

Preparing for War (S1, E25)

SFX: INTRO MUSIC

Rev: So, the thing that I need to know for the Halloween episode: In character, what are you guys dressing up as for Halloween?

Tass: Oooh... And this is in-canon, in the episode, what we're dressed up as?

Rev: Correct, correct.

Tass: I think... I'm blanking on his name. Borderlands. The sniper.

Teej: Mordecai?

Tass: Mordecai!

Teej: Is it Mordecai?

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: OK.

Tass: I think Mordecai.

Teej: That's like one of my favorite characters out of that game.

Tass: Mine too.

Teej: Hey, let's give each other --

Tass: No, I don't want to --

Teej: Finger fives? No? OK. All right. Cool.

Rev: Anybody else? Where are you gonna be dressed as?

Teej: I was thinking, maybe like one of the Disney princes.

Rev: OK. Which one?

Tass: Eric.

Teej: It's gonna be Eric.

Tass: Yes.

Teej: Because --

Rev: From the Little Mermaid?

Teej: Yeah. Well, and also from real-life Eric here. Like, sitting next to me. Yeah. Prince Eric. He's my prince.

Tass: Who's that?

Teej: You, dude.

Tass: I don't know who you talking about.

Teej: Yeah. My friend who is sitting here, his name is not Eric. *laughs*

Rev: *laughs* Jake, what do you think you're gonna be dressed as?

Jake: Pinhead from Hellraiser.

Rev: OK. So we have Mordecai from Borderlands, we have Prince Eric from The Little Mermaid...

Teej: Yes, you do.

Rev: And we have Pinhead from Hellraiser.

Jake: Yeah.

Rev: OK, OK.

Jake: I've never seen Hellraiser. I'm pretty sure that's the name of the guy. That's the name of the guy, right?

Rev: With all the pins in his head?

Jake: Just calls him Pinhead.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Yeah.

Rev: Any particular reason?

Jake: I've been studying acupuncture recently, and so it seems like a good way to both test my skills and test my costuming skills.

Rev: So the way that he looks is that a -- like a four that you rolled, or a twelve?

Tass: Hmmmm...

Jake: Hmmmm... It's got to be a twelve, just for the symmetry. If they were just kind of all over the place but the same number of pins, that would be a four.

Rev: OK.

Tass: Good call.

Rev: I had a couple of people me on Facebook, asking about the stickers. So just a quick reminder, that is on Ko-Fi, which is ko-fi/thecritshow. Donate any amount you want there and then send us a message with how many stickers you want, and we will get those out into the mail. I've actually sent off like 50 so far, so --

Tass: Nice!

Rev: Thank you, for all of you who have gotten some of those. So Tass, do you have your stuff together for when we go shoot with Wes?

Tass: Oh god, I hope. Got all my clothes clean and nice and situated.

Rev: And you -- and your guns oiled?

Tass: Oh yeah.

Rev: I guess we haven't yet shown any of the photos, but when Jake went and did his photo shoot, I actually dressed up as one of the creatures and I'm going to do the same thing with Tass.

Tass: Oh, are you?

Rev: I am, I am.

Tass: I didn't know that.

Rev: Wes knows what it is, but...

Tass: *sighs*

Rev: And Wes, again, he is The Portrait Dude. But he is also StylishSenpai. He is the one who does our shirts and our hoodies. These hoodies are awesome, by the way.

Tass: They are! Mine's on the way! It's ordered.

Teej: Same!

Tass: I don't have it quite yet.

Teej: I got mine too, yesterday.

Tass: Oh, you got it yesterday?

Teej: High five on that!

SFX: *high five*

Rev: I think really the only other thing worth mentioning right now is that some point in November, we will probably put out the first episode of Hero Salad as a teaser.

Tass: Ooh!

Rev: Because it -- kind of our goal was to try to get the Patreon together for December, and it seemed like we should still be on track for that. We've got quite a few hours of Hero Salad, and then once we put some out, we can start playing it again.

Teej: Yay!

Tass: Yeah, I'm excited! You guys left me at the point where we stopped to kind of try to, you know, analyze what we had.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: Test the levels and stuff. You guys left on a cliffhanger.

Rev: We certainly did.

Tass: And -- I'm not kidding -- I had where if you guys, if we had kept going, I had a path we would have went. And then, it's just been so long at this point that I've gone through about four more iterations --

Rev: Different ideas.

Tass: They keep getting worse and worse for you. So, you need to hurry. Or it's just going to be a team wipe the second we start.

Rev: Oh, you know what, actually, speaking of team wipe: I think it's time to let the recap roll.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Jake: "I guess we go do recon, then. Maybe we can see through one of those portals, if we manage to get close enough. See where the hell they're coming from."

Rev: And they actually ask, as you guys are getting ready to go out, if you want anyone to accompany you.

Tass: Fox.

Teej: Yeah, we're going out recon, and she'd probably be the best to do it.

Jake: Now that T.J. doesn't need the gun, do we literally want to show her how to use a revolver real quick?

Teej: Oh, my god.

Tass: I would ask her if she would like to.

Rev: FOX: This is the thing you use that kills them, right? Yeah, I -- yeah, I want that.

Rev: And the deeper you guys travel through the woods, the more frequent you start to come across the bodies of the fallen nymphs.

So as you look through your goggles, you can tell right away that the big portals aren't connected to anything. They must be self generating somehow. Through the portal, you see a blasted land. It is just dust and sunlight. And these arachno-people are actually crossing maybe half a mile of it. And you can see that there are portals there as well, that they're coming out of. But you can see that the smaller portals seem to be connected by a very thin strain of magic to the general that cast it.

Tass: This is just a hunch, but I got to follow it. "Do you know of anywhere high up like a cliffside, or something, that I could get up to? To see that whole area from -- from kind of afar?"

Rev: You do get to the location that she indicated. And sure enough, it is a very, very large tree. The last sliver of the sun starts to sink past the horizon. The light from the sun makes the Goliath's translucent body glow and pulse. You know that at sunrise and sunset, for a window of like three seconds, this monster is filled to bursting with the magic of this world.

A female arachno-person appears, and she is terrifyingly beautiful. And she is familiar. Because you saw her in the nightmare you were pulled into a couple of weeks ago. Then one of the huge brutish enforcers grabs you and picks you up and starts to carry you towards her.

You get a feeling that T.J. is in a bad way.

Jake: Gonna pull him back, then.

Rev: As he appears, the last bit of the light casts a shadow at your feet of something very large that you have brought with him.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Rev: So Jake, much to your surprise, T.J. has someone with him. It's about eight feet tall wearing rock armor, and it is crushing him between two of its hands, and wielding a giant stone mace in the other.

Jake: Oh, well, goodbye. Um, I want to look and see if there's any way I think I can get him out of this without hurting him. Like if he's fully in this thing's clutches --

Rev: Uh-huh.

Jake: How do I hit it, or stop it, without him being part of the damage?

Rev: Roll 'Read a Bad Situation.'

Jake: Eight.

Rev: You get a Hold 1.

Jake: 'What's the best way to protect the victims?'

Rev: If you can find a way to make it focus on you, maybe it will drop him.

Jake: Yeah, I'm just gonna yell real loud at it. Like, not words. I don't know if it speaks English. Just scream at it.

Rev: Roll 'Protect Someone.'

Jake: OK. Damn, thirteen.

Teej: Nice!

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: And I went all impending danger focused on me.

Rev: So you start screaming at this enforcer, waving your arms, trying to be big. And sure enough, it throws T.J. to the ground and starts moving towards you.

Teej: "Oww!"

Rev: It raises its giant mace and starts to swing down at you.

Jake: Okay. Can I... I can't teleport myself anywhere. Damn. Can I just dive out of the way?

Rev: Roll 'Act Under Pressure.'

Jake: Ooh, god. OK. I rolled a six, but I have a +1. So, seven.

Rev: All right. So you can dive out of the way, it's gonna turn its focus back on T.J.

Jake: No...

Rev: It's going to crush the device that is there to amplify Tass's call for help, or it's going to clip you just in the right spot to destroy the armor, but not damage you.

Jake: I'm wearing the wood armor, right?

Rev: Correct.

Jake: Man. Both of the other ones are just so bad. I think I'm going to take the destroyed armor.

Rev: All right. You're able to kind of point your shoulder up at it, and it hits just right. You don't take any damage from it, but it cracks like someone splitting a log of wood and falls off of you. T.J., what are you doing?

Teej: I am going to use my electro-blaster on this thing.

Rev: Roll 'Kick Some Ass.'

Teej: That'd be five.

Tass: Oof...

Rev: You go to shoot the blaster at the back of this enforcer, and it just continues its arc from having hit Jake and crushes you in the side. You take 3 points of damage, and you are knocked to the ground.

Jake: Whoa! I should've kept armor. *laughs*

Teej: Did you say that was armor-defeating?

Rev: Do you have armor? Oh, yeah, you do have 1 armor. So no, it's not armor-defeating.

Teej: So I only took 2 damage, really.

Rev: Yeah.

Teej: Oh, good.

Rev: Jake, what are you doing.

Jake: Boy howdy, I don't know. I mean, I guess I'm going to try to hit it again. It's all I can do.

Rev: You haven't tried to hit it yet.

Jake: Oh, yeah. I guess I'm gonna try to hit it for the first time.

Rev: *laughs*

Jake: Eleven.

Rev: All right. What's your extra effect?

Jake: I'm going to suffer less harm. Like, having seen how bad it just smoked him through the armor, I'm concerned now.

Rev: You take 2 points of damage. You hit it, and its blow kind of glances off of you, but you get a good clip in. But you can tell as your hammer hits, this thing is heavily armored.

Jake: Ok. Is it wearing, like, stone armor?

Rev: Uh-huh.

Jake: Not good for electricity.

Teej: T.J., what are you doing?

Teej: I am... I don't know, uh... Maybe just I'm -- I'm taking a breather, I guess, um... 'Oops!'

Rev: Oh, all right.

Tass: *laughs* You son of a bitch.

Teej: I'm going to try and use this power a lot more often, so I don't have it taken away from me again. I love it.

Rev: So as you kind of crawl to your feet, you see Jake get hit pretty hard the first time. And your hands actually fall on a set of keys.

Teej: Like, car keys, or --?

Rev: Yeah. And you recognize them. They're Jake's car keys. They must have gotten dropped at some point.

Teej: I just go ahead and put them in my pocket.

Rev: So, Tass, you've just watched this energy flow through this Goliath, and you've had this impulse of like, 'Oh my gosh, the magic from this place at sunrise and sunset, it channels through it. And it seems to be in pain for this kind of three second window.' And you don't have that feeling anymore that you are missing something. You feel like that you saw what you needed to see. What are you doing?

Tass: Oh, man. I'm having a fundamental battle with myself about whether I want to fire my shotgun in the air a couple of times, and definitely draw attention of what's down there and hopefully get heard. Or, if I want to make the long walk back.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: So for the sake of hilarity, I think I'm going to fire the shotgun three times.

Rev: OK. Jake, as you are tussling with this enforcer, you hear through the speaker next to you: 'Blam! Blam! Blam!'

Jake: "Oh, thank god."

Rev: And as you hear that, the enforcer is pulling up its mace again toward you.

Jake: I pull him back still.

Rev: So Tass appears next to Jake. As you appear, Tass, you see T.J. on the ground. You see Jake bare chested, his armor broken on the ground, and this eight foot tall spider wearing stone armor with a huge mace. It slams Jake in the side. You take 3 points of damage.

Jake: Oh, my god. I am in such bad shape. I'm very unstable and dying.

Tass: Oof.

Rev: What do you do?

Tass: "Oohh, boy, I'm your huckleberry." And I'm going to take a shot at this thing.

Rev: Roll 'Kick Some Ass.'

Tass: Oh, that is a seven.

Rev: So it takes the brunt of this shotgun blast, and you can see that it kind of rocks it back, and it puts a bunch of holes in the stone armor. You take 3 points of damage as it swings down at you. T.J., what are you doing, now?

Teej: I'm gonna try with this silly electro-blaster again. I'm like, like, smacking it at first, then just like, "Come on, work, dammit." That's better. How about a nine, sir?

Rev: And that does 3 damage?

Teej: It does. 3 messy, awesome damage.

Rev: It is still up. And again, it kind of follows through its momentum. And you get this idea that as it's hitting you, it seems like it was almost switching arms. That it's slamming at Jake with the right hand, and as you attacked from behind, it's almost switching over really quick to the left and smacking you and bringing it around. Like, it is very fluidly switching the weapon from hand to hand, carrying the momentum around from swing to swing. And you take 3 points of damage, but it is not armor-defeating. Jake, what are you doing?

Jake: I think I'm chillin'. If I take another hit, I die.

Rev: Why don't you 'Read a Bad Situation'?

Jake: Seven.

Rev: You get a hold 1.

Jake: I mostly want to ask, 'What's my best way out?' I could ask 'What's most vulnerable to me?' So I can at least relay some helpful information from the sidelines. But I think I need 'What's my best way out?' Or else I'm just going to perish outright.

Rev: There is a very, very thin lip over the side of the parapet, and since he has knocked you down right beside it, you're pretty positive you could haul yourself over, and kind of take yourself out of sight, out of mind.

Jake: I'm going to do that.

Rev: All right.

Jake: Like I'm a.. I'm going to say, like, "Sorry, guys, I'm about to die." And climb over that wall.

Rev: All right. So, yeah, you scoot yourself over, and you kind of skinny your way down just a little bit so that you don't feel like it can see you any more. Tass?

Tass: Yeah, I think I'm still just screaming at it like, "Come on, bitch, look at me! Look at me!" And taking another shot.

Rev: Roll 'Kick Some Ass.'

Tass: That would be a nine.

Rev: So you exchange harm with it, take 3 points of damage, not armor-defeating. But it does go down. You see that the shotgun blast finishes its hole through the armor, and this thing slumps to the ground.

Tass: I'm going to spit on it and then run over to Jake and pull him back up.

Teej: I'm gonna help out because he's a big guy.

Tass: "Holy shit, you guys look awful." And I think I'm gonna try to patch him up.

Rev: Roll it.

Jake: "My wood armor broke. He hit me real, real hard, and my armor is gone."

Tass: You are stabilized and healed 2.

Jake: "Oh, thank god."

Rev: This is really unlike anything you've experienced before. Especially for you, Jake. This thing hit hard, and it took a lot. Like, you hit hard yourself. You don't often encounter things since you've started this that you think, like, 'I couldn't do that by myself.' They are dangerous.

Jake: "That thing would three-shot me, guaranteed." *laughs* I want to try something else I haven't tried yet. I want to see if I can teleport a thing to me. I want to see if I can summon my regular armor.

Rev: You feel like you should be able to. Like, it doesn't feel out of the realm of possibility. But it feels like something's blocking you, and it doesn't feel the same as when you tried to teleport. That just didn't exist. It feels like something's stopping you from pulling it to you.

Jake: "Well, dang."

Teej: "Well, where did we leave it?"

Jake: "I put it -- I put it in the car. I was just hoping I didn't have to hike down and get it."

Teej: "Well, it's it's in that magic room, right? Like where all the runes are, right?"

Jake: "Yeah."

Teej: "So maybe that's what's not getting it to you."

Jake: "Yeah, that makes sense."

Tass: "Well, I'll go get it. You guys need to sit down for a minute. Good lord."

Teej: "I know I do."

Jake: "I would like to go inside."

Tass: "Yeah. Well, how did this get up here? Is there a portal?"

Jake: "No, T.J. was in trouble and I pulled him back, and that thing came with him. T.J., what was happening?"

Teej: "Well, I went to investigate to see if I could find that other general. And sure enough, I came across something even worse. I don't know, like she was gorgeous, but, like, hideous at the same time. Like, this beautiful spider woman? And she tried to get in my head. But like, you know like how what's her name -- Rachel -- tried to get in my head and everything?"

Tass: "Yeah."

Teej: "And then we killed her? Yeah. That was pretty terrible. Um, but, like, it was like that."

Rev: What do you mean, 'tried' to get into your head? You were chewing on Jake's neck.

Teej: Oh, yeah.

Jake: "Was it the lady from the dream?"

Teej: "Yeah, it was."

Jake: "I... I wish even more now that I had a tuning fork. T.J., what are we -- where's Fox? What happened to her?"

Teej: "She was still down there. I think she must have run away. I mean, she's not stupid enough to get caught like I did."

Jake: I don't know if I know Fox well enough, but I wanna try to pull her to me. I doubt I do, but things are just so wild here.

Rev: Roll 'Angel Wings.'

Jake: *laughs* God! Uh, five.

Rev: Yeah, nothing happens.

Tass: "I have one important thing to say before I run down to grab your armor." And I hand T.J. all of the pieces: "Fix my goddamn gun, dude." And then I'm going to run down and grab his armor.

Rev: And the rest of the pieces are in the car. Like, the parts that he didn't use.

Tass: I'll get those, too.

Rev: OK. And so you're bringing up his armor and the pieces for the gun. T.J., you're gonna try to put the gun back together?

Teej: Absolutely.

Rev: All right. Roll it.

Teej: All righty. I'll roll 'Engineering.' Ooh, that was close. That'd be a ten.

Rev: All right. Yeah, no problem. You are able to remove all the various pieces that you had added, you're able to get rid of some of the spider webbing that you had used as straps. And Tass has his sniper rifle back.

Tass: "All right. What's the sitch? What's happening?"

Jake: "First thing's first. Zip me up."

Tass: Oh, yeah. We'll get him into his armor.

Rev: Yep. No problem.

Tass: And as I'm doing that, I'm telling them what I saw. "I feel like we need to ask maybe Ferguson about this. I've got a couple of hunches. But I mean, when the light hit the Goliath, like, just that energy pulsed through it. It seemed like it was in pain, and then it faded away again. And I don't know that this is the right choice, but after seeing that gland get shot in that explosion, I feel like I want to shoot this thing at that moment --"

Teej: "Exactly what I was thinking."

Tass: "Either that, or something about just hitting it with magic energy in general hurts it. But, I mean, I don't think we have the kind of capacity to do that. I think it's a critical

moment. I think it's that timing that we got to hit. Here's my problem with this plan, is we saw how big of an explosion one of the little ones made."

Jake: "Yes. So it'll definitely wipe out all the bad guys."

Tass: "Yeah. And whoever's close enough to shoot it, I would guess."

Teej: "So then we'd need to be far away."

Jake: "Or at least, I need to be far away."

Tass: "Oh, I don't love this."

Jake: "And I just yoink you --"

Tass: "The second the gun goes off."

Jake: "Yeah, we're gonna need a more consistent means of communication to pull that one off."

Tass: "Yeah. Cause yeah, gunfire will echo, therefore you won't hear it until --"

Rev: Oh, I'm sure by the time the sound reached you, it would be fine. *chuckles*

Tass: "I mean, another thing, too." And I put my hand on T.J.'s shoulder. "I have a couple of grenades. If we could figure out some kind of a trigger, and get it in there, and set off the trigger at the right moment..."

Teej: "Yeah, I think we could do that. I think we could create some kind of trigger."

Rev: You do remember that the devices you've tested so far that required a radio signal did not work.

Teej: Oh, yeah...

Rev: Just to throw that out there.

Jake: "Another problem I'm thinking of is I feel like we're going to need their portals to get home."

Tass: "Their portals?"

Jake: "Yeah. Like it'll take, like, a hundred years to summon up the magic runes they had to burn to get us here."

Tass: "I think these are some questions for Ferguson."

Jake: "We'll go ask him after Fox gets back." You said she was like 20 minutes away?

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: "Like, one of us can go tell them that what has happened, that Fox is out there --"

Tass: "I'm going to do that. I'm gonna go report everything, while you guys chill."

Rev: So Tass heads inside, as you guys continue your watch for Fox.

Tass: Yeah, I'm gonna go into the main hall and look for Ferguson.

Rev: Oh, yeah, he is at the table talking with Conover.

Rev: FERGUSON: What were you able to discover on your expedition?

Tass: "Uh, it's really bizarre. I need, kinda your advice here to see if what I have in my head makes sense. But I mean, you were there when the general -- the magic user exploded."

Rev: FERGUSON: Oh, yes.

Tass: "OK, so here's what I saw..." And I'm gonna kind of explain that -- just the moment of the sunlight, and the energy that went through, it was in pain. I'm going to explain that -- like, this queen or, you know, this woman that came through, and tell them about the the rock-covered ones, and that they're much stronger.

Rev: And you actually hear a couple of the people around the room kind of get agitated at the sound of that.

Tass: "So I don't know if this would work, or if this is the right path for me to be thinking in my head, but I feel like when this energy is going through the Goliath, I think we need to

hit it with some of our weapons that we know harm it. And I mean, if my hunch is right, it'll wreck the whole thing. It'll blow up bigger than that little one ever did."

Rev: FERGUSON: How big would you say the gland was on the one that was casting the magic?

Tass: "The way T.J. described it, it was like a gland..." and I hold up "Like a fist, maybe?"

Rev: FERGUSON: That explosion was, what would you say, maybe --?

Tass: "About twenty four feet."

Rev: FERGUSON: Did you get a sense of how big the creature was?

Tass: "Yeah. Probably... oh god, 50 feet."

Rev: FERGUSON: So what's that? Twenty five, or thirty times that?

Tass: "I mean, it'd just about have to be, yeah."

Rev: FERGUSON: Yes. It seems like you would have to hit it with something very powerful. It's so big.

Tass: "Yeah, I guess I don't know what the prerequisite there is, as far as if this thing is charged with the energy and it seemed weak, if hitting it at all is a good move? Like, I mean," and I'll hold up my sniper rifle "like this is strong. I guess that's what I'm hoping for a little wisdom on, is if hitting it at all in that moment would be enough."

Rev: FERGUSON: If I had to guess, I would say you would have to get to its core. Magic is held at the core, it radiates from the core of anyone who can use it. It's not like a berry where there's the skin and then the magic's right underneath. It's more like the pit.

Tass: "Yeah, it makes sense. Oh, speaking of which, I hate this, like, little purple berry underneath a big tree. Was that a bad call?"

Rev: FERGUSON: Have you moved your bowels recently?

Tass: "Um, no."

Rev: FERGUSON: You probably won't for a while.

Tass: "Oh, OK. I could go for a few more of those berries. I'm so hungry."

Rev: FERGUSON: Would you like something to eat? We've got pancakes. *laughs*
Already established that, I believe...

Tass: *chuckles* "No, thank you. You use a different kind of topping for that."

Rev: FERGUSON: We can also give it to you with a nice spread of those purple berries.

Jake: What were the blueberries? *Ferugson impression* 'Blueberries? What the hell are you talking about?'

Tass: "OK, so I need to -- we need to just make something to hit this thing harder, and at that correct moment. Well," and I kind of just am looking around the room. "We're getting the start of a plan here. I think if we hit that, it's going to make a real big explosion. And I've got a Science Guy that can at least tell us how big that's gonna be. Frankly, I don't know what that means. That means maybe this whole castle goes down, and that means a plan on evacuating before we can do anything, but --"

Rev: FERGUSON: Oh, yes, we would have to wake everyone.

Tass: "You would."

Rev: FERGUSON: Figure out a place to go.

Tass: "We'll cross that bridge when we get to it."

Rev: FERGUSON: Yes, all right. But perhaps we will start talking about that now, rather than waiting for them.

Tass: "Of course. Yeah. Better to have plans laid and not have to use them."

Rev: And you see Conover actually gets up and goes over to Pryde and they start chattering. Then they go over to the side of the room and start pulling very old tomes off of the wall. And about that same time Tass is having this conversation, Fox does come trotting up the ramp.

Rev: FOX: What happened to you?

Teej: "I got snatched, and then all of a sudden I was by Jake. He pulled me back. Unfortunately, it also brought one of those soldiers with it. As you can clearly see over here," as I point out, the dead, you know, enforcer.

Rev: FOX: Yeah, I saw one of those right before I decided to come back, hoping that you had found your way back this way.

Teej: "Sorry."

Rev: FOX: That's all right.

Teej: "Well, at least there's one here now, so we can go ahead and check over him if you wanted to." And that's what I'd actually like to start doing, is like, checking this armor out. Seeing like, what's the deal? How is it being held on to this giant humongous spider?

Rev: All right. Roll 'Investigate a Mystery.'

Teej: Will do. That is a thirteen.

Rev: You get a Hold 2.

Teej: 'What is being concealed here?'

Rev: They are that weird mix of flesh and crystal. And then it seems like the stone is growing off of the crystal. But as you start to look around the rest of its body, you notice that the space underneath its body, there is no armor there. It seems like it would restrict its movement. It's so big but so agile, you imagine if there was stone down here, it wouldn't be able to move as well. And so the underbelly is completely unarmored.

Teej: Well, that answers my second question, too, which was gonna be 'What can hurt it?' But, uh...

Rev: You know, looking at the body, aside from it not being armored underneath, you see the same thing that you've seen with the other two, that the metal is just searing through these. You now scientifically know metal is the thing. There is almost always straight exit wounds, and they're big.

Teej: "This thing is weak underneath. If we can somehow get into it with a gun or something, we could definitely do some hardcore damage to it."

Tass: You know, actually, there would be something else that I would want to ask Ferguson. So so I think I would go back to him.

Rev: Oh, OK.

Rev: FERGUSON: Hello again.

Tass: "Hi."

Rev: FERGUSON: How can I help you, traveler?

Teej: *laughs*

Tass: "Just from from having talked about some of the runes and stuff with y'all before, how do we get home after all is said and done?"

Rev: FERGUSON: Since your story is true, since the Queens story is true, somehow she was able to get from our world to yours, and she did it on accident. I think maybe we should have some conversation with her to figure out how she got there, and how she got back. She may hold the key.

Tass: "All right. Um, is that -- I'm not sure protocol. Is it all right to approach?"

Rev: FERGUSON: Oh, yeah.

Tass: "Is it very --?"

Rev: FERGUSON: Yeah.

Tass: "All right."

Rev: FERGUSON: Oh sure, sure sure. Just walk on up. She's a real people's kind of queen.

Tass: And I'm gonna go to Queen Leah.

Rev: And Ferguson is actually gonna join you, since he might have to do some kind of research on this.

Tass: "Hi, Your Majesty."

Rev: QUEEN LEAH: Hello.

Tass: I'll bow awkwardly because I'm not sure. "I'm just kind of looking ahead a little bit, and was curious how you got to our world in the first place?"

Rev: QUEEN LEAH: You know, I remember laying down to rest, and I thought I was asleep. And there was a thunderstorm, and I walked outside and it was raining. And the thunder hit the parapet. And then I could see this other world, and I could see the sun shining there. And it was like the sun was going down there. And I remember that it was really beautiful, because the sun was rising here off in the distance. Have you ever had one of those moments where you can see the storm, but you can also see the sun?

Tass: "Yeah."

Rev: QUEEN LEAH: It was that. And I just saw this other world and I... I went through. But once I -- once you all set me free, I flew back to where I remember seeing the trees, and the hole was still there. I went through it and I went back to my bed because I thought that's what I should do, that's how you end a dream. You get up from your bed at the beginning of the dream, I must have to lay down to wake back up. And I assumed that it may have just been some kind of a vision, because the next morning there was no hole on the parapet that led to another world.

Tass: "Okay. Well, thank you that... That helps. Both of the guys with me are no strangers to calling lightning of some kind. So maybe there's something to it."

Rev: QUEEN LEAH: Oh, all right.

Tass: "Thank you very much."

Rev: QUEEN LEAH: Thank you.

Tass: And I think I'll go back to the boys. "What do you think? I mean..."

Teej: "Hmm... It seems to me like as sun rises and or sun sets around this place, some kind of magic burst happens. Jake, if you could create some kind of lightning at the same time as well, that culmination of those two coming together might create some sort of portal for us to get home."

Tass: "Yeah, she said as the sun was rising here, that's when the portal was made. So, wow, is this gonna be a really orchestrated thing? Are we gonna have to set up this attack and try to get out at the same time?"

Jake: "I can't, like, call lightning. You remember you made that look like that, with your technology, but I can't."

Teej: "Sorry. Yeah."

Jake: "That was you, that was showmanship."

Teej: "Yeah. Well, thank you."

Jake: "So it was so good, you fooled yourself."

Teej: "I did. Yeah. Wow."

Jake: "I can, like, hit something with the hammer at the same time? And it's kinda... It's kind of shocky?"

Tass: "Well, and all of your stuff is enhanced here."

Jake: "That's accurate. I don't even know how to begin to go about trying to call lightning, though."

Teej: "You might practice."

Jake: *effort noises*

Rev: What are you doing?

Jake: Uh, I'm gonna basically mimic the gesture I did when I pretended to raise a shield in the Circle.

Rev: Roll Luck.

Jake: Eight.

Rev: So you guys are standing there and you kind of like 'Oh, maybe you can do it in practice.' And he's like, 'Uh, I don't know. All right.' And he strikes the pose from the

battle at the Circle. About 40 feet behind him, a huge bolt of lightning comes down out of the blue sky and cracks.

Jake: *scared* "Ooh!"

Rev: And everybody shits a little bit.

Teej: "What?!"

Jake: "Ooh. Um, OK."

Tass: "Jake!"

Jake: "OK."

Tass: "Jake!"

Jake: "Yeah, I guess I can do that. That wasn't where I meant to do it, but we can work with that."

Rev: Mechanically speaking, so what just happened: When you try this, it'll be Luck. On a fail, nothing happens, or maybe it strike someplace you don't want it to. On a mixed success, it strikes near you. On a success, it strikes on you.

Tass: "OK. So a lot of things need to happen because, my god, who knows how much time has gone by at home. So, we have to figure out something that we can use to hurt it. Pretty much at the same time, hopefully you're doing your thing to make sure that the portal is at least there. We check out our damage control, make sure everything's good, and we get out. But how the hell do we hurt this thing? I mean, I don't think -- I don't think my sniper rifle's gonna do it."

Teej: "I think we're going to have to use your grenades. And we're gonna have to create some kind of missile or something like that to hit this thing with."

Tass: "But we don't even have any metal. All we have is the -- god damn it."

Teej: "All we have is the car."

Jake: I look at the keys in my hand, and I look at them, and I look at the keys, and I look at them...

All: *laugh*

Jake: *sighs* "Damn it. OK." I will hold the keys out to T.J., and right before he grabs them, I'll pull them back a little bit. And I will say, like, "Can you try to keep it superficial?"

Tass: *laughs*

Teej: "Sure."

Jake: I hand him the keys.

Tass: "I don't believe him."

Jake: "I don't either. But it made me feel better to ask."

Tass: "Yeah. Let's go take this bitch apart."

Rev: So when you say 'Go and take this apart,' what's your plan?

Tass: "OK. So things we can use the metal for: I feel like we're gonna need to at least equip some of the others here with metal-tipped stuff. Arrows, spears..."

Teej: "So I can probably easily make a arrowhead punch that would easily make arrow tips for the people."

Tass: "So what are you thinking about using to, like, actually damage this thing?"

Teej: "Oh, I was gonna make an RPG using 'Weird Science.'"

Tass: "Like out of what? Are we using the ballista? Are we using --"

Teej: "No, we're gonna use your sniper rifle."

Tass: "Oh, good. OK. So I get to shoot it."

Teej: "Yeah, absolutely."

Tass: "Neat."

Teej: "You're the best shot."

Tass: *bashful* "I know... So, we've essentially got a bomb that we're firing out of a very large gun."

Teej: "Mmhmm."

Tass: "We've got Jake ready to open the portal, at least."

Teej: "Mmhmm."

Tass: "Not necessarily us jump through yet, because we need to make sure that this works before we go anywhere. Ideal situation, and this thing doesn't just kill all of us instantly and incinerate the castle: If the castle is still standing, that queen was close. So she would probably survive, too, unless we're lucky and she happens to be back there at the same time that this thing goes off. T.J., you're probably going to need to be up there with Jake and with all of the other people with, you know, the metal-tipped stuff, ready to fight. Because killing this bear doesn't necessarily mean we win. It just means that the portals are closed and more can't come. And I mean, so how close -- do I have to be in the tree? Is the tree my spot?"

Rev: Yeah, you would think to get a clear shot at it... You know, you can't do it from here, obviously.

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: So yeah. That tree is probably your best option.

Tass: "Ooh boy. Can I take, like -- OK. So they're weak to metal. Can we keep, like, a car door for me to take up there with me? And, like, pray to God that the magic is kind of weak to it as well? Something for me to hide behind and -- I don't know, give me a chance to freaking live/"

Teej: "Like a blast shield?"

Tass: "Yeah."

Teej: "Basically?"

Tass: "Yeah."

Teej: "It wouldn't be um-impossible to make a blast shield. I don't know how well it would work."

Tass: "We can also ask Ferguson to just take a shot at a car door and see what happens."

Jake: Yes. I just love this visual. I want to see Ferguson shoot a car door with magic and see what happens.

Tass: "OK. Let's get to work, boys."

Teej: "Yeah!"

Rev: So you guys go inside. Are you telling everybody this plan? What parts are you doing, in what order?

Jake: I think, one: tell everybody this plan. Two: make the press that can punch out metal weapon parts.

Teej: Cool.

Jake: Three: you start working on the bomb, I start assembling weapons for people using the tool you have made. Four: question marks. Five: profit.

All: *laugh*

Tass: I think earlier in that we need to have Ferguson test that blast, because if it doesn't work, we have at least one more door with metal to use for something.

Jake: 1.5a: Ferguson shoots a metal door.

Teej: I like it.

Rev: So you guys head into the royal chamber and everybody has assembled there, and they all look to you.

Teej: "Ferguson, we have a plan."

Rev: FERGUSON: All right.

Jake: "And we need your help testing it."

Teej: "That's right."

Rev: FERGUSON: Oh.

Jake: So, evidently I'm the one telling the plan. Um...

Teej: You had the list.

Jake: You're right. I have the list. I pull out the list. "OK. Here's what we're gonna do. T.J. is going to create a device that will essentially turn parts of our car -- the thing that we arrived in that's all made of metal -- into weapons for you guys. Once he makes that, I'm going to start assembling weapons for you guys. And we'll get to why that matters in a moment. Once that part is happening, Ferguson, we need your help. We need you to shoot some magic at part of that car and see what happens. And we'll get to why that's important in a second. So the next thing T.J. is going to do is essentially make a rocket, a bomb. Do you guys know what rockets or bombs are?"

Rev: FERGUSON: No.

Jake: "OK."

Tass: "A weapon that will kill the Goliath."

Jake: "Yes. From a distance, which will use some more parts of the big metal car. Tass is going to go back to the very tall tree that he perched in to watch them. And that's where he is going to fire the weapon from, so that he gets a good line on the creature. He is going to take a piece of the car to use as a shield, maybe. We don't know yet what magic does to it. That's where you come in: When you blast you with magic, we're hoping that metal might disperse the magic, in which case he might be protected if he stays behind his shield."

Rev: FERGUSON: Hmm.

Jake: "The blast, as far as we can tell -- relative to the size of the creature that exploded before and the size of this thing -- the blast shouldn't reach the castle. So we should be OK here. But if that's the case, we know that there are some of them closer to the castle that might be outside of the blast radius. That's why we need to equip you guys, because

whatever is left, we'll probably need your help cleaning up the stragglers at that point. But we know that they're weak to the metal. So if we get you guys some metal weapons, we should have no problem picking the remainder of them off at the end."

Rev: QUEEN LEAH: Yes, this... this sounds like it could work.

Tass: "I hope so. The only other thing is really up to you, how you want to handle it, is we're fairly certain that that blast won't get this far. But we still don't understand fully the power of magic in this world, or how much fills this thing and to what capacity. Whether you want to evacuate and get all the people sleeping way further out somewhere, that's up to you. You know, we're willing to give this a try and stand our ground here. I don't feel comfortable making that decision for you whether you're going to keep them here or not."

Jake: "The problem is we only have until sunrise to execute this whole thing. Because that's when the magical be the most powerful in the Goliath, that's when we need to hit it. That's when, according to Queen Leah, the opportunity opens for us to summon the portal that gets us back out of here. So if we can't get everybody out in that amount of time, that's gonna be some trouble."

Rev: So as you guys are having this conversation, Leah stands up from her throne and she looks at Robear and she looks at Ferguson, and she gestures to them. And then she beckons you to follow her. And she starts to walk out and down the hallway and towards the Chamber of Rest. And she's having this conversation with you as you go.

Rev: QUEEN LEAH: You know, we have told you a little bit about the sleep. That is the thing that we use to make sure that everyone is healed and healthy. And it gives us an opportunity to live a very long time because we work when we need, we spend time with our loved ones when we can, and other times we sleep. It's what we've always known.

Rev: And as you guys approach the door to the Chamber of Rest, the two guards there open it. And she walks into the middle. And Robear and Ferguson joined her.

Rev: QUEEN LEAH: The thing that you have to understand about us is that the life here now has been easy. We have taken care of the plants here. We have been the guardians of this tree.

Rev: And she reaches out her hands, and you see that Robear and Ferguson both take her hands. And when they do, this energy radiates off of all three of them and fires up the column. And as the energy coming from the three of them passes over the hibernating

nymphs, you see them all start to shift and wake. And they leap out of their positions on the wall and they start to fly around the room, hundreds upon hundreds upon hundreds of these filling the room and flying around. She looks at you and says:

Rev: QUEEN LEAH: But you do not become the guardian of something without knowing how to fight.

Tass: "Hell yes."

Rev: And she escorts you back out into the hallway as everyone inside starts to kind of land and stretch and yawn and greet each other. It's very jovial.

Rev: QUEEN LEAH: We had not had success fighting these things because we couldn't figure out how to hurt them. And I refused to just throw more people at them. But now that you have shown up with a way to hurt them: We are fighters. So, my people will not be some other place in case the explosion happens. My people will be next to you, making sure that whatever this is doesn't spread to the next plane.

Jake: "Excellent."

Rev: And so I think that the first thing that happens is you guys start to make the press. Some conversation with Fox and some conversation with Vitz, and you know that essentially all you need to make is arrowheads and spear tips. They have all been trained enough that everyone knows how to use those two things, at least. And so it is a very easy thing for you to make a press for. And they've already got all the arrows, they've already got all the spears, they just need the heads replaced. So, T.J., it's time to do some some 'Weird Science's.

Teej: So, yeah, the arrowhead machine is going to be made out of the engine. So like, a lot of the moving parts and everything that is involved there is all mostly in the engine there. And so I'm going to have it to where, Jake, all he has to do is just step on a pedal. And so he just takes some, like, metal off the door or something and just presses it through and --

Rev: Oh, OK.

Teej: He's got arrowheads.

Rev: Kind of like a kick-ass sewing machine.

Teej: Yeah, kind of. Yeah.

Rev: All right.

Teej: Yeah.

Rev: And then what about the rocket?

Teej: That's going to be awesome, because it's just going to be like any other rocket RPG or whatever, except it's gonna have, like, this long tail that kind of goes into the barrel. All he has to do is just shoot the gun and the actual firing pin from the gun will ignite the rocket. And so then it just fires off, and... explodey time.

Rev: All right. So which one do you wanna roll first?

Teej: I'll go for the press.

Rev: All right. Roll it.

Teej: That would be nine.

Rev: What is your requirement?

Teej: 'It won't work exactly as you intended.'

Rev: And for mine, I'm going to pick 'It requires a large amount of energy or fuel.' So to create this, essentially what you're gonna have to do is, as you said, use the engine. And it's going to use a decent amount of the gasoline, because you're basically going to have to run the engine like a car. And it is essentially automated. Someone will have to be watching it to switch the metal out. Someone will have to be watching it to make sure it doesn't backup or jam. And then roll for the rocket.

Teej: All righty. Another nine.

Rev: OK. What is your requirement?

Teej: Gosh. 'It needs a rare and/or weird material.'

Rev: 'It's gonna take a while to get it working.' You have, as of right now, about ten hours before the sunrise. Once you get everything built -- this is such a difficult piece to craft.

You're trying to make a rocket that you can fire from the barrel of a normal sniper rifle. And so it's gonna take you right up to the minute, probably, that everybody needs to leave to get it working properly. And part of the reason it's going to take you so long is because it requires a special component. And that component is one of the glands of one of the generals. It needs that magic kick to help propel it and cause the explosion that you want, now that some of the gasoline has been used up.

All right. So what I want to do here is, like I said, you guys have got ten hours. Tell me your time lines. What are you doing, each of you, between 8:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. when this plan has to go off, essentially in three seconds?

Tass: Mine's pretty simple, I think.

Rev: OK.

Tass: I'll definitely want to go hunting on T.J.'s behalf to get that gland.

Teej: Why thank you, sir.

Tass: Oh, you're welcome. I assume you're gonna be... Well, I'm sure you'll tell us, but I assume you're gonna have to start in on some of that engineering. So, yeah, I would want to go out and get that to him as quickly as possible. And then once the press is done, start helping with that and helping arm everybody.

Rev: And are you, uh -- how are you gonna get to the tree?

Tass: So my thought on that: I mean, of course, I'm just gonna have to go by foot. I'm gonna have to walk out and be sneaky, sneaky. But I thought about asking Fox if some of the huntresses would be able to essentially make a distraction. Like I'm going, whatever it is, east towards the tree and they go west and cause chaos in the woods. You know, they do some guerrilla tactics stuff to draw attention that direction, so that there's not nearly as much in my path that might come across me.

Rev: OK. And so to get to the tree and get in the position, moving pretty quickly, you'll have to leave around 3:00. And so you want the huntresses to go out at that same time and start causing chaos in the other direction?

Tass: Yeah. Yeah.

Rev: What about the defenders?

Tass: It's my opinion that really the bulk of the people, the defenders and any of, you know, just the kind of general populace that we're arming now, should stay there and essentially just be prepared for if all things go well, the second that explosion goes off, that they're ready to just, you know, gates open swarm and just murder anything that's left.

Rev: OK. And so you know that with you having to leave at 3:00 and we'll go -- we'll go to T.J. now, that rocket is going to take you about six hours to make properly. It is a very precise piece. And you do know you need this special component. So just kind of going back, knowing the Tass needs to leave by 3:00, that means you have to start on this rocket by 9:00 for six hours of uninterrupted work to get it done.

Teej: Sure.

Rev: For three o'clock, which means they have an hour to get you the gland, but you'll have the hour to make the press and start making weapons.

Teej: Yeah.

Rev: What do you want to do after 3 o'clock, after Tass leaves?

Teej: Well, if he's going to be leaving, I'm probably going to pick up where he's left off, where I'm helping to arm the people, making sure that the press punch is actually going to not get jammed up or anything. I'd probably be the best person to do that.

Rev: OK.

Teej: Yeah.

Rev: And then, Jake, what are you going to do?

Jake: Well, I'm going to go help Tass hunt for that, however much of that first hour it takes.

Rev: Yep.

Jake: And then after that, I think I would probably practice my lightning call because I still have seemingly very little control over it.

Rev: Oh, OK.

Jake: For probably until he leaves, I guess.

Rev: Yeah. Where are you gonna do that at?

Jake: *snorts* Just the middle of the dining room. 'Everybody watch out!' Is there like an end of this castle that nobody's gonna be in now? Like, could I go to the other side on like a -- well, it's in a tree...

Teej: Well, the sleeping chamber?

Rev: There isn't really an 'other side.'

Jake: Yeah. I guess just out on the parapet then.

Rev: OK.

Jake: That's where it's gonna have to go down for real.

Rev: Accurate.

Jake: Get the home court advantage. So then once Tass leaves, that would mean that a lot of them have their weapons, so I'll head inside and I'll start helping them, like, practice. Helping them use a bow and a spear and learn to fight.

Rev: All right. And so, again, this is kind of your guys's ideal timeline as you break from the group. Anything else that you want to do before you set off on your specific tasks? I think the only other thing that you had talked about was you wanted Ferguson to test the doors. Is that now? Is that later?

Tass: I think so, just so we have a definitive answer there. And if, you know, it goes poorly and we know it's useless to do it, at least we have the rest of that door for more metal.

Rev: Yeah, sure.

Teej: And that could just be me simply taking the door off its hinge and handing it to Tass and he can go take it to Ferguson.

Rev: OK. So this is happening in that hour before you have to have the bladder.

Jake: It's a bladder?!

Rev: Er -- yeah, the gland.

Jake: It's a magic bladder!

Tass: *laughs* Eww...

Rev: Everybody roll Luck.

Jake: Nine.

Teej: Ten.

Tass: Also ten. Thank you, spherical dice, for serving me well.

Jake: I'm going to melt those one day...

Tass: *laughs*

Teej: I'm gonna cut them open first to see what's inside. Then I'm going to melt 'em.

Tass: It's just smaller spherical dice.

Jake: It's just tinier d6s.

Rev: So you guys head down into the Room of Magic to start taking apart this car. That gets you one of the doors. As you get down there, you can see that, again, those two runes are still there. And you can actually see in the shallow pits where the other runes sat, there's a millimeter of, like, collected material. You can see that this room must collect the magic and just form the rune in the spot that it's in. Ferguson comes with you.

Rev: FERGUSON: And so you want me to just shoot this door?

Tass: "Yes, please."

Rev: All right. How are you guys -- how do you guys have this set up? You just like lean it against a wall? Is somebody holding it, like it's a sitcom?

Jake: Uh, I think shot number one, it's just leaning against a wall.

Rev: Uh, yeah. He blasts at the door and it goes right through. Just like on Earth, magic is armor-defeating.

Jake: "Asked and answered. Thank you, Ferguson."

Rev: FERGUSON: Yes, of course. I like working with you guys. You make me feel very useful. There's nothing like having a purpose. 'Shoot this,' and 'talk to that,' and 'research this.' It's nice to have a purpose again.

Tass: "I suppose I would love to ask you if you could help me out with a little more purpose?"

Rev: FERGUSON: What's that?

Tass: "I know these runes are extremely important to you guys. But this is really kind of an all or nothing situation for you, I think. Is there anything in this magic, or magic that you have, that can help me out up there?"

Rev: FERGUSON: Uh, how do you mean?

Tass: "Well, if this magic is as powerful as we think it is, I mean, that tree is a half a mile away from that blast. I mean, where I'm at right now, man, I'm willing to die for this, but I'd rather not."

Rev: FERGUSON: Yes. Yes, I might have an idea. I'm glad you asked. I'll talk to you in a few hours.

Tass: "OK. Thank you."

Rev: All right. So you two are gonna go out and try to hunt down a general?

Jake: Yes.

Rev: Are you asking anybody to go with you? You going solo?

Jake: Fox has proved herself a capable navigator and tracker.

Tass: Yeah, absolutely.

Jake: So, her help would be nice.

Tass: Mm hmm.

Rev: Yeah. And she agrees to go with you. T.J. stays in the Room of Magic, starts taking apart the car, starts putting together the metal press. I assume this is where -- is this your workshop now, essentially?

Teej: Basically, yeah.

Rev: OK. Fox agrees to go with you.

Rev: FOX: So how do you want to do this? We have to, what? Hunt down one of these guys and cut out this gland?

Jake: "Yeah. So we know that they're spider webbing out from the portals in these three spots, in these three directions. I think we should be able to, if we've got a map, we can probably kind of figure out the line that they're following, and follow it until we find one of them.

Rev: FOX: All right. And, so what, just take out the little ones, and then...?

Jake: "Yeah, and kill the big one without detonating it."

Rev: FOX: All right.

Rev: Yeah, I don't think this is any problem. She's been weaving in and out of this wooded area for quite a while now, and she's been doing it during these kind of battlefield excursions. And she will take you the opposite direction that she and T.J. went, because it was not far away that the queen and these enforcers were at. And so she obviously doesn't want to run into that group. Is anything else you guys want to do before you leave?

Tass: I think healing everybody up that's in bad shape might not be atrocious.

Rev: Yeah, that's fair. What's everybody sitting at?

Teej: 4 harm.

Tass: Oh, God, yes, so you're unstable?

Teej: No, because I have the different thing.

Tass: Ohhhh.

Jake: That funny playbook.

Tass: Right. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, I'm at 2. I'm OK.

Jake: I'm at 3. Yeah, if you can patch me up.

Tass: Yep. That was a nine. So you have 2.

Jake: K.

Tass: And then for Teejus. Or are you -- are you going for it?

Teej: 'Lay on Hands,' baby. Use that super awesome healing.

Jake: Yeah. I mean I can try to use my super magic.

Tass: OK.

Jake: 'Lay on Hands.' Hell yes. Twelve.

Rev: All right. So you heal 4. Is that it?

Teej: I feel like a million bucks.

Tass: Yeah, I think so.

Jake: Yeah, unless you want me to tap you? Get you a couple.

Tass: If you want to give it a try, I'm not going to say no.

Jake: Eight.

Rev: Yes. He heals 4. And you take 2.

Teej: *laughs* You're back to 3.

Jake: And I'm right back to --

Rev: Which I believe is what we established last time.

Tass: Are we to keep running this circle around and I try it again?

Jake: I mean, it just seems like a smart game play.

Tass: *laughs* All right.

Teej: And I bet it's good listening, too.

Tass: And you absolutely get your 2 back.

Jake: OK. So I'm at 1, you're cool, you're cool. That's fine.

Tass: That's as good as we're getting. Let's roll.

Rev: All right. Nothing like going into battle, mostly healed. So you're wearing your metal armor?

Jake: Yes.

Rev: You're still wearing the wood armor? Or have you switched back to your normal stuff?

Tass: I've switched back to mine.

Rev: OK. So you guys are not going in stealth to hunt?

Tass: Oh, this is for hunting. This is not for going out. I'm so sorry. For hunting, yeah, I just have the wood. I have the wood armor.

Rev: OK. And...?

Jake: If they have more, I'll put it back on.

Rev: They don't. They spent three hours to make those three sets.

Jake: Yeah. Then no, I'll just I'll wear my regular armor.

Teej: He can wear mine -- no, he can't. He's bigger than me.

Jake: And I will hang back.

Rev: OK.

Jake: I'll let them kind of scout, and then give me like a 'OK, This much is good.' And then scout and give me like a 'All right, this is good, too.'

Rev: Ok. All right. So roll 'Act Under Pressure,' everybody.

Teej: Everybody?

Rev: Well, not you.

Tass: Good. I love that giggle from across the table.

Rev: Can we tell that he's wearing heavy armor?

Tass: I think we can.

Jake: That's a six.

Tass: Oh, lovely. I got a ten.

Jake: I've gotten three of the five necessary experience to level up again, just in this seating.

Tass: I think I've only gotten two like the whole arc so far. Two experience, not level ups, obviously.

Rev: So as you guys creep through the woods with Fox, she starts to indicate that she can sense one is close by, and she stops and she indicates past a couple of trees. And you can actually hear some movement.

Tass: I'm gonna creep forward.

Jake: I'm gonna chill.

Rev: OK. She creeps forward with you, Tass. And around the other side of this tree, you see one of the generals, and he's being escorted by two enforcers.

Tass: Oh, the big guys?

Rev: Mmhmm.

Tass: Oh, no. I'm gonna back pedal and motion to Jake 'Big arms' and like, try to make motions around myself like armor and, you know, yeah. Try to communicate 'Big ones' and then hold up a 'Two.'

Jake: I'm going to give a thumbs up and like, rub my tummy. Like, 'Hit him in the tummy.' And then put my hands up in a shrug. Like, 'I don't know what to do about it.'

Tass: I'm gonna shake my head 'No.' And then hold up the 'Two of them' again.

Jake: I like, point to myself and like, in a different direction, and like, do a bunch of movement. Like 'You want me to go over there and get their attention?'

Tass: I'm going to sign to him, 'LOL,' and then nod 'Yes.'

Jake: 'Two thumbs up.' So, yeah, I mean, I'll just -- I'll try and loop around like 30 feet-ish to, like, the left. You know, just somewhere off their flank. And then just start, like, hitting a tree with my hammer or something. Make a lot of noise.

Rev: All right. Roll 'Read a Bad Situation.'

Jake: Good.

Tass: 'They're right behind me already, aren't they?'

Jake: You gotta be shitting me!

Tass: Oh, no. What did you get?

Jake: Six.

Tass: Wow.

Teej: Jacob, no.

Tass: Wow...

Rev: So you start to -- you read Tass's signal. He's like, 'Oh, they're coming this way.' You're like 'Okay, I got this.' And you start to go around to get behind them. And as you do, Tass, right beside you, they come walking around the opposite direction that Jake had went. He misread your hand signal and went the wrong direction. And you can see that one of them stops and starts to look around and starts to feel the ground. Fox crouches down and doesn't move. What are you doing?

Tass: Am I like in bushes and stuff here?

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: I want to make myself as small as possible.

Rev: OK.

Tass: Like in that armor, like Ninja Turtle head down in the wood armor, like, you know.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: Just look like nothing.

Rev: Jake, you see two enforcers are starting to inspect the area where you know that Tass and Fox are hiding.

Jake: How far away am I at this point?

Rev: Right now, you're about 30 feet away.

Jake: Be a distraction, I guess. Hit a tree with the hammer. Just a big like *hammer sound*

Rev: Roll 'Protect Someone.'

Jake: Eight.

Rev: So yeah, the forest here isn't quite as dense as some of the places you've been before. So when you hit the tree, kind of hoping to get them to look this direction, they just look at you. They're able to kind of spot you, and they both draw out their weapons and start to move toward you.

Jake: OK, once they are past them, because they're moving essentially across them, right?

Rev: Uh-huh.

Jake: So I'm going to, like, kind of backpedal. Like, I'm going to walk backwards some. And once they're past them, I just wanna start being like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa. Whoa, let's be cool. Let's talk about this. Hey, everyone, just relax. Let's -- we can work this out." Like -- like, the hammer hanging from the strap on my wrist instead of, like, in my hand. Like, "Let's just all chill."

Rev: So as you drop your hammer onto your wrist and try to start talking, one of them charges towards you, and the other one moves out to the side as if it's going around to flank.

Jake: I want to pull, like, a Bugs Bunny and the bull situation. Like, have my back to a tree and wait until the last second, and then dive out of the way to the side in the hopes that it just smashes into a tree.

Rev: Roll 'Act Under Pressure.'

Jake: Nine.

Rev: Yeah, you can do that, but you feel like the strength with which it hits the tree is gonna cause it to fall, and you think it'll be in the direction that they're hiding in. You can do it, but you're gonna pull away just a second too late, and it's gonna pin your hammer against the tree -- between the tree and its body. Or, you think the impact on the tree is gonna be so loud that other patrolling troops are going to hear it.

Jake: Hmmm. Those are all bad.

Rev: They are.

Jake: Well done.

Rev: Thank you.

Tass: *laughs*

Jake: I am going to let them pin my hammer.

Rev: Tass, what are you and Fox doing as these two start to walk away?

Tass: I'm trying to get eyes on the actual magicky one.

Rev: He is still where you saw him last. He is essentially, to you, straight ahead. He is at noon, while Jake and the enforcers are at three o'clock.

Tass: OK. I want to pop up and say "Boo, bitch!" And take a shot.

Rev: What would you want Fox to do? Are you communicating with her at all, or are you just doing this by yourself?

Tass: Yeah. If I think she'll help me attack, I'll give her like a '3, 2, 1' and point at magic man.

Rev: All right. Roll 'Kick Some Ass.'

Tass: Nine.

Rev: And that'll actually be an eight. But that's still the same success level, because as you point and start to move up, you see Fox quick draw that gun.

Tass: Yes!

Rev: You both hit this at the same time, the shotgun blast and the pistol. And that combined is enough to kill it, and it falls over.

Tass: OK.

Rev: As it goes down, you hear this very loud slam, and a crunch of wood. And you can tell that something must be going on with Jake and the enforcers over to the side.

Tass: OK. I want to turn on my heel and sprint straight over.

Rev: Yeah, so they are essentially beginning to flank him. Right now Jake has his hand on his hammer, it's pinned against the tree. And one of the enforcers is leaning its body into it, while the other one comes around the other side of the tree.

Tass: OK. So the one that's, like, pinning him, I want to adapt my trademark Medic Slide.

All: *laugh*

Rev: It only took twenty five episodes to pay off, but here we are. Episode twenty five and he's finally going to get to Halo shotgun slide.

Tass: Yup. That's what I'm hoping.

Rev: All right. Roll 'Kick Some Ass.'

Tass: Sweet. That's an eight.

Rev: All right, so you slide underneath and you take 3 points of damage.

Tass: Oof.

Rev: You fire up at its belly as you slide underneath, and it reacts. And it lets go of pinning Jake's hammer and slams its mace down on you, kind of as you follow through with the slide.

Jake: I'm going to yell to Fox to "Cut that gland out, and get ready to boogie."

Rev: FOX: With what?

Jake: "Oh damn it. I thought you had, like, arrows or a knife or anything. You don't have a knife, there's no metal here."

Rev: FOX: Yeah.

Jake: "Can't you just gnaw on it? Can you just chew it out? With your fox claws, or something!"

Rev: FOX: You just want me to dig it out? Just turn into a fox and start digging?

Jake: "Never mind!"

Rev: FOX: I don't know what it looks like!

Tass: "Never mind!"

Tass: "Shoot one of these!"

Jake: Yeah! I'll yell at Fox to "Shoot one of these!" And then I want to take sort of an uppercut swing again up into this guy's soft underbelly, and smash him with the hammer.

Rev: All right. Roll 'Kick Some Ass.'

Jake: Eight.

Rev: So you exchange harm. This one does go down when you hit it. You're able to get low enough to hit the weak spot. And the 3 damage that you take actually comes from the other one, who has now made it around the tree. And he sees what you have done to his partner here. And you notice that he crouches some, and starts to get really wide and low. And it's very unsettling, because he went from being very tall and muscular to now he's taking up all this wide space and like --

Tass: Ooof... Hate. That.

Rev: Creeping sideways.

Tass: Ooooh, god.

Rev: And you can tell that it's somewhat effective, because you hear Fox fire off a shot and it takes a little bit of damage, but she's basically hitting it in its armored areas.

Tass: So it's holding its mace thing, I assume?

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: I want to try to blow the hand off that's holding that mace.

Rev: Roll 'Protect Someone.'

Tass: Ooh. OK.

Rev: You just saw Jake get clobbered by this thing. And it seems to be aware of the tactic that you guys have just used, and it has gotten low, and is moving towards Jake a little closer.

Tass: That's a seven.

Rev: You fired the gun, right as it swings down at Jake, and it does -- the hand blows clean off. But the mace tumbles end over end at you, and hits you. You take 1 point of damage.

Tass: "Ow!"

Rev: And it roars, and then it starts to move towards you --

Tass: I roar back and I start to move towards it.

Rev: With its grapply hands out. Jake, what are you doing?

Jake: I want to start practicing early. I want to try to call lightning on this thing.

Rev: All right. Roll Luck.

Jake: Nine.

Rev: So lightning does come down, but not where you're intending it.

Jake: Does it scare it?

Rev: No.

Jake: Damn! This thing's a badass.

Rev: Like it doesn't -- I don't think it knows that you did that.

Jake: I'm just like, "Ooh, look what I did!"

Rev: I mean, in all fairness, there was another thunder strike just like an hour ago.

Jake: Must be a storm coming.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: He sees you saying 'I did it,' and he just kinda pats his chest and says 'Respect, man,' and keeps going.

Rev: Is starts to throw a bunch of webbing at you with its free hands.

Tass: Oh, can I try to, like, backpedal out of that?

Rev: Yeah. Roll 'Act Under Pressure.'

Tass: OK, I will. Seven.

Rev: So you can get out of the way but it's gonna catch Fox, or it's gonna catch your gun, or the lightning strike alerted the neighboring group where you guys are.

Tass: I yell "Sorry, Fox!" As I realize I dodge out of the way, and it kind of entangles on her.

Rev: So Fox gets wrapped up in this and starts to struggle. It moves towards her, having entangled her, and goes to grapple her.

Jake: All right, here's what I have in my head, and I don't know how this will resolve, if at all. Like, I want to get over there and I want to essentially, like, step on the web close to her, like pin it to the ground. And grab the web closer to its hands, and try and swing it away. Like, try and swing it in a different direction. So that hopefully I pin the web, and kind of keep it with me. And it goes tumbling.

Rev: Oh, I see. You're hoping that your foot will stop, throwing both of them?

Jake: Correct.

Rev: All right. Roll 'No limits.'

Jake: Hell, yes. Twelve.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: Nice!

Rev: I think that you even move with some pretty incredible speed, and you stomp down on the web and it makes a big divot. You grab the spider, and you throw it -- where are you throwing it?

Jake: If 'into something hard' is an option, then that. Is there, like, a rock around --?

Rev: The clock tonight?

Jake: *laughs*

Rev: There is the corpse of its fallen brethren.

Jake: Oh, wearing the stone armor.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Yeah, that.

Rev: Um, yeah. So it tumbles through the air, and you can tell that it takes some pretty severe damage. You just made it essentially sit on its keys.

All: *laugh*

Rev: Its soft underbelly lands on, like, the shoulder of this thing's stone armor. And it very gingerly tries to climb off and turns back towards you.

Jake: All right.

Tass: Um, as it's, like, trying to climb off, I'm gonna take my moment of its distraction and take a shot.

Rev: Roll 'Kick Some Ass.'

Tass: How's a twelve do me?

Teej: Yeah!

Rev: All right. What is your one condition?

Tass: 'Take less harm.'

Rev: You fire the shot and it goes down. It's not in a position to make an attack at you, and it is dead.

Tass: "Hell yeah!"

Jake: "All right. Get your big ol' knife out."

Tass: "Yep."

Jake: "Go cut that gland out, and let's get the hell out of here."

Rev: FOX: How 'bout you fucking cut me out, first?

Jake: I'm going to untangle Fox. Do I need the knife to get her out?

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: OK.

Rev: Because it's super sticky stuff.

Tass: Yeah, I'll cut her out of that pretty quick, and head over and see if I can dig for this gland.

Rev: Roll Sharp, and you get a +2.

Tass: On top of whatever I usually get?

Rev: Yep.

Tass: Oh.

Teej: Because the goggles.

Rev: Yep.

Teej: You're welcome.

Tass: Then that's a fourteen.

Rev: Oh! You're like the chef in The Simpsons, cutting apart the blowfish. And you put the knife in, and you give it a very quick flick of the wrist. And this gland comes out and it is.... It is -- it is hot.

Tass: Okay. I take a bite and I hold it up. No, not really. "All right. Let's get the hell out of here."

Rev: So all of this is pretty precise timing. Is there anything you guys want to do, before we kind of go into this hourly check in with everybody?

Jake: "I need to be patched up, I don't know about you."

Tass: "Oh, that's, yeah. That ain't bad. Let me patch you up, buddy."

Jake: Yeah. Let's do it. Let's do our alternating heals.

Tass: *laughs* Indeed. Yeah, you are stabilized if you weren't, and heal 2.

Jake: OK. Now let me try and 'Lay on Hands.' That's a ten. So you're fully healed.

Tass: Do you want me to try more, or are you --?

Jake: Yeah. Tap me again.

Tass: No problem. That's an eleven.

Jake: All right.

Rev: So you guys get back to the castle with no problem. You give T.J. the gland, and he sets to work. Tass goes into the basement next to T.J. and starts to work on getting the armory going. Jake goes out onto the parapet and starts summoning the lightning. How frequently are you doing this? Like is it just, like, every time you can? Just *multiple quick lightning strikes*

Jake: No, I think, like, every ten seconds or so.

Rev: Ok.

Jake: Enough that it could feasibly seem like a natural occurrence, but like a real bad lightning storm.

Rev: Yeah. We're at the point now where you have armed maybe half of the group. T.J. is about halfway through his time with the rocket. It's about one o'clock in the morning. Jake is still outside calling the lightning. And as the lightning is striking in the darkness, we see a figure appear on the parapet behind him. Jake, roll +Cool.

Tass: Goodbye, Jake. We really enjoyed our time with you.

Teej: Yeah.

Jake: It's a four.

Rev: So as you're bringing the lightning down and you're thinking about how to focus so that you're able to get this to strike whenever you want, you hear this very soft voice.

Rev: SPIDER QUEEN: You should join me. We belong together. You could be such an asset to us. I could love you as no one else could ever love you. You would be considered a god.

Rev: And you turn around and you see this terrifyingly beautiful spider-woman, with two enforcers flanking her, and a small army down the parapet ramp behind her.

SFX: OUTRO MUSIC