

Transcribed by Sena Bryer.

A note for our readers: "Jess" is Jesse's in-game avatar's voice. "Jesse" is the voice of his internal thoughts.

[A stately melody plays.]

Alman Netarres: To the wise Zho Taipar, Queen of Han Tol, Blessing of God be upon you and your people, now and always. It is my hope, and the hope of all those who follow the Good Faith, that you should find it in your heart to repent. If you should continue in this folly, I fear for your soul. He is not without His mercy, even toward those who once defied him and worshipped false idols. He is the bountiful, the generous, the strong! One need only look at the holy might He has bestowed upon Thaar to know the truth. Your navy is crushed, both in Nalia's Sea and in Meyzh's. Your profane elven magics are fallen before our iron strength, and your people look to you for guidance. Would you abandon them? It is this servant of God's sincerest wish that you choose for them salvation, both in this life and the next. His Grace, Emperor Alman Netarres, Holy Sovereign of Thaar and the Men of the West, Protector of the Good Faith, and the First Servant of God.

[The main theme plays.].

Jess: A wartime letter from Thaar to Han Tol, dated 1445 E.L.

Episode 8: The Rainbow City

[The scene begins immediately from where the previous episode left off, with Jesse and Proto in the forest. A wind blows.]

Proto: 'Jess', huh? You know, that's the best thing about starting a game at launch. All the nice, short, super easy-to-remember names aren't taken yet. [Pause.] Or is it short for something?

Jess: [Nervous] Y-Yes.

Proto: [Hesitant] Are you going to tell me?

Jess: [Scared] No?

[A pause.]

Proto: You've... got some secrets, don't y--

Jess: [Interrupting] So, your guild! How about that, huh? How about we talk about that instead? What do I have to do to be in?

Proto: Just one thing.

[The movement of items and guts.]

Jesse: C'mon, man, answer first, then loot the corpse.

Jess: [Clearing his throat] And that is?

Proto: Oh! Nothing much. We just need to fashion you a voicelink, which I can do once we get to Soi Fen.

Jess: You can't invite anywhere?

Proto: Sorta, but it's weird. There's not really a clear line whether or not someone is in a guild or not. Like, I don't have access to a list of members, or anything like that.

Jess: That *is* weird. Does that mean someone could like, lie and say they're in a guild when they're not, and not get called out on it?

Proto: Maybe. I think Salve is testing the waters to see if people want that sort of espionage gameplay, or something more written in stone. [Pause.] Oh! Look, the chimera dropped a staff! Do you want it?

Jess: You did most of the work--you should have it.

Proto: It's okay. I prefer wands anyway. I'll just take the other drops. Lots of good alchemy stuff in here.

[Item obtained jingle.]

Notifications: Obtained Chimera Femur!

Jesse: "Chimera Femur". [Pause] It's not really a...

[He brings it out and swooshes it through the air a couple times.]

Jess: Oh wow. It is just a big ol' bone.

Proto: The stats are nice though!

Jesse: +2 attack, +4 spirit. Quite good. And one end is filed down to be super pointy.

Proto: Anyway, we're not far from Soi Fen, if I remember this road right. Let's continue on, shall we? It's getting late.

Jesse: It is. I wonder, it's the same no matter what timezone you're in, right?

Jess: Sure thing. Let's go.

[Scene fades out. Fade into the sounds of woods in evening. The wind has died down. Jesse and Proto walk along the road, then come to a stop.]

Proto: Here! Just past this gate is the city.

Jess: Really? Because I don't see anything. Just a gate and a bunch of trees.

Proto: Oh, trust me, it's there.

[Heavy armored footsteps approach, with the movement of plate mail.]

Guardsmen: Hold, draken!

Jesse: Wow, talk about resplendent. That's one hell of a set of armor you got on there, Mr. Guardsman.

Guardsmen: State your name and business in Soi Fen, and I will decide if you are allowed to enter the city.

Proto: Huh? Hm. [Clears his throat] My name is Proto, of Xan Kanesh. I am a... uh... friend of your people.

Guardsmen: [Suddenly remembering] Yes, yes. I have heard of your good deeds to Han Tol. My apologies

[The guard steps aside.]

Guardsmen: Soi Fen welcomes you. [Pause.] And you as well, priestess. Bao watch over you.

Jess: Uh... yes, and Bao... watch over you too, Mr. Guard... sir.

Guardsmen: [Shouting back] Open the gates!

[A heavy groan of metal and wood as the gates open. The sounds of idle chatter and a distant waterfall fill the air as it opens.]

Jesse: [Awestruck] Oh... my... God...

Jess: It's...

Proto: Pretty, eh?

Jesse: 'Pretty' doesn't do it justice, this is...! Wow, I don't even know! The... the city, and... and the waterfalls, and the towers, and... That's the Spine, isn't it? They put a flipping city on top of ten thousand-foot waterfalls! See, this is why I play video games! You can't pull stuff like this off anywhere else! [Pause.] I want to draw something. I want to draw this, or my own city, or... I

don't know, just... Man!

Jess: [Still beaming] So how do we get up?

Proto: Over there.

[A pause.]

Jess: ...Elevators? All the way up?

Proto: Are you afraid of heights?

Jess: No, it's just uh... It's safe, right?

Proto: I assume so.

Jess: You assume so? You never rode it?

Proto: This right here was the last thing I saw before the beta ended.

Jess: You didn't come through here before?

Proto: Not this exit. I'm sure it's fine. The game wouldn't do that to us.

Jesse: Oh you'd be surprised what this game will do to you. [Pause.] But I'll trust you.

Jess: Okay.

[Scene fades out. When it fades back in, it is with the rhythmic turning of gears as one of the lifts approaches.]

Jess: [Impatiently] Almost here now...

Proto: It is taking a while, isn't it?

[A loud thoom of metal and wood on stone as the lift reaches the bottom. Its metal doors grind open and footsteps of two adventurers leave, one hurried and one normal.]

Adventurer 1: Ahahaha! Can we ride it again!? Can we ride it again!?

Adventurer 2: [Fed up] No.

Adventurer 1: Too late! I'm gonna-- Oof!

Adventurer 2: I said NO!

[Their footsteps and voices fade as they grow more distant.]

Adventurer 1: But I wannaaaaaa!

[A pause, then Jesse and Proto burst into a fit of half-stifled laughter. They enter the lift and the door closes behind them. It then groans to life and begins rising with the same turning of gears.]

Jesse: This is actually way sturdier than it looks. Slow, though.

Jess: Bets on how long it'll take to reach the top.

Proto: Hmm... Six minutes. You?

Jess: I say fifteen.

Proto: Fifteen? That's a bit pessimistic, don't you think?

Jess: It's a big cliff.

[All sounds from the ground level has vanished, replaced by the wind.]

Jesse: Hell of a view, though. I can only imagine what it's going to look like from the top. Will we be able to see the curvature of the earth? [Pause.] Err, of the planet, I guess I should say. This isn't Earth. [Dread realization] Oh no. This world is round, right? I assumed those things in the sky were rings around the planet but they could very well be anything.

Jess: Hey, Proto. How much do you know about this world?

Proto: Hm? What do you mean?

Jess: Like, lore-wise, I mean. I didn't look anything up before I got the game.

Proto: Oh, that. I'm afraid I don't know too much. It's big and it's magical and it's full of a lot of crazy stuff.

Jess: It's called 'Mardéon', right?

Proto: Yep. I think there's two continents. I've seen a map of the one we're on. My home nation, Xan Kanesh, is on the eastern edge. We're sort of west and south now. I did a lot of traveling that first day to get all the way over here. You get a nice bit of EXP for exploring new areas.

Jesse: Hm. Noted.

Jess: You seemed surprised when the guard stopped you. Didn't they do the same thing the last time you came through?

Proto: They did. But I'm friendly enough with Han Tol that I thought they wouldn't do it again.

Jess: And you weren't before?

Proto: Nope. I had a tough time getting in then.

Jess: So that's why you were out here all this time doing low-level quests, right?

Proto: Bingo! I'm trying to raise my reputation with as many of the major factions as I can. Draken are more or less neutral with everyone as far as alignment is concerned, so aside from the Frost Draken, who will probably hate me forever because I'm Flame, I should be able to raise it high enough with everyone else that I can run around freely without fear of being

attacked. So far I've got my own people and Han Tol under my belt. I plan on making Terland next, and then maybe Binésa after that, since they'll be right next door.

Jesse: Binésa... No way in hell they'd ever like me.

Jess: I probably should have looked into this more when I made my character.

Jesse: Oh wait. Right. I barely had anything to do with making my character.

Proto: What alignment did you choose?

Jess: Uh... Good?

Jesse: That's how the old 2000s CRPGs did it, right? They just took Good, Neutral, and Evil straight out of D&D's playbook, right?

Proto: There's no 'Good'. It's either Order, Balance, or Chaos.

Jesse: Ooh, fancy, are we?

Jess: Order then probably. I think they made me choose that.

Proto: Ah, yeah, that makes sense for a high elf priest. Watch out in ogre and kobold territory then, and I wouldn't even be caught dead in the dark elf forests.

[A pause.]

Jesse: Hold up...

Jess: Forests? I thought dark elves lived in the desert.

Proto: The Binésans do. The Sonésans live in a dark forest to the... oh, lemme think, northeast? Yeah, northeast. It's sort of wedged in between my draken lands and where the naku are, if I'm remembering that map correctly. I actually thought about exploring them instead of heading south to Terland and then coming here, but I took one look inside and nope'd right back out. Too spooky for me.

Jesse: So there are two factions of dark elves? Interesting. I've only heard Binésa this and Binésa that. Although I hadn't heard anything of ogres or kobolds either until Proto

just mentioned them. I guess these other ones just mind their own business and leave us alone. Probably too busy fending off horrible, evil forest monsters.

Proto: Anyway! I'll see if any of the others are on and want to come say hi. There's a hunter and a minstrel who I think might be real life friends. Ah, but they're both humans, so I'm pretty sure they're still in Terland. The other's in town, so she might come. Oh, she's a hoot, too--you'll love her!

[A pause.]

Proto: [Like he's talking on the phone] Hey! Anyone on? I've found a fifth member!

[Pause.]

Proto: Yeah, she's really good. We took down a chimera together!

[Pause.]

Proto: I know, right? Priests are awesome!

[Pause.]

Proto: Heh heh, yep! We got ourselves a healer! Anyway, we're riding the elevator up to Soi Fen now. I figured I'd see if anyone was-- Oh, you're here? Awesome!

[Pause.]

Proto: Okay! We'll see you there!

Jess: Was that the 'hoot'?

Proto: Yep! She says she'll meet us at the Guild Enclave. Her--

[A sudden boom as the lift stops abruptly. The metal door opens.]

Jess: Whoa, we're already there?

Proto: And just about six minutes too!

Jess: You already knew, didn't you?

Proto: Nope! Lucky guess!

[Jesse and Proto walk out onto a stone pathway. A gentle melody, played on a Chinese pipa.]

Jesse: Oh yeah. Now this feels like a city. [Pause.] Doesn't smell like a city though. Or maybe that's just because the Industrial Revolution hasn't hit Mardéon yet.

Jess: So which way do we go? Mossy stone gate to the left or avenue of paper lanterns to the right?

Proto: Uh...

Jess: Have you been there? Or did you make the guild somewhere else?

Proto: I made it in Maethun Kra, but I've been to this one. I'm just trying to remember... Ah! This way!

Jesse: Guard towers it is!

[Scene fades out, then back in to a different part of the city.]

Proto: [In a quiet laugh] I dunno how they expected anyone to find the place.

Jess: The sign says 'Guild Enclave'.

Jesse: Ah, but again my mind is telling me that it is written in High Elvish, so of course Proto can't read it.

Proto: Okay... I dunno how they expected anyone who isn't a high elf to find the place.
[Their footsteps shift from the stone road of outside to the echoing tile of inside. Their voices echo a little as well.]

Jess: What's it sound like anyway? High Elvish?

Proto: I dunno.

Jess: Like Chinese?

Proto: No, not really. Well, maybe? I took Mandarin in college, and still remember a decent amount.

[A pause as they continue walking through the hall.]

Jess: Do you have a dragon-y language?

Proto: I do.

Jess: Can I hear it?

Proto: Maybe another time. Here, this door.

[A door opens and the two walk through, to a carpeted room wherein there is a steady magical hum.]

Jess: Wow, this is the strangest hookah lounge I've ever seen. [Pause.] What? Don't give me that look. Ooh, what's this light do?

Proto: This... is how you make a voicelink. I just reach my hand in here, grab some of the light...

Jesse: 'Grab some of the light'? You can't grab li-- Oh wow, he just did. Okay.

Proto: ...and here you are. Here. Take it. [Pause.] It's okay, it won't hurt.

Jesse: I know it won't hurt, you big lizard. It's just... you have the glyph. You have what I'm searching for, right there on your palm. [Pause.] Plus, I really don't want to have to touch you. I'll have to make it quick.

[He snatches it, and a magical chime plays. The magical humming fades.]

Notifications: You have been invited into a guild. If you accept the invitation, lock eyes with the one who gave it to you, and give them a thumbs-up. If you refuse, give him a thumbs-down.

Jesse: Hah. That's cute. What was that old movie from the 2000s with the gladiators? Where the villain did this? I'm gonna pretend I'm him.

[A dramatic rising stinger and a drumroll plays, followed by a cheerful fanfare. Immediately after, the door to the room swings open as a figure enters, then slams the door shut behind them.]

Proto: Sal! Perfect timing! She just joined!

Jesse: 'Sal'...? I know that name. Or no... I know it as...

Jess & Sal: YOU!

Sal: This is our new guild member!?

Proto: Y-Yes? What? What's wrong?

[Sal stomps across the room, her armor clinking with every movement.]

Sal: She's a racist little runt who abandons her party, that's what's wrong!

Jess: Oh, and someone who tries to PK her teammate is so much better, right?

Sal: I did no such thing!

Jess: You did too! And I am not racist!

Proto: [Cowering] D-Did I do wrong?

Jess & Sal: YES!

Proto: Okay, okay, okay! Look, calm down! Look! So you two had some hiccups in the past... But that's the past! Okay? C'mon, if we're gonna be a team, we have to be able to work together, right?

Jess: I tried working together with her. I didn't turn out.

Sal: Yeah, it was a little too *tall* of an order for her.

Jess: THAT'S IT! I'm gonna--

[The two draw their weapons.]

Proto: Stop! Put away your weapons!

[A sword is sheathed.]

Sal: Tch. Not like the porcupine could hurt me anyway.

Jess: You want to find out?

Sal: What? Here? In a sanctuary? Yes, do try--I'd love to watch.

Jess: In *my* sanctuary, yeah. Are you a high elf?

Proto: Enough! You two are not going to fight each other!

Sal: She--!

Proto: No! I forbid it! No fighting among guild members!

Sal: Fine! But you can't forbid me logging off.

[Sal logs off immediately.]

[Proto grumbles something incoherent under his breath, then calms down.]

Proto: I'll talk with her tomorrow. [Pause.] And with you. Try to get along. Please?

[Proto logs off as well.]

Jess: Oh, okay! Yeah! Log off before I can say anything back! [Long sigh.] I'm not promising anything, Proto. I'll stay in your guild, but... I can't promise anything.

Credits, read by Sena Bryer: This was episode 8 of Dreambound. Dreambound is written, directed, produced, and edited by Sena Bryer. The role of Jesse was played by Brandon Acosta and Daisy Guevara. The role of Proto was played by Kyle Nishimura. The role of Sal was played by Ta'Neal Chandler. The guardsman at the gate was played by Brandon Nguyen. The adventurers were played by Ta'Neal Chandler and Jazzy Oliver. The notifications voice was played by Sena Bryer.

Dreambound's main theme is "Blue Light", by Pinofas. Other music used in this episode was by Alexander Nakarada, Li Shaoqing, and Lilo Sound. Proper attribution can be found in the show notes and on our website at www.senabryer.com/dreambound.

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Now, you know it's coming, but I'm gonna say it anyway. Stay safe everyone, and we'll see you in the game.