

Previously, on Quest Friends ...

[Opening theme, "Friends" by Miracle of Sound, begins.]

Kyle (as Shauna)

Yeah, so this is the Heart of Charmonde! This powers everything and we've been using it to make the most amazing things, like, uh—

Kyle

—a purplish reddish substance that looks almost like a swarm of locusts.

Tom

So, Xoc is breathing heavily, ah, and his first instinct is to reach out with his mind to the machines nearby, and particularly, looking for Misha.

Tom (As Xoc)

I'm sorry [whines] It's all my fault, I'm sorry. I don't know where the others are, and I—

Hallie (as Hopper)

We're going to find the others, I'm sure they're okay, we're both okay, everyone will be okay.

Kyle

You realize Misha, you don't remember anything.

Ari

It happened again, no!

[Opening theme intensifies.]

Kyle

Reality is malleable. What we think of as real is only what can be found within what our words and our senses tell us. And considering how both perception and language ebb and flow like water on a stormy day, reality rarely persists in one state longer than a few moments. That being said, there are some aspects to reality that maintain relatively firm stability. For example, what counts as a floor or a wall. And all of this philosophic waxing—

[Sounds of alarms pick up.]

—is just a fancy way of saying that Xoc and Hop, you're really fucking surprised when gravity seems to shift from pointing down to pointing towards the wall. And you, Jesse, Joe, Don, an unconscious Vera and Hop's boots are all thrown against it. As you hit the wall, the lights in the fluorescent prison kind of wrap around it like they did when we are you were trying to escape earlier, Hop.

[Electric crackling ensues.]

The lights in the fluorescent prison are crackling and beating against the wall like a prisoner stuck behind glass. It's not just waiting for you to move anymore; it's actively reaching around your clothing, crawling higher and higher while wailing with electric energy.

Hallie

That's not good. Okay, so if, like, we just try to move out of it what happens? Like, Hop's just—

Kyle

Whatever's connected against the wall I don't really care if it's like you landed on your feet or you landed on your back whatever it is is firmly connected and it doesn't look like slipping out of your clothes is going to fix it this time.

Hallie

Awwh, boo! That was my next, uh, that was what I was going to do.

Tom

Well, Xoc will do what I had sorta been trying to do at the end of last session, and reach out to, uh...
[Uncertainly.] Shanna again—

Kyle

Shauna.

Tom

Oops.

Kyle

[Laughter.]

Tom

[Hesitantly] Shauna, yes, the name I said the first time.

Kyle

I can't edit around everything, Tom.

Tom and Emily

[Laughter.]

Tom

Um, I reach out and say,

Tom (as Xoc)

Shauna, can you please hurry back? We seem to all be stuck—on the walls—of this room.

Kyle

As you come in, you could have faintly heard her saying to herself,

Kyle (as Shauna)

Oh no, oh no, oh no, oh no, oh no. Uh, yes! Yes, of course, I can certainly help with that!

Kyle

Uh, and within moments you see her plop down, now to what's essentially the ceiling above you, and she slams her hand against the wall like she did earlier to deactivate the floor. And after a couple of harrowing moments, where the light seems to get stronger and stronger, the lights on the ceiling and the floor and the walls all turn off and you are all still stuck against the wall call cuz that's where--it's not gravity but essentially work what it feels like gravity--is pushing you but you're no longer stuck there, so that's, that's a bonus!

Tom

Hmm

Hallie

Okay, that's a plus. Can I put my shoes back on?

Kyle

You absolutely can put your shoes back on.

Hallie

Well, Imma put my shoes back on.

Kyle

Roll me a 1d6.

Hallie

One d6—two!

Kyle

Two?

Hallie

[Apprehensively drawing out the word.] Twoooo.

Kyle

Yeah, you accidentally—because there are so many people against the wall, you accidentally step on Xoc's wrist while trying to put on your shoes.

Hallie

[Laughter.]

Tom (as Xoc)

[Wailing in pain.]

Hallie (as Hopper)

Sorry! Sorry! Sorry! I'm just--I'm just trying to get—my shoes.

Tom (as Xoc)

Owww!

Hallie (as Hopper)

Sorry!

Tom

Am I wearing my robes now? Am I wearing any clothes at all now? I can't remember.

Hallie

You're wearing Misha's robes.

Tom

I'm wearing Misha's clothes! That's right.

Kyle

Yeah, you slipped into Misha's clothes last session.

Emily

[Gleefully.] So, I hear you got into Misha's pants! *[Laughter.]*

Ari

They were probably a little bit big for you.

Kyle

Ohhh! Ohh ho ho. *[Pained laughter.]*

Hallie, Emily, and Kyle

[Laughter.]

Ari

I didn't mean to say it like that, I just meant to say that they're really tall!

Kyle

[Laughs harder.] [Faintly.] Oh no!

Ari

[Faint, unintelligible protests.]

Kyle

Let it be known, dear listener, that Tom is very upset right now—

Hallie and Emily

[Laughter.]

Tom

I'm not upset—I just don't have a comeback.

Ari

I didn't mean to say it that way! I just meant that--that they're really tall, and Xoc is not.

All

[Laughter.]

Kyle

Anyways, yes, you're wearing Misha's clothing, that's the answer to your question.

Tom

Ok, Xoc takes the ANNEX, and then asks Shauna,

Tom (as Xoc)

So, I've only seen part of this place; where do we go to find our friends and leave?

[05:07]

Kyle (as Shauna)

Oh no, no, no! Don't—don't touch that, here, I'll uh—

Kyle

And she starts climbing down and she starts reaching towards ANNEX, and she's like—

Kyle (as Shauna)

Here, I'll, uh, I'll handle that, you don't want—

Tom

No.

Tom (as Xoc)

And Xoc will pocket it as best he can, in Misha's pocket.

Kyle (as Shauna)

Okay, uh—you're guests here, and that's a very important thing to—to help save, you know, lots of people. So, if I could just, uh, have that—

Tom

Xoc continues just staring blankly.

Tom (as Xoc)

We need to leave this place now, could tell us where we go, to leave?

Kyle (as Shauna)

Uhhh, okat, okat—well, what does Vera think, she's usually better at thinking in these scenarios than I am?

Hallie (as Hopper)

Vera's a little indisposed, right now.

Tom (as Xoc)

Vera asked us to pick it up, right before she fell asleep.

Hallie (as Hopper)

That is a true thing.

Ari

[Snickers faintly.] She fell asleep!

Kyle

Shauna's going to look at you, and she's going to get visibly nervous. She's going to start backing up, and she's going to be like,

Kyle (as Shauna)

Okay, uh, I think--I understand—now—

Tom

And Xoc says this with his machine connection, his telepathic connection,

Tom (as Xoc)

These organics are really so strange, I don't really get their weird functions. The reason my friends and I came here, is because we had an important meeting with Vera, and we need to get a hold of the ANNEX.

Tom

And Xoc will like, start moving towards, what used to be the door, I guess? I guess it's now like, a hole in the wall.

Kyle

Give me, give me a roll, for—

Tom

Yeah!

Kyle

—pleasant social interaction.

Hallie

Oh no.

Tom

Ahh, but--but with a machine! *With a machine.* Which I'm--I'm--I'm trained in that, I think. Let's—let's take a look.

Kyle

[Voice muffled, tone gleeful.] Uh, yeah, but you're going to take a couple penalties. Because you're acting sketchy as fuuuuuuck.

Tom

Mhm, yeah, ok. Admittedly, difficult—difficult. I could've done better, mm, it's--it's fine. I donnnn—

[Extended groan.] Let's spend—let'sssssssss—aghhh *[Extended, increasingly distressed groaning.]*—what are my cyphers? Do you still want me to roll for my lie?

Kyle

Uh, if you want to lie, then yes.

Tom

I kind of just want to use the beanie.

Kyle

You want to use...*the beanie*...

Tom

It has two long ropes that tie things together. Maybe just machines. Hard to tell.

Hallie

[*Laughter.*] I forgot about the Beanie.

Emily

Are you doing to *strangle Shauna*?

Tom

But, she's a robit, how would you strangle her? No, I just wanted to like—

Kyle

You remember what it was trying to do to that rock, right? I was trying to wrap up that whole rock as hard as it could. Well, not the rock, the piece of machinery—it was trying to tangle itself around that piece of machinery, really fucking hard.

Tom

Oh, 'cause like I didn't write that down, so all I remembered was "Ties things up." [*Long-suffering sigh.*] Ok, let's roll to lie! How—what can I leverage any skills in this situation? I've got—

Hallie

Uh, I have--

Kyle

No wait one second! Hallie might want to take over a sentient creature's being.

Hallie

Yeah, I have machine control implant, like on a moral scale—

Emily and Kyle

[*Laughter.*]

Tom

We should probably resolve the--the roll, because I already said things.

Kyle

Yeah, that's fair, let's resolve the roll quickly.

Tom

Okay, okay, “communicating with automatons,” I’m trained in that. So one step easier from that, one step harder from all INT rolls being fucked. Can I spend two levels of effort, so it’ll be two steps easier in total, based on my inabilities and skills.

Kyle

Uhh, no, it’ll be minus one because you acted sketchy as shit.

Tom

Okay.

Kyle

So it’ll be plus one total.

Tom

That’s fine. *[Dice rolls.]* A 17.

Kyle

Uh, she is going to look at you, and look back at Vera, and look at you.

Kyle (as Shauna)

I, uh—I need to check something.

Ari

Oh no.

Kyle

—and like that she is going to extend one of her arms, grab the door, and scurry out of the room.

Tom (as Xoc)

We should leave this room quickly.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Agreed.

Tom (as Xoc)

Come on, everybody!

Hallie

Uh, should we do anything with Vera?

Kyle (as Jesse)

Well, we can’t just leave her here!

Hallie (as Hopper)

Hmm, I guess we can’t.

Tom

Uh--

Hallie

Oh, but how--

Hallie and Tom

[Various distressed contemplative noises.]

Tom

I still have the beanie.

Kyle (as Jesse)

Oh, what does--what does that do? Would it like, like, hold on to her, kind of like, like a little kind of person holder? That we can use to carry her with?

Hallie (as Hopper)

[Awkwardly.] It might be a li--a--a *little* bit too intense for that.

Tom (as Xoc)

Will Vera stay knocked out down here the whole time we'll be gone?

Kyle (as Jesse)

I don't know! We can't just leave her down here; this whole thing is falling apart!

Tom (as Xoc)

It's falling apart?!?

Kyle

Yeah, you hear a very harsh rumbling.

[Deep rumbling noises and painful screaming play.]

And you hear very harsh screeching, as if this thing's being pushed to its limits.

Tom (as Xoc)

Oh, huh, well that changes things.

Hallie

An explorer's pack doesn't have like, rope in it, does it?

Tom

It does.

Hallie

It does? Can--can we I just take rope, and then like, bind her? And then we can just drag her along with us?

Kyle

Okay! Who's going to carry her?

Hallie

How heavy is she?

Kyle

Uh, I mean, she's a pretty thin woman.

Hallie

Okay.

Kyle

She's very tall though, so like, *[Squinty confused sounds.]* let's do...170? Let's make her 170.

Tom

I think that might be heavier than me, even.

Hallie

That, I think is heavier than Hopper is. Uh, I'll give it a go, can I try? Well, there are like, four people down here—can I like signal to Jesse and ask them to help me? Like if one of us takes her shoulders and one of us takes her feet?

[10:10]

Kyle

Jesse will be a little bit reluctant and say,

Kyle (as Jesse)

Well, I don't see how this is necessary, but okay!

Hallie (as Hopper)

We're just trying to be careful, Jesse.

Tom (as Xoc)

Xoc will try to pull Don out of the room as well.

Kyle

Like a pouty child, he will slowly follow you wherever you go.

Tom

Oh, he's not unconscious? For some reason I thought he was.

Kyle

No, he was just—he was just sittin' against the wall being about a mopey mope, being like, "Oh, welp, guess it's time to die."

Hallie

[Laughter.]

Tom (as Xoc)

Are you going to get up and walk, Don?

Kyle (as Don)

Fine, I hate all of you, though. I hope you know this.

Tom (as Xoc)

Okay.

Kyle (as Don)

Every single one!

Tom (as Xoc)

Ohhh, okay.

Kyle (as Don)

Especially her!

Tom (as Xoc)

Ohhh--kay.

Kyle (as Don)

But especially you.

Tom (as Xoc)

Ohhh--okay.

Hallie (as Hopper)

[Laughter.] Thaaat's fair.

Tom

I guess we head off down the hallway in the direction Vera came from?

Kyle

Alright, so you climb onto the walls of the main hallway. Most of the experiments have been thrown from their containers, and are now engaging in a colorful assortment of generally deadly reactions. Shauna is decisively scurrying from experiment to experiment, pulling various components together into a crude numenera device. And kind of just being super frazzled, like you can even see little sparks coming out, uh, and Jesse turns over to you and says—

Kyle (as Jesse)

Should we—help—her?

Tom (as Xoc)

Shauna, you know this place is collapsing, right? You'll be destroyed if you stay here.

Tom

And this will be telepathic again.

Kyle (as Shauna)

Stop going into my head! Yes, I know that, what do you think—

Kyle

She points to the--the gun.

Kyle (as Shauna)

—What do you think I'm doing? I got to go down and--and stop it before the entire energy is going down. This thing can produce all the energy it wants, but it can't handle this much! I got to go, go turn it off.

Tom (as Xoc)

Is it possible for you to do that?

Kyle (as Shauna)

Well, I mean this is, this is everything, so I gotta try!

Tom (as Xoc)

What will happen if it's destroyed?

Kyle (as Shauna)

It's not—it's not gonna be—it's not gonna be destroyed.

Tom (as Xoc)

But what *would* happen?

Kyle (as Shauna)

It's not gonna be—it's not gonna be destroyed!

Kyle

She's holding up a finger as she walks away, as she starts running down the hallways.

Kyle (as Shauna)

It's not going to be destroyed! That's not going to happen!

Tom

Xoc just sort of looks back at Hop and says,

Tom (as Xoc)

I don't know if we can fix this.

Hallie (as Hopper)

I think you're right. I don't know what we would do if we stayed. I think we need to get out.

Tom

I want to try to contact Misha again. Does it work?

Kyle

It...does not. In fact, it seems that since you were thrown against the walls, whatever is blocking out the datasphere has gotten stronger.

Tom

[Painful, uneasy wailing.]

Ari

[Nervous laughter.]

Tom (as Xoc)

Ahhhh...Hopper Scotch, h-how do we get out of here and find everyone else? I don't know where to go!

Ari

Poor Hopper! *[Laughter.]*

Hallie (as Hopper)

[Dumbfoundedly.] Uhhh—uhhhhh...

Ari

[Laughs harder.]

Tom (as Xoc)

Wait! Jesse knows! And...Joe—

Hallie

Yeah, Joe is still with us, right?

Kyle (as Jesse)

Yeah, yeah! I know the way out! We gotta go this way!

Kyle

And Joe's just going to give a thumbs up, and then uses his finger to point in the direction Jesse is already running. Now, I'm assuming Jesse has Vera's legs, so now they are running with Vera's legs.

Hallie

Hopper has the head, so he's just running to, to like keep up.

[Synthy, beat-heavy chase music plays.]

Kyle

You almost drop her for a second as Jesse just starts running. You all run through the hallways, and you climb through the doorway that Xoc used to originally enter this hallway in the first place. Now, Xoc, when you first entered, the top of this tower seemed unreachably high, but with your new shift in perspective, it seems like it's a reasonable horizontal walk away. Although it is admittedly hard to tell as you're immediately pelted by a whirlwind of gifts and garbage, swirling down from the pit in the ceiling, into the depths of Charmonde's heart.

Kyle (as Mr. Mako)

Are those your friends?

[Synth music intensifies.]

Kyle

Mr. Mako's muffled voice calls down to Misha and Everett, who are being dragged at the wrist by Elee. Now, when you first overloaded the power to the heart of Charmonde, things seemed relatively simple.

Tom

Oh nooo!

Kyle

Sure, you WERE now running on the walls, but that made your way up to the exit easier! Within moments, however, the heart needed fuel to maintain its high movement, and Charmonde's garbage pit opened up, letting loose a torrent of random objects. With no other clear option than but follow Mako, as he sprinted up the walls, you've been running for several seconds now, before he calls out to you and points out a cluster of individuals a few dozen feet in front of you.

[Music crescendos and stops abruptly.]

Kyle

Elee, you see Jesse, a really buff sexy version of Hop Scotch's body--

Hallie

[Laughter.]

Kyle

--But with a lizard head, an unconscious Vera, who is just kind of being dragged by Jesse and Hop, and then you see a small robot with kind of like an eggshell hat rushing downwards, further into the heart of the Charmonde. So, rushing down from the direction you came. Misha, you see--Misha, you see two figures, and when you see them, they immediately feel recognizable to you somehow? And instinctually, you notice yourself pulling up your scan ability to take a little bit of a scan of them.

[15:01]

The first one you see, is you see this figure with this wide-brimmed duster hat, and when you try to pull it up, it pulls up the name “Simon,” but then everything gets kind of fuzzy for a second and glitches. And this name Simon just starts repeating over and over again until your entire vision is just “Simon Simon Simon Simon Simon Simon Simon”

Ari

[Laughter.] All right.

Kyle

At least like five dozen Simon's. There is one spot where you don't see that name, and that's where you see this other figure, wearing a long brown coat, a pretty lean, pretty tall figure, butbut not quite as tall as you. When you look up this figure, the name Misha Jarvis? with a question mark shows up.

Hallie and Ari

[Laughter.]

Kyle

What do y'all do?

Emily

I want to yell up to them,

Emily (as Elee)

Didya miss us??

Hallie

Ayyyyy!

Tom

Ohhh!

Hallie

Hopper will go,

Hallie (as Hopper)

Ayyyyy!

Tom (as Xoc)

Elee! Misha Jarvis! You're alive!

Emily (as Elee)

Yeah, we're alive!

Hallie (as Hopper)

Are you guys okay?

Ari

Mi-misha is just going to slowly approach both of them, slowly, and then—they are going to look at Hop, and say,

Ari (as Misha)

Salutations, Simon Simon Simon. My name is—

Ari

—and then they are going to introduce themselves. Then, they are going to look at Xoc, really confusedly, and just not say--and just say like

Ari (as Misha)

Salutations—Sss, mmm—

Ari

—and then is just going to like, kind of be overwhelmed, but not say anything, just look at Xoc, really confusedly for a second. And then, divert their gaze.

Tom

Xoc is horrified, and tries to telepathically connect.

Tom (as Xoc)

Are you alright? Are you fine?

Ari

Misha is going to be startled, by suddenly hearing Xoc, and be like,

Ari (as Misha)

Are--are you my thoughts? How are you—

Tom (as Xoc)

Do you remember anyone named Xoc??

Ari

Misha is going to just stare blankly at him.

Tom

[Sad, painful groaning.]

Kyle

As this happens, you're going to hear--

[Horrible, deep scraping sounds.]

--The scraping and rumbling is going to happen again. And far below, you can hear Shauna go—

Kyle (as Shauna)

Oh no, oh no, oh no, oh no! I'm coming!

Kyle

And Jesse is going to be like—

Kyle (as Jesse)

Uhh, so, we should go?

Kyle (as Mako)

Yes, Jesse! I absolutely agree! We should get out of here, before the whole thing falls to the ground. Also, hi, Jesse! It's a pleasure to see you again!

Kyle (as Jesse)

Hey, Mr. Mako!

Hallie

[Laughter.] Ok, Hop is just going to nod,

Hallie (as Hopper)

There's a lot going on, um, ok, we should figure everything out after we run outta here.

Tom

So Xoc staggers back a couple of steps after his little talk with Misha, and stares blankly into space for a second, and then says—

Tom (as Xoc)

I—I don't think I can leave Shauna behind. We ruined everything again, didn't we?

Kyle

Uh, Mr. Mako is going to look to you, as this thing is shaking and garbage is falling down from the sky.

Kyle (as Mako)

I don't know what you're talking about, Xoc! It looks like things are going pretty smoothly to me!

Hallie

[Laughter.]

Hallie (as Hopper)

I would disagree with that!

Tom (as Xoc)

Are you Mr. Mako? Do you know how to fix this thing?

Kyle (as Mako)

Well, I certainly hope I would, I'm the one who broke it!

Tom (as Xoc)

Can it be fixed, though?

Hallie (as Hopper)

Look Mr. Mako, things are falling down, what do you mean you broke it? Can--can you fix it?

Kyle

He's going to sit there, and he's going to look for a moment,

Kyle (as Mako)

Hopper Scotch?

Hallie (as Hopper)

Hopper Scotch.

Kyle (as Mako)

Ah, Jesse's mentioned you. Well, Hopper Scotch, you should know better than anyone, that when you've got an enemy with a super powerful item, sometimes you just gotta let the whole thing fall apart.

Hallie

[Incredulous wheezing.] There's a range of emotions going across Hopper's face. He'll look stunned, and then really, really sad, and then he's going to turn to Xoc, and be like—

Hallie (as Hopper)

I don't think we can leave Shauna behind either. Uh, Elee, would you take the other half of Vera, that I am holding?

[Synthy chase music starts up again.]

Emily

I just want to take—the whole of Vera—from both you and Jesse, and just like, sling her over my shoulder—

Hallie

You could probably lift the whole of Vera!

Emily

—not necessarily being super gentle.

Tom (as Xoc)

We have to go back down there and get Shauna out, then. If anyone else needs to get out first, that's fine, but I'm going back down there.

Hallie (as Hopper)

I'm going with you.

Emily (as Elee)

Mako, you—you broke it, maybe *you* should get the robot.

Tom (as Xoc)

I think Mr. Mako should probably go back to the surface. If we don't make it out, somebody has to be able to fix what we've let loose.

Kyle (as Mako)

Whoa whoa whoa, I appreciate your gumption, sir, but no man, woman, child, non-binary individual, non-human individual, or generally sentient life left behind.

Tom

And Xoc will just have sort of set off down, because we've already wasted a lot of time while the place falls apart.

Hallie

Yeah, I'm going to follow. I'll look concerned, back at Misha and Elee, and then just say like—

Hallie (as Hopper)

Get everyone else out.

Hallie

Wait! Can I, can I just really quickly, be like,

Hallie (as Hopper)

Don, I'm sorry we got ya mixed up with all this. You can go find a better boss. Go have a job that isn't terrible, if you just take everyone else outta here.

Kyle

He's going to look really sad and confused, and conflicted as to why you're being so nice. And he's going to turn over to you, Hop, and he's going to say:

Kyle (as Don)

Eh, well excuse me son, I have--I have a quick question. Did that uh, domestic terrorist, recognize you by name?

[20:02]

Hallie (as Hopper)

Uh? I guess so? More by reputation, really, than name.

Kyle (as Don)

Well in that case, I uh, this is--this the only gig I have—if I do this, will you, uh, write me a—a letter of recommendation?

Hallie and Tom

[Laughter.]

Hallie (as Hopper)

Yes, I will write you a letter of—I, Hopper Scotch, *pointed glance at Joe* will write you a letter of recommendation.

Kyle (as Don)

Well then, I suppose I will, sir.

Kyle

He's going to give you a little salute.

Hallie

Yay!!

Kyle

And he's going to trot on upwards with Jesse, Joe, and Vera. What is everyone doing?

Emily

Okay, did I set down Vera?

Kyle

Oh, you have Vera, sorry.

Emily

I can give him Vera—

Kyle

He's going to trot up with Jesse and Joe, what is everyone else going to do?

Emily

I'll give him Vera, actually. I'm just gonna, like, kinda dump her, on Don instead, and be like:

Emily (as Elee)

Look, I dunno if the queen's going to hear it, but I mean, Vera was the bad guy. Maybe if you take her in, you'll get a promotion?

Kyle (as Don)

Well, I guess some things change, but usually they stay the same.

Kyle

And with that, holding this woman that is too much for him to carry--

Hallie

[Laughter.]

Kyle

--He starts trotting upwards with Jesse and Joe, who you see, start to help him out. What is everyone else doing?

Tom

So while that banter was happening, Xoc just went down, with one last telepathic message to Misha saying:

[Contemplative music plays.]

Tom (as Xoc)

It's okay, Misha Jarvis, I'm not going to die here. I'm gonna come back for you.

Ari

M-Misha is going to not like, just stare without--

Ari (as Misha)

What is, "die?"

Tom (as Xoc)

It--it's when you don't come back, but I am going to come back.

Ari (as Misha)

I would certainly like to see you again—

Tom and Hallie

Awww.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Xoc, no! You can't do this by yourself!

Kyle

Misha and Elee, what are you going to do?

Emily

I want to immediately like, well actually, first, I wanna turn to Misha and say:

Emily (as Elee)

You don't remember us. You can leave, you can follow them, but—I gotta go, so—

Ari (as Misha)

But you—you said that I shouldn't just follow individuals, previously. My apologies, I'm not still quite certain of what actions are required of me. You're all the only individuals I have known, you're all the humans I have known, and I would rather be with someone that I have known, than something I have not known.

Emily (as Elee)

Then, uh—let's go.

Tom

[Pained wailing.]

What the fuck happened last session?!?

Hallie and Kyle

[Laughter.]

Tom

What the fuck is going on?

Kyle

Alright, you all run down, but as you do, you hear Everett, who hasn't moved or been addressed at all—

Emily

Wait, I thought Everett was going with them!

Hallie

I didn't know Everett was there! *[Laughter.]* There's so many people!

Kyle

You hear Everett, who hasn't said anything or been addressed, at all, just kind of like, look around, really confused, and say:

Kyle (as Everett)

But where am I supposed to go?!?

Tom

[Laughter.]

Kyle

And then you hear a voice from high up say,

Kyle (as Jesse)

Up here, honey!

Kyle

And Everett starts running up to meet everyone else.

Ari

Misha is going to be like,

Ari (as Misha)

Alright, am I going to see An Individual again? Is he off...to die?

Hallie (as Hopper)

Nope, that's what we're off to, it's fine. Everything's fine.

Ari

[Laughter.]

[Dramatic, synth rock music plays.]

[23:02]

Kyle

Hi, welcome to the announcement break for episode fourteeeeeeen? *[Draws out the word in confusion.]* Yeah, for episode fourteen. My name is Kyle, and we're going to have a subdued announcement break because it's 11:19 p.m., and I'm very tired. Our intro and outro song are Friends and Hitoshio, both by Miracle of Sound. Check out Miracle of Sound; he's pretty cool. This week, your call to action is pretty simple: we have one episode left in the Clockwork City arc, so just finish out the arc with us next week. That's right, because this episode was initially intended to be a one--parter that I had to split in two, and because it was a week late, I've decided to release episode 15, the finale to the Clockwork City arc, next week. The date specifically is Monday, May 14th, I will see you, then.

[25:00]

[ominous music]

Kyle

Alright, so you all run down, and you are back, eventually, at the bottom of the tower. It is burning with this bright blue light, you can feel the heat emanating as the garbage is falling down and falling into this pool, and basically being instantly vaporized, sending jets of hot light upwards. And in the center of this area, you see a small platform in the center that is been kind of like charred as if it's been shot with too much energy. And in the middle of it, you see Shauna holding on tight and trying to patch everything together.

Tom

So Xoc is going to run up and start slowly approaching and say:

Tom (as Xoc)

Shauna, please, you have to come with me!

Tom

And this is out loud, not telepathic, since apparently, she didn't like that and I didn't know. Oops.

Kyle (as Shauna)

Hey, get--get off of there!

Tom (as Xoc)

Shauna, please, you can't fix it, it--it won't be fixed. You have to know that.

Kyle (as Shauna)

Don't know until you fail!

Tom (as Xoc)

I don't want you to fail. Please come back with me. You'll need--you'll need time to--to build something new for the city. It's better in the long run if you're around to conduct long-term repairs, than foolishly wasting your life here.

Kyle (as Shauna)

Okay, okay, I've spent one thousand years working on this, and the second somebody gives me a chance, you—*things*—walk in, feel like you can just destroy it, saying it's okay. *Steal* my research, and just—and just, walk away? No, I'm going—I'm going to *fix it*, and I'm going to stay here until it is fixed.

Tom

Uh, h-how powerful of a thing can I do for two experience, Kyle?

Kyle

A two experience could be used to basically have an insta-roll success.

Tom

Okay.

Tom (as Xoc)

Shauna, what did you want to do for this city, originally?

[Soft piano music plays.]

Kyle (as Shauna)

Eh, eh, you don't just make this, Xoc, you don't run across these things. You don't—this is--this is a once in, in, in a ten--million--a thousand lifetimes opportunity. We can use this to make things like *that*—

Kyle

And she points towards the pocket where you have ANNEX.

Kyle (as Shauna)

T--t--to change the world, to make things better for everybody, I have spent so long trying to get this to run. I'm not--gonna let--you stop me.

Tom (as Xoc)

But it isn't better. This is a weapon. I helped Vera make a weapon. I finished the formula that Mr. Mako had been working on, and Vera is a member of the Jagged Dream. She wants to bring an unending horror to all peoples of the Ninth World. That's why we had to take it away, and if this is allowed to continue, Vera and people like her can use this machine to hurt people. We can find a better way, a better way to do this. This might be a one in a thousand lifetime chance, but I've seen just a fraction of the things that are out there, across this place, and there are *billions* of lifetimes' worth of treasures out there. It's—it's not as impossible as you think.

[Piano melody continues, then slowly fades.]

Kyle

Are you going to use the experience on that speech?

Tom

I would like to, yes.

Kyle

She's going to lift up her eggshell helmet, and she's going to motion towards the, uh, pocket where you have ANNEX, which is kind of like, motioning for you to give it to her.

Kyle (as Shauna)

Please.

Tom

[Sighs warily.] Xoc will hand her the ANNEX?

Kyle

She's going to grab ANNEX, and she's gonna say,

Kyle (as Shauna)

Listen, I'm really sorry for this.

Tom

Oh, this is where I die! This is how I die—oops.

Kyle

And she's going to reach up, and she's going to very painfully pluck out one of your hairs. And she's going to kinda jimmy her hand, to create a tiny little hole in where ANNEX is, and she's going to stick the hair inside—and you just hear this horrible, screeching sound—*[Horrible, wheezing screech.]*—as the hair, like, curls up, and is just kind of like, seems to be eating itself from the inside out. And I'm going to justify that by saying, bacteria are everywhere; there were probably some on your hair. And she pulls it out, and

there's nothing left, except for the parts that she was holding in her fingers. And she takes the ANNEX, and she gives it back to you, and she says:

Kyle (as Shauna)

Okay, let's go.

Tom (as Xoc)

Okay, hold on tight.

Tom

Now I would like to farstep the two of us, back to the walls.

Kyle

She holds onto you, into what could be considered a hug—

Tom

Aww!

Kyle

And you blip onto the walls. And then Mako, who was just standing there the whole time, turns around and says:

Kyle (as Mako)

Well! Things are just going great today!

[Deep rumbles and pained screeches play again.]

Kyle

And then everything rumbles and squeaks again, and he says:

Kyle (as Mako)

But we *really* should get going, or we all are going to die.

Tom

Ohhhkay.

Hallie

We've said that like, three times!

Kyle

[Laughter.]

[30.07]

Kyle

So you all run up, and you reach the opening to the top of this tower, but the opening to the pit you fell down is still a long distance above you. As you get up there, Shauna presses herself against the wall, and looks over the top of the tower, pointing outwards. You can see from her arm, two long, triangular

platforms: one short, one long. These platforms are connected to the central tower, and rotating clockwise at variable speeds between 12 numbered platforms. Shauna grabs onto the longer hand, points to a platform, and says:

Kyle (as Shauna)

Alright, we have to get to 4 o'clock.

Tom

Don't do this to me; don't do platforming!

Hallie

[Laughter.]

Tom

My greatest weakness!

Kyle

Alright, so Shauna—and as you can see Shauna is climbing down this longer hand. What do the rest of you do?

Hallie

Follow her, I guess.

Tom

I guess, gonna follow.

Ari

Yeah.

Kyle

Alright! So you all, you all climb, technically, horizontally, but to you, *down* this hand—and Shauna is like:

Kyle (as Shauna)

Alright, this is going like, super fast, but wait, I have an idea.

Kyle

She takes her leg, and you can see parts of her body, just kind of move downwards, and assemble at her legs, and basically make one of her legs a lot longer than it used to be, and this leg hooks onto 4 o'clock, and uh, stops the platform in its tracks, which also has the added effect of changing gravity back to being downwards, because you no longer have momentum throwing you to the sides. And she goes:

Kyle (as Shauna)

Okay, okay, okay, uh, just quickly! Jump over me and get to the platform, please? Please?!

Tom

Xoc will go quickly.

Hallie

Yeah.

Emily and Ari

Yep!

Kyle

So you all jump onto the platform, and Shauna, with a little bit of struggle, plops backwards onto it, and you see the hand of the clock immediately start rotating at really fast speeds. Anyways, so you all walk onto the central platform, as Shauna rushes you on.

Kyle (as Shauna)

Okay, I'm going to have to try something a little bit weird, but I think it will work.

Kyle

And in her palm, kind of changes, so you can see divots of a clock, and she starts rotating this clock on the back of her palm. And the platform you're on, kind of shudders for a moment, before raising up, into this small hole above you. This platform rises up into the ground, and you find yourselves surrounded with lines of light, between bands of metal that rotate around you in opposite directions. Eventually, the platform rises into an open space, with a dozen statues standing in gravel, each wearing royal garb and striking powerful poses. Far into the distance on one side, you can see the sun setting behind an immeasurably tall natural wall, the base in Charmonde resides in. And on the other side, you can make out the top of the queen's palace. An alarm is buzzing through the air, as the queen's voice echoes through the gardens, saying:

Kyle (as Queen Armalu)

Intruders?! In MYYYYYYY Gardens?? Get them at once and bring them to me!

Kyle

Two more things.

Hallie

[Faintly] Oh no.

Kyle

For Misha, once you get out, you feel like it's a little easier to think, and while you still can't remember much of anything, you feel like you *should* be able to remember things.

Ari

Mmm.

Kyle

You no longer have the extra cost to your esoterics, but you can tell that overriding the heart of Charmonde has created some extra interference that's still blocking out some of the datasphere, even though you're out of, essentially, the basement. Your wi-fi should be workin', but it's still not!

Ari

Oh, that's great.

Tom

[Laughter.] Why are there no bars here?!?

Kyle

Xoc, you feel this release too...for a second! But then suddenly, your veins seem to rebel against you, and you feel a thousand hands striking at your insides. None of your pools are affected, but you are now impaired.

Hallie

Hah!

Tom

Ohhhhhhhh... *[Trails off in distress.]*

Ari

[Laughter.]

Kyle

And it's time to talk about the damage track, baby!

Tom

Nooooo, noooooo...

[Elevator music plays.]

Kyle

So the way the damage track works, is generally—uh, in this case it's a bit different, but generally, if one of your pools is completely empty, you become “impaired,” which means each level of effort costs one extra point, and you don't get any major or minor effects for rolling super well. Now, if a second pool ends up getting lost, you become “debilitated,” meaning you can only move, unless your speed pool is empty, in which case you can't really do anything, and if all your pools are dead, uh, you're in one of two conditions: You're either dead as a doornail, or, in this game, to make sure we have interesting stories, you might just be basically knocked out and out of commission for the rest of that combat or until you can get healed. But you will be, in some way, permanently altered or scarred. So it's still really, really, really fucking bad to lose all your pools. You just might not necessarily be...dead, because...we need character arcs to happen.

Hallie

Isn't Misha at one might? *[Laughter.]*

Ari

[Laughter.] I am at one might, indeed!

Kyle

Yeah, so if it makes you feel better, Xoc, you might have an impaired buddy very soon.

Tom

Two of my pools are at two.

Hallie

Okay, great.

Tom

So, I could be dead with *four* points of damage.

Ari

Oh nooo!

Tom

Xoc is going to stagger a bit, and I don't have my staff yet, do I? Or do I?

Kyle

Yeah, you grabbed your staff; that was the thing that you saw in the garbage pit.

Tom

Right right, right, well, he's going to lean on his staff a bit, and just,

Tom (as Xoc)

[*Uneasily.*] Oooof.

Hallie (as Hopper)

You okay?

Emily

I want to toss Hop his shield.

[34:58]

Kyle

Yeah, let's say Xoc is just feeling like *shit*, you're in the middle of an escape sequence, and you all just take a moment to be like, "Oh is this yours? I found this in the lost and found. Is this yours?"

Emily

Oh no, I'm just gonna like, throw it. I'm not taking time to hand it over; it's like if Hop does not catch this shield, it will probably hit him in the face.

Ari

Misha--

Hallie

I'm gonna hand back--

Ari

Oh, sorry

Hallie

Sorry.

Ari

You go ahead.

Hallie

No, no, no, you go ahead first.

Kyle

Misha, you go; you've been trying to talk.

Hallie

Yeah.

Ari

No, I was just saying that Misha is not going to hand over anything because they don't know that the thing is not theirs. So like, if Hop sees his thing, he has to go get it.

Hallie

Right! Which is why Hopper is going to hand Misha the bat and be like:

Hallie (as Hopper)

This is yours. It's pretty cool. I used it earlier.

Ari

Misha is going to grab it and immediately, is going to be taken in by it, and then is going to be slowly be like:

Ari (as Misha)

Yes, this--this is mine!

Ari

And then kind of have a slight smile at it, and look at, at Hop and say,

Ari (as Misha)

Thank you, Simon. I don't know how I know it, but I know that this—this belongs to me now.

Hallie

He'll just nod and be like,

Hallie (as Hopper)

It's Hopper, *[Laughter.]* that's fine.

Ari and Hallie

[Laughter.]

Kyle

[Laughter.] Ok, Misha is not handing anything else over though?

Ari

Yeah.

Kyle

Okay, if that moment comes up, we'll figure out what Misha has. And as you return each other's gear, you hear a couple of voices arguing a few statues down.

Kyle (as Don)

I have walked in that palace for years, and there is not a single way to get into it that does not involve us accidentally running into the Gendarme soldiers or...*her!*

Kyle (as Jesse)

Listen, Don, I understand the queen is very...*passionate* about meeting us, which normally would be good, but I feel like might be bad today. I--but that's the most direct way to get from here, to...not here.

Kyle (as Don)

That's the most direct way to get from *here* back to oblivion!

Kyle

And sure enough, when you look over, you see Jesse and Don arguing with each other, with Vera by their feet, while standing next the column, Joe's just leaning against, just slightly cooler than Hop ever could. And Everett, is sullenly slumped against it.

Emily

I'm going to look at Everett, and say:

Emily (as Elee)

You can see different realities, right? Does that mean you can like, "seeee" a--a way...out? Or like, like something u--usef—

Kyle (as Everett)

[Loud sighs.]

Emily (as Elee)

—vaguely useful? Don't--look at me like that. Do not sigh.

Hallie

[*Laughter.*]

Emily (as Elee)

I will tell Mauve.

Kyle (as Everett)

I guess I could. Wait, no, I guess--I guess I *could!*

[*Dramatic music plays.*]

Kyle

And he kind of gives a look over to Jesse and gets really excited and is like,

Kyle (as Everett)

Yeah, I guess I *could*!

Kyle

And he starts blinking really rapidly, and he's like,

Kyle (as Everett)

Alright, alright, alright, I think I got it!

Kyle

And he picks up Vera's feet, and says,

Kyle (as Everett)

Let's go!

[Dramatic music cuts off abruptly.]

Emily

[Laughter.]

Kyle

—and dramatically takes a few steps before, like, kind of shrinking down with the weight of her on him.

Emily

I'm gonna pat him roughly on the back, and just kinda fling Vera back over. I feel like she's gonna wake up with like, a really sore stomach from getting slung over my shoulder!

[Dramatic violin chase music plays.]

Kyle

Okay, so you run, Everett leads your way out of the courtyard, and eventually you find these stone steps leading up to the hallways of the queen's palace. You run through the hallways, you find that elevator you originally took to take to the Queen's chambers, the one that Xoc had his first wonderful hallucination in. Shauna slams her hand onto the pad on the side, and it quickly takes you all down and opens the door out to the main courtyard. So you run back out onto the courtyard in the queen's palace past the piper, past the jack, past the moonlight dancer, and past the scrat. As you run, you hear the crowd in front of you scream and rush to the sides, opening the passageway for Mako and Mauve's covered wagon-boat to speed through. And at this point, it really does look like a covered wagon. The front deck has been folded up into a driver and passenger seat, much like the horse and buggy, but with the horse replaced by water, because despite hovering a good foot off the ground, this is still a boat and it still needs water move. It's just used numenera to create a small stream of water hovering loyally beneath it. As this boat comes over, it kind of does like one of those wild drifts to the side and you hear another triumphant *[victorious whistle]*, as Tready just flies out of the back of the covered wagon, and rushes towards Mako, who screams,

Kyle (as Mako)

Tready--bear! I missed you!

Kyle

And gives him a big hug. And he turns over and points to Mauve, who's in the driver's seat.

Kyle (as Mako)

And my wife! I missed you too!

Tom and Hallie

[Laughter.]

Kyle

Almost just as much!"

Tom, Emily and Hallie

[Laugh harder.]

Ari

[Laughing.] Almost.

Hallie

I love it!

Emily

I just want to add, that as--as he greets Mauve, Elee looks a little nostalgic.

All

Awww.

Kyle

Now it's sad!

Hallie

[Laughter.]

Kyle (as Mako)

Well, anyways, I think it's time for us all to get going!

Kyle

And Mauve turns over and says:

Kyle (as Mauve)

Why yes, I think that would be a very marvellous idea.

Emily

MAUVELLOUS!!

All

Ayyyy! *[Laughter.]*

Ari

I'm just not going to comment on that.

All

[More laughter.]

Kyle

Actually, fuck it, no, she says that in character.

Kyle (as Mauve)

Why yes, I think that would be a *mauvellous* idea.

Kyle

And she smiles a little bit to herself. *[Short pause.]* Alright, what are y'all going to do?

[40:04]

Hallie

I guess we get on the boat, right?

Tom

I guess we're gettin' on the boat.

Hallie

Gettin' on this sweet-ass boat!

Kyle

There's space on the covered wagon, there's also one, like, "shotgun" spot next to Mauve, so does anyone call shotgun?

Hallie

I sort've assumed Mako would.

Kyle

Yeah, actually, Mako is going to go call shotgun.

Hallie

Okay.

Kyle

But as you walk, something kinda happens.

Hallie

No.

Kyle

Something pretty bad.

Ari

Oh god, no.

Kyle

The pounding inside of Xoc's veins has kind of laid down a little bit, but it suddenly spikes up a second time. And Xoc, you are debilitated.

Ari

Whaaat?!

Tom

Ohhhhh--

Ari

Why?!

Tom

--boy.

Kyle

Xoc, how do you respond to being debilitated?

Tom

I--[*Sputters briefly.*] Xoc is just going to sort of get into the back of the wagon and like:

Tom (as Xoc)

Well I'm very glad we all--we all got ou—— [*Trails off into gibberish.*]

Tom

And then he's going to sort of go limp, and, and just sort of, fall off the bench and onto the floor. Just sort of wiggle around there for a sec and go:

Tom (as Xoc)

I'm—mmmieajfsd—I'm fiiiiii—I'mm fii—I'm fine.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Uh oh.

Tom (as Xoc)

Ohhh boy. Ohhh, I'm—I'm okay, everyone. I just can't really move very well.

Tom

And he's going to try and climb back onto the bench, which I guess he can do, 'cause he still has speed?

Kyle

Uh, gimme a roll. GIMME a roll!

Tom

Okay! Alright, alright—heart of the cards! That was very messed up! It rolled on top of my other dice, and almost landed on a one, but it, then it got, like fell into a crack!

Kyle

Oh, *almost*—

Emily

Ohhh.

Kyle

I'm noticing a pattern, here, *Xoc*, if that *is your real name!*

Tom

Whaddya know, I got a 17, just like last time.

Hallie

[Laughter.]

Kyle

Alright, you slowly climb your way onto the bench, and as you do, Mako looks back at you for a second and is like:

Kyle (as Mako)

Hey son, you alright??

Tom (as Xoc)

No, actually, that's why we wanted to see you! I've got—the spiders in me—the Apocrita.

Kyle

He turns over to Mauve, and turns back to you, and says:

Kyle (as Mako)

Oh! Well, today is not going well at all!

Kyle

And he clambors, he kind of clambors behind, uh, he clambors over the shotgun thing into the back cabin area, and he looks around and is like:

Kyle (as Mako)

Uh, one of you, uh, keep Mauve company, will you?

Hallie (as Hopper)

I'll do it!

Kyle

Ok, Hop, you're going to climb up to the front seat, and he's going to turn over and he's like:

Kyle (as Mako)

Alright, I need you, son, I need you to lay down.

Tom (as Xoc)

Thats, what I'm already doing, man. Uhhh—

Hallie

[Laughter.]

Kyle (as Mako)

Alright, someone, someone--

Kyle

And he points to Misha--

Kyle (as Mako)

You! Can you grab my legs for a second?

Ari

Misha is going to confusedly do so.

Kyle

Alright Misha, you are going to grab Mako's legs as he opens the panel on the ground, basically dumps, somehow, his entire body down through this hole. And you're grabbing his legs—

Ari

So a lot of responsibility

Hallie and Tom

[Laughter.]

Kyle

And as you're holding onto this man, you're keeping his life in check, uh, you turn over to Xoc, sitting there, writhing in pain, and you remember:

Ari

Oh yo.

Kyle

You remember Obsidian Bay, you remember seeing the spiders in Rhubarb, you remember going to Charmonde—you don't remember everything—

Ari

Okay.

Kyle

—but you do remember Xoc.

Ari

Okay, well, then as soon as that happens, Misha's gaze is going to go really wide.

Ari (as Misha)

Xoc? Xoc?!?

Tom (as Xoc)

[Weakly.] Hi, heyyy.

Ari (as Misha)

Xoc what--are you--are--are--are you okay, your hallucinations, you—uh—we--I tried to save you and then, what happ—are you okay?

Tom (as Xoc)

[Weakly.] Heyyy, you're alright, I told you I was coming back! It's going to be okay now—

Ari (as Misha)

Is it? It's--you look, you look—your life energy seems very low.

Tom (as Xoc)

[Weakly, shakily.] It's fiiine, everything's fine.

Ari (as Misha)

Xoc.

Tom (as Xoc)

Well, you know, since we're running short on options, would you mind...playing a song for me?

All

[Several seconds of collective pained outcries and howling.]

Ari

Ahh. Everything's fine.

Ari (as Misha)

Uh, eh, yes, yes, sure, of course. I will certainly do so.

[Ari plays a slow, sad, off-tune kazoo version of Tangled's "Healing Song".]

[8--bit music plays.]

Ari (as Misha)

I--I am sorry, I tried to protect you and, and I couldn't do it, I--I--I'm--I—

Ari

Misha's going to yell at Mako, and going to be like:

Ari (as Misha)

You can fix this, right? You--you are going to fix Xoc, right?

Kyle

He's going to come up, and you can see his glove has now been augmented with like, it's like a Swiss--army glove now. It's got like a fork and like a scalpel, and a bunch of million things poking out of it, and he's going to look at you, kind of deadly serious, and you can tell he's worried for a second, and he's going to put up a smile and say:

[45:11]

Kyle (as Mako)

It's my job, isn't it?

Kyle

And he turns over to you Xoc, and he's like:

Kyle (as Mako)

Alright, son, this is going to be rough. I need you to let me know that it's okay before I do it.

Tom (as Xoc)

[Faintly.] It's okay.

Kyle

And as you say that, Xoc, your Might, your Speed, and your Intellect—all drop to zero, and everything goes dark.

[Closing theme begins.]

And Mako turns around to everybody, and says:

Kyle (as Mako)

Alright, everybody, this is gonna be rough, but we can make it out of here.

Kyle

And he turns over to his wife in the front seat and he says,

Kyle (as Mako)

Mauve, punch it!