

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

Kyle

Okay, so for today's episode we are going to open up on black, just the color black.

[Ruinous ethereal music begins.]

And this black changes. There's this different color on it almost as if it's reflecting a pale green light. We're gonna zoom out from the black, and we're gonna see that it has a shape. It's a circular shape, but next to it are other circular shapes and small legs sticking out from it, eight of them to be precise.

We move out from this small glass spider that is motionless and see that it's laying in a pile of hundreds, thousands of other spiders, all piled motionless, forgotten, until that light which is connected to the end of a vine reaches down and picks up one of the spiders. The vine turns to the man that they're wrapped around, and they show him this creature, and they say,

[Music changes to southern guitar music.]

Kyle (as Bee)

This one has me confused. It looks like a spider, but...

Kyle

And it taps it against the wall, and it just breaks into brittle shards of glass.

Kyle (as Bee)

...it has the construction of glass.

Kyle (as Rockryan)

Uh, then Bee, it's a glass spider.

Kyle (as Bee)

A glass spider?

Kyle (as Rockryan)

Yeah, a glass spider. You got glass, you got a spider, you put them together you got a glass spider.

Kyle (as Bee)

Oh, you can put different things together.

Kyle

Then the light goes down, picks up one of the spiders, and says,

Kyle (as Bee)

I think we're going to keep one of these.

Tom

Xoc is just that meme of the monkey puppet that looks to the side, and just "eh..."

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Tom

Looks back, minds its own business.

Hallie

Yeah, Hopper thinks about it, and then just... Bee's excited, and he's also seen how much Rockryan values his cool things that he likes that he picks up off the ground.

Kyle (as Rockryan)

Well, it's not a fossil.

Tom

What if it was a glass fossil?

Hallie

Yeah.

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Hallie

Sci-fi! It could be!

Kyle (as Rockryan)

Fine, put it in, Bee.

Kyle

As Bee goes to take this Apocrita spider, not knowing what it is, from this giant pile and put it into Rockryan's satchel, you just hear another voice pipe up.

[Music fades.]

Kyle (as Q-BO)

[Beep-boop.] We have actually not had the opportunity to study a member of the Apocrita safely. Please pocket one of those for me as well for further research.

Kyle

Against Rockryan's wishes, Bee just picks up another armful of obsidian spiders and shoves them in the satchel for Q-BO's research.

Hallie

So Q-BO's getting like ten times the samples he asked for. I love it.

Kyle

Bee's just helpful like that. So yeah, let's zoom out from Bee and Rockryan and the spiders. You are in front of Redd. I was originally gonna be cruel and make Redd a pyramid that is half-submerged underwater.

Tom

It would still look like a pyramid, though. Even if you half-submerged a pyramid it still looks like a pyramid, it's just smaller now.

Hallie

It's true.

Kyle

But for the sake of you and our audience, it's a cube.

Hallie

That's nice. That was kind of you. An easy shape. *[Laughs.]*

Kyle

And you are in this little cavity in the cube, which is also a cube but like a smaller divot outside. Next to you, you can see one of the tubes that they used to travel across Prylima. This one, like the others, was broken so you had to kind of platform your way across.

Tom

The worst experience.

Hallie

Terrible.

Kyle

But now you're on the other side. You're in front of a door. It is a square door—we're gonna keep with our square theme here—but interestingly, next to it, you see piles of the Apocrita spiders, motionless. Now, you had seen one or two while you were exploring the ruins before, I hadn't brought them up because there were other things to be paying attention to, but you notice that they're really congealed here as if this was a center point for the Apocrita before it got temporarily halted by Aegon.

Hallie

Okay. Hopper's a little bit more concerned with the volume of spiders, because if it was just one or two it's like that makes sense for them to be here, and even the small pile, sometimes things happen in larger quantities than at other times, but this is a significantly larger quantity.

Kyle

It's like six foot tall. You could have children climb on it to play, like a snow hill in winter.

Hallie

That is too many spiders if you can climb on a hill of spiders. *[Laughs.]*

Tom

[Chuckles.] Altogether too many.

Hallie

[Smiling.] Altogether too many spiders.

Kyle

[Chuckles.]

Hallie

Hopper doesn't wanna dismantle anything, because that could cause structural damage and he also is a little bit afraid of the spiders, but he does want to poke around. I don't need to roll anything for that because I don't expect to find anything, but Hop's taking note.

[00:05:00]

Kyle

Okay. Sounds good. You know what? I'll be kind. You do find something.

Hallie

[Brightly.] Really?

Kyle

You find spiders.

Hallie

[As a groan.] Oh...

[Others laugh.]

I got really excited...

Kyle

Okay, roll me a 1d10. I'll give you a cypher.

Hallie

Okay.

Tom

The cypher is spiders.

[Laughter.]

Hallie

It's a spider cypher! It's a spipher! ... I can't find my d10s.

Kyle

Actually, a 1d6.

Hallie

Wait-wait, no... it's a 10.

Tom

Heh.

Hallie

The only time I've ever rolled— *[Laughs.]*

Kyle

Yeah, there are only six items actually on this list.

Hallie

I had just found my d10 so I rolled it and I got a 10 and now I have to roll a d6!
[Rolls.] And I got a 2.

Kyle

Oh wait, Tom already got this, give me a second.

Tom

[Laughs.]

Hallie

[Laughing.] Should I reroll my d6?!

Kyle

No, I'm just gonna give you what 3 had.

Hallie

Okay.

Kyle

You get a 3 foot by 3 foot cube of clay that once molded into a shape maintains its form. At an opportune time the clay will break away to reveal a cypher of that shape.

Hallie

Ooh!

Kyle

You can either describe the shape right now or just doodle it down, but you need to decide it now.

Hallie

I'd like it to be a diamond, please.

Kyle

Now, are we talking about a 'diamond' diamond or a pyramid diamond?

Hallie

We're talking about like a cartoon prize diamond like you'd find in *The Rescuers*, like just a big old diamond.

Kyle

Okay, so like an *Every Kiss Begins With Kay* kind of diamond.

Hallie

Every Kiss Begins With Kay, but bigger.

Kyle

Okay, the clay diamond, which is not in a diamond shape in the classic geometrical shape, it's in the diamond gem shape.

Hallie

Yes. It's a chaos emerald.

Tom

[Smiling.] I was about to. Hmm.

[Laughter.]

Hallie

It's a clay-os emerald!

Tom

Ha!

Kyle

While Hop is doing that, Xoc, you notice that Bee is kind of looking around—it seems like they haven't been in this specific space a whole lot—while Rockryan is shiftily moving his eyes around and just taking that fossil that he found, as well as some others he picked up along the way, and just quietly putting them in his beard safely as he looks around.

[Chuckling.]

Tom (as Xoc)

So, is there any way other than sound that you can tell that creature is coming? The Preserve?

Kyle (as Rockryan)

It's always coming.

Tom (as Xoc)

Well yes, but when it's close.

Kyle (as Rockryan)

It's always close...

Kyle (as Bee)

What I think Rockryan is trying to say is that we always need to act like the Preserve is around the corner, because it is always hunting us.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Why is that?

Kyle (as Rockryan)

Well why was I hunting you? It likes fossils I guess.

Tom (as Xoc)

Could it be the fossils?

Kyle (as Rockryan)

[Grunting that sounds like "I dunno".]

Tom

Xoc is going to consider this further.

Kyle (as Bee)

It's tough to know for sure, but that's what we think.

[Dark electronic music begins.]

I like to think of the Preserve almost like a sibling? It and I both came out of...

Kyle

And the vine just motions all over the place.

Kyle (as Bee)

...this stuff. I can't really remember anything, that's why Rockryan is helping me out, but the Preserve seems to remember everything, and it does not like to share its memories.

Hallie (as Hopper)

That's interesting. Do you have any idea where it came from?

Kyle (as Rockryan)

[Grumbles.]

Kyle

Rockryan, frustrated, almost seems to punch the wall where a door should be.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Oh, like everywhere. But I mean, what kind of force created it?

Kyle

He slams the wall even more, like five times. *[Makes impact sounds.]*

Hallie (as Hopper)

Alright, fair enough.

Kyle (as Rockryan)

[Impatient growl.] Bee, tell them.

Kyle (as Bee)

No, Rockryan is not angrier than usual.

Tom

[Chuckles quietly.]

Kyle (as Bee)

He is saying that the Preserve comes from “here.” You called it the Redd Module?

Hallie (as Hopper)

Oh.

Tom (as Xoc)

Well, there might be more answers as to why it lives here inside.

Kyle (as Rockryan)

And plenty of fossils too. Right?

[Music ends.]

Kyle

He gets right up to you, Hop, right in your face, challenging you.

Hallie

Hopper forfeits.

[Laughing.] He just, he will put his hands up a little bit and step back.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Fossils are all yours, although I think if they’re chasing you for the fossils that might be something you wanna consider when you take the fossils.

Tom

Xoc just looks at the piles of spiders and does a thousand-yard stare.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Tom

[Breathy and wistfully.] Lots of fossils...

Kyle

[Laughs.] With that, Rockryan pulls out his shovel, which still has the imprint of Xoc’s face on it...

Tom

Wow.

Kyle

...and in response to you, Hop, says,

Kyle (as Rockryan)

Well that’s what I got this for.

Kyle

And he taps part of the wall which you notice has that indentation the green light had gone in to power things, and following that Bee actually leaves the vine and they spread out, taking their light and making it fill the entire width of the square door which opens up.

[The sound of grating stone.]

Hallie (as Hopper)

Again, fair enough.

Kyle

Okay. You make your way into Redd's Module. You know what, I'm gonna keep it simple. The inside, you get to a giant awning... also a cube.

Hallie

Thank god.

Tom

Would have been disappointed otherwise.

Kyle

[Smiling.] Except! This cube is not really a cube.

[00:10:00]

Hallie

Why isn't it a cube?!

[Gentle mysterious synth music begins.]

Kyle

So when we went into the Bleu Module—and reminder, that one's the pyramid that's actually a diamond half-submerged underwater—I had mentioned that the bog was trying to get up but the flexi-glass was keeping it out. Something similar has happened here for the inside of the Redd Module, except instead of successfully keeping out the bog the flexi-glass in the Redd Module failed to keep out this mishmash of sharp neon colored wires and wooden panels haphazardly smashed together with just all sorts of nails like a terrible woodworking project.

For the first time you are able to actually set Q-BO to the side and not use him and need to illuminate everything, because there is enough light here. The building is really separated into two parts. On the right side you can see this perfectly manicured, put together space. It looks almost like a museum where there are these neat countertops that each have things delicately placed on top of them, beautifully dusted as if you had a janitor coming in and cleaning it every single day.

That part is relatively dark. It's shadowed by the just blinding lights of this loud, in sight, crushed remains of the Speedy Speed Boy lair which are just illuminating the space. So you've got two areas: to your right you've got some of the Redd Module, and to your left you finally found it, and all without Far Step. You've made it to the crashed ruins of the Speedy Speed Boy lair.

[Music ends.]

Tom

Xoc runs his hand along the counter, closes his eyes, and then says,

Tom (as Xoc)

Oh, wait... heh, I can't.

Tom

And then he turns to Hopper and says,

Tom (as Xoc)

Hopper Scotch, can you help show me the best way to look for clues?

Hallie

Hopper lights up.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Yeah! Well, first you wanna start...

[Quirky music begins.]

Kyle

[Laughs.] The first step is to begin.

Hallie

[Laughing.] He has to think of clue-finding techniques that aren't "take out your magnifying glass and click around until it turns red."

Tom

I thought it was a cut to like a long-winded explanation not a "now I have to come up with the second lesson."

Hallie (as Hopper)

Well, often you start by asking the locals what they know about the place.

Hallie

Looks at Bee and Rockryan.

Kyle (as Rockryan)

Jack shit.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Sometimes you get that answer, so you have to... You have to look for context clues a lot.

Hallie

The right side of the module is nice pristine things, right?

Kyle

Yeah. That seems to be what is preserved. It seems much more Pryliman whereas the left space, which is all of the Speedy Speed Boy stuff, seems to be untouched in that it's collapsing and ruinous and it's not being up-kept.

Hallie

Right. No one is taking care of it.

Hallie (as Hopper)

So, over here you can tell by looking at everything it's really nice, but why is that, you know? It fits into a context of why is it here, who's taking care of it... You see, in the Lardy Boys...

Hallie

I had nowhere to go with that.

Kyle

We had Jameson Hopper, your idol...

Hallie

I know!

Kyle

...who also was just Indiana Jones, that you could have used at any time...

Hallie

I know! No!

Kyle

...but you went with the LARDY BOYS!

Hallie

[Laughing.] No! I was gonna build up to Jameson Hopper using the Lardy Boys, because clearly the Lardy boys are the beginner books and then you get to Jameson Hopper. The Lardy Boys—

Kyle

All I can think of is the Tardy Boys: the Hardy Boys but they always arrive after the crime has been solved.

Hallie

[Squeaks laughing.]

Tom

And their good friend Fancy Sue.

Kyle

[Laughs.] We've broken Hallie already.

Tom

Mm-hmm. I just don't know which part of this broke her the most.

Hallie

All the things I can think of are really obvious, like dust away dust, use a magnifying glass to look at things closer.

Kyle

I'm gonna be merciful. Hop, your speech is cut off as a pickaxe just slams into the desk next to you.

Kyle (as Rockryan)

You look and then you loot.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Honestly, that's pretty much it.

Kyle

[Laughs.] Rockryan picks up his pickaxe, starts walking towards the pristine part of the module, and says,

Kyle (as Rockryan)

I got no interest in any of that light crap you got going on over there. Let me know if you find anything interesting.

Kyle (as Bee)

Bye~

Kyle

And Bee just waves their vine as Rockryan walks away into one of the Pryliman parts of the module. You just see as the vine goes from a waving vine to just a waving little light, and then eventually it disappears.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Bye~

Tom (as Xoc)

I guess they're right. We can't spend a lot of time here or we'd risk getting attacked again. Let's just search quickly and see if there's anything that survived.

Hallie

Hopper will nod in agreement.

Kyle

Okay. Each of you give me an investigation roll. You will each get an asset from Rockryan's explanation.

Hallie

Yay.

Tom

Oh...

Hallie

Well, no, I can't even—Yeah.

[Laughs.] Like, I botched that.

[00:15:00]

That's fine. I accept that.

Kyle

It helped you clear your mind, Hop. You thought let's stop thinking of all these steps and just—

Hallie

Look, he got really excited and then didn't know how to put what he does into steps that didn't sound obvious, so he just stammered for a little while, while Xoc looked at him politely, and then Rockryan "BAM!" *[Laughs.]*

Kyle

Xoc was probably enraptured.

Tom

Mm.

Kyle

Like uh-huh, uh-huh, and the next step?

Tom

Hopper Scotch knows what he's talking about.

Kyle

He does, he just doesn't know how to talk about it.

Hallie

No, Hallie doesn't know what he's talking about. That's why.

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Hallie

[Rolls.] Even though I'm the world's greatest detective, with an 18! Yay~

Tom

I rolled a 4.

Kyle

Well I can't just give you another cypher.

Hallie

You can't. Well, you can.

Kyle

[Laughs.] We'll start with Hop. Hop, you notice a pathway.

[Music begins 15:44.]

You've been around enough organizations like the Speedy Speed Boys to know what poor road design looks like, and even in the ruins—honestly it makes them make more sense—you're able to see a pathway, so you can see from here how you could maybe maneuver through these. You see a tunnel that leads back to the shoreline, and this is probably how the Preserve leaves, and you see other ways that you can explore as well.

So, I'd say you probably go down not 'too' too far, because you know you got other things to do, but you're going down, exploring this tunnel, seeing that it has further places to go.

Hallie

Yeah, I'm scoping it out.

Kyle

Xoc, meanwhile, how are you going about your studies?

Tom

Xoc is simply overturning anything that looks like it might be concealing a clue. He doesn't really know what he's looking for. He doesn't have any idea of what happened. He doesn't have any frame of reference for anything. He just thinks "but maybe there's something, anything."

Kyle

You actually do see one thing. A bit high above you, maybe a short distance, stabbed into one of the wires you see a dossier, this little folder document.

Tom

Is it like out of my reach up high?

Kyle

Yeah, it's a short distance up high, like out of your reach.

Tom

Strong-glass staff! Xoc's gonna poke the dossier down with his staff.

Kyle

Alright, give me a roll.

Tom

Heart of the cards...

[Rolls.] I got a 10.

Kyle

You poke it, and it rustles to the side. You poke it again, and it ruffles to the other side. You're poking it in a way that you think should work, but it just doesn't fall down.

[Music ends.]

And after I'd say maybe five, ten minutes, the document finally flutters to the ground.

Tom

I read it.

Kyle

It is a book report on racecars by Fungi, age 8.

Hallie

[Breathy laugh.]

Tom

Xoc can't tell if this would be a cherished memory or not for him, so he puts it in the bag.

Kyle

[Grinning.] Okay.

And you keep looking, and you keep finding nothing, or even worse than nothing, you keep finding things like this little document written by Fungi, which while cute isn't really aiding towards your goal.

Tom

Or is it...?

[Clicks his tongue.] It's not, it's not, I know that.

Kyle

It is not.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Tom

I know that it's not actually doing anything.

Kyle

[Laughing.] How is Xoc feeling?

Tom

I don't know if Xoc knows what to feel, because he wants to help Misha, and he's worried about what the Speedy Speed Boys will do, but I think Xoc is maybe doing some soul searching

[The Lady with Cinnbar Lips' theme begins.]

and realizing that this is a way to distract himself from thinking about the real problems like this being that everyone's so afraid of and everything else that could possibly happen to Misha.

[Music stops abruptly.]

Kyle (as Loell)

Because those Speedy Speed Boys aren't the real ones to worry about, are they bud?

Tom (as Xoc)

Well, thank you for joining us, Loell. Yeah, yeah, I guess they're not.

Kyle

Loell walks over and he looks at one of the documents that's on the ground in front of you before saying,

[Sinister ambient music begins.]

Kyle (as Loell)

Sorry about those spirits, by the way.

Tom (as Xoc)

You didn't know them at all. It was, um... It's been a weird few weeks.

Kyle (as Loell)

Well, it's always a shame when someone you trust doesn't trust you back.

Tom

Xoc will turn and look at him, like "oh really?"

Kyle

[Chuckles.]

Tom (as Xoc)

Yes, it is very unfortunate when you trust someone a lot and they betray that trust.

Kyle

He notably does not turn around to look at you.

Tom

[Dramatic angered exhale.]

Kyle (as Loell)

So, you got a plan for her yet?

Tom (as Xoc)

Who?

Kyle (as Loell)

You know who I'm talking about, The Lady, that... thing.

Tom (as Xoc)

You know about The Lady With Cinnabar Lips?

Kyle (as Loell)

I've popped in from time to time, learned a thing or two. You know, I've got...

Kyle

And he taps his head.

Kyle (as Loell)

...quite a few things I know about now, and I can promise you...

Kyle

And that's when he turns back to face you.

Kyle (as Loell)

...I don't like her any more than you do, bud.

Tom (as Xoc)

But you're not going to tell me that, are you?

Kyle (as Loell)

Like I said, it sucks when someone you trust doesn't repay that trust in kind.

Tom (as Xoc)

Is that directed at me this time?

Kyle (as Loell)

I don't know. Is it?

Tom (as Xoc)

What do you want? Why tease this in front of me and then say nothing else?

Kyle (as Loell)

Because I want you to understand, or I want you to understand that you understand.

Tom

Xoc raises his eyebrows for him to continue.

Kyle (as Loell)

There's a reason we got along, Xoc. You care about people, you care about those closest to you,
[00:20:00]

and I know that you have it within yourself not to let naysayers stop you from helping those people, even if those people are the naysayers themselves.

Tom (as Xoc)

You're not wrong. I want to help people as best I can.

Kyle (as Loell)

And so do I. We're both on the same team, bud.

Tom (as Xoc)

Unfortunately, actions and intent are sometimes very different things.

[Music changes to sinister piano.]

But once again, what do you want? Will you tell me how we can stop The Lady?

Kyle (as Loell)

I'll tell you anything you want. I said I don't like her any more than you do, but I also said trust is a two-way street. The Pro—

[Makes a labored effort to correct himself.] Mayra and Sunny do not seem to trust me. Just like your good friend Misha, they'd rather lie down and take whatever fate gives them. But they do trust you. If you promise that when this Cinnabar Lips business is done you'll help me find them, then I'll tell you everything you want. Pretty good deal if I do say so myself.

Tom

Xoc is going to do a sad little smile and say,

Tom (as Xoc)

This feels like it's a bad deal for you. I haven't given you very good reason to trust me with that information.

Kyle (as Loell)

But I choose to, because I believe in you, Xoc, and I will not stop believing in you.

[Music swells and carries into the announcements.]

Kyle

Hello, and welcome to the announcement break for Quest Friends Episode 66, One Neon Night: Part 8. I am Kyle, your GM, and our intro and outro songs are Friends and Hitoshio, both by Miracle of Sound. For our announcements today we've got an NPC shout-out for Azuron who provided a paragraph for Rei to speak in her own words. Although Rei, while being very good at improvisation actually gets a bit nervous about it, so she's just gonna read it word for word.

Kyle (as Rei)

With the various quarantines and social distancing requirements, this is a difficult time for many people's mental health. Be on the lookout for signs of depression and anxiety in your friends and family. Talk to

anyone and support them if you think they might be having mental health difficulties. Encourage them to get professional help if necessary. There's no shame in it, and this help can be literally life-changing, and perhaps even more importantly make sure to monitor yourself for symptoms as well. People with depression and anxiety can often hide it from others, and it's extra important that you make sure you aren't hiding it from yourself. 2020 is a, uh...

Emily (as Elee)

Bitch!

Kyle (as Rei)

Thank you, Elee. 2020 is a bitch, but that doesn't mean you should let your mental health problems consume you without a fight.

Kyle

Thank you again so much, Azuron. I hope you enjoyed your NPC shout-out. If you're interested in having an NPC shout-out of your own, if you subscribe to us on Patreon.com/QuestFriends at the \$5 level or above, you also can have a custom message from any NPC of your choice, in addition to a whole lot of other fun stuff such as an enamel pin of Hopper Scotch's new hat.

This pin is a limited time promo for anyone who backs us at any level on Patreon by the end of the month. If you'd like to learn more about the hat as well as the other benefits you can get from subscribing to us on Patreon, you can follow the link below or google Patreon.com/QuestFriends.

Alright, that's all I've got for you today. Our schedule is gonna be a little bit different coming up. In a week and a half on Halloween itself, October 31, we are going to be releasing The Daemon AU, a follow-up to our Halloween special from last year, and then to hopefully start getting me on a better schedule we're actually gonna take the next week off and come back on November 9 for the next episode of One Neon Night.

[00:25:00]

I'll see you then.

[Nostalgic music carries out of the announcements.]

Tom

Xoc is a little taken back by Loell's admission of trust in him, and it more than anything gives him a little bit of hope, so Xoc says,

Tom (as Xoc)

I appreciate that, Loell, I appreciate it a lot, and because of that I'm not going to abuse your trust.

Tom

And he takes another deep breath and says,

Tom (as Xoc)

As much as I hate to do this, I cannot take your deal, because I will never be able to help you find Mayra and Sunny. They are happy and safe, and their trust in me was also well-placed. I don't betray my friends. So, I guess I'll have to find another way to figure out what I need to know... but thank you.

[The Apocrita's theme begins.]

Kyle (as Loell)

[Curt and disappointed.] Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Okay.

Kyle

Loell takes back his hand. He had his hand out in a handshake. I wasn't sure if he did, but now he does, and he takes it back.

Kyle (as Loell)

Mm-hmm. Okay. Okay. Okay... *[Exhales.]*
[Angrily.] I don't know what the HELL your problem is...

Kyle

And he slams his fist down on the table.

Kyle (as Loell)

...but we don't have time here, Xoc. You don't have time, and I don't have time, and we don't have time to be playing around in hypotheticals.

Tom (as Xoc)

Why do we have so little time?

Kyle (as Loell)

Because of time itself. Because any second anything could happen. Anything could happen. I know you grew up in this timeless paradise, this Weal, but that's not how things work. Even there time marches onwards, and we are desperately running out of it!

Tom (as Xoc)

[Softly.] Oh... I understand now. We've talked about this before, I know, but it's okay to be afraid. That's something you can face, and you don't have to face it alone. I think just about everybody is afraid most of the time.

Kyle (as Loell)

And yet they do nothing. They do nothing. Like Misha, just sitting, rolling over, afraid of fate but letting it happen, Xoc! And I thought, I think, I know that you have what it takes to face that!
This isn't over. This isn't over... I'll convince you yet.

Kyle

And with that, he disappears.

[Music ends.]

And conveniently, for the sake of plot, at that point, Hop, you've made your way back through the tunnel and you made your way to Xoc.

Tom

And you see as Xoc who is just sort of idly leaning one hand on a broken – was it a desk, was it just a sign, was this a wall post, who knows – just very much lost in thought, out of it.

Kyle

[Chuckles.]

Hallie

Hop, brushing himself off a little bit from his cave adventure, his mini cave adventure, will be like,

Hallie (as Hopper)

[Chipper.] Hey, did you find anything?

Tom (as Xoc)

[Still gentle.] Nothing related, no.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Oh, that's a shame. There's a cave down there and it seems to be the way out. I bet it's how the Preserve goes in and out.

Tom (as Xoc)

Quite possibly. That'll be a good way to leave here once we do.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Yeah.

Tom (as Xoc)

Hopefully the Preserve isn't that way right now.

Hallie (as Hopper)

It didn't seem to be.

Kyle (as Bee)

We found something too!

[Quirky ragtime music begins.]

Kyle

You notice just in one of the grooves of the side of the building there's this bright green light right in between you, and Q-BO responds.

Kyle (as Q-BO)

[Beep-boop.] Oh! What did you find? I need to add it to my catalog.

Tom

I just imagine Bee sticking their head into the frame while this is happening, just off-screen, Bee "whoops" in as a vine, like,

[In Bee's voice.] We found something too!

And suddenly the camera turns and they're just there.

Kyle

[Chuckles.]

Kyle (as Bee)

You said you were looking for a s-spear, correct?

Tom (as Xoc)

Yes.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Mm-hmm.

Kyle (as Q-BO)

[Beep-boop.] That is correct. We were looking for Redd's Blessing.

[Beep-boop.] Redd's Blessing is a valuable artifact from Prylima. It was used originally to fight the Apocrita by absorbing the Apocrita...

[Q-BO continues talking but fades out beneath Kyle speaking over himself.]

Kyle

As Q-BO is speaking, you just see the green light just starts slowly sliding away. *[Laughs.]*

Tom

[Chuckles.]

Kyle (as Bee)

Well, we found it in this room over there.

Tom (as Xoc)

Well, let's go get it then.

Hallie (as Hopper)

Yeah.

Tom (as Xoc)

Before anything else happens.

Kyle

[Smiling.] And as that happens...

Hallie

[Chuckles.]

Kyle

Yeah, take a GM Intrusion.

Tom

Yeah!

Hallie

Yeah.

[Music ends.]

Tom

You get my other XP, Hallie.

Hallie

Give me the XP! Yes!

Tom

Because there's no one else here.

Hallie

By default, my favorite kind.

Kyle

As that happens, the question of how you know the Preserve is coming is answered, because you hear those whispers again.

[Sinister ambient music begins, accompanied by varied quiet whispering.]

Kyle (as the Preserve)

Well, I look forward to being of assistance.

We'll check out the sidewalk work.

[00:30:00]

My evil boss came back to the office, permanently.

Kyle (as Bee)

Oh no, it must have noticed that I have accessed the systems. We should move quickly and quietly.

Kyle

With that, the light shrinks down as Bee flies back up and down one of the hallways.

Tom

[Stammers, confused.] I guess we follow.

Hallie

Yeah, let's be speedy quiet.

Tom

Tiptoeing very quickly, Scooby Doo style.

[Music and whispering ends.]

Hallie

[Rolls.] I have 7.

Tom

[Rolls.] No~

Um, I know you wish to discourage this, but am I allowed to use an XP to reroll?

Kyle

What did you roll?

Tom

I rolled a 3 originally.

Kyle

Okay, give me a reroll. So Xoc, you take two steps and you get caught on one of the nails in the boards, and you just have to like rip away your robe.

Tom

[Indignantly.] I'm not gonna rip it away, just carefully unsnag it.

Kyle

Okay, and since you're so focused on that you then trip over something in front of you, and there's just a stumble sound, but you get your bearings and you're able to sneak forward.

Tom

Alright, let's try this again, with the heart of the cards this time.

[Rolls.] That's a 17.

Kyle

Okay!

Tom

Much better.

[Quirky sneak music begins.]

Kyle

So you make your way through these hallways. They're pretty easy to maneuver through. They're very square. They're not actually all squares, but they're all rectangular, sharp angles, pretty easy to maneuver in, but easy to get lost in as well because they're all so similar. Xoc, besides that initial noise of you stumbling, you don't make a whole lot more noise, but Hop, what kind of noise would Hop make that would be not super loud but kind of loud?

Hallie

[Laughs.] He'd try to quiet anything that happened by keeping his mouth closed and a hand over his mouth, but if he stubbed his toe on a rock or something it'd be like a *[Long strained pain noise.]*
[Laughing.] Or like if he tripped over Q-BO.

Kyle

Yeah, you trip over Q-BO, and you hear a *[Long, upset strained noise.]*

And as you hear that there's just this whoosh of wind.

[Heavy whooshing noise brushes by and whispering joins the music.]

You feel this wind of spirits almost getting closer, whispering to themselves, and whispering almost, you feel like, to you.

Kyle (as the Preserve)

Are you in Redd right now? Paula forgot her ID and cannot get in.

Kyle

You can feel it's looking closer and closer to you. What do you do to respond?

[Music and whispering end.]

Hallie

Stay still. I mean, Hop would just stop, and if Xoc does anything he would follow Xoc's lead, but the first instinct on Hop's part at least would be the T-Rex thing. They can't see you if you don't move.

Tom

[Pinched.] Xoc doesn't think that's a thing, so Xoc is gonna like tug Hopper Scotch.

Hallie

ACK! Hop would kind of grab Xoc's sleeve in response and be like a finger to the lips kind of "wait," to see if the coast is clear. He's also trying to hear if he can figure out which way the Preserve went so that they can gauge how far away it is.

Kyle

So you just rounded the corner around a hallway, and it's coming down through the hallway you just passed through, and you're at an intersection. It's like five feet away from rounding the corner to you or rounding the corner towards the other hallway.

Hallie

Oh, well then okay, never mind. We're gonna hurry towards the hallway that it's not in.

Kyle

Okay. Give me one more roll.

Hallie

[Small scoff.] Fine. Let me get my third d20 of the night. Maybe it's my fourth d20. I don't know.

Tom

Are you considering sending good dice to dice paradise?

Hallie

Yes! I have a shoebox, but no one has made it to paradise yet.

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Tom

If only you didn't make it so hard to earn a position there.

Hallie

[Forcefully, but still kind of smiling.] I don't make it so hard! I ask for 10 or above!

Tom

I imagine the dice can do that about 50% of the time.

Hallie

The dice cannot do that 50% of the time! Fuck you and your math.

[Rolls.] Three!

Tom

[Groans.]

[Evil synth music begins.]

Kyle

Each of you give me a roll to run.

Hallie

ACK! *[Laughs.]*

Tom

No! I want to use another XP to have...

Hallie

[Rolls.] God fucking damn it!

Tom

...a skipping stone in my pocket.

Kyle

Okay.

Tom

When we hit the next intersection, Xoc is going to send a skipping stone down the other intersection.

[Rolls.] Fourteen.

Hallie

I got a 5. *[Laughs.]*

Kyle

So, Hop stumbles, and this thing hears him, and as you start running it starts to say names.

Kyle (as the Preserve)

Elda. Luna. Tobias. Cassandra. Beatrix. Dawn. Kennedy. Annalynn. Eden.

Kyle

And as it's shouting out names, almost as if asking what yours are, what part of the Preserve you are, Xoc, you throw a stone down the hallway, yank Hop to the side, and stay perfectly still.

[Music fades and whispering rises.]

The beast looks around.

Kyle (as the Preserve)

Create something that is gonna be remembered for a long time, even if my name gets lost over the years.

[Whispering fades.]

Kyle

And it goes down the corner with the pebble.

Tom

Xoc doesn't let out a woo. Instead, I think they just sit there for a moment or two, waiting until it gets farther away.

Hallie

[Chuckling.] Yeah, just wide-eyed.

Kyle

Okay. It takes a while, especially considering, I'm assuming, you two are shuffling as slowly and quietly as you can.

Tom

We're crouch-walking.

Kyle

But you make your way into the one non-square room in the Redd Module.

[Leik and Jessar's sacrifice music begins.]

This one is interesting. It's not as preserved as the other parts of the module, and not just because Rockryan is just knocking artifacts off of shelves,

[00:35:00]

picking them up, and then tossing them behind his back when he finds out that sure, they're priceless artifacts, but they're not fossils. As you get in, Bee, who is back on the vine on his shoulders, waves their hand and says,

Kyle (as Bee)

This room was not, not, not opened by the Preserve, so we thought it might be what you were looking for.

Kyle

Bee wraps down, and you see in their light, in the rubble, a long stick like the end of a rod, and you do notice that there are little cords attached to it.

Hallie

I'll look at Xoc.

Tom

Xoc will take a look. Is there writing on it or anything that would help us identify it?

Kyle

Not on the spear itself, but you see next to each of these artifacts the podiums they were on and different names, "Olive's Attempt," "Tobias's Promise," "Leik's Failure."

Tom

[Emotional exhale.]

Kyle

And next to the list of everyone's attempt you see a spot labeled, in that glittering powder, "Redd's Blessing." You don't know if it is here, but it was here, and if you know anything about the Apocrita... it doesn't let things too far out of its grip.

[Music fades.]

Tom (as Xoc)

Well, time to use my machine powers once again.

Tom

Xoc sticks one end of his staff under part of the rubble and begins using it as a lever to hoist up some rubble so we can yank it out.

Hallie

[Smiling.] We have technology.

Tom

[Grinning, proud of himself.] Simple machines! It's all I can do anymore.

Kyle

Give me a roll.

Tom

[Rolls.] An 11.

[Energizing music (Redd's Blessing theme) begins.]

Kyle

Something this momentous doesn't need something bigger, but it feels like there should be. When King Arthur pulled out the sword in the stone was this great big moment of picking up something no one had picked before. When Bilbo found the ring it was in this deep dark cave, hidden behind a series of malevolent riddles. But Redd's Blessing doesn't get that. Redd's Blessing doesn't need that, because as it pops itself out of the rubble and the glittering prismatic end shines in both the candles and in Bee's light, you still know just how momentous it will be.

[Music fades.]

Tom

I think Xoc will just say as he lets the rubble down,

Tom (as Xoc)

I think that's it.

Kyle

Okay, so we did it.

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

We got through the puzzles. We got into Redd. We got into this room. We survived Rockryan, and with his and Bee's help—mostly Bee's—you got Redd's Blessing... except for one issue. You didn't fail one of your rolls to avoid the Preserve, you failed all of them.

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

Hallie

You're gonna edit this, right? *[Laughs.]*

Kyle

I'm gonna edit it to make sure it sounds good, but I'm gonna make you suffer.

Hallie

No.

Kyle

You said earlier, Hallie, I should let players express themselves more and roll with what they're doing, so that is what I am doing.

Hallie

That feels like a gross misinterpretation of what I said.

Tom

Well-well-well, if it isn't the consequences of my own actions.

Hallie

[Laughs and grumbles, angrily and silly.]

Kyle

[Chuckles.] Alright, hop back in. I'm just gonna check some emails for the next half an hour. *[Laughs.]*

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Tom

Wow. Wow.

Hallie

[Words indistinguishable through laughter.]

Tom (as Xoc)

Well, that hardly seems like a way to live, just adventuring to loot ruins, chasing after experiences... It's just like what I heard about in the Beyond. Terrible.

Tom

I don't know. The joke was a lot funnier in my head.

Kyle

Those places are all filled with dungeons and sometimes even dragons. Who wants to fight a dragon?! They're the friendliest creature!

Hallie

[Quietly gasps for air.]

Tom

[Chuckling.] Anyway. Did the words—

Kyle

[Smiling.] I didn't even try to make a "dungeons your dragons" joke! I didn't even try!

Tom

[Smiling.] Was it the words "dungeon" and "dragon" near each other that triggered this memory?

Hallie

[Strained through breathy laughing and coughing.] I was drinking water and now it's stuck, in my ribcage. It hurts a lot.

Tom

Jesus Christ.

Kyle

[Grinning.] This episode is gonna be so short, because so much, but the post credits is gonna be so long.

Hallie

[Nearly crying, but still laughing through coughs.] I know, I just...

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Tom

Just delay all episodes until April 1 so this can be our April Fools episode, like oh yeah, 10 minutes.

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Hallie

[Struggling.] No one said Dungeons & Dragons. It's a longshot, and it snuck up on me, and then after the Tardy Boys and Fancy Sue and my botched detective instructions there was no hope.

Kyle

[Laughs.]

[00:40:00]

Hallie

There's no hope for the rest of this session!

Tom

Oh Jesus.

Hallie

I can't do it! I gotta... I gotta... Okay! I gotta readjust myself here. Oh, I'm gonna dungeon some dragons.

[Laughs.]

[Episode ends - 00:40:14.]