

Transcript of Dust and Blood Episode 17 - A Precious Gift

Transcribed by Gale Parker.

[Dust and Blood by Arne Parrott plays: Dust is in my eyes, my blood is on the ground. A quiet little chuckle, and the shuffling of the boots of the coward that shot me down. He turns toward the sunrise, and I hear him softly say "I guess you've met your match, old man," as the colors fade to gray...]

Keith: Howdy Pardners! Dust and Blood is a rabble-rousin', rootin-tootin', bronco-bustin' podcast, not suitable for the ears of youngins! Take a gander at the content warnings and listen with care.

Blake: Welcome to Dust and Blood, a narrative-play podcast set in the wild, weird fantasy west. I'm Blake, your GM, and our players are Keith Curtis as Jasper Graves, Corinne Hill as Myra Sting, Zach Parker as Moz Copernicus Prior, and Gale Parker as Bonesaw.

Last time on Dust and Blood, our heroes confronted the Rabbit Prince to free Cameron Spinner and Zen Orkwen from the snare of the Banshee!

[Musica transitions into creaking cart ambience.]

Blake: After finishing up at the camp, you all set on going to go after those inoculations. You begin riding out west, following the general trail that you were told leads into Badlands. It's a short day because you you spent most of the morning and afternoon fighting, so it doesn't take too long before it's starting to get dark, and you arrive at a campsite that seems like it would be a good place to do what you need to do. Rest, relax, reconnoiter, and prepare for your next mission.

Keith: Uh, we have a chest of doubloons here. How heavy is this chest?

Blake: I—it's not overly heavy. It was a smaller chest that you're able to pick up a carry, and distributing it between Otto, Smokey, and Myra's horse, you're able to easily carry everything that was in it.

Keith: All right then! We'll carry on with our pockets full of jingle jangle!

[Laughter.]

Gale: I think that Ash has been somewhat... I would almost say surly and withdrawn since the events of the cavern, and they're kind of keeping to themselves.

Corinne: So Bonesaw is still Ash.

Gale: Yeah, Bonesaw is still out of commission. Asharel is our inhabitant for the evening.

Corinne: Okay. Myra has been clocking Ash this entire time, and is watching the movements that they make.

Keith (as Jasper): Well then, this looks like a good place for us to set up camp. Uh, looks like the sun might be getting a mite low in the sky.

Keith: Uh, how defensible is this place?

Blake: You're still kind of in the foothills. Uh, it's fairly open plain, but you're able to find a copse of trees, and be able to give you a good view of the valley around you. Kind of up on one of the hills.

Keith: All right, well I'm gonna give Smokey her head, and uh, when it gets to around twilight, the sun is not so quite so bright in the sky, which hurts my poor little undead eyes uh, I'm gonna go to a high point and try and get a general lay of the land, and see if I can see anything that's like, you know, signs of smoke on the horizon, or dust.

Blake: Give me a Survival check.

Keith: For the purposes of favored terrain, is this still desert?

Blake: I would say at this point you're in plains.

Keith: Okay.

[Dice rolling.]

Keith: Twenty-nine!

Corinne: Nice!

Gale: Awesome!

Blake: Um, let me roll something...

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: With a twenty-nine—that's a very good roll—you can see far, far off to the distance. You see what appears to be a small streak of smoke to the west, and also like, a small glow of red, closer than the smoke, but further... you would guess half a day's ride out. It is barely on the edge of your vision.

Keith: All right, well I'm not, I'm not too worried about that, because that'd be a half day's ride even in the daytime, and I don't think we're going to be looking forward to any surprises during the night, then.

Gale: Mhmm. Bonesaw's stomach growls loudly, and Ash just sort of sighs heavily, like—

Gale (as Ash): [sighs]

Corinne (as Myra): Yep, even with uh, a mortal body you gotta, you gotta take care of it.

Gale (as Ash): I hate it.

Corinne: Myra, unless somebody tries to stop her, is going to try to cook something.

[Everybody laughs.]

Gale (as Ash): Bonesaw does not have pleasant memories of...you doing that.

Corinne (as Myra): What! Why...?

Keith: Jasper would like to uh, to stand behind Myra as she cooks and uh, give the occasional—

Keith (as Jasper): [faux coughs] No, uh [faux coughs]

Keith: Or uh—

Keith (as Jasper): [sotto voce] Oh, yeah, that'd be a real good idea...

[Laughter.]

Keith: Just trying to give a little bit, a little bit of guidance on trail ration preparation. If she's amenable to it.

[Cheeky music starts up in the background.]

Corinne (as Myra): Hey, look! Look, I found um, uh... this kind of green? Green stuff? Green stuff? What's... what's this?

Keith (as Jasper): That... that is uh, Saguaro. That is cactus that you have right there.

[Blake and Gale cracking up in the background.]

Keith (as Jasper): Now—

Corinne: Oh! It's a cactus!

Keith (as Jasper): You, yeah, you—now, you *can* get some moisture out of it, if you are in desperation. Um... for a bit of moisture. It's a little sticky, but you can, you can uh, you can get something out of that. You can also—

Corinne: She throws it into the pot.

Gale: No—!

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): Boil the thorn out of it—oh my...!

Blake: [laughing] Myra, give me a Survival check!

Gale: Oh my God!

[Laughter.]

Blake: With a plus two, as Jasper is helping you.

Zach: I think if Moz is in the area, he'd be trying his hardest to prevent Myra from cooking, but I think he's going to be preoccupied with uh, washing the various um rabbit and jackalope guts off of his clothes.

[Dice rolling.]

Keith: Woah!

[Explosive laughter and clapping.]

Gale: That's a nat one!

Keith: That is a natural one!

Blake: Oh! That's couldn't have been—!

Gale: That's so fitting! I'm so sorry!

Zach: Nooo!

Corinne: It's perfect! It's perfect! Myra is wafting the fumes towards her nose and she's like—

Corinne (as Myra): Mm-mm-mmm! That's good eatin'!

Keith (as Jasper): [strained] My—my—my—Myra...?

Zach: Moz catches a whiff from half a mile away and gags.

[Laughter.]

Blake: Oh!

Keith: Jasper's gonna try and do something a little surreptitious. He's gonna try and accidentally trip and knock over that pot.

[Laughter.]

Corinne: Yes please! For all of our sakes, please do so.

Keith: Because I just watched her—I just watched her put in three heaping handfuls of nightshade—

[Laughter.]

Blake: Alright, go ahead and give me a uh, either a Sleight of Hand or a Bluff check to convince that it's an accident.

Keith: Alright!

[Dice rolling.]

[Everyone dies of laughter.]

Zach: There's another one!

Blake: Getting it out early! We're gettin' it out early!

Corinne: Another nat one!

Keith: Ooh!

Gale: This is a comedy of errors! Oh!

Keith (as Jasper): Myra—! I...I am...I am terrible sorry, uh... but you was about to poison us all. Uh...

Blake: Ooh!

Keith (as Jasper): Uhh...ohh—!

Corinne: Myra, she looks at the pot, and she looks at Jasper, and she goes—

Corinne (as Myra): Yeah well, I...uh. Yeah, well, I gotta, I gotta work on my um... my cooking skills. Maybe we can just do trail rations tonight.

Blake: Yeah, y'all, y'all will have to do trail rations for tonight.

Keith (as Jasper): Oh—okay...

Corinne: Myra kind of sulks over in the corner with her trail rations and nibbles on some bread.

[Laughter.]

Keith: Jasper will turn to uh, Moz, and whisper...mouth—

Keith (as Jasper): You're welcome.

[Laughter.]

Blake: Moz, what were you saying you were up to? You were uh...

Zach: Just cleaning myself off from the uh, gore that um, I believe Jasper was mostly responsible for getting all over me, but also uh, trying to cake in some mud on the fiddle to uh, give it that nice uh, *normal* look to it—

Blake: Okay—

Zach: Sort of beat down.

Blake: While you're doing this, for the first time in a couple of days, you actually hear your fiddle speak to you.

Blake (as Kyep): Look, boss. I know you're trying to keep things on the down low, but... do you mind not *putting* so much dirt on me—I mean, I'm a bit of a uh...I like to show off a little bit.

Zach (as Moz): And that's exactly why you're getting this much mud!

Blake (as Kyep): Now, come on! You gotta understand! I could—! You should be showing me off! You're the master fiddler! Wouldn't want people to think you just carry around some old fiddle now, do you?

Zach (as Moz): Remember the last time you showed off?

Blake (as Kyep): [chuckles]

Zach (as Moz): That's what I thought. Take your mud.

Blake (as Kyep): [stutters] ...*fine*.

Blake: It falls silent again.

Zach: Moz will return to the uh, campsite, once his task is complete.

Blake: You arrive to seeing Jasper, in the worst possible of pratfalls, like— 'Uuuh! *badoom!*' and spill the pot. You see, the sheriff hops over to it, leans down, and then hops away quickly—

Corinne: Oh no!

Blake: One of the plants that is caught in the flow just withers and dies immediately.

[Laughter.]

Corinne: Nooo! Oh my God! I'm gonna kill you guys one day! I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!

[Laughter.]

Blake: If it wasn't for the fact that that was a nat one, it wouldn't have been as bad as that, but it was—I...

Keith: Oh, but two nat ones in a row!

Blake: Oh!

Keith: I imagine that Jasper went to accidentally knock it over, and said 'Oops!' and then realized that he had missed, and then like, stuck a hand back out, and *then* knocked it over.

[Everybody laughs.]

Gale: Uh, does Goiter find it appealing at all? Or not—not even Goiter?

Blake: I think even Goiter like, goes over to it, sniffs, picks up a little bit and—

Blake (as Goiter): Bleh!

Blake: —scuttles back up onto Myra.

Corinne: [laughing] Myra looks at this, and she goes—

Corinne (as Myra): Okay, okay, okay yeah, maybe, maybe my cooking skills do need a bit of a brush up.

Corinne: And she looks at the plant, and she's like—

Corinne (as Myra): Yeah, maybe a lot.

[Laughter.]

Gale: Ash goes digging through Bonesaw's bags, doesn't find any trail rations, and then just like, tosses the bag off to the side and just sits next to the fire, arms crossed.

Keith: Uh, Jasper would like to come up and try and share some rations if he notices this, because Jasper's better at living off the land, if necessary.

Keith (as Jasper): Hey uh... Asharel, right?

Gale (as Ash): That's correct.

Keith (as Jasper): I take it uh, from your uh, your dejected posture there, that Bonesaw plum forgot to pack any rations for you?

Gale (as Ash): He keeps them in the cart.

Keith (as Jasper): Ahhh. Well, tell you what, I got more than I rightly need, uh, um, iffin you are feeling a bit peckish, I'm willing to share.

Keith: And I hand over some hard tack and some jerked meat.

Gale: Ash will take it and say—

Gale (as Ash): ...thank you.

Keith (as Jasper): Do you mind if I ask you a question or two, uh...Asharel?

Gale (as Ash): What are the questions?

Keith (as Jasper): Well, see, I—I got introduced to Bonesaw as ‘Bonesaw,’ and uh, you have shown up a couple of times, but I don't rightly, I don't rightly claim to be able to understand what the relationship is between you. Where...? Where are you from, Asharel? Or... were you? Were you born in that body? Or did you...? Were you invited in? I—I don't understand how all this works, and I'd like to make sure that I don't uh... I don't commit any faux pas there.

Gale (as Ash): I have... perfect recollection of Templeton's memories. But my own...I'm not sure they're compatible.

Keith (as Jasper): Compatible? You mean, you're, you're not sure if you remember exactly where you're from?

Gale (as Ash): I know I am... a warrior. And that I fight evil. That is my purpose.

Keith (as Jasper): Interesting. And uh... any idea how you uh...? How you wound up in the situation that you are cohabitating in?

Gale (as Ash): Templeton's memories... place him in a town. There was a magical disease. And he could not cure it. The preacher in the town... riled the people against him. And then tried to use him... for some kind of sacrifice. I believe...that is when I arrived.

Keith (as Jasper): Well, if that don't beat all...Well. You are a boon companion, Asharel, and I'm glad to have you here. I will admit that uh... I am a little trifle worried about Bonesaw. Is this uh... something that you folk share? You two share? And that... you know, you're going to come and go, or...? How is Templeton?

Gale (as Ash): Templeton... is recovering. Normally... I try not to take over this much. Not since the beginning, when I didn't know what I was doing. I prefer to let Templeton handle the...mundanities. Walking. Breathing. But... because he's recovering, it's too much for him right now. And he's this... *crazy* mortal. Always pushing too far. Drawing on my power, when he has no idea the consequences for himself.

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah, I've tried to talk sense into old Bonesaw, I can't say that it is an easy task to undertake. Bonesaw has their own ideas about what's a good idea and what's a bad idea, but friends is as friends does, and I'm...I'm rightly glad that you were here for him when he was failing.

Gale (as Ash): He wouldn't be failing, if not for me.

Keith (as Jasper): Oh. Well that's... that's a mite different. Uh, are you saying that you are...? Oh, because he was drawin' on your uh, your power and your uh, your being?

Gale: Asharel nods.

Keith (as Jasper): Uh, I see, I see.

Gale (as Ash): He has found a way, with his chemical concoctions, to access some of my energy. But it's caustic for him.

Keith (as Jasper): I see.

Gale (as Ash): But your... your be, your cohabitation there, doesn't really have any effect on uh, Bonesaw's unique mental...outlook? To put it politely?

Gale: Ash is uh... quiet for a long moment. Takes a bite of the hard tack. Takes as long to chew the hard tack as you normally need to chew hardtack.

Gale (as Ash): I did not choose to be here. And I have nowhere else to go.

Keith (as Jasper): Well. You done about right by us, I'm willing to stand by and do right by you. Whether or not you are here, or let's say... "resting" behind Bonesaw. But uh... iffin I can like... I—you know, I'll be honest with you, I can talk till I'm blue in the face—if I could—to Templeton to convince him that this is a bad idea, drawing on your power, but uh... I don't know if I've got a spit's chance in a tornado to change Bonesaw's mind about nothing.

Gale (as Ash): I suspected as much.

Keith (as Jasper): All right, well, for your sake, I'll do what I can to convince him that maybe that potion ain't no good idea right now. But yeah, if you let him rest up, your company is welcome.

Gale: Asharel nods thanks, and eats some more hardtack. I assume that this was sort of around the campfire, so Moz and Myra could also hear, as Moz returned, and maybe also eating.

Zach: Sure! Moz is very interested in this conversation, but I don't think he would uh, pipe up. He'd just watch and observe.

Corinne: Yeah, Myra's kind of, she doesn't say anything, but she kind of eyes Ash. She kind of looks in the fire for a little bit and goes—

Corinne (as Myra): So uh... are you deceased and trying to pass on?

Gale (as Ash): I do not think I am like you.

Corinne (as Myra): I see. Interesting.

Keith (as Jasper): Well, I don't know about the rest of you, but uh, it's been a tuckering day, and I think it's time to turn in. Anybody want to take first watch?

Gale (as Ash): I can.

Keith (as Jasper): All right, then. Give us a nudge when you're ready to turn it over. Don't go pushing yourself, neither.

Zach (as Moz): I'll take a second watch.

Corinne (as Myra): I'll take uh, third.

Keith: And Jasper will lay down, and cross his arms, and to all intents and purposes, stop breathing.

[Dice rolling.]

[Nighttime sounds fade out and back in.]

Blake: First up, Ash, give me a Perception check.

[Dice rolling.]

Gale: Twenty-three!

Blake: Sometime around after everybody has fallen asleep, a couple of rabbits come bounding past, and they stop and look at Ash for a long minute, before turning in continuing on.

Zach: Regular rabbits? Sure they ain't got no antlers on 'em?

Blake: As far as uh, Ash can tell.

Gale: Ash assumes they are regular rabbits. They feel that if there was anything special about these rabbits, they would be able to see it, or know it, or sense it.

Zach: Got it.

Blake: Next up, Moz, give me a Perception check.

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: Twenty-five! You actually see, as you're getting up and changing places with Ash, you see the same, self-same rabbits, and it turns out they're *not* just regular rabbits, they are in fact

jackalopes. However, unlike the jackalopes that you dealt with earlier, these ones are your run-of-the-mill jackalopes, just small creatures, small rabbits with antlers.

Gale: Hmm!

Zach: Okay, uh... does it look like they have weapons on them? Or are aggressive?

[Laughter.]

Blake: Nope! They're just small rabbits, they have a bit of intelligence in their eye, more than your average pair of coneys, but, otherwise, they are, for all intents and purposes, they do not appear to be dangerous, or—they don't appear of nearly the size nor magnitude of what you faced earlier.

Zach: Mhmm. Okay. Moz will keep an intent watch on the rabbits, but also scan for other surprises.

Blake: Otherwise, it is a quiet evening. Myra!

Corinne: Doo, doo, doo!

[Dice rolling.]

Corinne: Twenty-six.

Blake: During the night, you do not notice anything in particular, other than a light breeze blowing on the wind.

Corinne: Can she chat with Goiter?

[Laughter.]

Corinne: She's starting to bond a little bit with the little flesh pile.

Gale: I'm so glad! I love it!

Blake: Absolutely.

Corinne: I think she kept the miner's helmet, and is holding Goiter in the little miner's helmet and watching him glorp and shlorp around.

Corinne (as Myra): Well uh... you don't really like this Ash fellow, do you? But uh... you know, it sounds like he's kind of stuck. Seems like there's a lot of people that are stuck. You know, maybe... maybe you sticking around him, even though Bonesaw is not really there right now,

maybe you sticking around him will... you know, help keep him safe? And then, when he does come back, you'll be right there.

Blake (as Goiter): [incomprehensible blobby sounds.]

Corinne (as Myra): Yeah, I know.

Blake: It's definitely a bit of, like, a consternated, like, 'Okay, I guess,' kind of blubbering.

[Laughter.]

Blake: But Goiter seems to acquiesce, and even though he does snuggle up a little bit closer to Myra.

Corinne: She kind of gives a little pat, and is, is less disturbed than, than uh, than she normally is, and she just kind of pats and goes—

Corinne (as Myra): I know. We'll uh, we'll get him back. I promise.

Zach: I'm curious... is Goiter warm-blooded or cold-blooded?

Keith: Blooded...?

Blake: Technically...?

[Laughter.]

Gale: I don't think he's 'blooded.'

Blake: Yeah. I don't know if he *has* blood.

Zach: Okay... Would it just be like a cold wet sop of flesh? Or like a warm...?

Blake: It would be a warm slop of flesh.

Zach: How—? You know what, I don't want to know. I don't want to know the answer to that question.

[Laughter.]

Gale: I feel like the pince nez that he's stole from Zen, like, bubble to the surface, and settle on a little outcropping of flesh that acts as a nose.

[Laughter.]

Blake: Definitely. Just like a *bloop!* He ate... he now is constantly wearing the uh pince nez on this little bit of flesh.

Keith: Looks so much more intelligent.

Corinne: Myra goes and wakes up Jasper.

Keith (as Jasper): Ah, thank you, Myra! Get yourself some sleep, and I'll take myself a little stroll around the pe-rimeter.

Keith: And I will make a Perception roll.

[Dice rolling.]

Keith: Twenty-four! Oo, that sucked for me.

Gale: Kinda low for you...

[Laughter.]

Zach: It ain't a nat one, so!

Keith: Well there is that!

Blake: With a twenty-four, nothing *seems* to happen.

Keith: I don't like the way that was stated!

Zach: Yeah. Very ominous.

Keith: Well, as the sun starts a'comin up, uh, Jasper is going to start tidying up around the camp and seeing if he can't get some sort of uh, breakfast going, with some trail rations and some things he scooted up around the end of his watch. He's going to be bustling around, whistling Red River Valley and just kind of getting things up and ship shape.

Blake: You all come to. It's a bright sunny morning. the clouds from yesterday have burned off. It's a bit colder than it has been, especially now that you're starting to go up a bit more into the foothills. Not enough to be *col'd* weather, cold weather, but definitely enough that you're kind of, you might want to watch for the next few days. You might see some snow.

Gale: Oo!

Keith: All right!

[Faint wind ambience fades into wagon creaking.]

Blake: You head off. Can somebody please roll a 1d100 for me?

[Dice rolling.]

Keith: There we go, ninety-seven!

Gale: Damn!

Blake: Ninety-seven, fantastic! Oh, it was so close to one that I really wanted you guys to roll.

[Laughter.]

Keith: We'll never know!

Zach: Moz lost all his big muscles and his gonna be hanging in the back.

Gale: Ash seems very uncomfortable to be squished on a horse with Moz, because they're sharing Otto.

Zach: Oh, I forgot about that!

Gale: But they did prepare uh, Endure Elements two times for each of us.

Zach: Oh!

Corinne: Oh!

Zach (as Moz): Appreciate it.

Gale (as Ash): It is... necessary.

Blake: As you guys ride throughout the day, about midday, you're climbing over and around the hills and—who's leading the charge in all of this?

Gale: Probably Jasper, with his tracking? And...

Keith: As a Ranger type, yeah, probably.

Blake: Give me a Perception check.

[Dice rolling.]

Keith: Thirty-three!

Blake: Around noon, as you're riding, Jasper, around one of the hills, that red glow that you had seen the previous night, it is much closer, and you start to hear a slight hum. Almost as if there was like...energy in the air. And you feel the, the hairs on the back ear arm, on your leather-bound skin are just standing up on end, there's a lot of energy in the air. You also, specifically because you rolled that well, hear muttered cursing. What languages do you speak?

Keith: I speak English, Apache, French, and Spanish.

Blake: You are not able to make out any of these words. It sounds like a very light voice, but the language that is coming out is very guttural and—[gibberish to represent the unknown language].

Keith: All right, I'm gonna hold up a hand to try and stop our progress, and I'm gonna motion everybody—

Keith (as Jasper): Gather 'round here. We got something strange on up ahead.

Corinne (as Myra): What is it?

Keith (as Jasper): Well... it's somebody muttering in a language I do not understand. Uh, but I don't know if y'all can feel it, but there's kind of a, I don't know, kind of a crackling power in the air. Like something you might get if it was gonna, like, thunder and lightning real soon.

Gale: Do we also feel the power?

Blake: Now that it has been pointed out, yes you can all feel that energy.

Gale: Ash looks at Jasper and says—

Gale (as Ash): Would you like me to prepare Templeton's Elixir of Tongues?

Keith (as Jasper): Uh... not yet. Might not be necessary. They might speak Common. They—they might be casting something, for all I know. Sounds more like cursing.

Zach: Can Moz roll, like an Arcana check? Or a relevant check to tell?

Blake: Yes. Go ahead and roll Arcana for me.

[Dice rolling.]

Zach: Fourteen?

Blake: With a fourteen, you get a sense... this is the kind of electric energy that comes from conjuration magic.

Zach: Okay.

Gale: Hmm.

Corinne: Hmm.

Zach (as Moz): Well uh, I think that weird voice over there is a-conjuring some or other.

Corinne: Can we hear the muttering?

Blake: No. It is too quiet for anybody else to hear it at this time. You would have to get closer. From what Jasper could tell, it's kind of over the next ridge.

Corinne: Myra's gonna start slithering very quietly up the hill, and see if she can get a little eagle's eye.

Blake: Give me a Stealth check.

Keith: I'm gonna cover her with my rifle.

[Dice rolling.]

Gale: Oof!

Corinne: Oo!

Blake: Twelve. Not great, my friend. Heh! Let's see what they roll—

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: Oof! As soon as you get to the top, you think you're being pretty quiet, but then all of a sudden, you hear a voice call out—

Blake (as mysterious voice): Oh, finally! Somebody that can actually deal with this issue! Come here! Now! You and all of your friends!

Corinne (as Myra): Kaw-kaw!

Zach (as Moz): Damn it, Myra!

Corinne (as Myra): Kaw-kaw!

Zach (as Moz): Thought snakes were supposed to be stealthy!

[Blake laughs.]

Keith (as Jasper): That sounds a mite imperious.

Corinne: She tries to pass it off as birds and goes—

Corinne (as Myra): Ka-kaw! Ka-kaw!

[Laughter.]

Blake: The voice continues—

Blake (as mysterious voice): Are you as simple-minded as you look?

Gale: Hoohoo!

Corinne (as Myra): Uh—!

Blake (as mysterious voice): Come down and help me!

Corinne (as Myra): Well geez, you don't need to be so mean about it!

Corinne: And she's slithers on down.

Blake: As Myra comes over the edge, and eventually as everybody else comes over the edge, she sees a horrific sight. Sitting in a small gully is, carved on the ground, a large star—

Gale: Oh shit!

Blake: It is glowing yellow, and around the edges is a giant red circle with a dome of crackling red energy. At each of the points of the star is a long line of crackled energy on the ground that is just burnt and shredded. Each of these points ends in a twisted and mangled and burnt corpse.

[Gale hisses in air.]

Corinne: Jesus!

Blake: —and sitting in the middle of this star is, what appears at first blush to be an almost angelic figure. She has long light hair and large white wings that drape out and almost touch the

edges as she sits there. But as she looks up at you, her face—this pure bone white, eyes completely black, there's something fundamentally wrong. It becomes even more obvious as you begin to see her blackened armor, and the blood dripping from the edges of her wings. She holds a long black two-pronged spear, and she stands up.

Blake (as the angelic figure): Come!

Corinne: Uhhh

Gale: Ohohoh!

Zach: Heh!

Corinne (as Myra): Nnn...no. No, no thank you?

[Laughter.]

Corinne (as Myra): Uh...who...? Who are you?

Blake: She stands to her full height, which is a decent head above you, and she says—

Blake (as the angelic figure): I am Miranavor the Erinyes!

Zach (as Moz): ...right.

Keith: Could you describe these bodies a bit more? Are these...? Who's dead here?

Blake: Give me a Perception check.

[Dice rolling.]

Keith: Twenty-one!

Blake: As you look at these bodies, they appear to be wearing, or *were* wearing, purple robes. Kind of an old-style robe with a deep, dark hood, and then wearing a very nice purple suit underneath. Their faces...what you can tell, under the burnt skin, are contorted in pain and surprise.

Gale: The suits are purple? Like Blackburn purple?

Blake: No. It is a different shade of purple. Anybody who would like to control a Religion check.

Gale: Oh, yes please!

[Dice rolling.]

Gale: Twelve.

Zach: Twenty-two.

Blake: Moz, you actually are able to recognize the specific cut of these robes, and suit, and on the back of one of their hands, the carved symbol that denote these as followers of the Good Book.

Zach: [wary] Okay...

Blake: You know that the Good Book followers are a bit of pariahs in the West. They tend to come with this 'Oh yes! We're just simply here to help!' But people around them tend to go a bit...mad. And they themselves, the people who start getting into the good book, they... it is said that they themselves descend into a bit of madness.

Zach: Well folks, I don't much like the look of this.

Blake: Ash. Deep in your stomach, especially after she says that she is an erinyes, something deep stirs within you. This is a *Fallen*. This is one who turned their back.

Gale: Ash is gonna go into mutant mode and draw crux.

Corinne (as Myra): Woah, woah, woah, woah, woah!

Zach (as Moz): Uh, buddy? She's already contained. Best not piss off the rat's nest, if you catch my drift.

Gale (as Ash): She should be *dead*.

Blake (as Miranavor): As should *you*! [laughs] Oh, this is absolutely hilarious!

Blake: She is looking directly at Ash,

Keith: I'd like to put a little bit of uh, distance between myself and my compa—or, I'd like to spread out a bit, is what I'm saying.

[Laughter.]

Keith: Just in case there's some spell casting a'coming up here.

Zach: Now why would Jasper be moving that way? Hey, get back here!

Blake: Miravanor leans up against this dome, the crackling energy seeming to go into her arm, and she looks at Ash and just smiles.

Blake (as Miranavor): Oh! This is...delicious!

Gale (as Ash): Have we met?

Blake (as Miranavor): [chuckles] You... don't remember? You've don't remember a thing, do you? All of that power, stuffed into such a simple, *stupid*, mortal vessel. [laughs].

Gale: Ash begins to quake with anger.

Blake (as Miranavor): Oh! That must be torture for one of you!

Gale (as Ash): One of what?

Blake (as Miranavor): [chuckles].

Gale: Ash is gonna stalk up to the edge of the dome.

Blake: She does not flinch, continuing to just stand there, hand pressed against.

Gale (as Ash): One of what?

Blake (as Miranavor): Hmm. If you don't know, I don't think I want to spoil the surprise! [laughs] Tell me... did it hurt when you fell all that way?

Gale (as Ash): Devil, I will fill you with fear like ash and iron!

Gale: He's gonna raise the hog splitter.

Zach (as Moz): Ash don't! She wants you to break her out!

Blake: As soon as you say this, Moz, her black eyes turn to you, and say—

Blake (as Miranavor): Silence, whelp! You and that little imp that you carry are *nothing* in our realms.

Corinne (as Myra): Well uh, seems a lot more than you, since you seem to be a whole lot of nothing!

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah, for somebody who was a requesting help, you do not seem to be uh, well-versed in knowing exactly how to go about that.

Blake (as Miranavor): [snippy] I did not *request* help, I *demand*ed help. And you *will* help me, or suffer my wrath!

Zach (as Moz): Heh! Okay there, Miss lady. I think we'll be on our merry way, then. Come on, fellas, let's pack it up.

Gale: Ash looks like they're teetering on a decision.

Blake: She smiles at Ash, and just says—

Blake (as Miranavor): That's right, little bird brain! Follow your devilish friend! Listen to everything that he is saying! [chuckles].

Gale (as Ash): He's *not* my friend!

Zach (as Moz): Harsh.

Blake (as Miranavor): He certainly orders you around like it!

Gale (as Ash): He's not ordering anything!

Blake (as Miranavor): Certainly. I'm sure that's what you tell yourself.

Gale (as Ash): You think I consort with the likes of you?

Blake (as Miranavor): Oh, my! With the history that we have? I *know* you have. [chuckles].

Keith: I'm gonna pull out an adamantine bullet.

Blake: Okay.

Keith: And on these rocks nearby, since it's the hardest object I have, I'm gonna start scratching out things like— 'Danger! Do not release! This person is a lying Fallen Angel! Danger! Danger!'

[Laughter.]

Blake: As you do that, she looks on you, Jasper.

Blake (as Miranavor): You! Undead thing! You're going to warn people against coming to help me?

Keith (as Jasper): Well, it seems like a right neighborly thing to do.

Blake (as Miranavor): I *swear* by all of the Masters below, if you do not release me, I will come after all of you, and I will flay the flesh from your bones while you are still alive, or whatever you call this second life that you have! And *you!*

Blake: And she points at you, Moz.

Blake (as Miranavor): If you think for one *second*, that your dealings with this Titivilius will protect you from my wrath, oooh my friend, you have another thing coming! Titivilius cannot protect you from me! If you do not release me now!

Zach (as Moz): What makes you think I need his protection.

Gale (as Ash): You're trapped. You're bound. You might have all the power in the world, and you can't do anything about it.

Blake (as Miranavor): Hmm. Through a mirror, darkly.

Gale (as Ash): [huffs]

Gale: Ash will turn away with an angry huff.

Gale (as Ash): Let's go.

Zach (as Moz): Damn straight.

Corinne: Myra pauses for a second, and goes—

Corinne (as Myra): Wait. I might be able to lend a hand. [starts clapping.]

[Laughter.]

Keith: Ooo! Somebody poked the bear!

Blake: As Myra does this, Miravanor just screeches this ear-piercing scream, and this bow of fire appears in her hand. She draws back and fires a shot—

Zach (as Moz): Take cover!

Blake: —and it impacts the edge of this seal and *foom* dissipates. And she just runs, and lunges, and starts pounding on it.

Zach (as Moz): Aww!

Blake (as Miranavor): You *dare* mock me, you simple-minded snake! I know what hunts you! And it will not rest! And it will not stop! And I *swear* I will be there when it catches you.

Zach (as Moz): Look at that, I think we might have got on its nerves! Ain't that a beaut?

Corinne: Myra is very tempted, but she decides not to poke the bear anymore, and turns around and leaves.

Gale: Ash will follow, but they are just...quaking.

Keith: As we're leaving, I'm gonna clap my hand on Moz's shoulder, and say—

Keith (as Jasper): Well, Jesse! Excuse me, Mr. Blackburn! We should probably get a move on!

[Everybody laughs. Blake claps.]

Corinne: Now *that*, that is clever.

Blake: Give me a Bluff check.

Keith: Oh no!

Gale: That took me a good long moment.

Corinne: Roll high! Roll high! Oh my god, guys.

[Dice rolling.]

[Groaning.]

Keith: Noo!

Gale: Nohoho!

Corinne: Aw, bummer. That would have been so great.

Keith: I'm just, I'm too damn honest for my own good.

Blake: Yeah.

Gale: Ohh! That's disappointing.

Corinne: That's disappointing, yeah.

Blake: Oh...I'll roll a Sense Motive for her, but...

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: Holy...shit! She says—

Blake (as Miranavor): I know what you look like now, Blackburn!

Blake: [in the same voice as a joke] I rolled a nat one—

[Laughter and screaming.]

Blake: —on my Sense Motive check

Corinne: Yes! Yes!

Keith: Oh, they can work in our favor too!

Gale: Yes!

Zach (as Moz): Well. Iffin we ever need a chat, I know where you live. Be seeing you!

Blake: As you all turn away, she speaks at you, Asharel, not in infernal, but in a light, glittering voice that rings in your head.

Gale: Mm!

Blake: A language that is deep within your soul. She says—

Blake (as Miranavor): Be seeing you around, Asharel. Say hi to your brothers and sisters for me. If you ever *escape* that mortal coil.

Gale: Mhmhm! Ash walks faster away.

Blake: Does anybody else speak Celestial?

[Keith laughs.]

Corinne: Nnno.

Zach: Nope!

Blake: Okay.

Keith: I skipped that day in, in school.

[Laughter.]

Zach: I barely speak English!

Blake: All right. Nobody else understands, but they do hear that bright language being spoken. As you all make your way, she slams her bident into the ground and returns to a sitting position, wings outstretched, watching and waiting for the next person to come around.

[ominous ambience fades into plains sounds.]

Keith: Well, as soon as we are out of uh, earshot of her, I'm gonna go *whew!* That was unexpected.

Gale (as Ash): [ragged] I'm just so *frustrated* with this limited—! It's got two arms, no wings, mortal weapons wound me! I can't see things that think they've disappeared or understand more than a paltry jumble of words! [frustrated sigh]

Zach (as Moz): Well, you could have all that and a lot less inches to your overall height, so pipe down!

Gale (as Ash): Dead people just lay there when you try to strike up a conversation, and you have to breathe *constantly*. It's a stunted, weak, broken little thing!

Corinne (as Myra): Hold on.

Gale (as Ash): I'm... stunted... weak... broken.

Corinne (as Myra): Are you...? Are you an angel?

Gale (as Ash): ...I don't know.

Keith (as Jasper): [New England accent]: Well, I can't say that I'm an expert on religion, but I do know that most Angel names do end with “-el.” “-El” being short for “Elohim” or “of God.” Michael, Raphael, Sephiriel. Asharel isn't much of a stretch.

Zach (as Moz): What *do* you know, Ash? What are you?

Gale (as Ash): All I know, is I am a warrior against evil.

Zach (as Moz): Mm-hmm.

Gale (as Ash): Everything else is Templeton's.

Keith (as Jasper): Hmm.

Zach (as Moz): Well, plenty of that to go around, so why don't we go destroy some evil by vaccinating some kids? Sound good? Let's get a move on.

Keith (as Jasper): I think that would put us in the uh, in the black maybe, in the good books. So let's just uh, let's just uh, get our—get ourselves a move on, there, then.

Gale (as Ash): Fine.

Keith (as Jasper): Uh... Ash? You gonna be okay?

Gale (as Ash): I will...subsist.

Gale: Ash seems to have blown themselves out. They're just sort of empty of emotion now, as they climb onto Otto and scoot distastefully to make room for Moz.

[Laughter.]

Zach (as Moz): Come on, Warrior! Leave me a few extra inches.

Gale (as Ash): You have *plenty* of inches.

Zach (as Moz): Oh, I do miss being muscly though. It's a good few hours. Probably some of my best.

[Cart creaking ambience take over, then fades out.]

Blake: The rest of the day continues on as you start to approach the final stretch before you are actually starting to make the climb up into the Badlands. It's around this time in the evening that you find a place to rest and recuperate for the day.

Keith: Now, as I recall, on the previous night, I was able to see a bit of that reddish glow, which I assume was from the pentagram area. Is that still visible?

Blake: Yes! As you turn around and look, you can see it, about the same distance as you saw the previous night.

Keith: I'm going to call the attention of the party to it, say—

Keith (as Jasper): There's a bit of a reddish glow there out there, near the horizon, just beyond that low ridge, there.

Zach (as Moz): That'd be the sun.

[Gale snickers.]

Keith (as Jasper): No, no, no, Sun is ninety degrees in the other direction, there. That being the West.

Zach (as Moz): Uh-huh... I see.

Keith (as Jasper): That glow would be to the north-ish, northeast-ish a little bit, there, but yeah, that's, that's our, that's our new playmate. Might be a good idea for whoever's on watch to keep an eye out in that general direction every once in a while, just in case some poor hapless soul comes around 'n thinks they're doing a good deed.

Zach (as Moz): Noted.

Keith: All right, / am gonna try and cook dinner before anybody else—

[Everybody laughs.]

Keith: —can try and volunteer.

Corinne: This time, Myra is gonna take the hint, and she's gonna go walk around the perimeter for a little bit, to let, let other people cook. She's looking around for things that were bad beforehand, so things like nightshade.

Blake: Mhmm.

Corinne: Like—

Corinne (as Myra): Okay, so that's Nightshade, that's, that's poison ivy. Don't pick that.

Blake: Myra, give me a Perception check.

Corinne: Okay.

[Dice rolling.]

Corinne: Twenty-one.

Blake: As you're doing this ,you notice a small glint of something golden off the beaten path just a little bit.

Gale: Oo!

Corinne: Oh, shiny! She goes towards it.

Blake: As she picks through the brush, she sees sitting on a rock, as if it was placed there, a small leather-bound journal.

Gale: Hmm!

Blake: On the cover, it reads 'The Good Book,'—

[Gale gasps.]

Blake: —in golden lettering.

Gale: Nope!

[Dice rolling and laughter.]

Blake: Seven? It's just a book!

Corinne: Uuuuh, cool!

Zach: Shiny book, even!

Corinne: Yeah, it's a shiny book, and it says 'Good Book,' so it must be good!

Gale: Oh no!

Corinne: She picks it up curiously and kind of looks it over.

Zach: Awww...

Blake: There doesn't appear to be anything particularly special about it, it's wrapped in this brown leather, very nice leather, you haven't really come across this kind of leather before, you're not sure what it is.

Gale: Ehhh!

Corinne: Oh no! Oh I think I know what it is. Myra doesn't, though. She goes—

Corinne (as Myra): Huh! Someone must have lost their journal!

Corinne: Hmmm. She is very curious, and there's no one around that she can see?

Blake: Not that you can see, no.

Corinne: Hmmm. I'm gonna roll a Will save.

Blake: [chuckling] Seventeen?

Corinne: Okay! She decides that—

Corinne (as Myra): Uh, I'll—you know, I'm not quite sure what this is, I don't want to open it—

Corinne: —but she's she's going to take it back to the camp.

Blake: Okay.

Corinne (as Myra): Hey, I uh, found something. It's got this, it's this nice leather-bound journal. I have no idea what this leather is, but uh, it says 'The Good Book' on it.

Zach (as Moz): Here, uh, let me take a look at that, Myra!

Zach: Moz'll extend his hand for the book.

[Gale starts laughing.]

Corinne: Uh, she hands it over.

Zach: Uh, he's going to just, with one fluid motion, toss it in the fire and uh, give it a little bit of a oomph with some hellfire—

[Laughter.]

Zach (as Moz): And that's settles that!

Corinne (as Myra): Whoa, whoa, whoa! What was that for? That could've—

Zach (as Moz): Oooh!

Corinne (as Myra): That was someone's journal!

Zach (as Moz): Well, it ain't a problem no more. Uh, that's uh...I've had enough of uh, peculiar golden items for a lifetime.

[Laughter.]

Blake: The book, as it sits in the fire, it takes a beat or two too long to start burning.

Gale: Oh no!

Corinne: Ooh!

Gale: But, as it sits there, it eventually starts, the pages start to curl and smoke, and it produces a very acrid smoke that smells a lot like barbecue.

Gale: Oh, gross!

[Keith makes a grossed-out noise.]

Zach (as Moz): Now my tummy is rumbling! Jasper! Where are you getting on them there hardtacks and whatnot?

Keith: Jasper comes back with a handful of wild onions that he has scavenged up from the rounding, surrounding area. Starts to walk towards the spot—

Keith (as Jasper): Who the hell put a book in my fire?

[Laughter.]

Corinne (as Myra): That was Moz.

Zach (as Moz): It's uh... seasoning!

Corinne (as Myra): Apparently, it's some cursed book? I don't know. We've, we've dealt with a lot of cursed items, so I don't wanna, don't wanna deal with anymore.

Keith: Yeah um, I'm gonna see if I can take a stick that we've got for feeding the fire with it, I'm gonna—I imagine it's burnt beyond recall—but I'm just gonna knock it out of the fire, because I don't want any of—if it's a cursed item, I don't want none of those fumes in my cookpot!

[Laughter.]

Zach: It is a hellfire campfire now, so—

[Laughter.]

Zach: I don't know if that speeds up the cooking, or whatnot, but uh—

Keith: Mmm! Smell o' brimstone!

Blake: You push the book out, and as it flops out, rather than like, being ashy, it more like *blorp*, blorps out, like it was a blob of flesh.

Gale: Oh God!

Keith: I turn to Moz and say—

Keith (as Jasper): Good call.

Zach: [joking] Ah, damn it! I wanted to do some light reading!

Blake: Go ahead and give me a Survival check.

[Dice rolling.]

Keith: Twenty-two!

Zach: Nice!

Blake: That's enough to provide a decent meal.

Gale: Yum!

Keith: All right, well this will be a little bit better than nothing. I've taken the hard tack and uh, boiled it so that we have basically dumplings—

Gale: Oo!

Keith: —and I do carry a sack of uh of beans, and a small sack of rice in the saddlebags on Smokey. So yeah, I've boiled up some beans, a bit of uh, of dumplings. I've managed to slice up the hard tack, once it's softened a bit, threw in a little bit of jerky and letting that boil. It's going to be a bit chewy, and some onion grass, and a few, a few special herbs and spices I found along the way.

Gale: Yum!

Corinne: It smells so good.

Gale: Ash says—

Gale (as Ash): This is far superior to Templeton's memory of Myra's cooking.

[Chuckling.]

Corinne (as Myra): Okay, okay! I get it! I could, I could, I could improve a little bit on my—you know what? I'm, I'm, I'm just gonna—I'm just gonna sit.

Gale (as Ash): Was that rude?

Corinne (as Myra): No...

Keith (as Jasper): Um...

Corinne (as Myra): It was true.

Keith (as Jasper): Blunt.

Corinne (as Myra): I—it was true.

Zach (as Moz): We got to work on your table manners, there, Ash!

Gale (as Ash): I'm not used to the fingers being this...

Keith (as Jasper): Lcky.

Gale: They shake a hand, and the fingers sort of rattle? They're like, looser than normal fingers because they're zombie fingers?

[Laughter.]

Zach (as Moz): Uh-huh. Well, you better get used to 'em. Uh, Bones needs those.

[Night sounds creep in and take over.]

Blake: We're gonna go ahead and roll for the night. Same order for watches?

Gale: Sure!

Keith: Sure!

Corinne: Sure!

Zach: Keep it simple.

Blake: Ash, give me a Perception roll.

Gale: Will do!

[Dice rolling.]

Gale: Fourteen!

Blake: You do not notice anything out of the ordinary. Moz.

Zach: Yeah.

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: Twenty-six.

Zach: Nice!

Blake: The night is quiet. Quieter than you would have expected. You do continue to see that red pulsing off in the distance, though.

Zach: Okay,

Blake: Myra.

[Dice rolling.]

Corinne: Twenty-eight.

Blake: Similar to Moz, the light in the distance continues to glow. The night is quiet, and on the edge of your Perception, you think you hear a gunshot in the distance.

Corinne: She whips around, and is a *little* paranoid, because now she knows that something is directly hunting her. But she just kind of holds Goiter—

Gale: Aww!

Corinne: Keeps watch.

Blake: Goiter snuggles up.

Gale: Awhaha!

Blake: Jasper, Give me that the final Perception check.

Keith (as Jasper): That was not a sight I wanted to awaken to. [shudders]

Corinne (as Myra): Oh, you warm up to him. I don't know that uh... it's kind of like autopsy jello as far as I'm concerned.

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): Alright, then.

Keith: I'm going to take a look around and I will, I'll start off looking in the direction of the red glow, but I will do a Perimeter search.

[Dice rolling.]

Keith: Twenty-three!

Blake: You do see the red glow continue. Though as you look, especially later on through the night... it starts to grow *redder* and redder. To the point that the sky starts to turn red... and then the sun rises.

Gale: Oh god damn you!

[Laughter.]

Blake: And it's a normal day.

Zach: Bastard!

Corinne: That got me good, I was like oh shit! We're gonna have to fight a devil.

Gale: I was like 'Holy—! Shit!' I wa— I do not want to fight...*that*. That.

Zach: [singing cheerily] 'Here comes the sun, doo-doo-doo-doo!'

[Laughter.]

Blake: And you have succeeded on another night! You pack up the camp, and start heading into the Badlands.

Gale: When Bonesaw wakes up, I don't think it's Ash anymore. Bonesaw is kind of curled on his side. He's not wearing the mask, because Ash wasn't wearing the mask, and as he starts to come to, he blinks sort of blearily and looks around, and flinches hugely, uh, and scrabbles at his side to find the mask, and pulls it out and puts it on.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh! Oh! Uh...we're...all—all right! Ah, hello... Jasper!

Keith (as Jasper): Morning, Bonesaw! How you feeling?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Um...sort of sore? And uh... confused?

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah, you uh, you plum checked out on us for a couple of days, there!

Gale (as Bonesaw): A few days! Really!

Keith (as Jasper): Uh, yeah! I got a message for you.

Gale (as Bonesaw): What's that?

Keith (as Jasper): First of all, do you know who Asharel is?

Gale (as Bonesaw): No. Uh, did... did they sign...the message? Is that who it's...?

Keith (as Jasper): Nn—no, no uh, no, it's more of...it's not so much like a *missive* or, or, like a transcribed message. More like a—a friendly piece of advice.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh!

Keith (as Jasper): [sighs]

Gale (as Bonesaw): I tend not to listen to people's advice, they're usually out to get me!

Blake: Hm!

[Zach laughs.]

Keith (as Jasper): Well, I'd say you better sit down, but uh, seeing as where you are, you better not stand up.

Blake: This moment is when Goiter just full-on launches off of Myra and just *pllbtt!* right onto the side of Bonesaw.

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, hello, Goiter! What a beautiful— oh I love when you give me morning kisses, yes! That's lovely!

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): All right, hold down the gorge there...

Zach: Moz is going to do a Constitution saving throw.

[Laughter.]

Corinne (as Myra): Bonesaw?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Good morning, Myra!

Corinne (as Myra): Bonesaw!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Was Goiter sleeping with you? Oh, that's so sweet! I'm glad you're making friends!

[Dice rolling.]

Zach: Ugh! Moz is gonna quietly hurl to the side of the camp.

[Everybody laughs.]

Zach (as Moz): Rise and shine, Bonesaw! Good to see you back!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Yes. I've been gone. Apparently.

Zach (as Moz): Apparently.

Corinne (as Myra): Bonesaw, you—you were inhabited by... *possibly*, possibly an angel?

Gale (as Bonesaw): His name's Goiter! I thought we'd gone through this!

Keith (as Jasper): No... this would be that Asharel I was talking about.

Corinne (as Myra): No, the angel. Asharel. You—you're you're inhabited by possibly an angel!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh... The... the person you talked about.

Corinne (as Myra): Yeah.

Keith (as Jasper): Oh, yeah!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Well...uh, can you tell them to leave?

Corinne (as Myra): I think they want to.

Keith (as Jasper): I don't think they've got a choice in that. But they did have a message. Um... you know sometimes when you uh assume that larger and more horrific form? Uh, for the purposes of being more effective in combat, I suppose?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Yes, my mutant form!

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah, yeah that word

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, it's really very clever, the science behind it—!

Keith (as Jasper): Unfortunately... uh, that's drawing on the power of this other person, and it makes you sick. It plum knocked you out for two days. You were not doing well, my friend. We practically had to nurse you back to health.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh...

Keith (as Jasper): That is a dangerous, dangerous gamble you're taking there. With your health.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Well... that sounds like... a not great side effect, but I'm sure it's something I can tweak in later iterations of the mutagen. It—it's really it's all part of the experimental process, you know?

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah, yeah, well, but for now, until you get a chance to sit down in your uh, in your, in your traveling laboratory, it might be a good idea to hold off on that. I wouldn't want to see you collapse on us again. You were plum pitiful, I'm sorry to tell you.

Gale (as Bonesaw): [coy] Oh! You almost sounds like you care, Jasper!

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah, almost, sure, sounds like it.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Well, if it puts your mind at rest, I will hold off drinking the mutagen until I have made some changes to it.

Keith (as Jasper): Well, that's probably more than I hoped for, so good on you.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Two *days*! Well, what happened? Anything exciting? I see Jasper still hasn't started moisturizing.

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): Uh, no, and I'm gonna hold off on that as long as I possibly can.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Well, you are downright crusty, sir. I—

Keith (as Jasper): Uh, it endangers my expiration date. Uh, well, yeah, you missed—you did miss something! We met ourselves a genuine devil!

Gale (as Bonesaw): You mean one Moz didn't bring... bring about?

Keith (as Jasper): Right, yeah, exactly, this would be a totally different consorted devil. Don't think it's quite up as high on the uh... on the uh infernal pecking order as uh, Titivilius.

Zach (as Moz): That's about right.

Keith (as Jasper): Some female with a flaming bow.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, that does sound exciting!

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah, it was exciting. They're uh, they're currently being held in some sort of a magical circle of some kind. But uh, yeah! That was probably one of the most exciting things... Oh! Yeah! And uh, that's right you've been out for a while! Yeah! We uh, we uh, plum took care of that there Jackalope uh, Prince.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh wonderful!

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah, banished him right out of the world!

Gale (as Bonesaw): So we can get Myra's memory back!

Corinne (as Myra): Uh, yep!

Keith (as Jasper): Yep!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Just as soon as we've talked to the railroad people and all that, but...

Keith (as Jasper): Well, we sent off communications to that end. Yeah, I don't know, Myra, it's been two days since then. You might be able to uh, I mean they were less than a ride, a days ride away from Perdition. You might be able to make that communication now if you want to try your coin?

Corinne (as Myra): Uh... yeah, maybe?

Keith (as Jasper): You know, dawn and twilight are great times for contactin' the First uh... First World, from what I understand.

Corinne (as Myra): Oh, really!

Keith (as Jasper): Well, from storybooks, anyway, I don't know if it holds any water or not.

Zach (as Moz): Better reception?

[Laughter.]

Corinne: She takes out the coin, kind of rubs it between her fingers, doesn't quite know what to do with it? But she calls out—

Corinne (as Myra): Uh... Wesglen? I don't know if you can hear me, but uh, we... we think we found a solution? It may take a few days to go into motion, but we uh, we, we think we did it! So uh... I'd like my memory back.

Blake: You speak all of this, and as you're speaking it, you feel the world around you get a little bit quieter. Everything gets a little bit muted. You can tell that there is something happening as you speak to this coin, and as you finish, there is a silence. And then a voice... it sounds similar to Wesglen's, but there's something a bit different about it. It—it feels deeper, older, somehow.

Blake (as Wesglen): Not... yet. Not quite finished. Get to the end, and see it through. Something isn't right.

Corinne (as Myra): Wait, what do you mean...? What do you mean, 'something's not right?' What—what happened? What...? What did we do wrong?

Zach: Moz is going to lean over to Jasper as uh Myra's talking to herself and whisper—

Zach (as Moz): [hoarse] I think she's gone mad!

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): Couldbe. Or could just be she's hearin' something we can't hear, because of that there uh, magical coin. She don't look too happy, though.

Blake: And Myra, you get no response.

Corinne: She, a little crestfallen, lowers the coin, puts it back in her pocket with a bit of a huff, and goes—

Corinne (as Myra): [sighing] Well, I guess we're, uh... we're not done yet. She said there's something wrong. I... I don't know what we did wrong, but...maybe we just got to see this through to the end.

Keith (as Jasper): Well, there's two possibilities, as I see it. Either something indeed has gone wrong with our chain of deals, in which case there's going to be hell to pay, or maybe they just want to make sure that it's actually happening because... you know, it'll take time for them to start moving tracks and things.

Corinne (as Myra): Right.

Keith (as Jasper): But yeah, as soon as we get back to Perdition, let's double check and make sure that people are holding up their end of the bargain, because we had a *deal*.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Yes, we'll figure it out, Myra, dear.

Corinne (as Myra): Yeah. Yeah, we'll uh... we'll get it figured out.

Keith (as Jasper): It's gonna be okay.

Corinne (as Myra): Yeah.

[Pause.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Where are we, exactly?

Keith (as Jasper): Uh, we're about two days south of uh, the mines and headed into the Badlands, here. We're looking for the uh, the inoculations that were lost for the Apache kids.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh! Oh, oh, that's right! All right!

[Creaking wagon sounds fade in, signalling a passage of time.]

Blake: Can somebody please give me a 1d100 roll?

[Dice rolling.]

Keith: Fifty! Wow!

Blake: Excellent. As you start walking, and you start making your way, and the road starts to climb up, it begins to diverge and go in different directions. Jasper, give me a survival check to try and track down the tracks of the wagon.

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: Twenty-two. You think you have a decent idea of which direction it went, and largely it seems like it is continuing the way that you would expect, going the most direct route towards the Apache lands where it was supposed to go. You all follow this for only about two hours before you all hear shouts and yells coming from up ahead.

Keith (as Jasper): You all hear that?

Zach (as Moz): Yup!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Yes!

Corinne (as Myra): Yeah, what is that?

Blake: You see a rough-looking man, couple of furs hanging off his shoulder, flopped hat that's askew... he has an eye patch and a long grizzled beard. You see his hands are tied in front of him as he is running towards you, and he's shouting at the top of his lungs—

Blake (as rough-looking man): Get down! She's right behind me! Get down! You don't want to—!

[Gunshot sound.]

Blake: —you all hear a massive shot of a gun, and in a red mist, his knee disappears—

Gale: Oh shit!

[Winching and groaning.]

Blake: —as he falls to the ground, yelling in pain, half of his leg about ten feet behind him.

Gale: Hoo!

Corinne: Jesus!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Have no fear! I'm a doctor! Though I do charge through the *nose*, heh, or perhaps, the '*knee*,' for reconstructions of this sort.

Blake (as rough-looking man): [frantic] Get me out of here!

Zach (as Moz): Bit soon, Bones?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Well, you've got to let them know about the prices up front, really.

Corinne: Myra is aiming her gun down at whatever it is that just shot him.

Blake: Make a Perception check.

Zach: Yeah, Moz is prepping an action/

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: Fifteen? You cannot see anything. You—you don't see hide nor hair, you can't tell where the bullet came from—

Corinne: Her head's on a swivel. She's panicking, looking around, trying to find whoever this person is.

Keith: Can you describe the layout of the land a little bit?

Blake: Yeah, absolutely.

Gale: Yeah, and how close are we to the guy?

Blake: He is probably fifteen, twenty feet from you. You're on a path heading up into the mountains, the walls have started to get a bit steeper, lots of switchback box canyons, it's still pretty low? It wouldn't be too hard to like, scramble up rocks and stuff, it's not as deep of canyons as it will get later on. A little bit of a slope, he was running down the slope towards you. As you look up, you see trees sparsely growing, a fall plane where a landslide took place, probably earlier in the season, a lot of little rocks and boulders that would be easy to hide behind. You can go ahead and hop into initiative.

[Dice rolling.]

Zach: Moz, essentially, he's just gonna go into a Bardic Performance whenever he can see the assailant or assailants.

Blake: All right, Myra, you're up!

Corinne: Okay, so his knee just got clean blown off by a gunshot. Would I be able to tell that it was close range and that the person might be invisible?

Blake: Give me a Profession roll.

Corinne: Okay.

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: Okay, with a thirteen for your Profession roll, Myra? You can tell that this was probably a high-powered rifle that was decently close, but definitely a sniper shot. It was probably close and a high-caliber rifle, but a pretty damn good shot to take somebody's knee out.

Corinne: Okay.

Keith (as Jasper): Myra, if you want to keep me covered, I'll run out there and see if I can pull him off the path.

Corinne: She has something called an arrow magnet. Um, she is going to put the magnet about ten feet away from the guy to draw any bullets.

Blake: You throw out this tiny silver cube. It bounces a couple of times and *vooom!* —starts hovering five feet above the ground.

Gale: [in an undertone] That's so cool!

Blake: A couple of rocks that were on the ground next to it kind of float up and circle around it.

Keith (as Jasper): Or—! Or that!

Blake: Bonesaw, you're up!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Quick thinking!

Gale: Bonesaw is gonna sprint the twenty feet to the guy and hand him an elixir, and say—

Gale (as Bonesaw): Drink this!

Blake: As you're running—

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: —another shot *pshhh!* —blasts out. Uh, however, because you are within range of the arrow magnet... It has hardness eight, five hit points. Mark down that it has taken one hit point of damage.

Corinne: Okay!

Keith: Arrow magnet sounds like a nickname you give to the most danger-prone member of the party.

[Laughter.]

Keith: Hey there, Arrow Magnet! Get out there and see what's going on!

Blake: You all see as the bullet is heading straight for Bonesaw's feet, but just as it is passing over the guy, the bullet *vooom!* —backs off—

Gale (as Bonesaw): Thank you, Myra!

Blake: —and there's this spark as the Arrow Magnet takes the hit.

Corinne (as Myra): You're welcome!

Corinne: So glad I got that!

Keith: I missed Bonesaw.

Zach: So we see where the bullet was coming from?

Blake: Uh, make a Perception check.

Gale: And does he drink the elixir?

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: Yeah, he takes it and starts downing it.

Gale: Oh! I got a nat twenty!

Corinne: Ooo!

Keith: Ooo, look at that!

Zach: Ooo! And I got a nineteen—which is a twenty-eight.

Blake: Nice! Let me check their Stealth...

[Zach chokes on a laugh and dice roll.]

Blake: Oof, even with their minus twenty, only Bonesaw is able to see—

Zach: You're shittin' me!

Blake: —just this *foom!* —flash, as up on the ridge about twenty feet away, this figure that had popped out and took a shot at you—

Gale (as Bonesaw): They're on the ridge!

Zach (as Moz): Which ridge?

Gale: Bonesaw points wildly, while the guy who has drunk the elixir rapidly shrinks to half his height and an eighth of his weight. Does his severed leg...uh, also shrink?

Blake: [giggling] No, it doesn't!

Zach: Ugh!

Gale: God dammit.

Corinne: Oh no!

Keith: Oof.

[Laughter.]

Blake: What the fuck! He's sitting there, he chugs it and is like—

Blake (as rough-looking man): Thank you! Thank you! Just get me away from her! She's crazy! She's been taking me across—[voice getting squeakier]—all the different places in the—what the hell happened!

[Everybody laughs.]

Blake (as rough-looking man): What did you do to me?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Listen, this will make you so much easier to carry! I can't fix it right now, is the thing, so hold tight!

Gale: And I'm gonna try to scoop him up—

Blake (as rough-looking man): I'm bleeding out, what are you doing?

Gale: —and also the leg, and try to run back, but of course, I won't be able to run until my next turn.

Blake: All right! Jasper, you're up!

Keith: Well, my original plan was to go out there and drag this guy back, but I think that's taken care of. I had dismounted before we rolled Initiative, back when he was still approaching.

Blake: Yeah.

Keith: I'm going to run for the cover of a boulder, crouch down, and aim with my uh, rifle in the direction indicated.

Blake: Give me a Perception roll.

[Dice rolling.]

Keith: Thirty-two!

Gale: Ohohohoh!

Blake: Nice!

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: You are able to see where they were at. You can see them up on the ridge. Specifically because Bonesaw called it out, you can see the shadow of where they're hiding pressed up against a rock. You can see them.

Keith: Alrighty. Before I squeeze off a shot, I'll handle that for next turn I think, because I'm gonna, I'm gonna try and really get some information here. What does this person look like? Do they have a badge? Do they have a big white hat with a big old star on it or something?

[Gale laughs.]

Blake: What you can tell... it's still a distance away, but they are carrying a very unique rifle with a very long scope on it.

Gale: Oo!

Keith: Ahuh...

Blake: Um, they also have several different guns strapped to their legs, they have a sawed-off shotgun in a special holster along their leg. You—you can't tell much from this distance, but you can tell that they appear to be a gnoll.

Keith: Gnolls. I hate those guys.

[Laughter.]

Keith: I am ready to squeeze off a shot. I think I've blown my action for this turn, but uh, I will squeeze off a shot as soon as I am able.

Blake: Okay.

Keith: But I will say—

Keith (as Jasper): It's a gnoll with some sort of sharp-shooting rifle and enough ordinance to feed that whole cavalry!

[Gale laughs.]

Blake: It is their turn, and they pop up from around the edge, and you all can see them now, and they shout down—

Blake (as the gnoll): Let 'im go! That's my bounty! I swear to gods above that you will not take this money from me.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, you *really* shouldn't have told me that! Now I'm so much more motivated to keep him!

[Laughter.]

Blake: She is going to hop down and charge right at you, Bonesaw.

Zach: Does this activate Moz's...?

Blake: Yes.

Zach: Okay. We'll play it safe, but we'll give everyone some uh, extra hit points?

Gale: Yeah!

Zach: Can never hurt.

Corinne: Yay!

Zach: So, it should be 2d10 plus Constitution.

Blake: —and as she runs up, she simultaneously holsters the rifle and pulls out her shotgun, [gun sounds] locks it in, and pulls out the gun. As she approaches, uh, you can tell now that she is a female gnoll. She is...fucking ripped, standing very tall, she just looks absolutely ready to fight. She's wearing an open jacket without a shirt underneath. On her arms, she has fangs wrapped around, she has a necklace of fangs and bones, many, many scars, and she approaches with the gun out and says—

Blake (as the gnoll): It ain't gonna end well for you if you don't give me my bounty back. I've been pulling him for three days and he's giving me nothing but trouble.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Okay, well, what about splitsies? Because he's mine *now*, but maybe we can negotiate something!

Blake: She points the shotgun at the ground and fires it at your legs—

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: —and it *foo-foom!* —it immediately goes back and hits the arrow magnet, but just *vooom!* —spins. It does no damage to it.

Blake (as the gnom): Clever little trick you got there.

Corinne (as Myra): How about you put that gun down, and we talk this out a bit, and you tell us what exactly he has a bounty for. Because you could be a raider for all we know. You could be hurting some innocent folk.

Blake: She looks around at all of you, spits on the ground and just [gun noises] holsters her shotgun.

Keith: I still have my gun trained on her.

Zach (as Moz): Now. What are this man's crimes?

Blake (as the gnom): From what I read on the bounty, he's wanted in Arizona, Mexico... was a petty thief for quite some time until he decided that he wanted to just try his hand at stagecoach robbin'. Turns out he's a bit shit at it, so he fucked that up.

Zach (as Moz): Hmm.

Blake (as the gnom): Now he's got rangers from Arizona, New Mexico, heard even some of the Colorado rangers are coming after him. [Chuckles] I got him first, though, so the a thousand dollars is mine.

Zach (as Moz): Did you say a whole thousand dollars?

Blake (as the gnom): He's been a load of trouble for it. And I intend to earn that.

Gale (as Bonesaw): You know, the knee's a pretty tricky joint. Ah... it is it's only a thousand if he's in good condition?

Blake (as the gnom): Thousand if he's alive. Less if he's dead, but still worth it to me. Whether or not he's alive or dead.

Blake: And the guy on the ground says—

Blake (as rough-looking man): [squeaky] You got it all wrong! I was framed for all of that!

Blake: And she just—

Blake (as rough-looking man): I don't give a rat's ass whether you were framed or not, that's up for the county court to decide. If *you* prove to be more trouble than you're worth—

Blake: She pats the uh, shotgun on the side of her—

[Dice rolling.]

Keith: Oh dear!

Gale: I rolled Sense Motive and got a nat one.

Blake: [sarcastic] Nice!

Corinne: Oh nooo!

Keith: I'm gonna ask the little guy—

Keith (as Jasper): What's your name, partner?

Blake (as rough-looking man): [slight pause] Frank! Franklin Hells!

Keith: All right. Sense Motive on that!

[Laughter.]

Keith: That didn't come out too quickly, and it might have been Blake, it might have been Franklin, I don't know.

[Dice rolling.]

Corinne: Got an eighteen.

Keith: Thirteen.

Blake: Eighteen? Yeah, he's fucking lying. His name isn't Franklin Wells, he ain't innocent.

Zach: Hm.

Corinne: Hmm...

Blake: Thirteen, you can get a sense there's something fishy about this situation, you don't get specifics though.

Zach: I think Moz is gonna sort of indicate to the group to uh, discuss things privately away from Tang. But I think he's gonna lead just by saying—

Zach (as Moz): I say we give him up, but under the condition that they owe us a favor if we uh... need someone of uh... her profession in the future. She owes us.

Gale (as Bonesaw): That sounds pretty nice. I'll be sad to give up the bounty, but I suppose we did sort of...step into the middle of things, yes?

Corinne (as Myra): Yeah.

Keith (as Jasper): Hey there, Miss Bounty Hunter? You got a wanted poster on this fella?

Blake: She scratches her chin and kind of holds up her hand.

Blake (as the gnoll): Mind if I reach into my bag?

Keith (as Jasper): As long as you do it slow!

Blake: She slowly reaches into her bag, pulls out a revolver, drops it on the ground, reaches in, pulls out a dagger, drops it on the ground—

[Everybody starts laughing as the list continues.]

Blake: —reaches in, pulls out what appears to be just a fuse grenade, drops it on the ground—

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oo, I'm liking her more and more!

Keith (as Jasper): You're a well-prepared person, I can see that!

[Laughter.]

Blake: —pulls out three posters and passes them over.

Gale: Oo!

Keith: All right. I'm gonna take a look at these posters, here. Any of them match the description of this here fella? No, it says here this guy's six foot tall, this guy's only like two foot one?

[Laughter.]

Keith: Can't—can't be the right guy.

Blake: You find one for William Atherton for a thousand dollars for theft of a stagecoach. Wanted alive thousand, dead 500. You see one for the uh—

Gale: Ooh!

Blake: —killer Billy Lefay—

Keith: Haha!

Blake: —and one for the Short Round Gang.

[Laughter.]

Gale: I love them!

Keith: All right, so... William Atherton is probably the only one that would uh, fit this person's description?

Blake: Yes.

Keith: Uh, yeah. I think you're, I think you're on the nose here, Moz!

Zach (as Moz): Hey!

Zach: Moz is gonna cover his uh, septum ring.

[Everybody laughs.]

Zach: Moz will uh, hold his hand out to uh, Bonesaw and say—

Zach (as Moz): May I?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Fiiiine!

Gale: Bonesaw passes the leg over.

[Laughter.]

Zach (as Moz): The other one.

Gale (as Bonesaw): [whining] Haaa!

Gale: He grabs William Atherton by the back of his collar and hands him to Moz.

[Laughter.]

Zach: Okay. Moz will uh, cradle him like a, like a child or a small baby, and uh, walk him over to the bounty hunter.

Zach (as Moz): Suppose this is your bounty fair and square, but in the future, if we come calling it'd be nice if uh, you could help us out maybe once or twice.

Blake (as the gnull): That's fair.

Blake: And she extends a hand.

Blake (as the gnull): Name's Tang. Tang the Bounty Hunter.

Zach (as Moz): Moz.

Zach: And he will hand her the leg.

[Everybody laughs.]

Blake: Her eyes narrow a little bit at him, and she growls a little bit.

Zach: Uh, he'll also hand over the small man.

Keith (as Jasper): I'm pretty sure that's temporary!

Blake: You see...he lost a leg, and he's starting to bleed out. She quickly pulls out a section of rope, ties it into a tourniquet, and like, yanks it on the leg.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oof!

Blake: —and says—

Blake (as Tang): Fair enough. I owe you one.

Zach (as Moz): Here, let me... let me help you with that.

Zach: Moz is going to start a small fire in his hand with uh, one of his cantrips—

Keith: Ooh!

Zach: —but essentially he's trying to uh, cauterize the wound.

[Gale hisses through their teeth.]

Keith: I'm averting my eyes.

Blake: Yeah, William yells bloody murder. Tang just nods, like—

Blake (as Tang): Resourceful. I like that.

Blake: And then she pauses.

[Gale laughs.]

Keith: Uh oh!

Blake: —and then she gets down, into a crouch and looks Moz dead in the eye—

Gale: Ohohohoh!

Blake (as Tang): What'd you say your name was again?

Zach (as Moz): ...Moz.

Blake (as Tang): You got a last name to go with that name, Moz?

Corinne: Shhhhhit.

Zach (as Moz): Tippet.

Blake: Roll Bluff.

[Laughter and groaning.]

Zach: Mmmmhm.

[Dice rolling and Zach laughing.]

Keith: Lookit that!

Gale: A thirty-*five*?

Zach: Yep!

Blake: Thirty-five bluff and...

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: She continues staring at you for a minute. [Pause] Then gives a small smile and says—

Blake (as Tang): Sorry. You remind me of somebody I saw once.

[Gale laughs nervously.]

Zach (as Moz): Hm.

Keith: Hmmm.

Zach (as Moz): I get that a lot.

Blake (as Tang): Hm. You all take care of yourselves.

Blake: —and she picks up her bounty, gives a whistle, and a horse that up until now you haven't seen comes trotting down. She tosses William over the back and says—

Blake (as Tang): Take care. Keep an eye out for any more ruffians.

Keith (as Jasper): Hey, before you take your leave, you've seen hide nor hair of a wagon in these here parts? Might have been abandoned, might have been taken by bandits.

Blake: Roll Diplomacy.

[Dice rolling.]

Keith: [child-like] Eleben!

[Laughter.]

Blake: Eh, it wasn't that hard of a check. It was a DC10.

Keith: Yeah, I'm not demanding anything of her.

Blake: Yeah, she says—

Blake (as Tang): No, but I did see some tracks up that way. Seemed like they went off the path a little bit. Seemed a bit odd to me, but I was hauling this one.

Keith (as Jasper): Thank you kindly, ma'am. I'm glad this didn't get no worse than it started.

Blake (as Tang): Certainly. I agree with that.

Blake: And she gathers up her weapons that were tossed on the ground. William, at this point is just yelling up a storm, he's kind of come back to consciousness and she—

Gale: Can you give us a sample of him yelling in the tiny voice? I love it!

[Laughter.]

Blake (as William Atherton): [squeaky] I swear! If you don't let me go right now! I'm going to—! Uh—! I don't know what I'm gonna do, but you're not gonna like it!

[Everybody laughs.]

Blake (as William Atherton): My parents are really rich from back East! And they're gonna—!

Blake: At this point, Tang just gets up, sighs, and just reaches a hand back and just fuckin' slaps him upside the head, and says—

Blake (as Tang): Shut up! Like I said, five hundred dollars for a bit of silence...*might be worth it.*

[Gale laughs.]

Blake (as Tang): Hyah!

Blake: —and she rides off.

Gale: God, I love her.

[Laughter.]

Corinne: She's best bae.

Keith (as Jasper): [fading with distance] Oh! And if you see a pentagram, best avoid it—!

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): I'm sure she heard me.

Zach: Moz is... before we get on the horses and uh get up, I think he'll step uh, away from the group for a little, and uh confer with The Sheriff—

Zach (as Moz): [in an undertone] Do you think she knows?

Gale: Oo! Spicy!

Blake: Oo!

Gale: [reading] "Murky Futures," huh?

Blake: Okay, roll 1d100. You're trying to hit below a seventy-nine.

[Dice rolling.]

[Gasping and shocked noises.]

Gale: Oh, seventy-seven!

Keith: Squeaked by with a seventy-seven.

Zach: Yup.

Blake: Okay. Your question was, "Do you think she knows?"

Zach: Mhmm.

Blake: It's a bit of a difficult ask for it to answer, but I think overall, it gives you 'Woe.'

Gale: Mmm.

Zach: Got it.

Zach (as Moz): Well! We best be putting some distance between us and this place. Come on, let's get a move on.

Gale (as Bonesaw): You know, I should have asked if I could keep the leg, if she didn't really need it? I could have found a use...

Blake: The leg's still laying there, she didn't take the leg.

Gale: Oh—okay! Can I... can I take the leg?

[Laughter.]

Blake: [speaking through hands] Yes, you can take the human leg.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Listen, if nothing else, this is going to be very intimidating! When we run into someone else, and they're like 'Why do you have a bloody leg?' and I'm like, 'Well because I've ripped it off a fellow, so don't back chat me!'

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): You, you know that's gonna get pretty ripe after a while.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Not if I pickle it.

Keith (as Jasper): Well... I can't argue with that. [In an undertone] I'm glad I do not keep a diary. No one would believe this.

[Laughter.]

[Trail sounds fade in and back out, signaling a transition.]

Keith (as Jasper): All right folks, uh, seems like our bounty hunter there did indeed see some tracks leading off the path, so we'd best keep an eye out for that. Could be they were stashing them, could be they were hiding them so they can sell the uh, inoculations later on, who knows. But it's also a good bet that whoever stowed them, they left somebody behind a guard 'em.

Blake: You begin to continue on for the rest of the day. Because of this description that you have been given, and Tang actually will have given you the exact location that she noticed, the pathway, you don't miss the turn off, and you start to be able to follow the path. You are now in the deeper canyon and the walls rise up about thirty feet on each side of you. It's a winding path down through the way as the day begins to grow long.

Keith (as Jasper): This looks like a wonderful place for an ambush...

Blake: You go ahead and make camp that night. Go ahead and, if you all want to roll Survival to eat, or if you want to just rations.

Keith (as Jasper): I think it'd be a good idea to eat rations tonight and not build no fire. Of course, we've been warned that there might be snow, so maybe we need a fire...

Zach (as Moz): It's no problem.

Gale: Yeah, how cold is it?

Blake: As night begins to fall, you see clouds start to roll in—

Gale: Ooo...

Blake: —and the temperature has begun to drop.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, I miss the cart!

Keith (as Jasper): All right... Smokey, I don't want you freezing any more than you have to. Smokey's going into her box.

Zach: We can all huddle around Otto.

Gale: Oh yeah!

Keith: Oh, there is that, yeah! What a great idea!

Blake: Yeah, Otto is warm!

Gale (as Bonesaw): What a good horse!

Blake: Otto gives a mechanical knicker of just [neighing].

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Doesn't really help with the wind chill, but it's pretty toasty right here in the middle.

Zach (as Moz): Move over!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh! Come in here, let's snuggle! It's for warmth.

Corinne: Myra, unfortunately, is unable to contribute to the warmth, because she's cold-blooded.

[Laughter.]

Zach (as Moz): Parasite!

Gale (as Bonesaw): [shuddering] Oooh, you're like an icicle!

Zach: Like the equivalent of putting your cold feet on someone's backside.

[Everybody laughs.]

Corinne: Yep.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Jasper? 'round the toasty horse?

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah... yeah... Um, I'm still a little concerned. This looks like a great place for being a fish in a barrel.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Well, we've got to sleep though.

Keith (as Jasper): Dang, if it wasn't so cold, I'd climb up top and take a look.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, I have uh, Fly? I could... I could let you fly and look around?

Keith (as Jasper): Hmm... wow, not too sure about that.

Gale (as Bonesaw): No?

Keith (as Jasper): Uh, no thank you, I appreciate the offer, uh... I—I think I'll save that for when the alternative is death, uh...

[Laughter.]

Keith: Uh, however, it is kind of box canyon-y. I am going to take my time to find a way up to a high point, just to take a look around before I go back down to the warmth of the iron horse.

Blake: 'Kay.

Keith: I want to see if there are any other fires in the vicinity, that sort of thing.

Blake: Give me a Perception.

[Dice rolling.]

Keith: There's a 30.

Gale: Oo!

Blake: Fantastic. I will say, you would guess it's by the winding path that you're going to be taking over the next few days, however long it takes to find this, you see, probably an hour away, a cave on a higher cliff face, and there is a small glowing light coming from it.

Keith: Ahuh...how much daylight do we have left? Anything to speak of?

Blake: It is getting pretty late at this point. I would say you have probably an hour to an hour and a half of daylight left.

Keith: Well, we've got night vision, but I do not think our steeds do. I'm gonna climb back down, say—

Keith (as Jasper): All right. Took a look around from up top. There's a cave, maybe an hour up this uh, here pathway. Kind of hard to tell because the way it twists so much, but uh... there's definitely somebody in there. There's a glow, like maybe from a flickering fire, at the mouth of the cave.

Zach (as Moz): Hmm.

Keith (as Jasper): I don't know if we want to try and make our way there at night? Or if we want to hunker down here and take a peek in the morning.

Gale: Does Otto give off light?

Blake: Yes. It's not a big light...

Gale: Enough for Myra's horse to see by?

Blake: Um, not really, no.

Gale: Uh, Goiter has a ioun torch.

Blake: Yeah.

Zach: Yes! His little hat.

Gale: —attached to the miner's cap, that we could give to Myra.

Corinne: To my horse?

Zach: Or Myra's horse.

Gale: Or Myra's horse.

Corinne: Oh my God, this is so cute.

Gale: You've gotta pry it from Goiter's squishy little hands, though, because he loves that thing.

[Laughter.]

Blake: Yeah, Goiter has been just playing with that. Every once in a while he'll just like, suck it into his body and like, open his mouth and just have light coming out of his mouth.

[Everybody laughs.]

Keith (as Jasper): You know, Goiter can sit up in the saddle there, and... and provide light for the steed. Myra, you can see in the dark though, can't you?

Corinne (as Myra): Yeah, I can. Goiter, uh... I'm gonna need to borrow that helmet? Or uh... actually, eh, if you're not gonna give it up...

Zach: I don't think they combined the strength of the party is enough to pry that from Goiter.

[Everybody laughs.]

Gale: Squish, squish!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Ah, G—Goiter... how about this? Why don't you go for a lovely little ride on Myra's horse, and can you just, Oh, I really want to see your *very* pretty magic rock. Can you hold it up for me? Just, for a really long time, so I can get a good good look.

[Laughter.]

Blake (as Goiter): Yes, of course!

Blake: [squishy sounds] *Voom!* Light.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Wonderful!

Zach: Uh...he talks?

Blake: None of you could understand it—

Zach: Okay.

Blake: All you guys heard was [blobby sounds].

Keith: Unfortunately, that's all that Bonesaw *really* heard.

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Ah, shall we, to the cave?

Zach (as Moz): Okay.

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah.

Corinne (as Myra): We shall.

Zach (as Moz): Don't got a better idea.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Drat! You know, I think I left all my rations in the cart, does anyone have something to nibble on?

Corinne (as Myra): I actually am out of rations.

[Sighs from Jasper and Moz.]

Keith (as Jasper): Hang on.

Zach: Moz will *silently* distribute some trail rations that he has.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, thank you, Mozzie, dear!

Zach (as Moz): You're buying me a drink.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, I'll buy you a couple.

Corinne (as Myra): I'll buy you some. Thanks for the food.

Keith (as Jasper): All right, well, when we get through with this, we'll take a little bit of time to get some uh, vittles off the land.

Zach (as Moz): Yeah.

Keith (as Jasper): Maybe shoot a coney or two. Ones that ain't got antlers.

[Laughter.]

Zach (as Moz): That's, that's a future problem. Right now we just gotta get to the cave.

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah, there might be vittles in the cave too. We'll see. All right, then. Let's go all stealthy-like. When we get closer, we're gonna need to douse that light. Myra, maybe just kind of uh, tie your horse off for that last uh, couple hundred yards.

Corinne (as Myra): Okay. Sounds good.

Keith (as Jasper): All right. Move out.

[Wind and trail noises fade out and back in, signaling a transition.]

Blake: You all make your way stealthily as night begins to fall. Twilight comes quickly as you are deep in the box canyon, but you can still see the light above as stars begin to wink. It takes you the better part of an hour to get to the place where Jasper saw the cave, and as you approach you all begin to see the light flickering from inside. It does not seem to be like a big fire but there is definitely somebody home. As y'all approach, can you please give me a Stealth check?

[Dice rolling.]

Keith: Oh my god! Fourteen? I rolled a nat two.

[Dice rolling.]

Gale: A thirteen.

Zach: Uhh...

Blake: God damn it!

[Dice rolling.]

Corinne: Uh, ten?

Blake: God damn it!

Corinne: Sorry.

Blake: Y'all will be happy to know that my luck persists.

Gale: Wait, I'm still—

[Dice rolling.]

Gale: Oh, twenty-one! Yeah, we're good.

Keith: Oh! The rest of us are all singing cowboy songs and crackling our ration wrappers really loud.

[Laughter.]

Gale: Yeah, Bonesaw's munching quite loudly on hardtack. He keeps slipping chunks of it beneath the mask.

Blake: You all make your way, Otto just *kah-CHUNK, kah-CHUNK, kah-CHUNK*, [Mechanical noises]

[Gale laughs.]

Blake: —and like, grasping... You actually see a couple of times, as he's like, trying, he tries to climb up the steeper part, and as he does, his hooves like, break apart and become these like super-tactile many-digit, digitated, uh, feet to gain traction.

[Gasps of admiration.]

Corinne: That's so cool!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Stella, I love you!

Keith: [singsong] Horsie in disguise!

[Laughter.]

Blake: But you all eventually make your way up towards the mouth of the canyon. Give me a Perception check as you approach, whoever is getting closest to kind of see inside the cave.

[Dice rolling and cries of shock.]

Gale: Oh!

Keith: Oh I rolled a natural one!

Gale: Jasper, no!

Keith (as Jasper): Oh, I looked right at the fire! Ah! I'm blind, I can't see!

[Laughter.]

[Dice rolling.]

Gale: *Damn*, Myra!

Corinne: That'd be a thirty-one.

Keith: Holy cow!

Gale: I got a seventeen.

Blake: Everybody except Jasper, as you start to approach, you hear the voice before you get close. It's an odd mixture of like, a metallic ringing, but it sounds almost like a younger girl's voice. She appears to be talking to somebody, but you can't hear the other side of the conversation.

[1:36:13]

Blake (as young girl): —and like, after daddy said I couldn't, you know, I had to keep going—

[Gale laughing uproariously.]

Blake (as young girl): —and now I'm locked in. [Sighs] It just sucks! Thank you so much, Tiffany, for letting me stay here—

Keith: Tiffany?

Blake (as young girl): It has been terrible. Oh. My God. Did I tell you? I did! Yes! He tried to—he, he hit on me! Can you believe that? No, and he's all, 'Oh yeah, I got this great gig working with these people at the railroad—' and it's like, oh my *god!* He's a green dragon, and I don't even want to deal with that right now. Like, just that, so... that, yeah, right? I know. It's so ridicu—

Blake: —and, it's about this time that you all come up around the corner, and you see lounging, laid back against the wall, a small fire with an entire deer just roasting over it—

Gale: Oh!

Blake: —you see a large—not, not *too* large. Not as big as you normally would expect, but a large blue dragon, with—

[Corinne gasps.]

Blake: —almost seems like gold paint going down her neck. She is laying there, kind of idly turning the deer over the spit, and she's holding a blue stone in her hand that she's talking into.

[Laughter.]

Blake (as blue dragon): Yeah, I know, it's just so ridiculous. I don't even—

Keith: [laughing] It's an 'I-stone.'

Blake (as blue dragon): I've been here for two, for *weeks* and *weeks*, and I've gotten *nothing*, and it's like, *oh my god!* It's so cold out, and I just want to find a place that's warm, but daddy says I can't come back, until I show that I'm worth it to the family—

Gale: Awwww!

Blake (as blue dragon): —and it's like, I know it, I'm trying to learn, but it's so tough! I don't even... I mean I caught a deer today!

Corinne: Ohohoh!

Blake (as blue dragon): I mean, yeah, yeah, I know... Come on, Tiffany! You don't have to be mean about it!

[Laughter.]

Blake (as blue dragon): Yeah, it was half-dead, but come on! Well, you're the one who had to go South because it was too cold! [Sighs] Yeah, I'm sorry. It's okay, I forgive you.

Corinne: Oh my God.

Blake (as blue dragon): Yeah...

Keith: I've never wanted to slay a dragon less.

[Everybody laughs.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Ah, knock, knock! Hello!

Blake (as blue dragon): Ah! Ah, ah, ah!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Uh, sorry!

Blake: She jumps and like, scrambles to all fours, drops the stone—

Blake (as blue dragon): Oh, no! Oh, I hope it didn't crack! Oh!

Blake: She goes—like, looks at the cave entrance, looks at the stone, looks at the cave entrance, goes, picks up the stone—

Blake (as blue dragon): Okay, it's good!

[Laughter.]

Blake: —puts it back.

Blake (as blue dragon): [trying to be intimidating] Uh! This is my...cave! And my horde! You have entered the realm of Kerry Airentoth!

Gale: Yes!

Blake (as blue dragon): Beware! Travelers! For there is a...a *toll* on this area...?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, all right, we're friendly!

Blake (as blue dragon): Oh, you are?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Yes!

Blake (as blue dragon): Well, come on in!

Keith (as Jasper): [belated] Jehosephat, look out, everybody, it's a dragon!

[Laughter.]

Zach (as Moz): Uh...

Blake: And she just she gives this big draconic smile to all of you.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Wonderful!

Gale: Bonesaw scoots right up next to the fire.

Zach: Moz is gonna do a Sense Motive.

Blake: Okay!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Ah, Bonesaw!

Blake (as blue dragon): Hi! I'm Kerry!

[Dice rolling.]

Zach: Oo...

Blake: With a seven? No idea. Like, this is either the most devious trick ever, or...? You, you have no idea.

Zach: Okay.

Gale (as Bonesaw): And here we have Myra, Jasper, Moooooze...uh and, Otto!

Gale: —because Myra's horse is outside, and Smokey is away.

Blake (as Kerry): Hi! Come on in! Um, oh, yeah, I—I need to, sorry, there is one bit of business that I need to do.

Blake: And she kind of holds up a claw—

Blake (as Kerry): Uh, I do, if you're going to be passing by this area—

Blake: —and she's kind of looking up, as if she's remembering something that has been rehearsed—

Blake (as Kerry): Uh, you need to pay a... uh, no it's not a... yes! A toll! You need to pay a toll of...one thousand dollars!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh!

Zach (as Moz): That's a mite bit steep.

Gale (as Bonesaw): What if we don't have that?

Blake (as Kerry): Oh...

Gale (as Bonesaw): Is there like a reduced rate for poor people?

Blake (as Kerry): Um... I mean I gue—

Blake: —and she kind of puts a talon on her face as she's thinking.

Blake (as Kerry): I mean, I guess, yeah, I guess it's okay. I mean it's...[sigh] It's just, not many people come through here, and my daddy kicked me out, and I'm not allowed to use any of the family funds, and it's so cold, and I like... this little c—, this little...[pause] Yeah, come on in.

Corinne: Awwww!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh! Well, thank you, that's very sweet! If you want, you can snuggle with Otto? He's quite warm.

Blake (as Kerry): Oh, he is? That's really...

Blake: And she steps up, and she's only about as big as Otto, like she is not that big.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Please don't squish him! He's very expensive!

Blake (as Kerry): Oh! How much did he, did he cost?

Gale (as Bonesaw): [strained] Ahh...you know...ah...

Corinne: Mhmm. Mhmmhmm.

Gale (as Bonesaw): He's actually a family heirloom, so I mean expensive for my heart.

[Laughter.]

Blake (as Kerry): Oh! Okay. I, I get that.

Gale (as Bonesaw): And you have to leave room for Myra, she's got circulation issues.

Blake (as Kerry): Oh, I get that, I get, you know, I have same issues, and like—oh! Oh no! Uh!

Blake: She scrambles over to the stone and picks it up.

Blake (as Kerry): Oh, uh, it's okay Tiffany! Um, I just have some visitors! Yeah! [pause, sigh] Yes, they're friendly! No, they won't ruin the cave. Yes, I made sure they're not going to ruin the cave. [outward] You guys aren't going to ruin the cave, are you?

Corinne (as Myra): Uh, nope! Nope, we'll be the perfect guests!

Blake (as Kerry): Yeah, see, they're gonna be the perfect guests. You're not gonna steal from my horde or Tiffany's horde, are you?

Corinne (as Myra): No!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Absolutely not!

Zach (as Moz): Nope.

Blake (as Kerry): Yeah, see, they're not gonna steal from our hordes.

Keith: Jasper is staring at this dragon with his mouth open, and has not said a word—

[Everybody laughs.]

Keith: —after 'Holy Cow, it's a dragon!'

Blake (as Kerry): Okay, yeah! Okay, I'll talk to you later. Yeah, okay. Bye, love you!

Blake: —and she sets down the stone.

Blake (as Kerry): Sorry, I forgot that I had her on the call. Yeah, come on in!

Corinne: Myra raises a hand and says—

Corinne (as Myra): I uh, I couldn't help but overhear, but you said you were talking to a dragon that got a gig with the railroad? Was that dragon perhaps a green dragon?

Blake (as Kerry): Oh, yeah, he's such—[sigh] He thinks he's all special and stuff, but honestly he just wants to grab some food, and he's just—[scoff]—he's such a child.

Corinne (as Myra): We uh, ran into him. He was a uh, he was a... a... He was an asshole.

Blake (as Kerry): Oh yeah, that's Drokaska. He is such an asshole.

Corinne (as Myra): Right?

Blake (as Kerry): He thinks he's all tough, and he's like 'Oh my God!' Like, but I mean, I kind of get it, you know, like, he at least has a place, and they like, feed him and stuff. I have to go hunting. I don't like hunting! You know how it sucks to go hunting all the time?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, so much!

Blake (as Kerry): It's like, just, I mean, it's... sorry, I don't wanna, I don't want to just *unload* on you guys...

Corinne (as Myra): No! No, no...

Corinne: [laughing] Somewhere in Myra's bag, she pulls out a nail filer and some nail polish—

[Everybody laughs.]

Corinne: —and she goes to work on the dragon's nails and goes—

Corinne (as Myra): —So tell me how you feel...

[Laughter.]

Blake (as Kerry): Well, I go—it's like, my daddy—I made one mistake, like five years ago, and I was like, uh, guarding a bank, and my daddy...and I got, they kind of stole from it, and daddy said, you know, 'Oh, you're not responsible!' And like, of course, I'm young, I'm still trying to find out what I want to do! Maybe I don't want to guard banks! Like, why would I want to... it's like... And he said 'Oh, you're cut off, until you can prove that you can make your own way in the world!' And like, fortunately, Tiffany, she's this white dragon who like, she comes up, uh, but then she goes south for the winter, because she doesn't really like the cold, which is *weird*, right? Like, if she's—yeah, you'd think that she would like the cold, but no, she's like, you know, 'I get it all the time,' so she's letting me stay in her cave here, but like... it's—[sigh]—I appreciate it, but it's also like, I just want to be in a place where I can be warm and don't have to worry about—and I can, you know, I have to like, "raise money," but I want to be up here in the mountains. Nobody comes here! Like there was like this one dog-looking lady who was really *mean* that came by like, yesterday, she took shots at me, it hurt! Look! Right—

Gale: Aw!

Blake: —and she points, and there's like two of her scales underneath her foreleg are broken off from a bullet wound.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, well, *that* I can help with!

Gale: And uh, Bonesaw will pass her an elixir of Cure Light Wounds.

Blake (as Kerry): Oh my god! Thanks! That's so, so... You guys are so nice!

Corinne: I love this dragon so hard!

Blake (as Kerry): You guys are like, the best people. You know, I... most of the time, I—I end up being alone. But I—it's just it's nice to hang out with people. Again.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Yes, of course! You wouldn't have happened to see a wagon around these parts, would you?

Blake (as Kerry): A wagon?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Ah, that's really what we're around for. But, of course, happy to stay and give you some company for a while.

Blake (as Kerry): Wagon? Um...

Blake: Let me roll something for her...

[Dice rolling.]

Gale: Is Jasper still standing with his mouth open?

[Corinne laughs.]

Keith: Uh, you can do a Sense Motive on him, if you want.

Gale: Okay...

[Dice rolling.]

Gale: Twenty-seven.

Keith: Jasper looks as if his world has shattered. He looks devastated. And, if he *could* cry—

Corinne: Ohooo!

Gale: Awww!

Keith: —his face has that look to it.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Uh, uh—Jasper? What—what's going on? Do you want to come in?

Keith (as Jasper): [wavering between accents] Uh... yeah. I—I think so. I... what did you say your name was?

Keith: He says to the dragon.

Blake (as Kerry): Oh! It's uh, Kerry Airentoth. Oh! Um, but no relation to the Airentoths that owned the Bluescale Bank that don't actually own the Bluescale Bank. Oh, shoot! No, I'm not supposed to say that either. Uh!

Keith (as Jasper): No, I—I—I...[sigh] I think I'm losing my mind, actually.

Blake (as Kerry): Oh! Do you need something? I can get um... I got some meat—

Blake: —and she goes over and like, jumps behind a rock wall, and like, you see a goblet go flying and some coins go flying, and then she comes back, and holds out a potion.

Blake (as Kerry): This might help!

Keith: He will take it from her like she's just handed him the Holy Grail, or... vanilla chocolate ice cream out in the wilderness, or something, just...like it's a great gift. And he won't even ask, he'll just drink it.

Blake: Okay!

Keith: What happens?

[Laughter.]

Blake: As you drink it, you feel yourself revitalized. Honestly, almost more lively than you've felt in a long time. This potion, specifically it was a potion of Restoration—

Gale: Oo!

Keith: Okay...

Zach: It's like you never died!

Keith: Jasper stands up straight. Normally he has a uh, just a little bit of a of a wacky Western crouch to him, but he stands up straight as a board, and he looks the dragon right in the eye and he says—

Keith (as Jasper): Thank you. That was a very generous gift. I'm... I apologize for my behavior, but when we first encountered you, I couldn't even make sense of what I was hearing, you sound... exact...[breathing heavily] I had...a little girl.

Gale: Ohhh!

Keith (as Jasper): She was about fifteen the last time I saw her.

Gale: Oh!

Keith (as Jasper): And her voice...[emotional] It... you sound exactly like her. Thank you.

Blake: Kerry is tearing up a little bit, and says—

Blake (as Kerry): Oh, I'm, I'm really sorry. That... did something happen to her?

Keith (as Jasper): It was... it was a long time ago. She's... she's gone now. But... I feel like I've remembered so many things I'd forgotten, all at once, I... I need to sit down. Thank you. Um...

Keith: And he's going to look around. Is there a chair or anything? Otherwise he's just gonna sit down with his back against the wall.

Blake: Yeah, actually, as you look around, it is a smallish cave, but in one corner it's been apportioned, there's a little library with a little reading nook and an overstuffed chair.

Keith: He will collapse in the chair.

Keith (as Jasper): Please, just... just keep talking.

Gale: Aww!

Blake (as Kerry): Okay! I—I can do that. Um. I... my daddy says that I talk too much sometimes, but, I mean, like why wouldn't I want to talk? I like talking! Especially when I get to meet new and interesting people! You all are so interesting! Like, I don't get to... Oh, you asked me a question, didn't you? There was like a... if there was a um... a thing?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Yes, about the wagon!

Blake (as Kerry): Yes! A wagon! Oh! Uh, yeah, actually I think it came by like, a few days ago, and it went down and I—I went down to try and like, to get a toll from them, but then they had this uh, this gun on top that went like—[gatling gun sounds]—really fast, and uh, it shot me a bunch of times, and it was so loud, and I just flew away, like, I didn't even want to deal with that. It's like, oh my god, no! If you're gonna shoot at me, like, I don't even want to deal with that.

Corinne (as Myra): You don't need that type of negativity in your life.

[Gale cracks up.]

Blake (as Kerry): Ex—*actly*. Thank you!

[Laughter.]

Corinne: How's Jasper doing?

Keith: He has his eyes closed, and he's just listening.

Gale: I think Bonesaw will reach over and just pat his hand. Sort of understanding.

Keith: Absently, he just puts his hand on top of the patting hand, he's not even sure whose it is.

Gale: Bonesaw...of course you can't see his face, but just the set of his shoulders, it looks like he's so excited, and lights up, and he puts his hand on top of the other hand, and just stands there in a hand sandwich.

[Laughter.]

Keith: Mm! Hand sandwich!

[Laughter.]

Blake: But yeah, uh, Kerry explains which direction the wagon went. She says she heard something weird happen half a day's ride from here. Like, a bunch of shouts and then quiet, but then, she didn't want to go investigate because they were mean to her.

Corinne: Huh...

Blake: And the rest of the night, she'll talk, she'll answer any questions you guys might have. She'll share the side of deer that she caught—

Corinne: Yaay!

Gale: Awww!

Corinne: Thank you!

Blake: She does take the lion's share of it because she's a big fucking dragon.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Listen, I don't have a thousand dollars, but maybe you could put this towards your horde!

Gale: And he'll give her...ten gold.

Blake: She brightens up as you do this, and she says—

Blake (as Kerry): Oh my god, thank you so much!

Blake: And she just wraps Bonesaw up in her forelegs, and like, gives him a big hug, and says—

Blake (as Kerry): This is so nice of you! I have been—nobody wants to give me money! They either are like 'No, you're a dragon, aaah!' and they run away, or they're like, 'Oh, you're a dragon aaah!' and they like, shoot at me, and it's like, nobody wants to—I don't want to like... I want to hurt people!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Well...

Blake (as Kerry): —to get the money, and it's like—

Gale (as Bonesaw): Maybe you could be like a philanthropic sort of dragon, where you like, help people, and get donations.

Blake (as Kerry): Yeah, but daddy says that philanthropic dragons are um... what's the word in English? It's, I mean, it's a very specific word in draconic that um, it's uh, '*kordthoth*'—

Blake: Myra, I think you speak draconic?

Corinne: Yeah, I do.

Blake: You know that that is basically a soft-shelled egg that was dropped—

[Laughter.]

Blake: And half-cracked. It's a fairly harsh insult in draconic.

Corinne (as Myra): Uh, it's kind of...it's kind of like an eggshell that's empty, it's been dropped and cracked and... yeah it's bad.

Blake (as Kerry): Oh! That's such a good explanation! I've never been able to really articulate that before...that...You're you're smart!

Corinne (as Myra): Oh!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Well, you don't have to do what your father says!

Corinne (as Myra): Yeah!

Blake (as Kerry): Yeah, but if I don't, I'm not gonna be able to get money that we have? And like, I really want a lot of that money, and...because it's like...it's a *lot*.

Gale (as Bonesaw): No that's... that's very fair. Ah... but you *could* get your own money.

Blake (as Kerry): That's fair but like, [sigh] it's so tough to get! It's so tough to find, like, a place to stay, and a safe place to keep my horde, and like...I mean I'm trusting that Tiffany will let me keep my stuff here for *now*, but like, I feel like she's getting a little pissed at me for being here, because it's been like *five years* and I haven't really found my own place—

[Laughter.]

Blake (as Kerry): —like, I like hanging out with her when she's here...I don't know.

Keith (as Jasper): If you were to...come across some treasure, would it...would it help you with your family?

Blake (as Kerry): I mean, probably, but it's like, I have to find a lot. It's...it's not a problem, well...Like, it's been a long day, and like, we could talk tomorrow. But...thank you all so much. It's been so wonderful. You're welcome to stay here and sleep in the cave, if you'd like.

Keith (as Jasper): That's very kind of you, thank you very much. I'd like to give you a gift, if I can. In return for your hospitality,

Blake (as Kerry): Oh!

Keith: And he reaches into his shirt, and he pulls out a leather thong, and at the end of the thong is a horseshoe, and he says—

Keith (as Jasper): This looks like an ordinary horseshoe, but if you throw it upon the ground, the fork will always point towards the nearest source of fresh water. If you roll it on the ground, it will roll towards the nearest edge of a zone of wild or dead magic, and finally, if you are in deep trouble, it will bring you luck.

[Gale gasps.]

Keith (as Jasper): Will you take it, Emma?

Gale: Aww!

Blake (as Kerry): That is so sw—yes, of course, thank you so much!

Blake: And she gingerly kind of picks it up and takes it.

Blake (as Kerry): This is such a sweet gift, thank you so much! You all are just the nicest people. If—if you ever find your way back over here, you are always welcome in my cave.

Keith (as Jasper): Thank you. And yes, it's probably past your bedtime.

[Gale giggles.]

Blake (as Kerry): 'Kay, good night! Uh, let me know if you need anything!

Blake: And she's gonna go to this like, big pile of pillows and circle around three times and lay down.

[Laughter.]

Corinne: Oh my goodness!

Zach: Aww!

Gale: She is precious!

Keith: Jasper will sit down next to where she has laid down, and so softly it's almost impossible to hear—

Keith (as Jasper): [singing] Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes. Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise...

Keith: —and he sings a lullaby to her. And he occasionally has to stop and remember words. And he only remembers the first verse, but he sings it completely, and then he just kind of lays down, closes his eyes and falls asleep.

[Piano instrumental of 'Flow Gently Sweet Afton' continues in the background.]

Blake: [sniffing] God damn, making me cry...

Corinne: I was gonna say...

Blake: Ohh!

Keith: [laughing] At least I didn't say he lays down and dies!

[Everybody laughs.]

Zach: Ohh!

Gale: Aww!

Corinne: My heart!

[Instrumental peters softly out.]

Blake: It is a quiet night as you sleep in the den of the dragon.

Zach: A very, *very* small part of Moz is curious about the horde...

[Exclamations and laughter.]

Gale: [laughing] You *monster!*

Zach: I—I—I!

Corinne: Oh, don't you dare! Don't you dare!

Keith: [laughing at Gale] 'You monster!'

Zach: I don't think...I, One, personally, I don't think I could go through with that, I don't even think Moz could go through with that, like... that's... that's pretty fucking low.

[Laughter.]

Zach: Not to ruin the moment or anything, but uh...there's a shitton of gold, I'm assuming, in the other room.

[Laughter and dawning birdsong ambience to signal the transition.]

Blake: The morning comes. It is a bright morning. Kerry wakes up, stretches, helps you all get around, and offers you some of the leftover deer to take with you.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, that's *very* sweet, thank you!

Blake (as Kerry): Yes, of course! Um, like I said, you guys are always welcome if you want to uh, if you find yourselves coming back this way. Just stop on in!

Zach (as Moz): Much appreciated.

Blake (as Kerry): Have a good day! Good luck finding your wagon!

Corinne (as Myra): Thank you so much!

Keith (as Jasper): Thank you! Thank you so much.

Keith: Jasper, as they're leaving, will turn to Bonesaw and say—

Keith (as Jasper): My wife's name was Petunia Westfield. My eldest son, Albert, wanted to be a school teacher, like me. Emma wanted to be a nurse. Edward wanted to be a pirate, but he was only seven. And little Clara, well... she just wanted food most of the time, or a hug.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh! Five out of five, Jasper!

Keith (as Jasper): [emotional] I can see their faces in my mind...I don't know how long this will last, but... it's wonderful.

Gale: Bonesaw gives you a great big hug. He squeezes you so hard.

Keith: Uh, he returns it.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Ohohohoh!

Gale: Bonesaw like, dances from foot to foot, and and takes y'all in a little circle.

Gale (as Bonesaw): That's wonderful, Jasper¹

Keith (as Jasper): Oh! What a wonderful gift! But we have promises to keep. And miles to go before we sleep...

[Gale laughs at the quote.]

Keith (as Jasper): [tongue-in-cheek] Oh, sorry, that was an anachronism!

[Everybody laughs.]

Gale: A little Robert Frost in there?

Keith: Yeah, he stole it from me!

[Laughter.]

[Creaking noises signal the cart on the move.]

Blake: The good news is, because you all were given directions from Kerry, of which way they went, you're not gonna have any issues finding your way to where all of these things were!

Gale: Yay!

Blake: It's gonna be an easy path, and you'll be in good shape. You all start making your way through the box canyon, and it is turning back and forth, and it is rough going. About midday, you start to smell the smell of cordite in the air, and gunpowder, and fire. And you come around the corner and you see a messy tableau. You see the wagon tipped over, all of the wheels off. There is a massive amount of damage all around. You see corpses of people, one bush that is burned, a person who had fallen to the ground as they were apparently casting a lightning spell, and it just, etches in the stone of the lightning. What appears to be a person who is hit as they were running by a stone that just *shp!!!* squashed them into the ground. Massive amounts of damage all around.

Zach: What size stone are we talking? Like a baseball-sized, or like a small car-sized?

Blake: Probably about the size of a watermelon, but it just like, hit them right in the head and drove them into the ground.

Zach: Got it! I will watch my step and avoid any stones that look...dangerous.

[Gale laughs.]

Blake: You see, just, magical damage across the entire area. One person was trying to climb up the cliff and got hit by something—

Keith: Oh no!

Blake: —and just, died there.

Keith: I hate to ask, but uh, what's this?

[Laughter.]

Blake: That is some uh, entrails—

Keith: I was afraid of that.

[Laughter.]

Blake: —that are right underneath the yoke of the wagon.

Zach (as Moz): Them's your digestive worms, Jasper!

[Laughter.]

Blake: Sorry, that was really funny! You see one person that was like, apparently lifted up and thrown on top of a cactus, and it just, is impaling them up into their chest cavity—

[Gale whimpers.]

Zach: Ugh!

Blake: —on the cactus. It is a rough-looking scene, with a lot of corpses.

Gale (as Bonesaw): [shaken] W—well—!

Keith (as Jasper): [New England accent] All right. I...Before anybody goes and disturbs anything... dang it. [Switches to cowboy accent] Before anyone goes and disturbs anything, let me take a look around, see if I can find any other clues that might not pop out at first sight.

Keith: I'd like to roll Perception, looking for things like, maybe giant tracks?

Blake: Okay.

Keith: Or an indication of uh, what might have hurled these things around with great force?

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: Twenty-eight to track...there's a couple of things you see. One, you explicitly do not see any tracks other than the wheel tracks of the wagon going and ending exactly at the spot where the wagon is.

Gale: Hooo...

Blake: You also notice that the bodies that are around here, they're in varying stages of decay. You see some that are fresh, and you can actually still see the army uniform on them.

Keith: Okay...

Blake: A couple are just skeletons.

Keith: Interesting.

Blake: Some were kind of mummified by the desert air.

Keith: But the fresh ones are the army ones?

Blake: Yes, you you see two fresh corpses of army personnel.

Keith: Mmkay. And the ones that are kind of mummified?

Blake: It's too hard to tell, it seems like whatever clothing might have been on them are gone, or just like, regular.

Keith: Okay. I will relay this information, but I don't see any signs of what attacked them, or what killed them, do I? I'm guessing something flew.

Corinne: Oo!

Keith: Maybe dropped a rock from a great height.

Zach: Hmm...

Keith: Does the wagon look as if it perhaps had been picked up and dropped? Like the pieces just kind of [shattering sound] outward from it?

Blake: Give me a Perception check.

Gale: I'm gonna start mixing a third-level extract.

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: Okay. With a twenty-three, the wagon itself, from what you can tell at this distance, does not appear to be dropped, and in fact, despite a little bit of damage on top, and the front yoke being chucked off to the side, it looks like it's in pretty good shape! Like, there's a little bit of burn on one side, and all four wheels are still attached. But you see four wheels *buh-buh-buh-buh*, sitting around it.

Gale: Huh...

Keith: That is strange.

Zach (as Moz): So, who wants to go check on the wagon?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Ah, Goiter, how are you feeling today?

Keith: Oh god! You mean person!

Blake (as Goiter): I'm feeling great! What are you...Is there something you want, Bonesaw?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Ah...how sure are we that there's... it's safe?

[Zach laughs.]

Corinne (as Myra): It kinda looks like this was set up.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Goiter, can you go just uh, touch that wagon for me?

Blake (as Goiter): Yeah, of course!

Gale: God, if this kills Goiter, I will never get over it.

[Zach laughs.]

Gale: Wait, let me look up rules...Can I bring him back if he dies?

Blake: He goes up, and he's going to touch the wagon?

Gale: ...yep.

Blake: As he touches the wagon, he kind of pats it a couple of times.

Blake (as Goiter): Ah, this is weird! Uh, it's kinda...S—it's...huh. It's kind of stick—

Blake: —and all of a sudden, on top of it, you see an eye open up—

Gale: [gasping] It's a mimic!

Blake: —and a maw—

Gale: No!

Zach: Oh fuck!

Keith: Oooh!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Goiter, run! Run away! Fly away! Get away!

Keith (as Jasper): [mis-quoting Forrest Gump] Run, Goiter, Run!

Blake: Goiter starts to pull away, and he is stuck to it—

Gale: Shit!

Blake: —as the mouth opens, the eyes open up—

Zach: No!

Blake: —the tongue lashes out—

Corinne: No!

Keith: [hyperventilating] Initiative! Initiative! Initiative!

Corinne: No!

Blake: The wheels that are all around it start to—

Zach: Oh no!

Gale: Oh my god!

Blake: —make an appearance.

Gale: We have to rescue Goiter, guys!

Zach: You just had to say he had to touch it!

Blake: And finally, in the corner, that big-ass cactus, that seems just too big to be true—

Keith: Oh god!

Gale: Awww!

Blake: —eyes open up and a mouth comes out.

[Disbelieving laughter.]

Zach: Fuuuck!

Gale: Oh my god, oh my god, what a cool battle, but—

Blake: And that's where we're going to—

Gale: No! No!

Blake: And that's where we're going to end the session tonight.

Gale: Noooo!

Keith: Oh, Goiter! This gives you plenty of time to find out how...how vulnerable Goiter is, or how, how undisposable he might be...

Gale: God, I'm gonna have a heartburn all week!

Blake: Yep!

Corinne: Oh no!

[Laughter.]

[Music fades out to be replaced with the theme song.]

Gale: Dust and Blood is a Rolling Path production, featuring Corinne Hill as Myra Sting, Blake Alfson as our GM, Zach Parker as Moz Copernicus Prior, Keith Curtis as Jasper Graves, and myself, Gale Parker as Bonesaw.

Our theme song is Dust and Blood by Arne Parrott, and other music throughout this recording is provided by Kevin Macleod, Tabletop Audio, Dark Fantasy Studios, and the Desperados 3 Original Game Soundtrack by Filippo Beck Peccoz.

Jasper's Lullaby is the song Afton Waters with lyrics by Robert Burns and music by Alexander Hume, performed by Keith on vocals and Gale on piano.

Transcripts, detailed sound credits, and more can be found on our website at DustAndBloodPod.com. You can follow us on X and Facebook at DustAndBloodPod. Support us through our Patreon at Dust and Blood, where you can join our community discord and get perks like our behind-the-scenes discussion show, The Roundup.

We are so grateful for the support of our fans, people like Hazz, Hylen, Steve Micdichael, and 50SlothsofGrey.

Dust and Blood releases monthly on the first, and our next episode is coming at you on March First!

Content warnings can be found in every episode description, and we hope you enjoy exploring this fantasy western with us. Thanks for listening!

[Theme fades in and out.]

Zach: Duh—wait, Goiter has an inventory space? Can we just like, shove money in him, and he could be a little dispenser, like a coin purse?

[Laughter.]

Blake: I mean you can *try*.

Gale: There is a limit to that! But yeah...

Corinne: Actually, that's a, that's a thought...

Keith: [firmly] No!

[Laughter.]

Zach: We should go shopping, and be like, I—I will buy three sodas, and like, shake Goiter on until a bunch of coins come out on the counter.

[Laughter.]

Zach: [laughing] 'No!'

Blake: Depending on what store you're in, that'll either win you a lot of points, or... get you arrested.

[Laughter.]

Zach: I don't like this imagery...

[Theme fades in and out.]

Blake: Damn, I-I was really excited to see if somebody would open that up.

[Laughter.]

Corinne: I know, I was so close, I was so curious...

Blake: No, it's good, it's good.

Zach: None of your shit today, Blake!

[Everybody laughs.]

[Theme fades in and out.]

Blake: Absolutely fantastic session!

Gale: Just, amazing! I literally, I was crying... 'cause Jasper.

Blake: Yeah!

Corinne: Yeah!

Gale: Oh my god.

Zach: Well done, Keith.

Blake: Jasper—

Keith: I was tearing up too.

Corinne: I was not ready for that.

Blake: I...I was expecting this to be a 'fun, happy, you're, you get to meet Kerry from the other campaign, oh it's fun,' and then you're, you come and bring emotions to it!

[Everybody laughs.]

Keith: Bringin' in feelers!

Zach: It was a good Cameo.

Keith: Yeah.

Zach: Moz might know how to play a fiddle, but Jasper knows how to play heartstrings.

Blake: Ohohohoh!

Corinne: Ooooooh!

Gale: Awwwww!

Corinne: That's a good one!

Gale: That's very sweet.

[Cassette ending sound.]