

[Monster Hour theme]

**Quinn:** Hello, everyone, and welcome to Monster Hour. I am Quinn, your Keeper of Monster and Mysteries. With me today are Kyle.

**Kyle:** Hi. I'm Kyle. I play Alvin the Monstrous.

**Quinn:** Teo.

**Teo:** Hi, I'm Teo. I play Constance the Expert.

**Quinn:** And Hannah.

**Hannah:** I'm Hannah, and I play JR the Crooked.

**Quinn:** Last time, the three of you finally rendezvoused after your miscellaneous adventures. You fled a series of scenes from the forest to The Prospector and wound up back at Constance's studio, where you were able to do a little bit more research and identify some potential weaknesses of the Consensus. Turns out the Consensus also identified a few weaknesses of yours and showed up at your doorstep.

**Kyle:** [chuckles]

**Quinn:** You were able to break away and make your way to the forest, where you ultimately found where you believe the Consensus to be hiding, the abandoned silver mine. And that's where we're going to pick up.

**Kyle:** I don't like it.

**Hannah:** Oh, that's right. I'm sorry, Alvin.

**Kyle:** You guys may have to do some heavy lifting on this one.

**Quinn:** So, real quick before we jump in. Alvin, you leveled up last time, if I'm not mistaken.

**Kyle:** I sure did.

**Quinn:** Do you know what you're going to take for your advancement?

**Kyle:** Yes. Alvin is getting more used to his shape-changing abilities and has grown sharp teeth in addition to his claws.

**Teo:** Ooh.

**Quinn:** Okay.

**Kyle:** Fangs, if you will.

**Quinn:** Makes sense.

**Kyle:** Yeah, it'll be useful. But I'm also one away from unstable-

[laughter]

**Kyle:** -and about to be surrounded by silver, my nemesis.

**Teo:** Ooh.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Quinn:** Do you want to tell us what the stats are for your teeth attack real quick?

**Kyle:** Yes, it's an extra natural attack. It's base teeth. It is three harm and intimate.

**Quinn:** Alrighty. The three of you have just exited the forest into a clear-cut hillside in the foothills of Cathedral Peak. Across the clearing ahead of you is the entrance to the old silver mine, which is being guarded by the wolf that you encountered previously. The entrance is flanked by the old mineshaft headframe, which is largely intact but boarded up and the broken-down remnants of the former milling facility. And down the forest service road in the distance, you can see the flashing lights of police vehicles headed your way. What do you do?

**Kyle:** So, as we approach the entrance of this mine and see this wolf, I believe I have the flamethrower. I take it off my shoulders and I hold it out to Constance and say like, [as Alvin] *I have little knowledge of how to use this. I hope you've got some--* [chuckles] *I mean, it was in your house.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *That means very little. [laughs] Look, it was my Buni's. I'm pretty sure you just point and hit the trigger.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Well, I hope it works for you, because it's probably not going to fit me in a second.*

**Hannah:** I'm imagining the wolf is just sitting there patiently while we have this discussion-- [crosstalk]

**Teo:** Totally. Totally.

**Quinn:** It's put like-

**Hannah:** It's checking his watch.

**Quinn:** -one of its paws up on its shoulder and it's kind of tapping it.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Kyle:** I hold a hand out a bit, [as Alvin] *Hold on, one second.*

**Quinn:** It gives like a perfunctory howl at the moon, but you can tell its heart's not into it. It's really just like waiting.

**Kyle:** I do some stretches. Oh, boy.

**Teo:** Yeah, you want to make sure--

**Quinn:** The wolf does a few calisthenics, does a downward dog.

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *These cuts are stinging. All right, I guess I will take point.*

**Teo:** I start playing the magical horn, and my hope is that it hurts the wolf enough for Alvin to be able to get a direct hit.

**Kyle:** Do the noisemakers seem to have any effect on this wolf?

**Quinn:** Are you waiting or are you charging in?

**Kyle:** It knows we're here. We've been doing our stretches, squaring off.

**Quinn:** [laughs]

**Kyle:** So, I think I charge in sync with a blast from the noisemakers.

**Quinn:** Alvin, roll to kick some ass and, Constance, roll to help out.

**Kyle:** That's our new band name, Alvin and the Noise Makers, I think.

**Teo:** [giggles]

**Quinn:** Yeah.

**Kyle:** [laughs]

**Hannah:** It was good-- [crosstalk]

**Quinn:** Definitely for this episode.

**Hannah:** It's better than JR and the waistcoats.

**Kyle:** [chuckles]

**Quinn:** [chuckles]

**Teo:** [rolls dice] Oh, that's a 9.

**Kyle:** A 11 for me.

**Quinn:** Constance, on a 7 to 9, your help grants them plus one, but you expose yourself to trouble or danger. Alvin, that brings you up to a 12, which is a full success. So, you're going to inflict harm and you get to choose an extra effect.

**Kyle:** So, that's going to be claws, leaping out claws first. And I believe the extra effect, I can choose take less harm.

**Quinn:** Yes.

**Kyle:** I would like to do that, please.

**Quinn:** Okay. So, I think, Alvin, you spring forward, and this wolf recognizes you from before, and the two of you run towards each other. And as you're about to collide, Constance gives a bellow on the horn, and you can see the wolf lose its stride a bit, and you take advantage of this, and you leap forward. It gets a bit of a claw on you, but it only inflicts one harm, whereas you rake it with yours and inflict two.

**Kyle:** Ha-ha-ha.

**Quinn:** And it stumbles forward past you. And as it does so, it recovers, and it sees Constance and the horn and starts at a dead sprint towards her.

**Kyle:** Right.

**Quinn:** And it covers most of the distance before anyone has time to react.

**Hannah:** I'm going to press the button on the bullhorn that makes the really loud noise.

**Quinn:** JR, where are you right now?

**Hannah:** They went ahead. I think I was edging around the clearing. I'm moving around the action.

**Quinn:** And, Constance, what are you doing right now?

**Teo:** So, it's charging towards me?

**Quinn:** Yeah.

**Teo:** At the same time JR blows her horn?

**Quinn:** Yeah.

**Teo:** Well, then I'm going to stop with the magical horn if we already got the noise part covered, and I'm going to whip around to get that flamethrower out.

**Quinn:** So, are you going to try to flame it?

**Teo:** Yeah. The smartest defense right now is a good offense.

**Quinn:** Yeah. It's going to be a kick some ass. And, JR, you're going to be helping out.

**Teo:** Ooh, boy.

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Hey, we still have a beef. Wolf?*

**Teo:** [rolls dice] That's a hot 6.

**Quinn:** Okay. JR?

**Hannah:** 7.

**Kyle:** Oh.

**Teo:** Oh-

**Quinn:** Okay.

**Teo:** -boy.

**Quinn:** JR, your help is going to grant Constance plus one, which is going to bring her up to a 7, which is a mixed success on kick some ass. So, you're going to trade harm. And then, JR, there's going to be a trouble or danger for you. So, Constance, this wolf is sprinting towards you, and you raise the flamethrower in time. This gout of fire erupts outwards, and it catches the wolf about 2ft in front of you. You're braced for impact, and none comes. What does come is a massive cloud of magenta haze.

**Teo:** Oh, shit.

**Hannah:** Oh, crap.

**Quinn:** And so, I'm going to need you to roll plus weird.

**Kyle:** Oh, God.

**Teo:** Oh, me?

**Quinn:** Yes. And, Constance, you're going to have a minus one on this because of your natural weakness to spores due to your allergies.

**Teo:** Damn it.

**Kyle:** Oh, God. Oh, God.

**Hannah:** Oh.

**Teo:** [giggles]

**Quinn:** Yeah, it's a deep cut back to character creation, y'all.

**Kyle:** Oh, no.

**Teo:** Except sucker. Because even with a minus one, that's a 10, baby.

**Hannah:** Yay.

**Kyle:** Ooh.

**Teo:** Weird is my jam. You try to go weird on me and I go weird right back.

**Quinn:** [laughs]

**Kyle:** I eat mushrooms for breakfast.

**Teo:** I do. I eat tomatoes like apples. What?

[laughter]

**Kyle:** Not a tomato attacking you. [laughs]

**Quinn:** That's a super weird flex, but I'm into it.

**Teo:** Yeah.

[laughter]

**Kyle:** Mushroom attack. That's okay. I eat tomatoes. Oh.

**Quinn:** Tomatoes and mushrooms, natural enemies. Anyway, moving on. Constance, you are enveloped in this cloud, and you feel a presence in the back of your mind, sort of force its way in. It's not entirely dissimilar from when you feel your Buni near you, but it's so much more aggressive. But I think part of it is, honestly, your experience having that line of communication with your Buni, you are able to shake it off, and this cloud in front of you dissipates.

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Quinn:** With that, you realize now that the fire and the particulates are gone, that all that's left of this wolf is a charred remain. JR, you are blowing this horn, and I think you stop when you realize that Constance successfully lit this wolf on fire. And when you stop blowing it, you realize that the sirens have stopped. You turn and you can see three squad cars have pulled up to the edge of the clearing and officers are exiting.

**Hannah:** Time to go.

**Quinn:** You see a-

**Hannah:** Oh, no.

**Quinn:** -red dot-

**Hannah:** Oh, God.

**Quinn:** -appear on the ground in front of you, and then-

**Hannah:** Shit.

**Quinn:** -start moving up your leg [Kyle laughs] to your chest. I need you to act under pressure as you realize that a sniper rifle has been trained on you.

**Teo:** Oh, fuck.

**Hannah:** Who the fuck in the Firmament police has a damn sniper rifle? What the hell?

**Kyle:** It's militarized police force, am I right?

**Teo:** Militarized police force.

**Kyle:** [laughs]

**Hannah:** Oh, Jesus Christ. [rolls dice]

**Kyle:** And then a tank shows up.

**Hannah:** Oh, That's an 11.

**Teo:** Whoo.

**Kyle:** [chuckles]

**Quinn:** These rolls, you all are getting some--

**Quinn and Kyle:** Finale rolls.

**Hannah:** How cool. Quinn, this is going to be really cool. You got to make it real cool, because I rolled an 11. Could you show that--?

**Quinn:** You know what? JR, why don't you tell me how cool it is?

**Teo:** [giggles]

**Hannah:** I fucking tuck and roll, and roll to the side. And as I do, I yell to everybody else, [as JR] *Time to go*. And then, right behind me, I hear a *thafoomph*, and that's the sound of the bullet hitting right where I was.

**Quinn:** Yup.

**Hannah:** Yeah.

**Quinn:** That's exactly how it happens. And so, JR, you're a little further away. Alvin, I think you're the closest to the entrance. And, Constance, you're not too far off. And this sniper rifle rings out through the early morning air. And, Constance, you hear your radio crackle on. [as Stoney] *Now, I don't want to have to hurt you, but trust me, I will*. And, JR, I think you know who has the sniper rifle.

**Kyle:** [gasps]

**Hannah:** [as JR] *We are going to have a very, very [Kyle laughs] long conversation about the dynamics of our interpersonal relationship when we are done with this. But not right now, Stoney.*

**Quinn:** What do the three of you do?

**Teo:** Well, I think it's time to get into that mine. Now, you're going to be mad at me, Quinn, but--

[laughter]

**Quinn:** I'm confused and scared.

[laughter]

**Teo:** As we go charging into the mine, I yell, [as Constance] *According to the 1977 Congressional Federal Mine Safety and Health Act, which currently governs MSHA activities, there should be some strong hardhats and some vests in this mine, even, even if it is no longer in operation, and I suggest we use them.*

[laughter]

**Teo:** [as Constance] *It's only saved so many lives. The fatalities dropped from 272 in 1977 to 1986 and 2000.*

**Hannah:** Is that true?

**Quinn:** You shout this as the three of you are sprinting towards the mine entrance.

**Teo:** This is true. Everything I'm saying right now is accurate.

**Kyle:** Who let Teo have internet access to this podcast?

[laughter]

**Teo:** So, I argue that we have some sort of semi armor, but I'll leave that to Quinn.

**Quinn:** Well, you haven't actually made it to the mine yet. So, we will--

**Hannah:** Oh, no.

[laughter]

**Hannah:** I can see the hardhats glistening in the moonlight.

[laughter]

**Kyle:** Who may argue against a high visibility jacket in this situation?

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Teo:** Yeah, that's fair.

**Kyle:** Alvin gives out as loud of a howl as he can muster, and he's going to try to run interference at the entrance to the mine while the other two scurry inside.

**Quinn:** Describe to me what you envision this looking like. Because the cops are about 75ft away, and they're out of the car now. Most of them just have their service pistols, but none of them are immediately advancing towards you. But they do have their guns drawn and they're fixing to fire. So, tell me how you're running interference.

**Kyle:** I expect Constance and JR are beelining straight for the mine entrance.

**Teo:** Serpentine.

**Kyle:** Yeah, serpentine.

**Hannah:** Yeah.

**Kyle:** So, Alvin is closest, but he's also the biggest target visually. So, he's going to try to draw the attention while the other two run inside.

**Quinn:** Okay. So, I think what this is going to be is it's going to be an act under pressure from Constance and JR. And, Alvin, if they don't do well, then you can protect someone.

**Kyle:** Okay.

**Hannah:** [rolls dice] That's a 5.

**Quinn:** And Constance?

**Teo:** That's a 9.

**Quinn:** Okay. Alvin, do you want to protect JR?

**Kyle:** Yeah, I'll protect.

**Quinn:** Okay.

**Kyle:** Alvin protecc.

**Quinn:** Go ahead and roll to protect someone.

**Kyle:** And he attacc.

**Teo:** Please protect thee.

**Kyle:** [rolls dice] 7, 8, 9.

**Quinn:** So, JR, you failed. So, you take off sprinting, but you're too far away to make it. And, Alvin, you see that red light show up on her back-

**Hannah:** Oh, no, Alvin.

**Kyle:** I got this.

**Quinn:** And you sprint forward and tackle JR to the ground. You catch just a bit of a sniper rifle bullet.

**Hannah:** Oh.

**Kyle:** That's probably fine though. It's oh.

**Quinn:** And it doesn't hit you square. So, I think it only does two harm-

**Teo:** Oh, Jesus.

**Hannah:** Oh.

**Quinn:** -which is going to be one to you.

**Kyle:** Yeah, it's enough for unstable. Can I pick up JR like a little baby cub, and take her into the mine?

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Quinn:** Yeah. I do think that after you take that bullet, there's other gunfire from the police officers, but it's not as accurate as a sniper rifle. And so, after you tackle JR, you grab her and you sprint back to the mine entrance.

**Hannah:** I'm going to yell over Alvin's shoulder. I guess I'm being carried like a baby.

**Kyle:** Yeah, you're like a baby in a stork's mouth kind of thing.

**Teo:** Oh, boy.

[laughter]



**Hannah:** Anyway, I yell over my shoulder. [as JR] *Stoney, if you hurt Alvin again, I swear to God, I will kill you.* I know he's in there and it's really important that he understands how upset I am.

**Teo:** Only I get to shoot my friends.

[laughter]

**Hannah:** Fuck off.

**Kyle:** Yeah, well, while we're running into the cave, I'll say to JR like, [as Alvin] *You've got better aim.*

[laughter]

**Hannah:** All right.

**Quinn:** Okay. Constance, you got a 9, so I'm going to give you a worse outcome, hard choice, or a price to pay. I think this is going to be a couple hard choices for you. You're going to catch a stray bullet. The question is what it hits. It's either going to hit you, it's going to hit the flamethrower, or it's going-

**Kyle:** Oh, God.

**Quinn:** -to hit the horn.

**Teo:** It's going to hit the horn.

**Quinn:** Yeah, the horn shatters.

**Teo:** Okay.

**Hannah:** Oh.

**Quinn:** It was already fragmented to begin with. And as you're sprinting towards the mine, you feel the percussive air of bullet fly by, and this horn just shatters.

**Teo:** Oh, wasn't that magical now, was it?

**Kyle:** [chuckles]

**Quinn:** It turns out the magic was inside you the whole time.

**Teo:** [sighs] I pick up one of the little shards and put it in a pocket.

**Quinn:** I'm sorry. To clarify, are you stopping to pick up the shards?

**Teo:** Fine.

[laughter]

**Teo:** I was going to pick up one and put in my pocket.

**Kyle:** Catch it midair as you go.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Teo:** I am holding the thing.

**Quinn:** Hey, this is a collaborative storytelling effort. I respect your choice in influencing the fiction. So, if you want to stop and pick up the horn fragments, you go right ahead.

[laughter]

**Teo:** Look, I'm going to just say this. I don't stop, but I was holding it and it got shot out of my hand. I assume that I can catch a piece as I'm running.

**Quinn:** Yeah, sure. That's fine.

**Teo:** Yeah. And I just stuff that in my pocket. I just want it for later.

**Kyle:** For the monster scrapbook.

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Kyle:** [laughs]

**Quinn:** The three of you all make it to the entrance to the mine, and you throw open the rusted over gate. There was probably a lock at some point, but it's not locked currently, and you enter into the mine. The space beyond the entrance is fairly broad, although you can tell that it narrows pretty significantly up ahead. There's some really old mining equipment propped against the wall, but it looks to be in pretty bad shape. You can also see, towards the entrance to the tunnel, a set of old, rusty minecart tracks leading down into the darkness.

**Hannah:** Any hardhats?

**Teo:** Valid question.

**Quinn:** Ah, yes.

**Kyle:** [chuckles]

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Hannah:** How many hardhats?

**Quinn:** At least three.

**Teo:** All right.

**Teo:** Okay.

**Teo:** Put them on.

**Kyle:** Well-

**Hannah:** Safety first.

**Kyle:** -I'll try.

**Teo:** Yeah, if you can fit.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Quinn:** There's no mechanical benefit to the hardhats, but they do exist.

**Teo:** Quinn, you say there's no mechanical benefit, but I would argue that if we decide to throw one at something, there is a mechanical benefit.

**Kyle:** Hey, what if a rock falls, huh?

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Quinn:** Fair.

**Kyle:** Pretty good.

**Hannah:** Just because you're not committed to safety, doesn't mean we aren't.

[laughter]

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Quinn:** Okay. You do not gain any armor from wearing the hardhat. Fair points about the other stuff.

**Hannah:** Do I look cute wearing the hardhat?

**Teo:** Oh, totally.

**Quinn:** You tell me.

**Teo:** Constance thinks so.

**Hannah:** Yeah, I look real cute in the hardhat.

**Kyle:** How about me? Do I look cute with a little hardhat?

**Hannah:** Oh, you look cute in everything, Alvin.

**Kyle:** [laughs]

**Hannah:** You're just such a cute little giant coyote man.

**Teo:** Even covered in blood, it's amazing.

**Hannah:** So cute.

**Kyle:** Bang, bang, bang. Oh, gunshots.

[laughter]

**Teo:** Sorry. Okay, we have not stopped for this conversation, by the way. We grab the hardhats, we go.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Quinn:** Yeah.

**Kyle:** We put them on, we take a second look at them and be like, nice.

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Kyle:** Keep going.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Teo:** Yup.

**Quinn:** I think as you enter the mine, the radio crackles on again and you hear--

**Hannah:** Oh, Goddamn it.

**Quinn:** [as Stoney] *Now, have you ever gone down in a mine before? Listen, you don't have to die. Why not serve a higher calling?*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Give me that fucking radio.*

**Teo:** Constance first says, [as Constance] *We're not going to die. We've taken the proper safety precautions. Over and out.*

[laughter]

**Kyle:** Thank you for your concern.

**Teo:** I hand it to JR, in case JR wants to add anything. But Constance feels very smug about that and enjoys it.

**Hannah:** Hold up. I'm spitballing here. Might this be an opportunity-- I know we're going down to the mine, we're going to find whatever this is. Do we want to try and get more information?

**Kyle:** Like, try to chat while we're looking?

**Hannah:** Yeah. I don't know if this is a Bond villain monologuing situation where we can get it to give us more information. I'm kind of thinking no, but also this would be a really good opportunity for JR to get some stuff off of her chest.

**Kyle:** The Consensus does seem to like to talk about itself.

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Hannah:** Oh, okay.

**Kyle:** We found that out when we were interviewing it earlier in the woods.

**Hannah:** Okay. So, give me the bullhorn.

**Teo:** Yeah. But we're still moving while we do this.

**Hannah:** The right-- Yeah.

**Teo:** I think it's meant to be a distraction. But I hand you the radio, as we move deeper in the mine.

**Kyle:** Constance, you may have to take point in trying to locate where in the mine we're trying to go because I expect you probably have the best knowledge of the layout.

**Teo:** Yeah. So, I assume that it's probably in a deep, damp part of the mine, so we probably want to get on that unfortunately, rusty-- Oh, my gosh, the name of the thing is escaping me.

**Kyle:** The cart.

**Teo:** Thank you.

**Hannah:** Cart?

**Teo:** Yes. We should probably get on that and head on down.

**Quinn:** I don't think I mentioned that there was a minecart, but I want this so badly. So, there's a minecart.

[laughter]

**Teo:** Yes.

**Kyle:** We've conjured one.

**Hannah:** Yes!

**Teo:** [laughs]

**Kyle:** We've conjured one through sheer willpower.

**Quinn:** It is pitch black in here. How are you navigating?

**Teo:** Well--

**Hannah:** Did the hardhats have lights on them?

**Teo:** They should.

**Quinn:** They do, but they are nonfunctional. Constance, I think it's reasonable to say that you would still have the flashlight.

**Teo:** Oh, yeah. I turn that on. I think I'm also going to investigate a mystery real quick. Just look around a hot sec.

**Quinn:** Yeah, you can definitely investigate a mystery. You'll probably want it to be a quick investigation, because those police officers are inbound.

**Teo:** Yeah, I guess the way I'm thinking of it is I turn on the flashlight, and I'm doing like a 360 look around.

**Quinn:** Yeah, go ahead.

**Teo:** [crosstalk] needs to be a roll, but-- [rolls dice] That is a 15.

**Kyle:** Whoa.

**Quinn:** Okay.

**Kyle:** [chuckles] Oh, my God.

**Teo:** Yeah. Double 6s plus 3 sharp.

**Hannah:** Damn, girl.

**Kyle:** That's crit.

**Hannah:** Damn.

[crosstalk]

**Kyle:** That's crit. Whomp, whomp, whomp.

**Teo:** I really know this mine, you guys.

**Kyle:** [chuckles]

**Quinn:** Okay. You get to hold 2.

**Teo:** Sweet.

**Kyle:** Your Buni built this mine.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Teo:** I think the obvious one is, where did it go? Which direction should we be going?

**Quinn:** Down. It went down.

**Teo:** Down on the cart. Yay. Okay.

**Quinn:** At least from your current position, there's only one way down, and it's down this tunnel.

**Teo:** Okay. Do I have to use my other one? I guess yeah.

**Quinn:** You can hold onto it if you want to.

**Teo:** Yeah, I'll hold onto it. I'll hold onto it.

**Quinn:** Okay. You do a quick scan. You ascertain that the only possible way it could have gone is down or it could be is down. And the three of you pile into an old minecart and start heading down as you can hear the heavy footfalls of the police officers approaching the entrance to the mine. JR, you had the radio. Did you want to do something as you're beginning to creak down this old, rusty mine track?

**Hannah:** Yeah. [as JR] *Okay, so, higher calling Stoney. This sounds like, I haven't gotten invited to one of these in a while because I keep picking up stakes and moving. But frankly, this sounds like a multilevel marketing scam. So, give me your best pitch for joining. What are you guys calling yourselves again? The Consortium? The Collective?*

**Quinn:** [as Consortium] *The Consortium? That's pretty good. That might even better. We're open to a rebranding, I think.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Just get on Twitter. I hear Twitter's real--* [crosstalk]

**Quinn:** [as Consortium] *JR, I could use your skills. Isn't that better than being dead? Because we will kill you if we have to.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Yeah. Look, I would really like to not be dead. Dead is very final. Very not my brand. I enjoy being alive. But I'm not real interested in this whole like letting you do what you want with me. Because frankly, that also feels a bit like being dead.*

**Quinn:** [as Consortium] *Well, it is sort of a yes or no proposition.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Are you going to let Stoney go when this is done? Are you going to let anybody go when this is done?*

**Quinn:** [as Consortium] *Well, I have to see how it all pans out. I don't know what the future holds. I mean, sure, there's a scenario where you all could happily live ever after, but we'll just have to see.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Thanks, but no thanks. I'm not interested in joining your company as a boss babe, and finding my best self. But thanks, I'll take my complimentary Tupperware, and get the hell out of this party.*

**Quinn:** I think as you say that the minecart picks up speed and you are sailing down a spiral tunnel that is descending downward and downward. And after a short distance-

**Hannah:** Weeeee.

**Quinn:** -as you get past this main entryway, it becomes, not just oppressively dark, but also suffocatingly narrow. You're constantly scraping against the walls and threatening to knock your head on the ceiling. And after you go not too far down, Constance, I think you spot with your flashlight that you're pointing ahead, a horizontal tunnel that splits off from the downward ramp that you're following.

**Teo:** Yeah, I'm going to go ahead and use my other hold now and say, what is being concealed here?

**Quinn:** As you pass by, you actually react pretty quickly, and you shine your light down there. What you see is, I think, Constance, you've probably read about mines because you have read about most things. This appears to be a stope, which is an access tunnel from which the decline tunnel gets to the ore. I think based on what you know, it's also a good bet that there are a number of these stopes, and they probably connect to the old mineshaft that you saw from the outside.

**Teo:** Okay. We have that way, and then we also just have continuing on the tracks?

**Quinn:** Yes. And in fact, given the state of these tracks, I don't think you have a chance to stop. You just fly by this fork and continue downward. [chuckles]

**Teo:** Cool. I think about telling them and I realize no one cares. It's fine. It's just information that I get to keep to myself for now.

**Quinn:** It's fine. It's just information. It's not like knowledge is power or anything.

**Teo:** Fine. Okay. I'm like, [as Constance] *Ah. Mm, mm.*

**Quinn:** It's not the central premise of your character.

**Teo:** [laughs] I'm just--

**Kyle:** Well, she only gets XP if we ask about it.

**Quinn:** [laughs]

**Teo:** Right. That's true.

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Say, Constance, do you have any helpful facts about mines now that we're in this mine?*

**Quinn:** Hurtling downward in a rusty mine cart in the darkness.

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Well, do I?*

**Hannah:** Look, I love learning.

[laughter]

**Teo:** I tell you guys, all that jargon and you probably look at me with eyes glazed, but I'm very into it. And then I add to the end of that. [as Constance] *Also, if you do spot some silver-- Well, with the exception of you, Alvin, I guess this is not good for you. But JR, silver does have antibacterial. We might be able to cure some wounds* [Hannah laughs] *with that.*

**Quinn:** And speaking of silver, Alvin, as this minecart continues to hurdle downwards-

**Kyle:** Uh-huh.

**Quinn:** -your skin's starting to itch.

**Kyle:** Yeah.

**Quinn:** Just all over, you're starting to get this itchy sensation. It's starting to tingle a little bit too, and you're starting to feel a little bit dizzy as you go further and further down this mine.

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *I don't know if I'm going to be a huge help on this one, guys. Gang, team, friends, it's real itchy down here.*

[laughter]

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Do you guys feel that? Probably not. That seems like a me thing because of that. Remember earlier when I put my hand in the hole-*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Yeah.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *I do remember that.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *-that burned real bad?*

**Teo:** [as JR] *Not ideal.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Well, listen, we learned some very important things.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Well, you know, teamwork makes the dream work. You're a little itchy. We'll just make sure when we get you out of here to get some Benadryl and chamomile lotion on you.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *I'm a lot itchy.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *A lot of Benadryl.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *I definitely have Benadryl because as we've established, I have allergies. Do you think that would work?*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *I don't know, for sure.*

**Teo:** *I hand you a Benadryl.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *We could try. It might just make me sleepy.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Oh, no. Non drowsy.* [Hannah laughs] *I have to live with this every day. Are you kidding me?*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *I'll give it a shot.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Okay.*

**Quinn:** *I love the image of the three of you in this-*

**Hannah:** [laughs] *Oh, my God--*

**Quinn:** *-absolute inky darkness, [Hannah laughs] hurtling down this utterly claustrophobic spiral tunnel, surrounded by silver on this rusty, bent out of shape mine track talking about Benadryl.*

**Kyle:** *Yeah, I hope these tracks-- [crosstalk] Stop all of a sudden.*

**Teo:** *Yeah.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Yeah. When do we get to the end of this?*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *We'll know.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *I have a distinct memory of, I believe it was Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom. I think the cart just went out into the river? Is that what happens?*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Yeah. We'll know when we're done with this ride.*

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *I guess be ready to jump at a moment's notice.*



**Hannah:** Can I read a bad situation to see, like, when we're going to run out of mine track? Is that a move I can do?

**Quinn:** Yeah. Sure. Why not? Let's say yes. We're going to yes and.

**Teo:** Oh, boy.

**Kyle:** If you fail, it's going to be now.

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Kyle:** He was going to give this to us!

**Hannah:** [rolls dice] Looks, failure is how we grow. It's a 9.

**Quinn:** Okay. Hold 1.

**Hannah:** What's the best way to protect the victims? And by victims, I'm going to say it's us.

**Teo:** [giggles]

**Hannah:** We are definitely the victims right now. [laughs]

**Quinn:** So, you have absolutely reached a critical speed here. This minecart is going very quickly.

**Hannah:** Excellent.

**Quinn:** It may have, at some point, been designed to go at this speed, but these tracks are decades old. The minecart is probably equally old. And so, even if it was built at one point to do what you're doing, it's probably no longer functionally able to do that. So, the best way to protect the victims is to stop doing what you're doing. Stop that thing.

**Hannah:** Stop the minecart. Okay.

**Quinn:** Yeah.

**Hannah:** Okay. Does it have a break on it?

**Quinn:** No.

**Kyle:** Yeah.

**Hannah:** Why would you do this to us, Quinn? Why would you do this to us?

**Quinn:** You jumped in an old minecart. [laughs]

**Kyle:** You can't blame Quinn for our own choices.

**Quinn:** I think, JR, you reach for the brake handle, and grab it, and it snaps right off.

**Kyle:** [laughs]

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Excellent. I know I do this a lot, and I apologize for my role in bringing unpleasantness to your life, but I've got some bad news,* and I hold up-- [crosstalk]

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Yeah. I heard it break.*

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Yeah, we're in the cart with you. We've figured it out.*

**Quinn:** I should add that you've passed probably three or four stopes.

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Okay, we need to jump into one of the stopes, you guys.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *We can't really jump though. The ceiling is right above us.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *We need to hobble out.*

**Hannah:** [laughs] Oh, God. We're just going to have to go hanging off the back of this cart one by one.

**Teo:** Pretty much of it.

**Quinn:** The three of you, if you wanted to try to break off into one of the stopes, could all try to lean the cart and roll out as you're approaching one.

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Kyle:** I could try and be a break.

**Teo:** Ooh.

**Hannah:** Oh, boy. [as JR] Buddy, buddy, you're already so itchy.

**Kyle:** Yeah, I don't like the idea, but I don't like the idea of jumping off into a tunnel because I feel like forward momentum puts us into the wall, but I'm feeling all hyped up on Benadryl energy. So, I'm going to try to do a no limits here and try to hop holding the back of the cart, try to like Wolverine break with my cool magic claws.

**Quinn:** I dig it. So, you halfway leap out and you start to coyote up. And this numb sensation permeates your body. Go ahead and read the vulnerability on your character sheet.

**Kyle:** Pick a substance. Silver. You suffer plus one harm when you suffer harm from it. If you are bound or surrounded by it, you must act under pressure to use your powers.

**Quinn:** So, go ahead and roll to act under pressure for me.

**Teo:** Sheesh.

**Kyle:** Come on, magic dice. [rolls dice] Well, it's actually 7. It's 8-1, which is better-

**Quinn:** Okay.

**Kyle:** -than I expected.

**Quinn:** [laughs] So, there is a branching tunnel up ahead as you jump out to do this. And so, I think either, as you're slowing down, you're going to scrape against the wall, which is going to have some consequences for you. You're not quite going to get the turn right and the minecart is going to collide with the wall as you break off. It won't be as bad as if you had just tried to turn away, but there will be a collision. Or you can recant, or you can hop back in, but you're not going to be able to break away.

**Kyle:** [chuckles] Hop back in? No, never mind.

**Quinn:** That's an option. It's a mixed success.

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Oh, Alvin.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Yeah?*

**Hannah:** My feelings won't be hurt if this doesn't work--

**Kyle:** You all have weapons now, and we haven't even found the main heart of things. So, I'm going to do the first option, or I'll scrape some of the walls, but no limits out.

**Hannah:** Okay. All right.

**Quinn:** Go ahead and roll no limits, and then we'll deal with the consequences of scraping against the walls.

**Hannah:** Oh, buddy. I'm so worried about you.

**Kyle:** [rolls dice] [laughs] Well, so I rolled a 4, but I do get plus 3. So, it is 7.

**Quinn:** So, on a 7 to 9, there is a consequence for your no limits. So, what is that going to be?

**Kyle:** I think minus one forward, probably.

**Quinn:** Yeah. Alvin, you hop out of the back, and you plant your legs against the ground, and your muscles bulge and you flex and you try to get this minecart to respond to you, and you're going to need more leverage than you have just by planting your feet. And so, you throw your shoulder into the side, and you feel this burn. You remember it vividly from when you stuck your hand in that hole in the side of Cathedral Peak, and you can tell that you're right next to a silver seam. So, you're going to take one harm, ignore armor or your immortal ability, and you're going to have the minus one forward from your no limits as you almost throw the cart into the stope. And JR and Constance, you're thrown from the cart, but not with any consequence.

**Kyle:** Bingo.

**In Unison:** Yay.

**Kyle:** Yay for me.

**Teo:** [as Constance] *We're just concerned about you, but yay, you did it.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Ouch.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *You did it.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *All right. Let's go into the tunnel.*

**Quinn:** As the three of you get your bearings in this tunnel, which I think is probably the fifth one, the radio crackles on.

**Hannah:** Oh, my God.

**Quinn:** [as Consortium] *I heard a crash. Are you all okay down there?*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Don't answer. Don't answer. No.*

**Kyle:** [crosstalk] [as Alvin] *Just turn it off.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Don't answer. Let them think we died.*

**Hannah:** [laughs] We died.

**Kyle:** Do you say that?

**Hannah:** No.

**Teo:** I'm pretty sure that JR had the button going.

[laughter]

**Kyle:** It's just so-- [as Alvin] *No, shh. Tell him we're dead. We're not home.*

**Teo:** Yup, 100%.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Hannah:** Ahoy-hoy. Well, this is the wrong number.

**Kyle:** [laughs]

**Teo:** This is Detective--

**Kyle:** Officer Gerald Ford.

**Hannah:** [laughs] It's Gerald.

**Teo:** Gerald Jasper reporting for duty.

**Quinn:** [as Consortium] *Now, don't you all worry too much. We're dispatching medical assistance.*

**Teo:** Hey, Consensus. Sorry. [laughs]

**Hannah:** Consus, I'm pretty sure-- laughs] I'm pretty sure it's The Consensus. The the is very important.

**Teo:** Oh, whatever. Okay, fine.

**Quinn:** [as Consortium] *Now, JR, you really sold me on Consortium. I might be willing to switch it up here.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *All right, now, are we talking The Consortium or just Consortium? Because I'm going to tell you right now, Consortium has a much better ring to it, and you're going to sell yourself so much better with that.*

**Quinn:** [as Consortium] *I'm really--*

**Hannah:** It's seriously fuck off, and I click it off.

**Teo:** Wait. No, I click it back on real quick, because--

[laughter]

**Teo:** -Constance is rarely ever quippy.

**Quinn:** [as Consortium] *I'm open to either know. You tell me, The consortium. Consortium. They both have a nice ring to it.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *That was JR's final word. So, she got the final say in that conversation. But let me just tell you this, Consortium, The Consortium, whatever you want to be. Think about how absolutely inept we are, given your experience with us, and then feel bad about yourself for the fact that we're still going to beat you.* And then I click it off.

**Hannah:** All right, that was pretty good.

**Kyle:** And then I take the radio, I click it back on.

**Hannah:** No.

[laughter]

**Kyle:** And I say, [as Alvin] *Just leave the med packs by the entryway. We'll come and get it after we go and beat your ass.* And I click it off.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Does anybody else have anything else-*

**Kyle:** I hand it back to JR.

**Hannah:** *-want to say to Stoney?* Anything else. Anybody?

**Kyle:** No, you've got it. No.

**Teo:** No, you've got it. We gave it back. We gave it back.

**Hannah:** Let's go. [laughs]

**Quinn:** As you deliver the final message-

**Hannah:** [Teo laughs] --messages.

**Quinn:** -which will be determined by how I edit this episode.

[laughter]

[music]

**Quinn:** Hey, everyone, it's your friendly neighborhood keeper, Quinn, here to welcome you to the intermission. Before we go any further, I do need to make sure you have a cozy blanket and plenty of candles on hand. You will need them to ward away the real monster, that is darkness setting in at approximately 03:45 in the afternoon. Thanks so much for tuning into Episode 12 of Monster Hour. This is the finale of our current mystery, and I think we all had a lot of fun with how it went down.

And speaking of lots of fun, I want to thank everybody who's helped share the show with their friends, both in person and on social media. It really is the best way to help new folks learn about Monster Hour, and our heroes' zany hijinks in the face of significant, life-threatening peril.

Don't forget that if you tweet about the show using *#monsterhourpod*, you could wind up with a character named after you. We're about to start a new mystery, which means I'll be introducing a slew of new characters. So, if you want to crack at some of the first names on the show, now is the time to fire up your Twitter engine.

One last note. We do still have some Monster Hour stickers to give away. So, if you'd like one, just shoot a note to *monsterhourpod@gmail.com*, and we will send one your way.

I think that's it for me. We'll be back with Episode 13 of Monster Hour on December 3rd. See you then.

[music]

**Quinn:** As the radio goes silent, now that the minecart isn't going, now that you don't have this shrill shriek of rusted metal on rusted metal, you can hear the sound of heavy footsteps echoing through the tunnels.

**Kyle:** How big is the minecart in relation to the rest of the tunnel?

**Quinn:** Probably about two-thirds of the width and height.

**Kyle:** Can I shove the cart so it's tipped over sideways in the tunnel blocking it?

**Quinn:** Yeah.

**Kyle:** I do that.

**Quinn:** Okay. You maneuver the cart so that it's blocking as much of the tunnel as possible.

**Kyle:** Okay, let's go.

**Teo:** Yeah, let's go.

**Hannah:** Yeah.

**Kyle:** I sniff the air.

**Quinn:** Okay. If you are sniffing around, if you're using your lycanthrope abilities to try to find the right path, it's going to be an investigative mystery.

**Kyle:** [rolls dice] 7 again.

**Quinn:** Hold 1.

**Kyle:** Where we go? [laughs] Where did it go? It being where we need to go?

**Quinn:** Yes.

**Kyle:** Where did where we need to go go?

**Teo:** [laughs]

**Quinn:** You travel down this side tunnel, and you come across a variety of tunnels to your left that are mined into a-- They're mined into a hollow cavern. Alvin, I think in particular, you can tell, based on your discomfort, that this is the lode of silver. This is the vein that they found and tapped into.

**Kyle:** Oh, I hate it.

**Quinn:** Yeah. You probably have a visceral reaction being this close to the direct source.

**Kyle:** I actually hiss and that catches me by surprise.

**Quinn:** Yeah.

**Kyle:** Constance gives you a weird look.

**Kyle:** [laughs]

**Quinn:** And so, you pass by probably a half dozen of these side tunnels until you reach a chute, basically, in the floor that goes downward. It's not big enough for a human to travel down, but the vaguely moldy aroma is coming from further down.

**Constance:** Ugh.

**Quinn:** And, Constance, I think, based on probably what you know about mines, this is an ore chute. So, they would mine the ore, and they would throw it down here to the crusher, where it would be broken down and then loaded up the mineshaft. I think further down this

tunnel in the opposite direction from once you came shining the flashlight down, you can see the old mineshaft.

**Kyle:** I'd say it's down.

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Hannah:** [as JR] *All right, let's keep going.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Let's do it.*

**Quinn:** So, you have-- to get further down the chute is not big enough for a human being to go down, especially in its state of disrepair. You have the mineshaft in one direction, and you have the decline tunnel that you were traversing the other way.

**Kyle:** And if, as I'm sure Constance has informed us, this smaller ore tunnel probably leads to a crusher, that may not be where we want to go anyway.

**Teo:** Yeah, that's fair.

**Hannah:** Okay. So, maybe not go that way.

**Kyle:** A mineshaft, probably.

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Teo:** [as JR] *All right, let's keep going down the mine shaft.*

**Quinn:** Okay.

**Hannah:** [as JR] *We should probably hurry.*

**Quinn:** The three of you traverse the rest of this tunnel and arrive at the mineshaft. It is a--

**Hannah:** A giant [crosstalk]

**Kyle:** As a function-- [crosstalk]

**Quinn:** See, that's what I didn't want to say, Hannah.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Kyle:** OSHA-approved steps. [laughs] It's a well-constructed shaft with a working elevator and proper stairs. [Hannah laughs] Like, an access stairwell-

**Quinn:** No, for sure not.

**Kyle:** -and secure ladders.

**Hannah:** And adequate lighting.

**Kyle:** And a sealift.

**Quinn:** No.

**Teo:** Wow. What a great mine.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Kyle:** It's a pretty good mine. Surprised they shut it down.

**Teo:** I know.

**Quinn:** So, you reach the end of this tunnel and lean forward. And below you is a pit, just a sheer drop into darkness. And you point the flashlight down and you can see the bottom, maybe 70ft, 80ft down. You point your flashlight up, and it doesn't reach the surface. You can see what may have been some rudimentary infrastructure. But at this point, the only thing in front of you is a precarious-looking cable. What do you do?

**Hannah:** I would like to read a bad situation and see if there's anything else that we can use to get down to the bottom of this without us ending up like flat and dead.

**Kyle:** Can I give a little tug on the cable?

**Quinn:** Sure.

**Kyle:** I tug on the cable a little bit.

**Quinn:** Your tug is not a significant amount of weight, but it goes taut at your pull.

**Kyle:** I give it a pretty good tug, like an Alvin size tug.

**Quinn:** It wavers slightly, but it doesn't give.

**Kyle:** Seems pretty good. Y'all could probably be fine.

**Hannah:** Okay. So, are we going to go down the cable, I guess? Ooh.

**Teo:** I don't want to steal this from you, Hannah, but I have a plus 3 sharp. So, I'm thinking I might read a bad situation before we do it.

**Hannah:** Yeah, why don't you try--? Like, I'm going to go over and look at the cable again. [rolls dice] I'm a little green.

**Teo:** That's an 11.

**Quinn:** Hold 3.

**Kyle:** Hot-diggity-dog. Okay. [giggles] I'm going to go with, what's the best way in, as in like into the layer of the big bad?

**Quinn:** It depends on how you want to define best. Your quickest way in is down the mineshaft. [Kyle laughs] Your safest way in is down the decline tunnel.

**Hannah:** The decline tunnel, the one that's not big enough for humans to crawl down?

**Quinn:** No, that's the ore chute. The decline tunnel was the spiral tunnel that you were using the minecart on.

**Kyle:** Ah, go back that way and walk down.

**Teo:** Ooh, okay. My second hold. Are there any dangers we haven't noticed?

**Hannah:** [laughs] Goddamn it. Is the radio going to click back on?

**Kyle:** All by itself? Ooh.

**Quinn:** The radio does not click back on by itself. For are there any dangers we haven't noticed, I think you can hear down this tunnel, the sound of the minecart grating against stone, and you can tell that people are trying to move it.

**Kyle:** Decline tunnels, probably not an option.



**Teo:** Not at the moment. Okay. What's most vulnerable to me? Because I think I know the answer to the other questions on the list.

**Quinn:** Most vulnerable to me.

**Kyle:** My brain knows what you said, but my ears really wanted it to be, what's most vulnerable?

[laughter]

**Kyle:** You can cut that-

**Hannah:** You're always making [crosstalk]

**Kyle:** -Quinn, if you'd like.

**Teo:** [laughs]

**Kyle:** I just have to let everyone know.

**Quinn:** The shaft is right there.

[laughter]

**Quinn:** The shaft is right there.

**Hannah:** It's right there.

**Quinn:** Were you going to say it's right in your face?

**Hannah:** [laughs] I'm not. I'm going to say you can reach out and touch it.

**Quinn:** Even better. A plus. Good work, y'all.

**Teo:** Oh, boy.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Kyle:** He came around.

**Teo:** Hey.

**Quinn:** What is most vulnerable to me? Constance, you still have the flamethrower, right?

**Teo:** Oh, yeah.

**Quinn:** If you waited in one of those side tunnels and caught those cops off guard, you could burn them all. That is what's most vulnerable to you.

**Teo:** Mm.

**Kyle:** Yeah.

**Teo:** But--

**Kyle:** But do we want to kill them? Probably not.

**Quinn:** I can't answer that moral question for you, but I can tell you what's most vulnerable to you.

[laughter]

**Teo:** What is my morally best option?

**Kyle:** Hey, I want to read a bad situation of my brain.

**Quinn:** [laughs]

**Kyle:** What's going on in here?

**Quinn:** Roll plus moral compass.

**Kyle:** [laughs]

**Hannah:** We're doing the cable car problem except we're in a mine and it involves flames.

**Teo:** Yes. I think I don't even mention the flaming option that comes into my head because I'm nervous that in JR's current state of anger at Stoney, she might semi consider it. Not really, but

**Hannah:** Would she give it more than a passing call?

**Teo:** Yeah. So, maybe don't--

**Hannah:** She's mad and bloody.

**Teo:** Yeah. So, I kind of look and I go, [as Constance] *Look, I don't think we really have a choice right now. It's time to go down.*

**Hannah:** So, I'm going to try, before we go down the mineshaft, down the shaft to the bottom--

**Quinn:** If you say it normally, we don't have to laugh down.

**Kyle:** [chuckles]

**Hannah:** It's down the mineshaft.

**Hannah:** Ah, I'm going to try and--

[laughter]

**Hannah:** Tried so hard. I'm sorry.

**Quinn:** You tried hard.

**Kyle:** You gave us a word. You gave us a new word.

**Hannah:** I tried. [laughs] I'm going to try and do some magic. I'm going to try and see if I can block the entrance to where the folks are going to come in.

**Quinn:** The consequence of doing magic without the key is, basically, you're going to take a minus one.

**Hannah:** I'm going to try. Just to be aware, I do also have, not my fault, in case this goes badly, [rolls dice] which is entirely possible, because that's a 3.

**Quinn:** Okay.

**Kyle:** Oh, no.

**Quinn:** So, Alvin, you're tugging on this cable. And, Constance, you're studying the scene. And JR just breaks away. She wanders back down the tunnel. And, JR, you hold out your hand with the inscriptions burned into your palm, and what do you say?

**Hannah:** God, what did I say when I blocked them at The Prospector?

**Kyle:** Stop or--

**Hannah:** I think I said stop. Yeah. So, I think I'm going to try that again, as I hold on my hand, I say stop.

**Quinn:** You say stop and you just freeze. You are frozen in place. And as you're paralyzed, you just see five police officers finish clearing the cart.

**Hannah:** Oh, my God, Quinn, why are you doing this to us?

**Quinn:** You missed completely, and that's a hard move.

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *JR? Constance, I think something's up with JR.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Oh, shit.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *And also, those look like police. We've got to go.*

**Quinn:** Yeah. The two of you see a light at the very other side of the tunnel that you're in.

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Take the cable. No time for a rappelling lesson.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Okay.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Good luck. I'll be right behind you.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *I've actually read about this-*

[laughter]

**Teo:** -and I follow appropriate protocol.

**Kyle:** Okay. So, what's the book?

**Hannah:** Yeah, what book? [laughs] You knew this was coming.

**Kyle:** Uhm-- I did, yes.

**Kyle:** [laughs]

**Quinn:** But she didn't know the circumstance was coming, to be fair.

**Kyle:** Yeah.

**Teo:** It's not a book. It's a manual. It is the *2006 Compendium: Miners Guide to a happy, healthy, safe ride*, and it has cute little illustrations because the man who wrote it, Sir Arthur Conan Jericho, is also an-

**Hannah:** What is it with these names?

**Teo:** -artist in his free time.

**Kyle:** Excuse me. Wait, Sir Arthur Conan-

**Teo:** Jericho.

**Kyle:** Jericho.

**Teo:** He was the safety officer in the mine here in town. He also was an aspiring artist, and he rewrote the safety guidelines to be a fun Dr. Seuss-like book. Hence, the rhyming title.

But it does have little hand-drawn illustrations in it. So, I'm remembering the stick figure. He wasn't a very good artist. I'll just put that out there. I'm remembering the stick figure of how you are supposed to repel down.

**Kyle:** He's drawn every step in detail, but they're bad details. [laughs]

**Teo:** Yes.

**Quinn:** So, I don't know if this is your head canon, Constance, but I envision these as like *Fallout* manual guides.

**Teo:** Mm-hmm. Yeah.

**Kyle:** Yeah.

**Quinn:** Okay. So, Constance, you are trying to rappel down. Alvin, you are going back to figure out what's going on with JR.

**Kyle:** Yeah, I'm running to grab JR.

**Quinn:** Constance, let's go ahead and do you first. It's definitely an act under pressure, so go ahead and use your plus sharp since you have read about this sort of thing.

**Teo:** I have. All right.

**Quinn:** From Sir Arthur Conan Jericho.

**Teo:** Yup. [rolls dice] Our world is fascinating. That's a 10.

**Quinn:** You grab hold of this cable, and boy, it's a little wobbly, but you deftly navigate your way down, and after just a few moments, you reach the bottom. Alvin, you are approaching JR who's just standing there, what on earth is she doing? And as you arrive, you see that several police officers have cleared this minecart and are moving down the tunnel.

**Kyle:** Retro. I shake JR.

**Quinn:** She's literally frozen in place.

**Kyle:** Okay. I pick her up like a log over the shoulder and I'm running back to the cable.

**Hannah:** Can I act under pressure to unfreeze myself?

**Quinn:** No, you are absolutely frozen in place.

**Hannah:** Ugh.

**Quinn:** So, Alvin, I think this is going to be a protect someone. As you pick up JR and take off down the tunnel, these officers have pointed their flashlights towards you and have their guns drawn once more.

**Kyle:** [rolls dice] 7, 8, 9.

**Quinn:** On a 7 plus, you protect them okay but you're going to suffer some or all of the harm. So, I think I'll give you a couple options on this one. You can take the bullet. You can let JR take the hit but get away. Or, the two of you will be okay, but you are going to have to duck into one of the side tunnels and you're going to get pinned down.

**Hannah:** You should let me take the bullet.

**Kyle:** Yeah, I think it's--

**Hannah:** You should let me take the bullet.

**Kyle:** I think I pick up JR on the back.

**Hannah:** I'm like the least wounded.

**Kyle:** I don't know if Alvin consciously maneuvers JR in the way of the gun.

**Quinn:** No. You throw frozen JR over your shoulder and these cops open fire. And, JR, you take two harm as you catch a bullet square in your shoulder, and you're going to take minus one on any tough rolls.

**Hannah:** This is for the dick jokes, isn't it?

**Kyle:** [laughs]

**Hannah:** I don't regret it, but I would like to know why I am being funny. Why am I being so persecuted?

**Kyle:** Why? Why persecuted?

**Quinn:** You rolled a 3. [laughs]

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Teo:** The dice have failed you.

**Kyle:** You get better dice.

**Quinn:** So, JR, you catch this bullet. And there are bullets ricocheting everywhere because this is a narrow tunnel. But, Alvin, you sprint away and you make it to the mineshaft, and Constance is nowhere in sight.

**Hannah:** Am I at least unfrozen?

**Quinn:** Not yet. No.

**Kyle:** I'm assuming Constance made it, because otherwise you'd just sit around being worried about it. So, Alvin's going to, actually, with one arm around JR over his shoulder, he's actually going to leap into the shaft and grab the cable and zip down using his hand as the brake.

**Quinn:** Hot damn.

**Hannah:** Oh, shit.

**Kyle:** This is a speed rappel down.

**Quinn:** I love it. It's going to be an act under pressure, because in order to make this a no limits, you would have to act under pressure anyway because of the silver that is surrounding you. So, it's going to be an act under pressure.

**Kyle:** [rolls dice] That's a 9. So, it would be 8 for act under pressure.

**Quinn:** I think that either you are going to lose your grip or you're going to lose your grip on statue JR as you go down.

**Hannah:** How far down are you?

**Kyle:** This whole thing is like 70ft. I'm going to luck it.

**Quinn:** You're going to use a point of luck?

**Hannah:** Whoo.

**Kyle:** Bingo-bango.

**Quinn:** Okay.

**Kyle:** Let's get down.

**Quinn:** You leap off of the exit from this tunnel and you grab hold with one hand of this cable and just start sliding down. You can feel it burning your palm. And JR is in her statuesque state, but you definitely navigate through and push off of walls and are able to land, not gracefully, but unharmed at the base of this tunnel. Constance, would you have waited for them, or would you have kept going? We have a little bit of a desync on time.

**Teo:** I would have waited, but with my back against a wall and the flamethrower out.

**Quinn:** About 30 seconds later, Alvin and JR come crashing down to the very base of this mineshaft.

**Teo:** I almost use my flamethrower, and then I realize it's them.

**Kyle:** I hold statue JR out and I say, [as Alvin] *Have you read about this?*

**Teo:** [as Constance] Hmm.

**Quinn:** And I think as you're holding JR out, JR, your muscles start to twitch and spasm, and suddenly you are back.

**Hannah:** [as JR] *[gasps]*

**Kyle:** Oh, never mind.

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Well. Oh, that didn't work very well. Oh, I got shot again.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *What happened?*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *I tried to do magic and it didn't work.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] Okay.

**Hannah:** [as JR] *It did the opposite. It's fine. Let's go. They're right behind us.*

**Quinn:** At the base of this mineshaft, there is a single small tunnel that leads ahead of you, and it is pitch black.

**Kyle:** You got one way.

**Quinn:** The three of you set forth down this tunnel. As you're traveling, Constance, you're shining the flashlight forward, and you can see a ways ahead, there is a space that doesn't look like any other part of the mine that you've seen. It's difficult to see, but it looks larger and it has a spherical shape to it. You start moving forward to get a better view, but something in the light of your flashlight catches your eye and stops you in your tracks. There is a haze of particles drifting in the air, and they are glinting a familiar shade of indigo and violet and magenta, and you realize that the passage ahead of you is just brimming with spores.

**Teo:** [as Constance] *I'm going to go ahead and use my flamethrower, light them up.*

**Quinn:** You light the flamethrower and start burning a path forward. I assume you're going pretty cautiously-

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Quinn:** -given the potential consequences.

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Quinn:** So, you're working your way forward. And, Alvin, I think you in particular are the one who notices that there is a thud behind you, and then another thud and then another one.

**Teo:** [as Constance] *JR, get the horn.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *They're just falling because they're going to keep--* [crosstalk]

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Yeah, I'm going to blast the bullhorn back behind us.*

**Quinn:** It echoes horridly in this tunnel. I think all of you are probably partially deafened by this blast, but you ring that horn. You can't really tell what's going on because Constance has the light pointed forward, but you don't hear anything.

**Hannah:** Good. No noise is good noise.

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Keep that finger on the trigger there.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Yeah. Get ready.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Yeah.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Both of y'all.*

**Teo:** Yeah, we're just kind of flaming and screaming as we go.

[laughter]

**Teo:** I'm actually screaming now as well. I'm screaming on top of all of this because why not?

**Kyle:** Yeah, more noise, the better.

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Quinn:** You continue forward. Eventually, you reach the chamber up ahead, and it is indeed a hollowed sphere about 30ft in diameter, and it is dominated by a towering fungal growth at the center. The fleshy stem is festooned with prismatic fronds and caps and tendrils that are all undulating in the darkness. At its base, there's a thick pattern of feathery filaments that spread outward in every direction. And as you get closer, even as you're sounding this horn, there is this drone, this low, continuous drone that fills your eardrums.

**Hannah:** Love it. I'm going to blast the bullhorn at the giant fungus.

**Quinn:** You turn the horn towards the fungus and blast it. And if this were a visual, it would be as though you sent out this force and it was just overwhelmed by some other force. The sound of this horn just disappears in this subsonic drone.

**Teo:** Great.

**Kyle:** It's its brain control ability as this subsonic frequency that, because we blast loud noises can be overridden remotely. But I think we're too close to the source.

**Teo:** Yeah, I think it's killin' time. I'm still flamethrowing.

**Quinn:** So, your flamethrower, it's keeping like a protective bubble around you, but it's not sufficient to get this heart from where you're standing. You're going to have to go in.

**Teo:** Okay.

**Kyle:** Stick together.

**Teo:** Yeah. Formation.

**Quinn:** As you're contemplating this, you hear a bullet ricochet from down in the other end of the hallway.

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Cut it out. You just stop it.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *JR, the magic knife you have is a magic knife from my Buni.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Yeah. I'm going to go fucking stab this thing.*

**Teo:** Constance looks at JR, looks at the sword in JR's hand, and says, [as Constance] *BRB.* Constance knows that this sword can do something, and maybe she can call upon her Buni to come here and help JR.

**Quinn:** I don't know that this is actually past lives, because you're not looking for information. But what I would say is, if you want to channel your connection with your Buni through the sword, that could be a method that you would help out.

**Teo:** Okay. Yeah. Constance looks at JR, sees the look in JR's face and looks at the sword, like it's time to slay.

**Hannah:** I'm going to just go running towards it.

**Quinn:** JR, I think it's going to be an act under pressure for you.

**Teo:** And I'm helping out?

**Quinn:** Yes, you are helping out.

**Teo:** I'm pretty sure JR gets a plus one, because they're taking my advice on slaying.

**Quinn:** You know, I think that's fair.

**Teo:** Oh, thank you.

**Hannah:** [rolls dice] Argh, and I'm going to need it, because that is a-- With the plus one, it's going to be a 7.

**Teo:** And I have 11, so I successfully helped out.

**Kyle:** Whoa.

**Hannah:** Ooh.

**Quinn:** Okay. So, there's no consequence. Constance, for your helping out. JR,-

**Hannah:** Mm-hmm.

**Quinn:** -it's going to be a worse outcome.

**Hannah:** Okay.



**Quinn:** You spring forward. And, Alvin, you're monitoring the tunnel. And Constance, you're providing cover with this flamethrower. And, JR, you [Kyle chuckles] spring forward in a break in the flames, but there's just a thin layer of spores between the two of you. Roll plus weird.

**Kyle:** Ooh.

**Hannah:** [rolls dice] 8.

**Quinn:** You pass through this thin wall of spores. And for just a moment, you are no longer in possession of your body. You are looking out your own eyes without any sense of control. And as you're doing this, you realize that there's more to you than just yourself. Almost like looking at rows and rows and rows of televisions, you can see yourself staring at the entrance to the mine. You can see yourself trapped underneath a police vehicle. You can see yourself walking through the streets of Olympic Heights. You can see yourself standing outside of Constance's studio. You can see yourself flying over Firmament in a bird's eye view. And from every perspective, you feel pain. Every view is tinged with this sense of longing.

Then, you feel this really sharp, acute pain in this part of your body that you don't recognize. And then, this presence that is taking control of you is gone. And you snap to and Constance's Buni's sword is embedded in this colossal fungus in front of you. And you pull it out, and you cleave through this giant mushroom, and it collapses. [crosstalk] And as it does so, it starts to putrefy on the ground.

**Hannah:** Oh.

**Quinn:** It starts to dissolve into this purple, and pink, and magenta, and indigo, and violet and all of these phantasmal colors. And that miasmic liquid starts to evaporate. And in the traces of that evaporation, you see faint glimpses of something familiar. That photonegative, that strange view that you caught once before when you killed the strigoi. But it's much fainter. And before you can really hold it in your eye, it's gone.

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Huh. Guys, just for a second, I was part of it. I could see everything. I was part of it, and it was awful. Everybody was in pain. Everything was in pain.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Are you okay?*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *I don't know.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Where did you hide the lush bombs? We need to know if it's really you.*

**Hannah:** [giggles] [as JR] *Well, I used up the last one.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Ah, yes.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Uh-huh.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Alright, it's JR.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Yup.*

[laughter]

**Quinn:** And JR, as you sit down, you see where the stump of this colossal fungus was just a moment ago, there is a small object. It is smooth and jet black and glimmering. It looks like a piece of a disc that was broken off. There are jagged fractures on one side, and it's perfectly rounded on the other. And the air around it is blurry and distorted like looking at the horizon

during a heat wave. You get a little closer in your curiosity, and you can see that this flat surface is covered with inscriptions. Most are just lines, but two elements catch your eye. One is a larger symbol that looks like an eye with a spiral pattern at its center. And the other is a set of characters that are etched on the outer side. And you don't know what they mean, but you recognize them immediately as a match for one of the sigils burned into your palm.

**Hannah:** I'm taking that disc.

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Hannah:** I'm grabbing it. That's my reward for putting up with this tomfoolery for far too long.

**Teo:** Take whatever you want from this godforsaken mine.

**Quinn:** Constance, as you see that disc, you feel a panic. It doesn't belong to you, but it is overwhelming.

**Teo:** [as Constance] *I can't explain it, but, JR be really, really careful. I'm getting-- My spider tingle is happening, and I'm not Spider man, but it's there. Something.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *All right.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Something weird.*

**Hannah:** I take my jacket off and I wrap it in the jacket.

**Quinn:** Yeah. Nothing happens immediately when you pick it up, but it feels just slightly warm to the touch. And as you pick it up, it gets just a little bit warmer.

**Teo:** [as JR] *You're going to go in the Tupperware container when we get back. Speaking of which, Stoney, you still here, buddy?*

**Kyle:** We might want to go check back where we came from. There may be some people who need to go to the hospital, and I will lead the way to the hospital.

**Quinn:** Yeah.

**Hannah:** Yeah, I come like check and see.

**Quinn:** You're going to literally lead the way, because you're unstable and in really bad shape.

**Kyle:** I need a doctor.

**Teo:** Yes.

**Hannah:** Yeah.

**Quinn:** The three of you make your way back. I think at the bottom of the mineshaft, you find several police officers who have broken their legs.

**Teo:** [crosstalk]

**Quinn:** I think, I assume you turn the radio back.

**Kyle:** Yeah.

**Hannah:** Yeah.

**Quinn:** I think you hear Chief Stoney online saying, [as Stoney] *Is anybody here?*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *We need a fucking ambulance. Like, five of them. We've got a bunch of officers down here with broken legs.*

**Quinn:** [as Stoney] *JR? JR?*

**Hannah:** **Hannah:** [as JR] *Yes.*

**Quinn:** [as Stoney] *JR? What happened to the kid? How did I get here? What's going on?*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *You don't remember any of this?*

**Quinn:** [as Stoney] *Remember any of what? Where's the kid?*

**Teo:** Probably for the best in terms of psychological state to not remember, maybe.

**Hannah:** I don't know about that. I think I'd be more upset if I didn't.

**Teo:** Well--

**Hannah:** [as JR] *What do you think, Stoney? Do you want to know or don't you?* [crosstalk] *pondering that question.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *We need a rescue team.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *You need to call-- Yeah.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *We need a rescue team now, and we will all explain it later. Hospital now, talk later.*

**Quinn:** Okay.

**Kyle:** [chuckles] *That my bumper sticker.*

[laughter]

**Quinn:** The three of you are evacuated, along with quite a few police officers out of this mine. And once more, you receive the medical treatment that you so desperately need. And unlike last time, where there was a cover story, this time I think you just fade into the ambiguity of this strange scene.

Galvan is there getting treatment for her broken legs. I think Leon winds up in the hospital as well, along with quite a few kids from Olympic Heights whose parents reported them suffering from amnesia episodes. And so, your injuries, although significant, just fade away. And then, we fade to a different scene.

We see The Prospector still in disarray after the torrent of gunfire. It's empty, save for a dozen people gathered around a single table in the back. Leon, Jasper and Cecilia are there. So is Rahul and his two friends.

The whispered conversation grinds to a halt as the front door swings open and Detective Galvan, dressed in plainclothes and hobbling on a pair of crutches, makes her way inside. She and Leon eye each other warily for a moment before he smiles, extends a hand, and says, [as Leon] *Welcome to the Daylight Society, Detective.*

Miles away, we see a person sitting at a desk in a drab office, poring over stacks of paper in front of them. Their stayed black suit is a stark contrast to their blue-tinged pompadour haircut. They're interrupted as they're working by a knock at the door as a young man peers inside. *Agent Pax, I just wanted to let you know that there was a security alert triggered at the Colorado National Laboratory yesterday. The intruder didn't access anything important,*

*so they just remanded them to local law enforcement. But there was some confusion on the ground, and now no one can find them. I just thought you'd want to know.*

Agent Pax nods absently and returns to their paperwork. Almost as an afterthought, they ask, [as Agent Pax] *Did they get the name of the suspect?* [as Leon] *Just an alias. Charlie Fairhurst?* Agent Pax looks up, smiles slyly, and grabs their coat.

**Teo:** [giggles]

**Quinn:** We see a press conference unfolding outside the Colorado National Laboratory. A woman with raven hair and a sharply tailored pantsuit stands in front of a podium that reads Mayor Chamberlain. She's flanked by Dr. Tamina and Rodescu as she addresses the crowd of reporters.

[as Mayor Chamberlain] *Today, I am pleased to announce that thanks to a proprietary discovery made by scientists at the Colorado National Laboratory, the city of Firmament will be transitioning effective immediately to 100% renewable energy. Firmament residents will also see a significant drop in their utility bills. While many of the details of this new technology remain classified, CNL Director, Naseem Tamina, is here to answer any technical questions to the extent that she can.*

[as Eve] *Mayor Chamberlain*, comes a voice from the crowd, and we recognize Eve as she stands up. [as one of crowd] *You're rumored to be a candidate for the appointment to the late Senator Nash's seat. Isn't the timing of this announcement a little suspicious?*

[as Mayor Chamberlain] *You know I don't comment on rumors, Eve, but I will say this, the people of Colorado are tired of gridlock in Washington. We need a senator who is focused on solutions. Someone who knows how to build consensus. And I won't apologize for all the exciting things that we have in store here in Firmament.*

[Monster Hunt theme]

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