mighty big yank.

Tom

[Laughs.]

Hallie

But that's after very carefully lining up the shot, because that's who he is as a person.

Tom

[Amused.] He's a careful cowboy.

Hallie

He's a careful cowboy!

Kyle

So he does this very careful then this hectic throw and then this very careful pull-out.

Hallie

Yes, because he's...

Kyle

It is difficult to pull. Honestly, normally I would have you apply Might Effort to this as well, but I don't want to overcomplicate it with multiple rolls, so I am just gonna say you are slowly pulling the hammer out.

Hallie

Yeah. I imagine it's not... The yank was just to get it lose to begin with and now he's like pulling the rope back to him, like the hammer. It's not going super-fast because he is not that strong.

Emily

[Laughs.]

Tom

This is everything I dreamed of.

Kyle

By the time we get to his next turn the hammer will be out but probably not before then.

Hallie

He's trying. I'm working on it.

[Music ends.]

Kyle

Misha.

Ari

The thing that stuck our feet, how sticky is it and can it be undone with a shiv or like a dagger? Can you cut through it?

Kyle

It is the glass tiles.

Ari

You know what, in that case, I think I'm gonna just do Concussive Force again and spend an XP to not hit people.

Emily

Misha doesn't want to concuss their friends.

Ari

Yeah.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Kyle

What are you targeting now?

Ari

So, I don't want to ruin Hopper's thing by suddenly putting a Concussive Force through his lasso.

Hallie

[Laughing.] While he's pulling it back.

Kyle

Okay, Peter Quill.

Ari

So I actually wanna do it on the other hand.

Kyle

Okay.

Ari

He has another hand. That would probably hurt it somehow. I want to spend 4 levels of Effort.

[Rolls.] That was another 14, but I spent another level of Effort than before, so I assume it probably maybe succeeded? I don't know.

Kyle

Yes, because he's also 2 steps easier to hit.

Ari & Tom

Oh that's right!

Kyle

So you're targeting his hand?

Ari

His left hand, the one that doesn't have the—because I don't want to...

[Colossal action music begins.]

Kyle

Yeah. So his left hand is going, it's making more motions, and it's going to lock you in place next turn. You just hit the inside of it and all his fingers splay back, like pretty far back, stretched to just the uncomfortable degree.

Ari

Oh god. Oh no.

Tom

[Pained struggling sounds.]

Kyle

And he loses 5 Might points, one for each finger.

Ari

God, I should have aimed for the head.

[Laughter.]

Tom

We're doing the Thanos Maneuver!

Kyle

"You should've aimed for the head!"

Tom

[Laughs.]

Kyle

Xoc, it's your turn.

Tom

Xoc will move closer to Hopper and the rest of the group as a whole just to be better able to help or be protected.

Emily

Can he move?

Kyle

Yeah, he's not stuck.

Emily

Oh, okay.

Tom

Yeah, I jumped right over it.

Kyle

Xoc is spending way too much Effort on dodging, but that's a different matter.

Ari

Yeah.

Tom

I'm definitely spending way too much on dodging, but I also really don't want to get hit.

[Music ends.]

Ari

This is probably why Kyle thought that Xoc was in danger of dying, because Tom is so reckless.

Tom

Reckless? I'm just fighting at full burn.

Ari

Full burn, exactly!

Kyle

This is an endurance fight! This is the only fight that is an endurance fight that's gonna last longer than probably four turns.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Tom

I do one thing well and I'm going to do it well here.

Ari

And it's spending 6 levels of Effort.

Tom

So anyway! While this is happening, Cutting Light warms up in Xoc's left hand and he's going to gather up a mighty beam. Let's think this through here. Let's take a look. Ooh, that's a lot of Intellect I've used. Ooh, oof.

Ari

Yeah, exactly.

Hallie

Oh boy.

Emily

Mm-hmm~!

Kyle

[Grinning.] We're still in Phase 1 of the boss fight.

Emily

How many phases?

Tom

Should we spend 3? Yeah, 3 and 3, that works. I'm gonna spend 3 levels of Effort to hit, 3 levels of Effort to damage.

Kyle

Okay, so it's gonna be 5 steps easier to hit because he's locked.

Tom

Yep, so I just need a 9 or higher.

[Rolls.] ... Ugh! Fuck!

Ari

Tom... Oh boy.

Hallie

Nooo!

Tom

Um! I'm torn because I don't want to do something boring but also I don't have a good idea of what I want to do with my XP and I've only got the 1 left. Ah, fuck it. One more reroll for the road, just as a treat.

Hallie

[Laughs.] As a treat.

[Xoc's magic theme begins.]

[01:05:00]

Tom

So, Xoc is going fully beyond his limits and drawing upon all of Misha's power from the Datasphere, all of this untapped energy that Misha has in their connection to the Datasphere. So that, like... I'm gonna frame it as Xoc just straight up fires two beams, like fires a beam, misses because he's running around, fires a second one again not even breaking a sweat. He doesn't care.

[Music ends.]

[Rolls.] But I did roll a nat 20 on the second one.

Ari

Oh! Yes!

Hallie

Oh~!

Kyle

Okay. So I, if it's alright, I'm gonna change your flavoring.

Tom

Okay.

Kyle

And you want a major effect or more damage?

Tom

Can I melt through his faceplate? I don't know what mechanical effect this should have, but I want to destroy the face part of his helmet.

Ari

Ooh.

Kyle

We'll melt his armor with this. So what does your attack do normally?

Tom

So it's 5 at base, +9 should be 14 total.

Kyle

And we're gonna cut through Armor with this one.

Tom

Ooh.

Ari

Can I flavor this also that after Misha did the hand they thought “Oh, I should have gone for the head,” and then Xoc shot the thing and Misha just—since Xoc is taking Misha's Datasphere connection or whatever, and like...

Tom

They just have a mental high-five?

Ari

Yeah!

Kyle

Yeah. Instead of it missing I think what will happen instead is you run in front, you get ready, the charge goes up.

[Laser blast SFX.]

The glowing light disappears for a second out of the Cutting Light...

[Xoc's magic theme swells.]

...and then gets a second burst of power from your XP and your natural 20, and it just blows an immense enormous light straight at his face, cutting, in fact, to the next phase.

Ari

Oh no.

Hallie

Oh...

Tom

[Chuckles nervously.]

Ari

[Smiling.] This was the first phase?

[Music ends.]

Kyle

You blast off his armor and the mask goes away, the eyes illuminating with the fiery light which shaves away the rest of his helmet, revealing underneath... Loell, but not as you expect him.

[Menacing ambient music begins.]

At first you think maybe you singed him because his thick auburn hair is now just a few thin strands, but then you see the rest of his face: the pale skin with bits flaking off and other parts that had flaked off long ago.

Ari

Ew.

Kyle

Sunken out eyes with deep rings inside of them. A mouth that is stuck in place with rigor mortis.

Ari

Ick.

Kyle

And all of you see, underneath his armor, what Aegon Stormbreaker has been all along... nothing more than a corpse puppeted by denial.

Hmm... You know, I think at this point, let's cut straight to Phase 3.

[Music ends.]

Ari

What?!

Tom

Wha...?

Hallie

That's not how numbers work.

Emily

Ma'am?

Hallie

Ma'am!

Emily

Ma'am, I'm an accountant.

Hallie

[Laughs.] Ma'am.

Kyle

There was gonna be a Phase 2 where Inuki came back, but since you've revealed his face I feel like not cutting straight to the chase would be a bit wrong.

[Rising, end of times music begins.]

Snap. Snap. Effortlessly, he breaks the threads of the String of Binding and he raises his non-warhammer hand to the sky.

Ari

Oh!

Hallie

No.

Kyle

As you all look up, you see the still shell of the outside barrier shake and a deep earthquake-like rattling reverberates through all of the cloud, and the shards start falling. Everyone roll Speed defense.

Hallie

Man! I'm gonna put in 2 levels of Effort this time.

Kyle

Also, I'm assuming everyone's pools are looking pretty good.

[Music ends.]

Ari

Eh, they're alright.

Hallie

Uh... they're like—they're better than they could be.

Tom

Uh... half my Int pool.

Kyle

Alright cool, so less holding back now. Got it.

Emily

Idk if I would say that!

Hallie

I don't know if that's the, like... Alright. Two levels, yeah.

[Rolls.] Ugh...

Ari

I'm spending 2 levels of Effort on this. *[Rolls.]*

Tom

Gonna spend 5 levels of Effort.

Ari

Oh, that was an 18.

Emily

[Rolls.] I rolled a 17.

Hallie

I rolled a 4, with 2 levels of Effort.

Tom

[Rolls.] Fifteen.

[Apocalyptic music begins.]

Kyle

The shards start raining down from on high. None of you get hit except for Hopper who's hit for 6 points of Armor-piercing damage as you are too distracted by the warhammer which you yank out right as it happens.

Hallie

[Whispering.] Yes!

Kyle

So what's going to happen now is every turn, in addition to Aegon getting his actions, shards—infinite falling shards are going to fall on the battlefield, and every time one of them falls something bad on the level of a GM Intrusion will happen.

Tom

Oh boy.

Ari

Ooh. Okay. Okay, okay, okay.

Kyle

And here's the first thing. The shards hit the ground. They hit Hop. The rest of you can dodge them deftly.

Ari

Oh no, Hopper.

Kyle

When they hit the ground, some immediately attach to the ground, but others plink off. These loose ones start rolling back, first hitting his leg, and then his stomach, and then his arms.

[01:10:00]

Obsidian glass shards all covering Aegon Stormbreaker...

Ari

Oh, here it is.

Kyle

...making him taller than he ever was before, ten feet tall.

Hallie

God damn it.

Kyle

Covered in these obsidian shards that eventually form a new immovable mask over its forehead, his mouth, and finally those two previously visible eyes.

Hallie

No.

[Music ends.]

Emily

So that's why you were like "oh, Xoc can burn away his armor. That's fine. I'll let that be your effect."

[Laughter.]

Hallie

Because it literally doesn't fucking matter!

Emily

Bunch of armor!

Kyle

So the way it practically was going to work is that he normally would have—I'll tell you flat-out. He normally was gonna have 6 Armor. I am going to let the 2 Armor he had originally get cut off, so it is now down to 4 Armor.

Tom

Hey, a little bit of shred helps.

Kyle

Alright. He has the powers of God and anime on his side now. You have now seen his final form. Elee, what are you going to do?

Emily

What I'm going to do depends on what Hallie was able to do.

Kyle

The Warhammer is on the ground.

Hallie

Yay.

Emily

Is it a heavy weapon?

Kyle

It's a heavy weapon.

Emily

[Smiling.] Like, the kind of heavy weapon that Elee can wield at no cost?

Kyle

Oh, you better believe it's a—Can Elee Badge lift a Warhammer?

Ari

It's like Captain America lifting the hammer, just like, oh.

Tom

[Severe.] "I knew it."

Kyle

Except this hammer is exclusively used by assholes.

Ari

It's true.

Emily

[Laughing.] Perfect for Elee Badge.

Tom

Oh no~

Emily

Passing by Hop with a quick “good job” and a pitying glance...

Hallie

Rude.

Emily

...because he’s just been nailed by the shards, Elee’s going to, as she approaches, dip one of her hands down and grab ahold of the hilt of the Warhammer and hoist it back over her shoulder and try to hit Aegon with his own hammer.

Kyle

Yeah, give me a roll for that. I’m gonna say it works functionally the—You know what? Fuck it. It does 8 damage.

Emily

Sweet. So, again, specialized. This is a heavy bashing weapon.

Kyle

It counts. It’s 2 steps easier.

Emily

Okay. Well, it’s 3 steps because I have Opportunist which gives me an asset on a previously attacked target.

Kyle

Okay.

Emily

And then I am going to put in a level of Effort to hit.

[Rolls.] Fifteen.

Kyle

You grab his Warhammer. How do you hit him?

[Rock wrestler music begins.]

Emily

Elee knows how to use a heavy bashing weapon. She's running on her little legs and she's gonna jump to give it a little extra force. Because it's nice, this one has a longer handle, so the weight of the hammer head end swings itself around really nicely.

Kyle

You hit him. At this point you can only really get to his kneecap at best. So you hit him in the legs causing 8 points of damage, -4 for his Armor, causing only 4 points of damage. The shards reverberate a little bit, but you seem to be no closer to actually hitting the man himself. Or, the corpse itself.

Aegon attacks, but this time he doesn't need his Warhammer because he doesn't need non-Apocrita attacks. He doesn't need anything besides what the Apocrita will give. I need everyone to roll me a Speed defense from the shards and a Speed defense from him. You can apply the same Effort to both of them, I will say.

Tom

Oh thank god.

Emily

Oh good. *[Laughs.]*

[Music ends.]

Ari

Yeah. See, I cannot afford that, so...

Hallie

[Laughing.] I was like this is too many rolls.

Ari

I'm just gonna roll it without any Effort because—

[Rolls.] Oh, hang on, this didn't roll well.

Hallie

Alright. Two for each, I guess.

Ari

[Rolls.] Agh... An 11, without any Effort. So I think, yeah, next turn is gonna be me trying to kill because this is...

[Others roll.]

Hallie

Yeah, same.

Kyle

Okay. What's your second roll, Ari?

Ari

Oh, right! Two rolls. Oops.

[Rolls.] Uh, 10.

Hallie

Ugh, god damn it. Alright, with 2 levels I got 8 and 9.

Tom

I'm gonna spend 5 Effort.

[Rolls.] My first one was 3 and then the second roll I rolled a 13.

Emily

I rolled a 19 and I rolled a 9.

Kyle

The shards come first. The downpour of them continues. They hit Hop and they hit Misha each for 6 points of damage through Armor.

Hallie

Ow. Ugh...

Emily

Babies...

Hallie

Okay, that's not good. Ugh!

Kyle

How are your pools looking, by the way?

Ari

Not good. I want to heal next turn.

Hallie

[Stammers.] I am... I have 2 in Speed and 19 in Int.

Ari

I have 4 in Might, 3 in Speed, and 5 in Int. I'm not to 0 in any, but like... you know.

[01:15:00]

[Threatening action music begins.]

Kyle

Well... The shards hit the ground, and as they hit the ground, with a massive hand Loell slams his hand on the ground causing them to launch back up again in an area of effect attack that causes 10 damage to Elee, Hop and Misha.

Hallie

Okay, so now I am back to 0 in two pools. Never mind!

Tom

So Hopper's on the ground.

Emily

[Nervous groan.]

Ari

I am also 0 in two pools.

Tom

[Into his hands.] Oh my god. They're both down.

Hallie

Oh my god!

Kyle

Very glad I decided to do the 10 as opposed to the 12 which I decided before I knew.

Ari

Oh, if you had 12 I literally would be... like, I would be at 0 in everything.

Hallie

Yeah.

Kyle

And from the shards, because a GM Intrusion effect happens, are birthed four obsidian soldiers.

Hallie

Ugh... fuck! Okay.

Tom

Okay.

Kyle

Hop, it is your turn.

[Music ends.]

Hallie

Okay. Um...

[Grunts angrily.] I know. Okay. Um...

Ari

You're at 0 in two pools, right?

Hallie

Yeah. Can I do my spray, speedy, speedy spray?

Kyle

Yeah. The first time you use a cypher it is immediate, so that is gonna put your Speed pool back up to max.

Tom

Ooh, nice.

Hallie

Okay, and then... *[Thinking sounds.]*

What I would like to do, I think, is turn invisible so that I am harder to hit.

Kyle

How does invisible work?

[Stealthy electronic music begins.]

Hallie

You become invisible for 10 minutes. While invisible you are specialized in Stealth and Speed defense tasks. This effect ends if you do something to reveal your presence or position (attacking, performing an esotery, using an ability, and so on).

Kyle

How do you turn invisible? How does Hopper, man...?

Hallie

He's just a man. Well, he is a man who once went into the Datasphere to help out a friend and he had two esoterics he just had at that time, one of which was Invisibility. He didn't use it during that time, but he knew that he could, so he actually sort of recognizes that feeling that one time he had access to the power and then when he kind of looks around at his hand he notices that he can see through it because he just "oops, I'm in danger, I'm invisible now." It was a completely instinctual thing that he also, Hopper the man, doesn't understand.

But he thinks "I could use this," so when he's invisible he's gonna sneak away just a little bit from the battlefield to get behind all the obsidian soldiers. This is also an action, but if I spend one action aiming, in the next round I can make a precise ranged attack. The difficulty of the attack roll is decreased by 1 step and if it is successful it will inflict 4 additional points of damage.

This ability is called Snipe which I would like to marry to my Punish All the Guilty ability, attacking every foe that I have designated as guilty in an area. Essentially I would like to sneak around behind everybody, line up several shots in a row, and then fan the hammer on everybody.

Kyle

Because going invisible is an action as well, you will have to spend 2 Experience to do another action and set up the Snipe.

Hallie

I will do that.

Kyle

Okay. Where are you taking shelter? There are the columns at the far end, the big ones. There are the two trapezoidal buildings. There is a pod. And then, you know, there's a big guy in the center, but he moves a lot.

[Music ends.]

Hallie

Probably under one of the eaves of the trapezoidal buildings.

Kyle

Okay.

Hallie

Because they're trapezoids! He likes that shape.

Emily

[Giggles.]

Kyle

Alright Hop, you are set up to not die and set up to hit every enemy next turn, assuming we all make it there. Misha, what are you going to do?

Ari

I want to use my Spraymetal which would heal my Might up to full, and I want to do a recovery roll as well.

Kyle

Alright. You're spraying the metal on yourself, and while you're doing that you're doing something else. What else are you doing to heal yourself?

Ari

Um... probably Misha, by watching Xoc fix Ness and just doing all of these machine things, kind of has learned how to do it on themselves, so they are gonna kinda follow the things that Xoc has taught Misha how to do in order to get fixed.

Kyle

Okay.

Ari

They also really want to make a quip remark to Loell, but they are not able to at the moment, so I'm gonna wait until next time.

Kyle

You're healing yourself and you're just putting up a finger, like "wait, just one second, let me..."

Ari

Yeah. So I roll—What do I roll? Just a d20?

Kyle

A d6 and then you add 6 to that.

Ari

Okay.

[Rolls.] Alright, that was a 3.

Kyle

Perfect. So Hop has gone invisible and run to god knows where.

Hallie

A trapezoid.

Kyle

Misha is just sitting there angrily healing themselves.

[Laughter.]

Xoc, you have seen two of your friends almost die and you have this towering monstrosity that is refusing every attempt for humanity in front of you, embracing this horrible mentality. What are you gonna do?

Tom

Misha, what is the max for your Intellect pool?

Ari

Thirty, I think... Yeah.

Emily

[Reprimanding.] Tom.

Tom

The Spraymind MAX was for me. That was the point of the burn at full max strategy.

Ari

No. No-no-no. No, don't give it to me.

[01:20:00]

Tom

Because then I could go full throttle, and now I'd be able to bump it back up to full and keep going full throttle.

Ari

No, keep it to yourself.

Tom

And that might be the better tactical move, too.

Ari

No-no-no, don't give it to me yet.

Tom

Because then I can do a lot, but...

Ari

If Misha sees Xoc trying to do it, they would mental link tell him not.

Ari (as Misha)

I'll be okay, Xoc. Don't use it on me. Keep it for healing.

[Laughter. Subdued action music begins.]

Hallie

Wow.

Kyle

Yeah Xoc, what are you gonna do? Actually, you hear another voice say:

Kyle (as Loell)

What, you're really just gonna let them take the hit for you? Not very heroic, bud.

Tom (as Xoc)

Fuck you.

Tom

Xoc is going to not heal either person yet because we're both at roughly equivalent levels right now.

Ari

Okay. Yeah.

Tom

But, Xoc is going to be standing protectively between Misha and Loell, hands still raised. Xoc is charging up another Cutting Light on Loell.

[Long deep breath.] I'm going to spend 3 levels of Effort to hit, 3 levels of Effort to damage, so same attack as before. I'm certainly not getting the bonuses from... Actually, that's a good point. I'm not getting the bonuses from him being tied up anymore, so this is just 3 levels easier.

Ah fuck... That's no good. That's not gonna fly at all. Let's change that up. Five to hit, 1 to damage. Everything else is too risky.

[Rolls.] Ooh! Eighteen. I made the wrong call.

Ari

Oh nice.

Hallie

Yeah!

Tom

My beam just tries to melt through the layers of obsidian tiles.

Kyle

And as it melts through the layers you swear you could see a little bit of the actual armor underneath before more tiles move to take its place. Elee, you've got one more move before he starts attacking everyone.

[Music ends.]

Emily

Okay. I have a question about a certain combo ability.

Kyle

Yeah.

Emily

So, on my turn, can I have Misha fling me?

Hallie

Ha!

Kyle

Because Misha was just healing, I'll say yeah, you can have Misha fling you on your turn.

Ari

Alright!

Tom

Let's fucking go.

Emily

People kept saying to aim for the head, so...

Hallie

[Laughs.] Here we go!

[Anime action music begins.]

Emily

Elee has been fretting. This is horrifying. Her children just keep getting stabbed and bonked on the head, so she's trying to help Misha up after healing and looks up at Aegon and then looks back to Misha.

Ari

Misha will lock eyes with Elee and just an unspoken, like, oh yeah, I get you, I get what you want.

Emily

[Laughs.]

Kyle

Ari will spend the points to Fling. Emily will roll, though, to hit.

Emily

Ooh!

Ari

Misha will just go:

Ari (as Misha)

Hit him, mom!

Emily

Aww~!

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Emily

[Sobbing.] Everybody's been calling her mom. Her heart is so full.

I would like to argue that I am a heavy bashing weapon. My fists are heavy weapons. My body is a heavy weapon. I am a heavy bashing weapon.

Kyle

[Grinning.] What are you hitting with? Are you just throwing—like hitting with yourself?

Tom

You've got the hammer, too.

Emily

Ooh! Okay. Okay. Then yes, I'm using his own hammer and I want to hit him in the face.

Kyle

Alright, so you get an asset from Ari automatically, so it's 3 steps easier.

Emily

Okay. It's 4 steps easier because I have Opportunist.

Kyle

You got—yeah. Yeah, mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Emily

Then I'm gonna do another level.

Kyle

Okay.

Emily

Then I'm gonna do a level to damage.

Kyle

Okay! Roll to attack, Elee.

Emily

[Rolls.] Seven...?

Kyle

You used 1 level of Effort, right?

Emily

[Meekly.] Yeah, so it was 5 steps easier.

Kyle

He is Level 8, so you needed to roll a 9 or higher.

Emily

[Seethes sadly.]

Ari

No...

Hallie

Ugh!

Kyle

I will say the Fling works. Elee, you get flung up, you go to hit him with your Warhammer, but instead the Warhammer connects to the side of his armor and I'll say you just slide onto his shoulder.

Emily

[Delighted.] Am I just up there?!

Kyle

You're just up there now. You're up there by the head.

[Music ends.]

Tom

Yes. Perfect.

Kyle

He is now past ten feet tall. He is 20 feet.

Hallie

Oh god.

Kyle

You are on top of this towering figure.

Emily

Oh, he's growing. Oh no.

Hallie

Jesus.

Ari

God.

Tom

I see this as a complete win because either you get to just smack him in the face again and again or he's upset that you're up there and it draws him away from Hopper and Misha.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Kyle

Well... yeah, we'll get to that in a second. Everyone except for Hopper roll to defend against the rain and against the soldiers. Just do one single roll—they're both Level 6—to dodge. Hopper doesn't have to do any because the soldiers can't see him but also because the trapezoid is blocking him from the rain.

Emily

Oh nice. Good.

Ari

Oh yeah~

Hallie

Trapezoids!

Ari

I'm spending 1 level of Effort.

Tom

[Smiling.] I'll use 4, so I'll have 2 Int points remaining.

Ari

[Rolls.] That was an 8.

Tom

[Rolls.] ...

Kyle

What did you roll, Tom?

Tom

Oh, I rolled a 2.

Ari

Oh boy.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Emily

[Rolls. Yelps.] I spent 2 levels and I rolled an 8.

Kyle

Misha is hit—

Hallie

Oh! Misha, no!

Kyle

—by both the obsidian soldier and the shard...

[01:25:00]

Hallie

Christ.

Kyle

...for 12 points of damage.

Hallie

Oh no!

Ari

It's fine.

Kyle

Xoc, you were right. If Elee had successfully hit Aegon, he would have been distracted by her, but...

Tom

Boo.

Kyle

You're right, he's gonna go after the biggest threat. He's gonna go after you.

Tom

Yes! Come on.

Kyle

Roll Speed defense.

Tom

Oh wait. I wasted all my Effort on the wrong attack. Oops. Oops, just spiders.

[Sharp inhale.] But that's okay. We were prepared for this moment. Um... I've got enough for 3 levels of Effort, and then I still have the 2 from Hopper, so it's at least 5 steps easier. So theoretically 9 or higher, assuming he's still Level 8, would be helpful. Come on, I can do that. That's like 50/50 yes.

[Rolls.] What the fuck does that say...?

[Yelps.] Oh! Woo! That's a 19!

Hallie

Oh thank god. Good.

Ari

Good.

Tom

I couldn't read it at first.

Kyle

Xoc, what is your health right now? Your total pools.

Tom

I have 9 Might, 9 Speed, 1 Intellect.

Kyle

Okay.

Emily

[Giggles.] Kyle trying to figure out how to not kill Tom.

Hallie

[Laughs, nervous gibberish.]

Kyle

Well, I wanted to see if he would have died... He wouldn't have.

Tom

No, that wouldn't have killed.

Kyle

But it would have gotten closer than you would like to believe.

[Apocalyptic music begins.]

Xoc, you notice just in time a spreading of the shards beneath you which spread to the sides and spiders start crawling out. As the shards go to converge back on you, to consume you in the shards, how do you block or dodge?

Tom

Xoc is actually going to leap up on the floating staff and almost surf it away from the area that's being attacked.

Ari

Nice.

Hallie

Shred it, man!

Kyle

As you surf away, you can see the other shards from the rain—because I haven't described the negative effect for that—start climbing up to the columns at the other side of the battlefield. You see them wrapping around the columns which you see at the bottom start breaking.

Hallie

Oh no.

Kyle

So there are four columns that are going to, on the next turn unless something is done, be pulled down onto the battlefield, and I'll tell you flat-out that they will do 15 damage if any of them hit you.

Hallie

Ow.

Ari

Oh boy.

[Music ends.]

Kyle

Hop.

Hallie

I'm sniping.

Kyle

You're sniping.

Hallie

I'm doing my Snipe.

Kyle

You are going to attack all enemies.

Hallie

Yep.

Kyle

Does Snipe give you any benefits in that?

Hallie

Because I spent one action aiming, the difficulty is decreased by 1 step and if I am successful it will inflict 4 additional points of damage.

Tom

Also, is this the buzzer disk launcher or is this the Mako arm?

Hallie

Buzzer disk does more damage than the Mako arm.

Tom

Does it? I thought they were both light.

Hallie

Buzzer disk says 4 and Defibrillimb says 2.

[Quirky, video game-like electronic music plays.]

Kyle (as MakoOS)

Would you like me to go into Overdrive Mode?

Hallie (as Hopper)

Yes please.

Kyle (as MakoOS)

How exciting!

Kyle

[Smiling.] And it is now a medium weapon.

[Laughter.]

Hallie

Okay. Yay. I'll use the Defibrillimb instead of the shitty buzzer gun. Okay! Um... 3 levels of Effort, all to hit.

Kyle

Alright, give me five rolls.

Hallie

Okay!

[Music ends.]

Kyle

You're gonna do the small boys first and then Aegon last.

Hallie

Okay. Small boy number one.

[Rolls.] A 15.

Ari

Ooh.

Hallie

Small boy number two.

[Rolls.] A 12.

Ari

Okay.

Hallie

[Rolls.] Small boy number three... A 9.

Kyle

Okay~

Hallie

Hop's losing steam.

[Rolls.] Small boy number four is also a 15.

Ari

Oh, okay.

Kyle

Alright, then give me a roll for the man in charge.

Tom

Big boy~

Kyle

Big boy.

Ari

Big boy.

Hallie

[Rolls.] Big boy went under my chair. Oh boy. Aw boy... Where did—? I lost it. I lost my dice. Hang on.

[Laughter.]

Tom

Hoo-boy.

Hallie

I found it! I found my dice. Big boy is 17!

Tom

Ooh! *[Claps.]*

Emily

[Happy hum.]

Ari

Ooh.

Kyle

So describe how Hop knocks out each of the four soldiers, just clean out obliterates them, and then does 5 points after Armor to Aegon.

Hallie

Alright. So, the MakoOS asks “do you want to go into overdrive” and Hopper whispers yes please because he’s still sort of hiding.

Kyle

And then it loudly, as I said, responds...

[Cowboy duel music begins.]

Kyle (as MakoOS)

Excellent!

Kyle

...loud enough that suddenly all the soldiers and Aegon just turn to under the trapezoid where you are.

Hallie

At that point Hopper who has been lining up a shot very suddenly has to change his plans, so while they’re all looking at him and not seeing anything he’s shuffling to the side, like just a little bit until he’s in their peripherals where they are not looking. Then he cocks back a head and aims at the closest obsidian soldier. He just takes the shot and it hits and he’s like “yeah,” and then—

Kyle

As soon as he goes “yeah,” suddenly he appears and the other three soldiers turn to you and start marching your way.

Hallie

But it is too late because Hop’s in the rhythm now, so he just shoots them as they’re walking toward him without breaking a sweat.

[01:30:00]

Then he keeps the rhythm up, because he’s got a good thing going, and just turns and does it at Aegon who I assume is looking at him now also but maybe not moving towards him.

Kyle

The MakoOS hits and you can hear the burning of spiders underneath the armor getting destroyed by the Defibrillimb arm.

Tom

Yes.

Ari

Nice.

Hallie

Yes!

Kyle

You see that some of the shards of obsidian glass seem to be breaking off.

Hallie

That is a good sign.

Kyle

He is very close to damaged, but we’ll talk about how close he is to damaged when we get to his turn. Misha, what are you gonna do?

[Music ends.]

Ari

Okay. If I did Move Mountains... the columns that are falling down, would I be able to push all four if I did that?

Kyle

What does Move Mountains say you can do?

Ari

It just says you exert a tremendous amount of physical force within 250 feet of you. You can push up to 10 tons of material up to 50 feet. This force can collapse buildings, redirect small rivers, or perform other dramatic effects.

Kyle

Let me do a check...

[Types loudly.] Unfortunately, I just checked up the Roman facts. A column drum weight ranges between 29 and 33 tons.

Tom

Damn.

Ari

Okay, so that's not—Alright.

Emily

Okay, but these are like fantasy columns.

Kyle

They're fantasy columns. I'm just using a template, alright.

Emily

[Giggles.]

Tom

[Grinning.] Damn it.

Kyle

If it were close, if it was like 12, maybe, but this is three times.

Tom

How could Totalus Rankium betray us in this moment?

Ari

They're just the terrible columns of I forget who. Trajan's columns! That's what it is. Just for of them.

Tom

[Groaning.] No... No.

Kyle

[Excited.] It's the column of Trajan! That's what the fact pulled up for.

Tom

No~!

Kyle

Trajan's Column, Basic Statistics.

Tom

Fucking Roman Donald Trump is going to kill us.

Ari

We can't have just one. We have four of those manliness statements.

Kyle

Each in a different pose, of course.

Ari

Yeah. Anyways, I have another idea.

Kyle

Okay.

Ari

I have the barrier thing where I can create an opaque stationary barrier, but it's like 10 feet by 10 feet, so I don't think that's...

Kyle

Yeah.

Ari

How big is that for protection?

Kyle

So 10 feet by 10 feet, I would say... You would need to make a Level 6 one, first off.

Ari

Okay.

Kyle

But you can run to one person and probably get within the distance, but everyone else would have to run to where you are to be covered under the shield.

Ari

Okay, so they would have to run towards it to be covered under it?

Kyle

Yeah. For example, Xoc's pretty close to you. You could go next to Xoc and do it and then he'd be protected.

Ari

Hmm...

Tom

Protect Hopper. I'll be fine.

Ari

I swear to god, Xoc. If you die because of what I do—

Tom

[Grinning.] No, it's okay. Don't worry about it.

Kyle

If Tom does not go under the shield with Hopper, a thing he can do, and he dies, I will not forgive him for this. *[Laughs.]*

Tom

It's okay.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Kyle

Anyways. Misha, what are you gonna do?

Ari

Well then I'm gonna run towards Hop and create the barrier.

Kyle

Yeah. What does this barrier look like? This is the first time we've seen it.

Ari

It is! I actually changed an ability for this.

Kyle

I thought it was new. I was like this seems new but I wasn't sure.

Ari

[Laughs.] Yeah! It says that it looks like solid energy. It's like a translucent purple-colored barrier that looks kind of like light but also like glass in a way, but it's all pretty purple because that's their color now.

Kyle

Yeah.

[Electronic inspiring racing music plays.]

Ari

It's kind of a bit of an extension of the scarf even though it's not.

Hallie

Aww.

Kyle

That's what I was thinking, actually. You run with the scarf and the scarf in fact wraps around both of you and seems to extend further than is physically possible for it and you have this purple fabric barrier around you.

Ari

[Smiling.] Yes!

Hallie

That's cute.

Kyle

Xoc.

Tom

First off, because it doesn't cost me an action, I will use my Spraymind MAX on myself, so now they can't kill me because I'm at full health again.

Ari

Oh nice.

Hallie

[Laughs.] Thank god.

[Music ends.]

Tom

I'm torn because I feel like the most fun thing I can do right now is Far Step onto Loell and try to point-blank him with Cutting Light.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Ari

That would be really funny.

Tom

Even though it would be much safer to shoot him and retreat under Misha's shield.

Ari

Yeah, that would be much safer.

Tom

So here's a thing. Here's a thing.

Hallie

The columns can't hit you on top of Aegon.

Tom

I don't have the XP to do this, so it is technically stretching the rules, but I feel like you will let me do this because it's a fun action. It says Far Step is an action to do, but would you let me just let that count as my movement for this turn?

Kyle

I will let you do it, but in payment we have to play out this scene.

Tom

Oh yeah.

[Running music begins.]

Kyle

So Elee, you are on top of Aegon. You see the massive columns about to come down and you see Misha rush over to protect Hop. You see Xoc turn and start to run, too, and then he disappears. With a little (whoosh) you hear, to your horror, Xoc Far Step right in front of you.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Emily (as Elee)

What the hell are you doing here?! There's a shelter!

Tom (as Xoc)

I'm finishing this.

Tom

[Laughing.] I'm going to use a Cutting Light, point-blank.

Hallie

God... God, just directly.

[01:35:00]

Tom

Just cranking out 'Out of Context Quest Friends Spoilers.' It's beautiful. Um... fuck. Which die do I even use? This one was blessed earlier, so I'm gonna use it. Six levels of Effort, of course.

Ari

Heh, heh...

Tom

Four to hit, 2 to damage. I'm feeling lucky.

Ari

If those are your last words...

Hallie

I swear to god.

Tom

[Rolls.] I got a 12.

Kyle

That's $5 + 6 - 4$. How do you hit him for 7 points of damage?

Tom

So Xoc Far Steps up to the other shoulder, says it...

Tom (as Xoc)

I'm finishing this.

Tom

...charges up another beam, gathering up the light in the palm of his hand, once again shaking with power, and just holds it to the side of the obsidian head and just lets it melt in.

Kyle

The armor melts off and half of this fake obsidian helmet disappears. And, like with everything else, he doesn't respond.

[Music ends.]

Before Elee's turn a few things happen.

[Colossal cracking SFX.]

The columns finish breaking and they all fall down to the ground. They do not hit you, Xoc and Elee, because you are on Aegon's shoulders, and Misha, you couldn't even tell with the exception of a few flakes of rubble that they had even touched the scarf. You hear nothing else. The rain has stopped... but why is there a rumbling?

[Evil apocalyptic music begins.]

The half of a mask that remains for Aegon looks up at the remainder of the shards in the sky and you can see the rest of them start to congeal together into one massive push that at the end of your next round of actions will hit the ground as a Level 10 attack. If it hits, bad things will happen. He has 18 health left. You all have one round. Elee, what are you going to do?

Emily

[Groans nervously.]

[Music ends.]

Wait a second. Wait a second! Wait a second! Aegon is not using his hammer. He is disarmed!

Kyle

He has the Apocrita as his weapon.

Emily

He is disarmed!

Tom

I mean, half of the Apocrita helmet is melted.

Emily

He is disarmed and dis-armored.

Tom

That could be considered a minor hindrance.

Hallie

Those two fit the definitions of those two words.

Ari

It's true.

Emily

[Laughing.] You know, I think this is a really good argument.

Kyle

How much XP are you willing to spend for that argument?

Emily

My... Okay, okay, okay. Yeah.

Kyle

Anyways. If you wanna hand over 1 XP my way, you know, sweeten the pot, sweeten the deal.

Emily

I will bribe you with 1 XP.

Kyle

[Silly, yielding.] Okay! Sure, yeah! He's disarmed.

Emily

[Laughs.]

Kyle

Yeah! Sure. Whatever. He's disarmed. What benefit do you get from that?

Tom

Finishing Blow?

Emily

[Delighted.] Finishing Blow!

Kyle

Ah, an extra 8 damage for 1 XP. I've been conned again. This is me, the XP Botter. I'm a new character.

[Laughter.]

I'm very bad at making deals. This is why Kyle doesn't bring me around much. I'll take that XP and I'll be on my way. And next to you this jaunty man in overalls just grabs a little token of XP and blips off somewhere into Season 2.

Ari

What the fuck.

Tom

[Laughs.]

Kyle

Alright, so it does 8 more damage.

Emily

I figured out how to spend the remainder of my Might pool.

Tom

[Delighted.] Yes!

Kyle

How are you spending it?

Emily

Alright, so I'm gonna do Finishing Blow.

Kyle

Okay. You do have Opportunist.

Emily

Yep, so I have 1 asset from that.

Kyle

And then 2 more from natural, just from hitting.

Emily

So I've got 3 levels, and then I'm going to spend 2 extra levels to hit, and then I'm going to spend 1 to damage.

Kyle

Okay, so if you succeed this Level 2 roll he will be down to 3 health.

Tom

Phew.

Emily

[Rolls.] Oh, oh, oh... A 9?

Tom

Phew.

Hallie

Oh god.

Kyle

How do you take him down to 3 health?

Emily

He just dropped columns on her children!

[Peppy action music begins.]

Elee clenches her hands harder around the Warhammer and hoists it back over her shoulder and springs it around, attempting to hit into where Xoc had burned away the armor on his face.

Emily (as Elee)

[Full of emotion.] Your mother would be disappointed in you.

Tom

[Smiling.] Oh Jesus Christ.

Hallie

[Smiling.] He deserved better.

Emily

[Laughs.]

Kyle

The other half of the armor head goes clean off. You now have this giant armor set that pieces are crumbling off of it. The façade is starting to fade away. It just needs one last person to knock it off for good.

Tom

Do it! Do it combined.

Hallie

Hop was just gonna take a shot with the Defibrillimb.

[01:40:00]

Ari

Misha would look at Aegon's corpse face or whatnot.

Ari (as Misha)

Huh... well I suppose you were the real puppet all along. It is a shame that you have pushed away all of the friends that would have come to save you and tell you otherwise.

Ari

Then they would toss the ball of ants directly at his eye.

Hallie

Ha!

Kyle

Hop and Misha, give me a roll.

Hallie

I am putting in 3 levels to hit. *[Rolls.]*

Ari

Yeah!

[Rolls.] Alright, that is a 16.

Hallie

Fifteen.

Kyle

So Misha, you do your line and everyone's like "yeah... yeah!"

Ari

God.

Kyle

And you go to throw the ball of ants and the craves which take the green light and the darkness of the open sky and gives them a little bit of a party flair to them.

Ari

Yeah.

Kyle

You're throwing essentially a disco ball at the center of Aegon, and it's going closer and closer, and Hop, you notice at the last second that it's not going to make it. You turn around your Defibrillimb...

Ari

[Smiling.] Oh nice.

Kyle

...and shoot a perfect hole in the cavity, and the craves go on the inside.

Ari

Nice.

Hallie

I love that so much.

Kyle

From inside of this obsidian mass you see multicolored lights shooting out—red, yellow, blue, green; a glorious light show that becomes more and more apparent as the cracks between the shards start to increase. The shoulders that you are on, Xoc and Elee, start to collapse.

Tom

So, for my turn, can I pop over to Elee and Far Step us both down to the ground?

Emily

Please, thank you.

Kyle

You absolutely can.

[Music ends.]

You all hit the ground at the same time as the shards do. The dust settles. You hear very little, just the wind from the outside sky and a few little skittering legs that are easily squashed as the spiders try to crawl out from underneath Aegon's armor and are quickly followed by a pair of ant and crave each which defeat each of the spiders that try to escape.

Emily

[Giggles.]

Hallie

Aww! That's so cute.

Ari

Ant on a crave, like the ants are doing little, like, knights on the steed.

Hallie

[Chanting.] Ants on a crave! Ants on a crave. Ants on a crave.

Ari

Ants on a crave!

Kyle

And... he's done. Face-down on the earth you can see a set of Angulan Knight's armor which starts cracking more and more, revealing the corpse underneath.

Tom (as Xoc)

[Somber.] Alright then. I guess one thing left to do.

Tom

Xoc is going to put a hand on Elee's shoulder, because she still has Redd's Blessing.

Ari

Misha will approach Xoc and take his hand and basically tell Hopper to come and take their hand.

Hallie

Yeah, Hopper will do that.

Emily

Elee raises Redd's Blessing and stabs.

Kyle

Elee, roll Speed defense.

Emily

[Rolls.] Unlucky 13!

Kyle (as Loell)

[Coughing hoarsely, breathless.] No... NO!

[Sad piano music begins.]

Kyle

The hand barely covered at this point by the armor grabs the Warhammer and Loell swings at you. With a few forced breaths, armor shedding off of his body, he slowly stands up and holds the Warhammer with both hands. Hop, it was your turn.

Hallie

I go stand beside Elee and I am just gonna shoot him.

Kyle

Okay. Roll me the shoot.

Hallie

[Rolls.] Ten.

Kyle

Now roll me to defend.

Hallie

[Rolls.] Eight.

Kyle

You take a shot. It reflects off of the small bit of armor he has, and he screams out again.

Kyle (as Loell)

[Hoarse, coughing.] I won't let you!

Kyle

He grabs his hammer and swings down at you but only for 4 points of damage. Misha, it is your turn.

Ari

I want my scarf to shank him.

Kyle

Roll me an attack and a defense.

Ari

I'm not even gonna spend Effort.

[Rolls twice.] That was a 20 for the attack, so that is, uh...

Kyle

Major effect or more damage?

Ari

Probably major effect. You know, I don't know what it would be.

Kyle

I have an idea. The scarf goes and it stabs him in the chest.

Ari

God.

Kyle

And Loell doesn't seem to respond much except for being pushed back, not by the stab but by the force of it. Shakily, he raises his left hand to shoot at you.

Kyle (as Loell)

[Coughing, trying to shout.] I am not a failure!

Kyle

He goes to shoot the Apocrita shards at you... and nothing happens. Not a single shard moves.

[01:45:00]

He pushes again, and pushes again, and pushes again, and nothing happens... except for a few shards which eventually start moving towards your legs, Misha, and pass them. The Apocrita wraps itself around Loell's legs, around his hips, and around his arms, locking him in place.

Tom

Xoc will just nod to Elee again.

Tom (as Xoc)

It's time.

[Music ends.]

Kyle (as Loell)

[Coughing hoarsely.] Xoc... please.

Tom (as Xoc)

[Softly.] I'm sorry, Loell, but you have to learn to let go sometimes.

Kyle

Elee?

Emily

Elee looks at him kind of pityingly. Not sympathetically, no, but she pities him. She raises Redd's Blessing again.

Emily (as Elee)

Dead is dead.

Emily

And she will stab him with Redd's Blessing.

Kyle

From inside of Loell lights start to shine out and this light eventually rises itself from the tips of Redd's Blessing all the way up through its staff. As Loell finally, finally goes still... the staff sparks to life.

[Upbeat electronic music begins.]

The ropes rise each of their own accord, each thread on the end reaching out and grabbing onto all of you as the light from inside the spear takes up the entirety of the dome's space. This light overwhelms you, it overwhelms your eyes and it feels like it overwhelms your sense of smell, your hearing, of taste, of touch.

But you realize it's not those lights anymore that are overtaking you, it's the sensations of every single memory you have ever had. But more than that, the sensations of every single memory of every single person trapped in the Apocrita, and it's time to set them free.

[Music swells and carries out to the bloopers.]

Kyle

That's gonna be the end of the episode.

Ari

Nice. We did it! We did not die.

Emily

We did not.

Hallie

We did it!

Ari

We lived~

Tom

Yeah, it was good stuff.

Ari

Yeah.

Hallie

Yeah! We did so good, guys.

Ari

We did not die. I'm happy I could protect Hopper and Misha.

Hallie

Yes. Thank you. Christ.

Ari

I feel like we were the most vulnerable people in the party.

Hallie

[Squirms.] Definitely.

Kyle

I like how if I critiqued any part of boy scouts, Tom would be like yeah, that's fair, but if I go after the fucking knots, that is a step too far.

Hallie

It's like the most useful thing they teach you.

Ari

Making a tent is also a good scout skill, but maybe you went to a different scout place than I did. I know how to make a tent.

Kyle

Ah, that's very good. We should go tenting sometime. Camping, that's the word.

Hallie

Tenting!

Tom

[Delighted.] Tenting sometime.

Ari

Tenting.

Hallie

We should go tenting!

Kyle

That's also why your tarps are very good, because Hop is also good at putting up a tent.

Hallie

Yeah. He's good at all that camping stuff, like unironically.

Ari

Where we're going we don't need roads. *[Hums the Back to the Future theme.]*

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Ari

My neat purple die, my one true love. The other one is good but this one is my boy.

Hallie

Look, I didn't curse it on purpose. It's just that way.

Kyle

Okay, so Hallie is dead.

Hallie

[Laughing.] Don't worry about it. It's fine. We're shredding in. We're dropping like Sonic in Sonic Adventure 2 on hundreds of tiny skateboards.

Ari

And suddenly the Kool-Aid Man just—

Hallie

[Laughs loudly.]

Tom

Well, that's it. Show's over. Campaign ends. Kool-Aid Man shows up and saves the day.

Hallie

[Laughing.] [Unintelligable] burst through the obsidian shards like he didn't even need a magical cypher!

Kyle

Because there aren't a whole lot of walls where you're fighting Aegon, he just bursts through the floor causing a hole to happen underneath Aegon and he just falls to his death.

Tom

I'm just imagining this with the shitty Sweet Bro and Hella Jeff comic book animation.

Ari

Oh my god.

Tom

Like static images just flipped on their side bursting up through the floor.

Kyle

We'll have to re-edit the scene where Ness says "they did it" so that before he says it we just (whistles), just see this body drop two feet in front of Ness.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Ari

Oh my god, yes.

Kyle

"I knew it." *[laughs.]*

[01:50:00]

Tom

[Amused.] God damn.

Ari

And the Kool-Aid Man doing a thumbs up as he also falls, like “OH YEAH!”

Kyle

“OH YEAH!”

Ari

Just falling behind.

Kyle

The worst part is because of the nature of the finale the Kool-Aid Man may not be gone. He can come back at any time.

Hallie

[Losing it laughing, can't speak.]

Ari

I am not sorry about this.

Kyle

We're gonna give Hallie a moment here and then we'll get started. We'll continue with this very serious episode.

Ari

Hallie was already dying. It was like you know what, let's just go full or go home.

Hallie

[Tearful from laughing.] I'm sorry, I know this is a Season 2 thing, but can the mascot of the little school in Season 2 be the Skool-Aid Man?

[Pinched, laughing.] And he's got a little backpack and some pencils!

Ari

And his rival school's pet is Salad Raptor so that he also comes back.

Hallie

[Happy sobbing.] No~

Emily

[Smiling.] Oh, why would you say that, Ari? She finally started breathing again!

Hallie

His rival has to be like a Capri-Sun knock-off. Like, I don't know, someone wearing capris.

Tom

[Defeated.] Oh god.

Hallie

[Laughing.] I'm sorry. You can continue. You can continue!

Tom

I'm not sure we can, because I was about to say something serious when we landed.

Hallie

[Stammering.] Okay. Go ahead. No, I'm serious. No, I can... Say it.

Tom (as Xoc)

Thanks mom.

Emily & Hallie

[Sobbing loudly.] Aww~!

Ari

That makes it a little bit weird, but—

Tom

No! No-no, it's fine. It's fine.

Emily

[Sobbing happily.] No~! Leave it!

Tom

I've been planning this from the start of the campaign.

Ari

[Smiling.] Okay. Okay.

Hallie

Oh god~

Tom

I've been waiting for this.

Hallie

[Laughing.] "I've been waiting for this! You hear that, Shinji? I called her mom!"

Ari

There she goes again.

Kyle

Hopper won't call her mom for a while but it will be very uncomfortable when he starts it.

Hallie

I was gonna say, Hopper probably won't and he's gonna hate it if he ever has to.

Kyle

Well, considering how things are going with you and Sera, and her and Rei, oh-ho-ho.

Hallie

I know, but...

Kyle

It's gonna be deeply uncomfortable.

Ari

Like, after the wedding with Sera or whatever, Hopper will try to be like hey mom and then stop halfway through, like no, this is not...

Emily

[Starts saying "mom" but turns it into "Elee" instead.]

Kyle

[Starts saying "mom" but turns it into "ma'am" instead.]

Ari

Ma'am!

Hallie

Ma'am!

[Laughter.]

Tom

The darkest day of Hopper's life.

Hallie

Oh, it's come full circle! It's come full circle. Oh no!

Kyle

Let's make sure Hopper can get to that day, shall we?

Tom

[Sad groan.]

Hallie

[Sad groan.] He's gonna... He's gonna.

Tom

Hopper is about to pull off a pro gamer move.

Hallie

Yeah.

Ari

The worst thing is I was gonna make a quippy remark at Loell but now I don't think I—

Kyle (as Loell)

[Coughing hoarsely.] You suck.

Ari

[Smiling.] Yeah.

Tom

Look! Everyone was like “Tom, why are you burning so many of your pools?” Because I think, other than Elee, I have the highest points of everyone here.

Emily

That’s because I started with 18 extra.

Tom

Other than Elee’s boost on me, like... I haven’t been hit, so I haven’t taken—

Ari

Do you have infinite Intellect?

Tom

I still have 12 Int points left and my other pools haven’t been touched.

Kyle

So much math this session.

Emily

Yeah. I don't know if my math is perfect.

Hallie

Parts of me are loving it.

Emily

Do I have 16?

Hallie

Not every part.

Tom

“This is what I wanted, isn’t it?”

Kyle

You go to hit him with your hor—

You go to hit him with your Warhammer.

Emily

[Laughing.] With my horse.

Ari

[Laughing.] With your horse. With the Totalus Rankium horse. It’s back.

Emily

[Laughs.]

Tom

[Whinnies.] He was a triple agent.

Kyle

Now remember, Xoc, before we start, that being a hero was the flaw of Aegon. It was the flaw you shared.

Tom

No-no, it’s okay, I just... I’m just trying to think of how funny I can be at all given times.

Kyle

He thinks.

Emily

It's not funny if you die. Can confirm.

Ari (as Misha)

But you're nothing but a corpse and we know that what bugs do best is to eat corpses from the inside and just slowly—

[Assorted laughter and sounds of disgust.]

Ari

[Smiling.] Is that too much? Is that too much edge, Kyle?

Kyle

It's too much. It's too much.

Ari

Okay.

Kyle

I think just “you were the real puppet” and using the bugs to fight his bugs is good.

Ari

Okay. Okay.

Tom

First Kyle X Card.

Kyle

I'm just thinking about the XP Baron or whatever his name was. Baron Zemo from Civil War but he now loves Cypher System.

Hallie

[Laughs.] Baron XP-mo! Yay! Happy for him.

Kyle

Baron Zemo just wants to take down D&D from the inside.

Ari

[Amused.] God.

Tom

[Amused.] No.

Kyle

Tony is like—

Tom

The new President of Wizards of the Coast.

Kyle

The roleplayer character and Steve is the one who really cares about the mechanics and getting them right, and they just go to war against one another.

[Laughter.]

Ari

Oh god.

Kyle

And Bucky is Steve's friend, the min-maxer. "I swear, Tony, his minmaxing days are behind him."

Tom

[Severe.] “Did you know?”

Ari

Amazing.

Tom

Zemo shows him a video of Bucky lying about rolling a nat 20.

[Severe.] “Did you know?”

“I didn’t know it was him.”

Ari

God.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Tom

It was fun to see Kyle be like I’ve used a damage that is precisely guaranteed to not drop Ari this turn. Ari: “I dropped.” What?! I’m sorry, what?

[01:55:00]

[Laughter.]

Ari

I... yeah.

Kyle

[Laughing.] I was so worried! I’m like, I don’t want anyone down unless they’re dead!

Emily

Wait!

Hallie

Unless they're dead! Rude.