

Kyle

Previously on Quest Friends...

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

Tom (as Xoc)

I don't know if I ever really mentioned much, but I grew up in a place called the Weal of Baz. It's kind of like a sanctuary for machines, and I spent my whole life there. The same people, the same places, nothing really changed until I decided to start traveling.

David (as Horus)

Little friend, wherever you take that robe and that walking stick, just know that all the Weal, yes even Jaykell, is there with you, and when you do come back they will be your keys home.

Kyle (as Loell)

You know one thing, I know the other. Words aren't going to solve this, Xoc. I have to show you.

Kyle

By the time you finally look up at the Apocrita itself, you can see its shadow covering all of the Weal of Baz... and that's when you wake up.

[Intro music swells and carries into the episode.]

Emily

One day there was a baby dragon lying in a bed of flowers.

[Happy, child-like music begins]

The dragon's name was Inuki, but the flowers, they never did say. Maybe the flowers didn't speak in psychic links, or maybe they couldn't think of what to tell her, or maybe they were simply shy... but Inuki didn't mind. She always had so much to share: stories of adventures, and of flying, and of her best friend in the whole wide world who saved her from that nasty TJ and did everything he could to keep her safe. And Inuki felt safe. She had felt safe for a long time. But the flowers, well... with a rump-bump-bump the baby dragon pounced on her pray and with a munch-munch-munch she gobbled up all the flowers resting in the bed. But, for the first time, Inuki didn't eat every single flower, she didn't even eat half, because her belly was full and the flowers were so pretty. Inuki knew it would be selfish not to share them with all her friends, because Inuki had friends. She had so many friends, and she had so many flowers, and she was so, so, so very happy.

[Music ends.]

Kyle

Okay. So, something that I like to do is keep track of what the timeline for Quest Friends looks like. It just tickles me to think of things of how, like, the first I don't know four chapters took place over two weeks. So I've been thinking about the last chapter, One Neon Night.

Now hear me out with the timeline here. The episode starts in I think about daytime, because I think I do reference the sun, at which point you get captured by the Speedy Speed Boys. You get taken to their hideout and then, eh, I describe it as a few hours long, and then after that Jimmy Win says hey, when morning hits we're gonna race, so presumably you have gone from afternoon, a full day, all the way through the evening, all the way continuing to the morning, and then afterwards. So, shockingly, One Neon Night took about one night long.

I say this to explain the fact that you have probably been up for 24 hours at this point, and that's fine for Ness, that's fine for Misha, that's fine for Q-BO, Elee might claim that's fine for her, I'm not sure.

Emily

[Laughing.] It's not fine.

Kyle

But it's not. Everyone needs to sleep. So, you know, I try not to make executive decisions, but I've kinda made the decision you probably all went to sleep pretty soon after the last episode with everybody. So, for example, Elee, what does Elee dream about?

Emily

[Laughing.] Elee dreams about the Patreon short story that I'm writing right now that is literally after One Neon Night Elee having a very specific dream.

Kyle

Oh right, it is a dream.

Emily

It is!

Kyle

This isn't just a promo.

Emily

[Smiling.] No!

Kyle

Your short story that is written for February is a dream.

Emily

It's that dream!

Tom

Well, break out the commercial music again.

[Game show music begins.]

You too can find out what Elee was dreaming about right here at this moment by going to Patreon/QuestFriends.com? I don't remember the link anymore.

Kyle

Patreon.com/QuestFriends. Subscribe at a \$5 level or above and not only do you get a short story every month you get behind the scenes clips, GM notes, AND an NPC shout-out.

[Music fades.]

So I guess we're not talking about that this episode, so let's move on to Hop... I guess?

[Laughter.]

[00:05:00]

Hop, I'm only gonna direct your dream a little bit in that I am saying you are dreaming of a Flex Skill.

Hallie

[Chuckles.]

Kyle

So what are you dreaming about and how does this give Hop his Flex Skill for the upcoming day?

Emily

[Grinning.] Only direct 'a little bit.'

Tom

What a cruel, irrational world we live in.

Hallie

What a mean... *[Coughs laughing.]*

Tom

One last bullying Hallie for the road.

[Cowboy music begins.]

Hallie

Hopper's dream is like one of those heroic dreams where he's doing an old west thing, and in this one he's driving a wagon real fast down the old town road away from some nefarious villains. He's got what they're after. He's got the McGuffin and he's going.

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Hallie

He knows that he probably can't get away from them, so what he does is he real smooth-like, in one fell swoop, somehow with horses, parallel parks the wagon in a side alley and then the bad guys ride on past, none the wiser that he's hiding there, because his Flex Skill this season is...

[Mocking herself.] This season.

...this chapter is Parallel Parking. Thanks Twitter.

[Music ends.]

Kyle

Because you ran—

Hallie

Oh, I should explain! I ran a poll. *[Laughs.]*

There were four options for his Flex Skill. There was Parallel Parking, Couponing/Bargain Hunting, Coffee Making, and Rolling above a 6, and if it got enough votes I would have petitioned to Kyle, make that a Flex Skill. It would never have worked.

But Twitter voted for Parallel Parking, so that is Hopper's skill.

Ari

So as I understand, Emily's dream, or Elee's dream, was a plug to Patreon and this one is a plug to Twitter?

Kyle

Yeah, but Hallie's Twitter specifically, not even the Quest Friends Twitter.

[Laughter.]

Hallie

No, my Twitter.

Kyle

Just Hallie.

Hallie

Go to my Twitter...

Tom

[As an amused groan.] Oh no.

Hallie

...to see this poll that's already done that you can't vote in anymore.

[Game show music begins.]

Kyle

What's your Twitter, Hallie? Where can they go?

Hallie

You can find me at @HallieKoontz. That's my name, that's my handle. H-A-L-L-I-E, K-O-O-N-T-Z, like the author – no relation.

... That's my Twitter.

[Music ends.]

Kyle

[In a "moving on!" voice.] Okay, so Misha.

Tom

[Laughs.]

Kyle

You presumably aren't sleeping, because Misha never sleeps.

Ari

No.

Kyle

So what is Misha doing during this period of time?

Ari

Misha is just doing the equivalent of frolicking down a meadow or whatever. They are very happy and feeling very liberated, so they are just running and enjoying night. They are for once not being super anxious about it being night.

Kyle

This leads to my other question. Where is everyone sleeping? Because I can think of like three possibilities. There's like the room where you got Redd's Blessing which had a ghost, there's your bunks in Coachman's Tree, there's in the Ladybug, and neither of those are conducive to frolicking.

Tom

See, my vision is the classic Pokémon setup where we are like, without tents, on bed rolls around a campfire under the stars next to where we parked the Ladybug.

Kyle

Were you planning to like go somewhere or are you just sleeping outside even though the Speedy Speed Boys gave you a room to sleep in?

Tom

I think we like camping.

[Laughter.]

Ari

Yeah.

Hallie

Yeah.

Tom

I think we just genuinely really like...

Hallie

We needed some air. Like... yeah.

Tom

We like the privacy of having our own space away from others.

Kyle

Okay, so it's like camping in your backyard. Ein will come with little pizza bagels every so often that she cooked.

Emily

Except that we said goodbye to everyone...

Hallie

Yeah.

Emily

...and Ness robbed everyone.

Hallie

Oh! We probably left. That's all correct.

Emily

[Laughing.] Ness robbed them.

Hallie

That's why we're not sleeping in the...

Tom

We are a little ways away.

Kyle

Alright. Then finally, let's go to Xoc. Before we talk about what Xoc is dreaming about I'd like to quickly encourage anyone in the audience who hasn't listened to Xoc's Memory to do one of two things.

One, if this is your first time listening to Quest Friends, hey, welcome. Sorry it's just been a bit of random confusion and stuff. This is not a great place to start because there's a lot of assumed stuff that happened, so check QuestFriendsPodcast.com/about for a summary of the first half of the show if you want to just jump in as far as you can or some recommended first episodes.

If you are caught up and you somehow skipped Xoc's Memory Part 1 and Part 2, now is your time to stop and go back and listen to them. I'm not joking. This isn't like "oh man, this is gonna make the story make a slight bit more sense" and like emotional, no, this will make the story make sense if you go back and listen to that. And then come back here and listen to Tom describe...

Xoc! Misha, while frolicking, turns around and sees Xoc in his sleep. What do they see in these last couple of moments of sleep?

[A muted version of the Apocrita's theme begins.]

Tom

They see Xoc not exactly thrashing about but disturbed and making little noises, as if in a weirdly vivid dream, and it gives the impression of a nightmare.

[00:10:00]

Xoc is not happy. After almost crying out, Xoc is just going to bolt upright.

[Music ends.]

Ari (as Misha)

Xoc! Xoc! Are you okay? I believe you are having a bad dream. I believe that is what is happening. Are you okay?

Tom (as Xoc)

We need to leave right now. Right now. We need to wake everyone up.

Tom

He's gonna hop out of the bed roll and start waking everyone else up. *[Laughs.]*

Ari

Misha will do that as well. If they can't wake people up they will play the kazoo to make sure they wake up. People always wake up to their kazoo.

[Laughter.]

Kyle

It's like a military horn. *[Makes a military horn tune.]*

Hallie

Ness is gonna be very unhappy, because he was having a dream where he was the Monopoly man and he was having a great time having lots of money and spending it on things, so he'll wake up swinging.

Hallie (as Ness)

What?! What?! What?! What?! What?!

Emily (as Elee)

[Long tired groan.] Is someone dead?

Tom (as Xoc)

Someone will be if we don't move fast.

Hallie (as Hopper)

W-What?

Tom (as Xoc)

The Weal is under attack right now, my home. I haven't talked about it too much, but Loell knows exactly where it is now and the Apocrita is attacking it, and we need to go.

Kyle (as Q-BO)

[Beep-boop.] The Weal is approximately 327 kilometers from here. In the span of about three days, considering the swamp and the mountainous regions, we should be able to make it there.

Tom (as Xoc)

There's no time for that, but I do have another way, maybe. I think I can take us all there with my own powers.

Tom

Xoc is going to activate his Teleportation ability. It's occurring to me: Does my Teleportation ability let us bring the Ladybug too? I kinda don't want to abandon it even though it theoretically does not in the text allow that.

Hallie

We've got stuff in there.

Emily

I mean, I feel like we could leave it at the world's largest garage here, they would take good care of it, and this would get rid of Q-BO.

Ari

Oh my god.

Tom

WOW!

Kyle

Q-BO can come with you!

Tom

WOW!

Hallie

Wow! Wow!

Emily

I thought Q-BO was like in the Ladybug now.

Kyle

Q-BO is attached to the Ladybug like a pair of dice that you put on the visor. You can take him off.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Emily

Okay.

Kyle

So... I'm gonna say unless you used XP, which I don't believe you have, you would not be souped-up enough to take the Ladybug with you.

Tom

Okay.

Kyle

You could, though, bring Q-BO.

Tom

Of course I could bring Q-BO!

Ari

But what if I use an XP, and since Misha is Xoc's patron, buff Xoc up enough that we take the Ladybug with us? I have 2 XP.

Kyle

Yeah, if you use 2 XP—2 XP lets you stretch your powers beyond what they normally can be, so if you wanna spend 2 XP, because you are the patron, you can in fact move the Ladybug.

Ari

Is there any chance we will get more XP before the finale is over? Because I don't know if this is how I wanna spend my last 2 XP.

Tom

Wow.

[Laughter.]

Kyle

I can promise that before the final minute of the final episode rolls you will get at least 1 more XP.

Ari

[Grinning.] Will it be at the final minute? Like, the end, by the way you all get an XP that you cannot spend.

Tom

I don't think Kyle would do that.

Emily

I'm just not sure what we'll need the Ladybug for.

Kyle

I mean it can fly.

Hallie

I keep forgetting that.

Emily

Oh yeah... *[Laughs.]*

Kyle

It has the beanie.

Tom

That would probably be helpful, I guess, because I can't fly.

Ari

In that case, Misha will be sitting on the Ladybug's driver seat, because they were doing that as soon as they thought that they would have to drive, and then they will help Xoc transport the Ladybug as well.

Kyle

Okay. Xoc, what does your teleportation look like?

Tom

So, Xoc says:

Tom (as Xoc)

Well, if we're going that big it'll work a little bit differently this time. In this case, everybody step onto the Ladybug and I'll just take the whole thing.

Tom

Xoc is going to start, with his staff, scraping a circle into the dirt around the Ladybug and etching little lines and symbols going in from it all around it, in true wizardly fashion. While he works, if anyone's listening, he'll just say:

Tom (as Xoc)

I took a little bit of Argent with me when we first left Qi, and I was trying to figure out how it worked. I'm not sure that I did it correctly, but I started to do some things, and now I can go to places I've already been.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Huh.

Hallie

Hopper's very interested in this description of what Xoc has done with Argent.

Ari

Oh. I thought of another way in which Misha could help. If they focus on the descriptions that Xoc has told them about the Weal, because I assume that he has talked to Misha a lot about it, they can also help focus Xoc's powers.

Tom

Ooh.

Kyle

That's really cute. I like that.

Hallie

Yeah, it is really cute.

Tom

Ooh, I like that. So yeah, it takes approximately ten minutes to set up the spell.

[00:15:00]

Once it's finished, Xoc will step on the back of the Ladybug, like leaning out the back where the whole is that we just covered with a tarp. *[Pained laughing.]*

Hallie

We have a tarp!

Emily

The nice tarp.

Hallie

Yeah, the really nice one.

Tom

And he slams the staff down onto the edge of the lines in the circle.

[Xoc's nano theme begins.]

And they'll start to glow with a blueish light, and this hum starts to fill the air getting louder and louder over those last couple minutes until everything goes white, and Xoc is just picturing home, that last day when he left the Weal and looked back over his shoulder.

Kyle

As your vision goes white, charged by your memories and Misha' second-hand memories, other senses take its place.

[Sound effects of what Kyle describes begin.]

You can feel the weird chalky texture of the projector board. You hear the waves of the sea crashing against the pier. The white is replaced by a series of technicolor lights flashing angrily at you and little crustaceans linked to those lights.

The hairs on the back of your hand perk up with the electricity buzzing from Powerstand Street, and you can smell just the metal and the rust, and... home.

[Accompanying sound effects end.]

As you are powered by these sensations, the blue light surrounding the Ladybug starts getting replaced by these golden sparkles which rise from the bottom of the Ladybug all the way to the top, slowly erasing it from the Ba-Adenu Forest as they go along.

[Music ends in a sci-fi whoosh and is replaced by sounds of the wind going through the trees.]

Then, suddenly, crisp wind gently nips at your faces as you are transported from the warm swamps of the Ba-Adenu Forest to a much less cozy mountain Cliffside... which I guess has enough space for the Ladybug now. When I originally wrote the description it was not Ladybug sized.

[Laughter.]

Ari

I'm so glad that we made everything way harder for you by bringing the Ladybug.

[SFX ends.]

Kyle

Ari, Ari, how badly do you want another XP?

Ari

A lot.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Tom

Please no.

Emily

No! No, you don't want it that badly!

Tom

This is a devil's deal.

Emily

No, you don't want it that badly.

Ari

No, it's fine. It can't be as bad as everything that has happened to me already.

Kyle

In that case, Ari, who do you want to give your other GM Intrusion point to?

Ari

I am going to give it to Xoc, because I feel bad that I did all of this effort and we might still lose the Ladybug.

Kyle

Okay, so I'm gonna retcon my retcon where I said the Cliffside is now wide enough for the Ladybug. It seems that way at first, but you start to hear this creaking and moaning of the vehicle as it starts tilting to its side to the left, and within a few seconds, unless you do something, it's gonna fall down the mountainside.

Ari

Well, uh...

Emily

Okay...

Ari

So I have three ideas, but two of them are tied to leveling up.

Kyle

That's a good point, because at this point normally everyone would have leveled up, but in this case we haven't. You haven't had time for a level up. However, Misha, you've had a pretty big empowering moment with The Lady where you really came into your own, so if you're okay with that kind of being the reason you leveled up, I'm happy to let you be Tier 6 right now.

Ari

[Smiling.] Okay. Can I use my big thing that I chose? Because I think that might help.

Kyle

What's your big thing that you chose?

Ari

[Grinning.] I chose a thing called Move Mountains.

Hallie

Ha!

Ari

[Laughing.] I can exert a tremendous amount of force within 250 feet of me and can push up to ten tons of material up to 50 feet, so I can collapse buildings or direct small rivers, etcetera, but I want to do it so that the mountain we're on is not... it's wide enough, so that the Ladybug doesn't topple over.

Tom

[Claps.] Yes.

Kyle

So... the way this is set up is there is a mountain range, a mountain range, and a valley. We're about to make a plateau I guess.

[Laughter.]

Ari

Let's do this.

Kyle

[Emphatically.] Ari, describe how you do this, how you harness the amazing powers of the Datasphere.

Ari

The way that I'm going to flavor it, it's a bit sad, because Misha's still at the wheel and they are arriving to this place and the Ladybug is falling and they don't want to be responsible for another car crashing.

Hallie

Aw!

Ari

So, in a sheer moment of desperation, they are going to do all in their power to not have the Ladybug fall down, and so they are going to just focus on the earth below and just do this hands-up motion to raise it up and make a plateau while just both eyes glowing, one super purple.

Kyle

[Amused.] I'm gonna quickly read this description to make sure. Up 50 feet... this force can collapse a building... yeah.

[00:20:00]

I guess we won't have all of the valley disappear, because I'm a coward I guess. It would just be too much for your power, but we will say that...

[Heroic music begins.]

You pull a sliver of the valley, no more than a few inches thick, up towards the mountain. It looks like a reverse avalanche as this small sliver, which again is a lot of tons when you put it together, rises up from the valley and makes another layer on the mountainside. It happens to come up just enough to push the Ladybug's legs back up onto even ground.

[Music ends.]

Especially compared to the lively swamps, it is shockingly quiet. No clouds in the sky, no plants other than grass and small clumps of flowers, no real sounds beyond the quiet whisper of the wind. That is, it's completely quiet for everyone but you, Xoc.

[Low, repeated sonar-like beeps begin.]

You can immediately recognize the communications from the Weal, the small little messages they send out for those who are tuned into their frequency. It's like a beeping. It doesn't really say anything, it's not like a Morse code where it has a specific message, it's just a beeping that you can hone in on.

Tom

Nonverbal communication.

[SFX end.]

Kyle

Yeah. So, you're now on even ground, and Xoc, you can still hear that beep-beep-beeping.

Tom

So first thing's first. Xoc is going to hop out and shout for everyone...

Tom (as Xoc)

Come on!

Tom

...and run into what appears to be just a solid rock wall, just at full speed.

Ari

Misha will do so as well!

[Laughter.]

Hallie

Uh... Hopper assumes he's not seeing this right. I imagine he comes stumbling out of the Ladybug, his hat's askew, recovering from the recent almost fall, and he kinda closes his eyes and shakes his head a little.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Xoc, is there a door there?!

Tom (as Xoc)

Yes!

Emily (as Elee)

I don't... I don't see a door... Are you sure?

Tom

I imagine at that moment we hit the rock wall, right?

Kyle

Oh, you're already through.

Tom

Oh yeah, we pass right through.

Kyle (as Q-BO)

[Beep-boop.] Fascinating. It seems that hidden within this non-machine focused area there are in fact some sort of cloaking devices embedded into the wall itself. I'm learning all sorts of things.

Kyle

And Q-BO just gently rolls, bonks against the wall, rolls back, rolls a foot to the left, and disappears into the mountain wall as well.

Hallie

Ness throws his little arms up, goes...

Hallie (as Ness)

Woohoo!

Hallie

...and then rockets towards the wall where he saw Q-BO go.

[Silly music begins.]

Emily (as Elee)

Well, I'm gonna walk.

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Emily (as Elee)

Um... slowly, and check.

Hallie

Yeah, Hop's with Elee.

Kyle

I'm gonna say you pat the wall a few times and then eventually your hand suddenly goes through.

Hallie & Emily (as Hopper & Elee)

[Surprised.] Ah!

Emily

She's gonna be putting her hand in and out.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Emily

And then finally go through, but like cringing, because it doesn't look like she should be able to go through even though she knows that she can.

Kyle

Same with you, Hop?

Hallie

Yeah. Hop will put his hand through and then as soon as it eats up to his wrist be like...

Hallie (as Hopper)

[Contemplative.] Okay...

Hallie

...and then just the rest of his body goes through about as slowly. He's not as sure, but everybody else did it, and that seemed to work.

Emily

I was really tempted to, if he stuck his hand through, just to grab his hand and pull him.

[Laughter.]

Hallie

Thwack!

Kyle

As you make your way in, the stumbling footsteps of Hop being pulled in, which is now what happened, echo as if he had just stepped on metal, because that's what he did.

[Music changes to atmospheric sci-fi.]

Whereas just outside it was just nature, some flowers, some mountainsides, now you seem to be in what looks to be a regular cave, but there is cheap rusted sheet metal bolted on all ends. It extends for a few dozen feet, but at the end of this little short hallway you can see Xoc and Misha, and Xoc, at this end is where that beeping sound is coming from.

I'm gonna say when you get close enough it stops. It'll play the audio at specific distances, to machine brains, but if it recognizes a machine brain that's close enough it'll stop beeping, because that's annoying as hell.

Tom

So, as Xoc approaches, he's going to say:

Tom (as Xoc)

[Shaky, to himself.] Okay, I can do this. I just need to figure out how to get back in.

Tom

He's gonna look at his staff and say:

[Music fades.]

Tom (as Xoc)

So you're supposed to lead me back, right?

[Nervous.] Um, um...

Ari

Misha will grab his hand in support.

Tom

Xoc will squeeze it back and then check the inside of the sleeve of his robe to see if something has been stitched in there, instruction-wise.

Kyle

You know what... I like it, because the robes came from Jaykell. And do you think Jaykell wouldn't tell you absolutely everything you needed to know?

[00:25:00]

Inside your sleeve, which I guess you've never checked before...

[Laughter.]

...is a little pouch that says, in some machine language...

Emily

Beep, beep, beep.

Kyle

...two instructions.

The first: How can you tell the age of a harebit? And the second: How can you tell if a harebit is two years old?

Tom

This might need some out of character help, because I'm not sure if I as a person remember correctly, but Xoc is going to raise up his staff and point it to the left.

Kyle

Exactly, and may that knowledge serve you well, because as you take your staff and move it to the left one of the pieces of sheet metal in front of you also slides in the same direction giving you a door back home.

[Ambling sci-fi music begins.]

If you closed your eyes and plugged your ears you could trick yourself into believing you were back with the Speedy Speed Boys. Immediately, the smell of glass and flowers from the valley is overtaken by the smells of a pit stop: rust, oil, metal, all coming from more machines than even Misha has seen in their

whole life. While these machines don't walk with the same rhythm, some move by treads, others wheels, others still by any number of legs, and that's just for those who travel by ground, they all slowly amble across the wide circular courtyard as if they were following some prescribed routine set by a tick-tocking clock only they can hear.

And yeah, you're home, you're in the Weal. Specifically, you're in the main courtyard of the Weal. So it's this large circular space in the center is the main communal area, a pretty big building. There are shops up on the side, quote-unquote "shops," parts of Powerstand Street that are set up for sharing electricity. Above you, in the circle at the top of the Weal and off on the sea-facing side, you can see... a bright sunny day.

[Music ends.]

Tom

Do we see the Apocrita in the sky?

Kyle

Give me a roll.

Tom

[Playfully aggressive.] Alright then, I will! I will give you a roll!

Ari

Can I also roll? Can anybody else?

Kyle

Yeah.

Ari

Okay.

Tom

We would be rolling with Intellect to spot, correct?

Kyle

Yep, Perception.

Tom

So, I could spend, say, 2 levels of Effort with no cost?

Kyle

Yep.

Ari

I will spend 3 levels of Effort.

Tom

Ooh.

[Rolls.] I rolled a 14.

Ari

[Rolls.] I rolled a 6.

Emily

[Rolls.] I rolled an 11, but I didn't put in any Effort, because I figured other people would be better at it than I would.

Hallie

Wait, wait, wait...

[Rolls.] Oh, I got a 19!

Emily

[Gasps.]

Hallie

And I'm trained in Perception!

Kyle

So, I think Hallie got a better natural roll but Tom got a better roll overall, so Tom is gonna get an Apocrita answer, Hallie's gonna get something else.

Hallie

Cool.

Kyle

Xoc, you look into the sky. You strain your eyes, and you see, eventually, a black spot.

[Apocrita theme begins.]

But then it disappears, and you see a black spot someplace else, and then that disappears and you see a black spot somewhere else...

[Music ends abruptly.]

...and you realize you can't see the cloud, you're just straining your eyes so much that you're starting to see a few spots.

Hop meanwhile, you can't see the Apocrita, but you're also kinda taking in the setting around you. You know?

Hallie

Yeah.

Kyle

Everyone else is a tourist here.

Hallie

It's like a new place, yeah. He's like wow, this is Xoc's home.

Kyle

You notice a robot that looks only like what I could call the Centartar from Gravity Falls.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Kyle

It's got a body with legs, and then a neck, and then another body with legs on the other side.

Hallie

[Happily disgusted noises.]

Ari

I love it.

Kyle

Just cork-wheeling towards an oblivious Ness who has taken a few steps out into the passageways of the Weal.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Oh! Oh, Ness, watch out. Excuse, excuse, excuse me.

Hallie

And he'll grab Ness before he gets just cartwheeled by this stranger.

Kyle

You pull Ness back.

Hallie (as Ness)

Wah!

Kyle

And... I'm gonna say the machine actually doesn't pay you any mind. They just keep rolling, rolling, rolling.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Sorry! Excuse us.

Emily (as Elee)

Watch it!

Tom

Xoc is—because why not use powers we haven't gotten a chance to use, am I right? Am I right, gamers?

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Tom

Xoc is going to use Information Gathering. I can speak telepathically with any or all machines within 1 mile, or 1.6 kilometers. I can ask one basic question about themselves or anything happening near them and receive a simple answer. It costs 5 Intellect points. So Xoc is just going to reach out to as many machines as possible.

Tom (as Xoc)

Um, hi everyone, it's me, Xoc. You may remember me from the last, uh... 18 or so years I lived here. Has anything strange, like a dark cloud-looking thing, appeared in the sky recently... or anything along those lines?

[00:30:00]

Kyle

What you just did, Xoc, is the equivalent of what would have happened if you ran a bull through a nursing home.

[Sounds of a crowd shouting begin.]

You just hear:

"What?"

"Huh?"

"Who is that?"

"Who wants someone on this channel?"

"[Random babbling]"

"Oh, I remember Xoc. He was a little baby boy."

"Oh no!"

"AGH"

[Laughter.]

You get the impression pretty quickly that if the machines had bothered to look into the sky, and you don't know if they had, they have not seen a black cloud, but before you can sever that connection you hear one last voice.

[Shouting crowd ends. Silly waltz music begins.]

Kyle (as Jaykell)

What... did you... do?!

[Music swells and carries into the announcements.]

Kyle

Hello and welcome to the announcement break for Quest Friends, Episode 74: The Obsidian Cloud, Part 1. I am Kyle, your GM. Our intro and outro song are Friends and Hitoshio, both by Miracle of Sound, and Horus continues to be voiced by the incredible David S. Dear. If you're interested in those theme songs or in David's voice acting, you can find links to all of their stuff in the description.

You can also find a link to Emily's short story on Patreon. One of the benefits Patreon backers get if they back at a \$5 per month level or above is that each month one of us writes a short story, and as Emily alluded to in the episode, they ended up writing about Elee's dream that Elee was having during the opening of this episode. Because the story is just so dang cute, I figured I would make it available for everyone.

So again, if you check the links in the description you will find a link to Emily's short story from February. You should be able to access it no problem regardless of whether you're a Patreon backer or not, but if you enjoy the short story you might want to consider backing at a \$5 level or above.

That's all I've got for you today. Our next episode, The Obsidian Cloud, Part 2, will be releasing on Monday, April 19, but if you'd like additional content before then you can find stories, artwork, and behind the scenes insights at Patreon.com/QuestFriends. I'll see you there.

[Cowboy music carries out of the announcements.]

Tom

Xoc will attempt to hone in on that mind with the telepathic link.

Tom (as Xoc)

I am so, so glad you're here. We need to talk, um... because the whole Weal could be in danger.

Kyle (as Jaykell)

[Long robotic sigh.] I'll meet you at home.

Tom (as Xoc)

Okay! Be right there.

Tom

And Xoc is gonna turn to everyone else and say:

Tom (as Xoc)

I don't know. Maybe Loell was messing with me. It doesn't look like anything's happened here yet, but I think he's still headed here, because he doesn't have any leads on anyone else. So, uh... why don't I

show you my home? We should go quickly though, because I probably annoyed a lot of people. They don't usually like it when I shout.

Hallie (as Ness)

When did you shout?

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Ari (as Misha)

It was certainly distressing.

Tom

Well hold on, hold on, Ness would have heard that.

Hallie

[Grinning.] Are you sure?

Tom

[Laughs.]

Hallie

He's really good at blocking people out, especially Xoc. *[Laughs.]*

Tom

Ness just did not care, ignored it completely.

Kyle

He was distracted. He's like the little kid when their mom is yelling at them and they're playing video games and they just don't hear.

Hallie

Yeah! Goes in one ear...

Kyle

Like, Ness... Ness, Ness, Ness! Ness!

Hallie

Did not register with him.

Kyle

Anyways. So everyone makes their way from the central plaza of the Weal down the steps to Xoc's house. I want to focus in on part of Xoc's house.

[Wind and beach waves SFX.]

I want to focus at the top of one of the chimneys where the wind starts to pick up.

[00:35:00]

There isn't any rain or anything, but there is some mist from the beach coming up with all of the crashing waves and the wind. We see a bird trying to escape the weather fly from off in the distance, far, far away, through the open air, not passing through anything, and then standing on one of the chimneys. Then, after a few seconds standing on the chimney, the bird is greeted by somebody else. This robotic head in a hood pops up to it and says:

David (as Horus)

Why hello there, friend. Here to take shelter again?

Kyle

You hear a little tweet-tweet, tweet-tweet, and this robotic figure extends one of his segmented hands out to the bird, just a little finger which it jumps on.

David (as Horus)

Well come on in, because...

[Knocking on a door.]

I think we have some visitors.

[SFX ends.]

Kyle

Meanwhile, everybody else, Xoc has run down with you. You are on the outside of this very whimsical-looking house. Start with the base of a cabin, right, just a regular log cabin, little house on the prairie. Then add a chimney, and then add another chimney, and then add a third chimney, and they're all zigzagging, and it looks almost like a Seuss house with all of these inventions, and you've got wires for clothes even though there's no clothes needed, so it's just my good old standby, it's just sheet metal. There's a windmill and multiple inventions out on the outside as well, little doohickeys and thingamabobs, and one is, yes, just the fork from the Little Mermaid.

Hallie

Aww, adorable.

Tom

Xoc is going to take a deep breath, straighten his cloak a little bit and hold his staff a little bit firmer in one hand, and then firmly knock on the door.

Kyle

After a few seconds where everyone can hear the house just settling and creaking and Xoc can hear his own heartbeat getting louder and louder in his ears...

[Gentle, heartfelt music begins.]

The door slowly creeps open, and on the other side you see a tall robot, probably about Misha's size.

He's very heavily resting on one hand on this cane. It looks like a screw with a ball on the top. Then on his other hand he just has a little bird.

This robot is not like Misha, not an android like Misha that can emote. He has an immovable face. It's just a still face with two glowing eyes, but there's still, I don't know, a warmth to that.

Tom

Xoc... everything he was planning on saying just leaves his head, and he just moves forward and hugs Horus tightly.

David (as Horus)

[Chuckles hardily.] Oh-ho-ho! Whoa, whoa, slow down. You don't want to stab yourself on my feathered friend, do you?

Kyle

And he shows off the bird which has a very long, sharp beak.

Tom

Xoc will step back again.

[Music fades.]

Tom (as Xoc)

Yeah. Hi... I'm sorry, I was a little caught up there. It's... It's good to see you again.

David (as Horus)

It's good to see you, too.

Heh, and all of you, I suppose.

Kyle

The robot turns to face the rest of you.

Tom (as Xoc)

Yes. Let me introduce all of my friends. This is Misha Jarvis-Badge, Hopper Scotch, Elee Badge, Ness, and Q-BO.

Kyle (as Q-BO)

[Beep-boop.] It is a pleasure to meet you. My name is The Incalculable Quorum of Beneficial Outputs, but you can call me Q-BO. Please state your name and your relationship to Xoc so that I may update my relationship matrix.

David (as Horus)

Oh-ho-ho!

Kyle

The machine kind of gets on, he leans on one of his knees and looks down to Q-BO.

David (as Horus)

Jaykell will like you.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Kyle

Then, without answering Q-BO's question, he walks inside just saying:

David (as Horus)

Come, come, the wind and sea have been acting up, and they make a dreadful combination. Best to get into shelter before the weather gets worse.

Emily

Elee has raised one eyebrow but doesn't say anything.

Tom

Xoc will also gesture for everyone to come in.

Tom (as Xoc)

Everyone, this is Horus. He took care of me when I was young. He found me when I was very little and brought me to the Weal.

Emily

Her other eyebrow goes up. *[Laughs.]*

Kyle (as Q-BO)

[Beep-boop.] Horus, marked as guardian in my relationship matrix.

Tom

And yeah, Xoc will step inside.

Hallie

Yeah.

[Nostalgic music begins.]

Kyle

So, I'm not gonna do this house justice the way Tom described it in Xoc's Memory, but what you find yourself in—

[Music ends abruptly.]

Tom

I've just realized there aren't enough chairs in this house, are there?

[Laughter.]

Kyle

No there aren't, and that's about to be addressed. Don't you worry.

[Music resumes.]

So you walk inside the house and it is very reminiscent of the outside of the house. It's this small and dingy but also very homey space straight from a fairy tale.

[00:40:00]

It's warm, light colors, soft hues in light browns. There is this little traveler's shelf when you come in that's full of supplies to leave and has a cute little probably Home Sweet Home style message there. There are a few wooden doors, some leading to resting areas, some leading to who knows where, but notably by Horus there is a table with I'll say three chairs and then maybe a little impromptu stool that Horus is picking up and setting down.

David (as Horus)

Now, heh, I had a feeling you would be returning soon, but I'm afraid I underestimated how many gifts you'd bring home with you.

[Music fades.]

Tom (as Xoc)

Oh... well, I did actually have like a proper gift, like you always used to bring me.

Tom

Xoc is actually going to slip out one of the recorder headbands.

Tom (as Xoc)

It's kinda spotty coverage, and a lot of it was just staking out or spying on adventures we were on, but there are a lot of memories from my travels recorded on this band, and it's linked up with this one here too so that you can see through one to the other.

Kyle

Horus takes it and immediately starts tinkering with it.

[Muffled sounds of the Misha VS Jimmy race begin.]

He presses a button that pulls up something from a few hours ago where we can just see, in the distance, this purple frog leapfrogging over a bunch of things, a bunch of tubes, before trying to attach itself and pendulum across something and getting cut off by a death laser. He just laughs to himself and goes:

[Sounds of the race end.]

David (as Horus)

[Laughs hardily.] And what adventures they are. I'm almost afraid to ask what else you've gotten up to in the previous year.

Hallie

Ness is looking at the video going...

Hallie (as Ness)

When the fuck was this?

Hallie

...because he misses everything apparently.

Tom

Wait. Wasn't that the race between Jimmy and Misha?

Ari

Yeah.

Kyle

Yeah.

Tom

Didn't Ness see that?

Hallie

Oh, that's the car! Yes, he did see that.

Tom

The Tirefly.

Hallie

I was imagining an actual frog and I was like "this is weird, when did we do that," but it was Misha's car all along was the frog.

[Laughter.]

Tom

Maybe the real frog was the friends we made along the way.

Hallie

Look! It has been... it has been a long time since we have recorded.

Tom

Maybe for you~

Hallie

For me! Only I matter.

[Chuckling.]

Ari

Misha will straighten up a little bit at seeing one of Xoc's daddos and just be a little bit uncomfortable. Not uncomfortable, but Misha will get nervous.

Emily

Elee will pop out her folding chair...

Hallie

[Laughs and hits her desk in excitement.]

Emily

...n sit down on it, and lean back a little bit, casually, and cross her arms, and just look.

Tom

Incredible.

Hallie

Ness has taken the stool. He's sitting on the little stool moving his little legs back and forth. Hopper is still standing. He's not gonna take a chair if anybody else wants one.

Tom

Xoc is also part excitement, part anxiety hovering and not sitting down.

Ari

Misha is not sitting down either.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Tom

Elee solved a problem which did not... no one had asked.

Kyle

Horus is also not sitting down. He's standing, he's leaning more on his cane, and there's just a pause. ...

Emily

Elee stands back up. Now it's kind of weird, because I thought we were all sitting down and I was like "oh, I have another chair," but nobody else is sitting down and now I feel really weird, so I'm just gonna stand back up and put my chair back on my back and we can pretend that I didn't do that.

David (as Horus)

Have humans stopped sitting in the past year?

Tom (as Xoc)

Oh, no-no, we are... I think we're all just a little bit worked up. We came here believing the Weal was in very immediate danger. I think everyone's just a little worked up still from all of that.

Tom

Xoc will actually sit down at that, sort of scolded by dad.

Emily

Elee will sigh and take her chair back off her back and slowly creek it open and set it down and push it so that it's flat and sit back down slowly and look at everyone.

[Laughter.]

Ari

Misha will not, and say:

Ari (as Misha)

Oh... okay. Thank you. I shall sit down as well.

Tom

Already an uncomfortable in-law moment.

[Laughter.]

Hallie

This is the worst.

Kyle

Horus is just staring at all of you. Xoc, you can recognize that Horus is just curious. He's excited. Like, he always would talk about all of the amazing things that he would see, all of the adventures he was excited for you to go on, and he's just so excited to see what yours have brought.

[00:45:00]

But to everyone else, you just see an emotionless robot staring at all of you, like looking at one, and then turning... and then turning back...

Emily (as Elee)

You know, Misha was driving that car. They're an amazing driver.

Tom

[Coughs fighting laughter.]

David (as Horus)

You drove that frog? Uh... it is a frog, right?

Ari (as Misha)

Y-Yes, it is a purple frog. I designed that car and I drove it. I like driving cars and I was in a race, and... yes, I did it. I'm glad you liked it... sir.

Tom

"Please, sir was my father."

[Laughter.]

David (as Horus)

Oh now-now, no need to be so formal. Please, all of you call me Horus.

Ari (as Misha)

Noted. I shall call you Horus then. I had heard about you from Xoc a lot. He has told me a lot about you, told us a lot about you, and I'm glad to meet you finally.

David (as Horus)

I'm glad to meet all of you too. I hoped Xoc would bring something, or someone, back. I couldn't have imagined it'd be anything... anything like this.

Tom

Xoc, not wanting to get too much into business until Jaykell arrives but also wanting to help bridge this gap for his family, will start telling Horus how he met the party. It'll be sort of an abridged version of their adventures, but he'll try to go through the story of how he met everyone in Rhubarb and what's been happening to them since.

Kyle

Okay.

Tom

To give Horus an idea of who everyone is, what they've all been doing together, and also to prevent it from turning into an awkward silence.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Kyle

Yeah. So I imagine it's silence and then just:

[Intro song begins at high speed.]

[Speaking quickly.] So anyways, I met all of these people on a mission when I was doing this and doing that.

And just speeding through.

Tom

It's not quite like that nervous awkward, but also Xoc is probably not telling the story as well as he could be.

[High speed intro song ends.]

Tom (as Xoc)

Oh, I forgot—I really... I forgot to mention, before all of that happened, we actually met this strange AI here... and also, I fell down this pit.

Kyle

When you're done telling your story, Horus will just stand there—he is still leaning on his cane, but he's leaning with both arms, the bird is now on his shoulder—just enraptured in your story. He takes his segmented hand and strokes his nonexistent beard.

David (as Horus)

Hmm... the nano spirits did say you had another friend who was trying to kill you. This is all very, very interesting...

What do you think, Jaykell?

[Silly waltz music begins.]

Kyle

And he turns over, and you can see it just at the doorway, this tiny robotic bookworm about four feet tall if you put him on his end with a soldered cravat on his chest. Where you would see sweat from a human you can just see bolts coming off of this robot as he just shakes. Jaykell goes:

Kyle (as Jaykell)

What do I think? What do I think?! I think this is an unmitigated disaster!

I think that all of the lessons must have been for naught, since... *[Huffs.]*

[Music fades.]

I think we may need to update our curriculum about the dangers of the outside.

Emily

[Insulted.] Okay!

Kyle

Sorry! I want to make it clear that it's like "a cloud? What?!"

Tom

Oh! Oh! Jaykell's just freaking out about the Apocrita. Gotcha.

Kyle

Yeah.

Ari

I thought it was about the friends.

Emily

I thought it was about us and I was very offended.

Hallie

Right? I also thought—I was like whoa, buddy.

Ari

Misha was already backing out towards the door, like looking for the handle. "I am gonna leave this, uh..."

[Laughter.]

Kyle

Well you, he doesn't specify, so you may think of it that way.

Hallie

Like, we're just gonna go.

Tom

Xoc, though, will stand up while this is happening and then slowly move over to Jaykell and also give him a warm hug, but release him quickly just in case he wasn't comfortable with it.

Kyle

Yeah. Actually, he leans into the hug for a second despite himself, because Jaykell is excited to have you back but then he remembers, you know, everything else, and he quickly takes his little bug arms, pushes them against you, and then turns to face Horus.

Kyle (as Jaykell)

A cloud? A cloud?! A dangerous cloud? Did you hear that, Horus? A cloud!

David (as Horus)

Hmm. Oh, I heard, Jaykell.

Kyle (as Jaykell)

The Weal isn't equipped to handle clouds, Horus, we're equipped to handle... not many things, but definitely not clouds.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Kyle (as Jaykell)

[Sighs.] Anyways...

[00:50:00]

Kyle

As you set him down, he scuttles up onto the table and starts pacing back and forth with his many legs. I'm gonna say he's partially up, so he's just doing the "think, think, think" that Winnie the Pooh does to himself with some of his legs. The rest are scuttling back and forth.

Tom (as Xoc)

So now that you know what's happening, is the shield strong enough to keep the Apocrita out? I know I've been gone for a while, but everything feels... rustier than I remembered. I didn't see it active before.

David (as Horus)

Well, that's because it hasn't been active for a few months.

Tom (as Xoc)

[Startled.] Oh... Has anyone tried to fix it yet?

Kyle (as Jaykell)

Do you not remember the vote before you left?

David (as Horus)

No, no one has tried to fix it, Xoc. No one has fixed much of anything around here. That's why I need to get my vocal friend here...

Kyle

And the bird chirps.

David (as Horus)

...and my other vocal friend here...

Kyle

And Jaykell continues to mutter.

David (as Horus)

...shelter whenever the weather starts to act up.

Kyle (as Jaykell)

Well, perhaps the, uh... perhaps those spirits know something, those nano spirits. They always had strange and reckless ideas.

Emily (as Elee)

They had terrible ideas that were wrong.

Kyle (as Jaykell)

Well yes, but we're kind of low on ideas right now.

Tom (as Xoc)

Well, we're not exactly speaking to them much anymore, but with me—

Kyle (as Jaykell)

They abandoned you?!

[Silly waltz music begins.]

Of course they abandoned you. I knew they were always unreliable. When this cloud business is done I'll go step into that... Data thing myself and *[Grunts angrily.]*

Kyle

He starts to sweat out more bolts as he just steams with rage and continues pacing faster.

Emily

Elee suddenly feels like this huge wave of kinship.

[Laughter.]

Tom (as Xoc)

Well, it was a little more complicated than all of that, but we do have Misha Jarvis here, so we can access the Datasphere quite easily still.

David (as Horus)

Oh... are you one of those wizards as well?

Ari (as Misha)

Oh! Um... yes, I suppose you could call me that. It is a little different than Xoc, but um, I am very experienced at accessing the Datasphere, so I can look things up... Horus.

David (as Horus)

Fascinating. I would love to hear more about—

Kyle (as Jaykell)

Horus.

David (as Horus)

—exactly the ways in which you—

Kyle (as Jaykell)

Horus!

David (as Horus)

—can manifest this—

[Music ends.]

Kyle (as Jaykell)

Horus! We don't really... Now is not the time to ask these kinds of questions.

David (as Horus)

[Chuckles.] Oh, right. Yes, sorry. Forgive me for forgetting about the Armageddon cloud. So what is your plan, Xoc?

Tom (as Xoc)

Well, I mean... we should first start by fixing the shield, because the Weal just needs that in general, and maybe we can make it stronger than it was before. After that I'm not really sure, because we have the tools we need to stop the cloud, sort of. I guess we'll probably need to get the Ladybug from outside too, because I don't know how we'd get up there to it, but—

David (as Horus)

You brought the walking car with you?

Kyle (as Jaykell)

Excuse me, walking what?

Tom (as Xoc)

Oh, yes, we have a nice vehicle. It was built by some dear friends. It's just outside the entrance right now.

Ari (as Misha)

I helped Xoc bring it.

Tom (as Xoc)

That's true.

Tom

Yeah, that's right. I guess we never did do proper introductions with Jaykell. *[Laughs.]*

Kyle

That's fine.

Tom (as Xoc)

So who was the last person responsible for maintenance of the shield here?

David (as Horus)

That would be... hmm. Jaykell, you know more of the machines around here. Who would be in charge of that?

Kyle (as Jaykell)

Yes Horus, just because I actually talk to the other machines once in a while suddenly I'm the expert. ... It was Unit 909, but they haven't been in charge of that for a year or so.

Tom (as Xoc)

But... But why is that?

David (as Horus)

[Sighs.] I suppose it is time. You've shared your secrets, it's only fair we share ours as well.

Kyle (as Jaykell)

What secrets do we have? You—

Horus, don't tell me you didn't say anything to him.

Kyle

Horus is gonna motion for you to take a seat, Xoc, as he finally takes one of his own.

Tom

Yeah, he'll sit back down.

David (as Horus)

Xoc, when you left, I said that the Weal had voted on two items: one, for you to take my place as the town's scavenger, and the other, for you to use it as an enrichment experience, a way to interact with more lifeforms than the Weal could provide. That isn't exactly the case.

[Outro song begins, "Hitoshio" by Miracle of Sound.]

There were two votes, and one was to let you leave the Weal, yes, but the other vote... that decision was to discontinue the scavenging program.

[00:55:00]

You were never supposed to bring anything back to the Weal, Xoc. You were supposed to leave permanently.

[Outro music swells and carries out to the bloopers.]

Kyle

And that's gonna be the cut of the episode.

Ari

Rude.

Hallie

Are they kicking you out?

Ari

That's so rude!

Hallie

Are they Mowgli-ing you? Boo.

Kyle

One last reminder. With God as my witness in front of all of you, so you don't forget and more importantly I don't forget, Q-BO is in fact still with you.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Kyle

He may have done literally nothing for months of episodes now, but he is technically still with you.

Tom

Don't worry, we won't forget Q-BO.

Hallie (as Ness)

You're still here?!

Hallie

Ness says, every time he sees Q-BO.

Kyle

Alright, so you're outside. You can hear the ambience of the bog, typical "moo~," the ambience, I'm not gonna be flow—

Tom

Was that a moo?! What the fuck?!

Kyle

Moo~!

[Laughter.]

Hallie

Are they ghost— Are they ghost cows? Swamp ghost cows?

Kyle

You can see a cow just getting quickly fossilized, just “MOO~!”

Tom

Well now it's really dark. I don't like that. Don't fossilize the cow...

Kyle

Okay, never mind. You can see a bog cow. It's one of the few cows that is not affected by the fossilization of the bog. It's just like a fucking shark, just “moo~”

Tom

Like a manatee, but for bogs?

Kyle

I was thinking like a shark that comes out of the water and then goes back in. Yeah, manatee, that's better. A manatee cow.

Ari

What about a whale that looks like a cow?

Hallie

No, we don't need to do that, because we already decided it was a manatee.

Ari

Like, it has spots and it...

Hallie

Which are called sea cows, so it makes sense.

Tom

Unfortunately, Ari's description now lives rent-free in my brain, the spotted whale with horns.

Kyle

MOO!

[Laughter.]

Hallie

Mana-beef... they're mana-beef.

Kyle

I was just getting Magic School Bus vibes. “No way!”

Hallie

“No way!” Hop would be so much better than Carlos—Who was, Arnold?

Kyle

Arnold.

Ari

Arnold. Carlos?! *[Laughs.]*

Tom

Carlos is the guy who makes bad jokes and then everyone's like "Caaarlos..."

Hallie

That's, that's—yeah.

Kyle

Yeah, Arnold. He's the one who takes off his helmet on Pluto.

Emily

He dead, fo sho.

Hallie

Yeah!

Kyle

And he gets a cold! I was scared of that scene as a kid. It was a nightmare.

Tom

It's fucking horrifying. He was dead for sure.

Kyle

Secret: Ness invents Nestlé chocolate.

Tom

No, Nessley does.

Ari

Oh no.

[Laughter.]

Hallie (as Ness)

That dweeb? He doesn't like anything cool!

Tom

Nonverbal communication.

Kyle

Yeah, to kind of tell you, hey, come to this sound. It's nice and... juicy.

Ari

[Snickers.] Juicy? What?

Kyle

I'm gonna cut that and just go where you go nonverbal communication.

Hallie

[Laughing hysterically, breathless.] No. No, do it. Please, please! It's nice and juicy!

Ari

I just imagine, like, if there's a camera of Hop being the last one entering, he would just straight up look into the camera as he slowly slides through the rock.

[Laughter.]

Tom
God.

Kyle
Misha definitely did hear just a cacophony of angry old folks.

Ari
Yeah. Misha was very distressed.

Kyle
Somehow more hectic than the Datasphere, which is literal millions of pieces of information flying at light speed.

Tom
But like, the Datasphere isn't as grumpy as the Weal of Baz.

[Laughter.]
Everyone's just sitting down, like "ah yes, just another quiet peaceful afternoon."
Meanwhile, Xoc, from a ledge with a bullhorn:
[Very awkwardly.] "Hey everyone! Have you seen anything suspicious lately?"
"God damn it!"

Emily
[Laughs.]

Kyle
If everyone listening followed Hallie right now... she still wouldn't have as many followers as Ari.

Ari
Yeah.

[Laughter.]

Hallie
Wait. We don't know that. Math, I haven't done the math. I haven't broken it down. I can get out Excel right now and I could do that.

Kyle
I have done the math. It wouldn't be enough.

Hallie
Okay, but what if you're wrong? What if I...?

Tom
Not unless we get a big surge of popularity for the finale.

Kyle
Anyways. Are we ready to play the game? *[Laughs.]*

Hallie
I... I guess.

Tom

Yeah, we're done bullying Hallie for now.

Hallie

You can sensor me all you like, but I will come back stronger than ever. Go to my Twitter! Tell me about why I'm right!

[Laughter.]

Ari

Well, I will just say that Misha will kind of straighten up at seeing the two... daddies. Daddies? *[Stammers, embarrassed.]*

[Laughter.]

Hallie

Just seeing the daddies! Hey kids, meet the daddies!

Kyle

The daddies!

Hallie

The daddies!

Kyle

Oh, there's only one daddy right now. The other daddy is coming.

Hallie

Daddy 2!

Ari

Oh, I forgot. I thought the other one also was there. I was gonna say daddos, first of all, but...

[01:00:00]

Hallie

Daddies!

[Laughter.]

Kyle

No, if the other daddy was here, trust me, you would hear that daddy.

Ari

Okay.

Hallie

[Delighted noises, trying to compose herself.]

Tom

Ugh...

Ari

Okay. Anyways.

Emily

[Laughs.]

Kyle

Gang, good news: we've got a lot of post-credits material. Bad news: not a lot of main content material, because I got distracted by the magic school bus.

[Laughter.]

Tom

That's fine. That's fine.

Hallie

[Laughing.] God! We're the worst!