

The Olympus Zoo (S4, E6)

SFX: INTRO MUSIC

Rev: So the other night, I just randomly started to stream this game called Raft.

Tass: Oh, yeah.

Rev: Where like you just wake up on a raft, and then you have to survive.

Kim: Isn't that a Stephen King story?

All: [laugh]

Jake: Wasn't TJ playing this for a while? Didn't TJ keep coming to recordings and telling us about Raft at some point?

Tass: I don't listen to him.

Jake: Because I feel like — I feel like I remember all of us, like ... You know, TJ is so afraid of, like, the depths.

Rev: Uh huh.

Jake: And I feel like all of us were like, what are you doing? Why are you playing this?

Rev: I can't remember if it was that, or if he was playing, like, Subnautica. Like I feel like he was playing the underwater version of this game.

Jake: OK.

Megan: Yeah, I think Raft's a little newer.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: I remember watching some streams of some people in our Discord playing it. It looked really cool. Except I think there's like sharks that attack you, and you gotta fight the sharks. And I don't want to do that.

Rev: Yeah. Constantly, sharks attack you. But it got me thinking, if you had to pick like the Naked and Afraid, lost on an island, post-apocalyptic world, like which one would you best survive in? Like being trapped in a desert, being trapped in the future apocalypse ... Like, what's the kind of survival-esque game world that you think that you could do the best at? And like, what's its vibe? Is it like a desert? Is it a forest? Is it on a raft in the water?

Megan: That's a good question.

Tass: That is. Is there one of those that's in, like ... Like an abandoned city, where all the power still works?

All: [laugh]

Kim: So you mean, like, barely an apocalypse?

Tass: Yeah, yeah. Like, I want that one.

Jake: So you mean like the Rapture?

All: [laugh]

Megan: Yeah. This is like a ... Thanos, can you just get rid of most people, and then I can just keep going?

Rev: One person per city.

Tass: I like that. Yeah, that's the one.

Megan: And like everything still paid for, and works ...

Tass: Yeah. I don't know how Netflix is still coming in, but I'm pretty OK with it.

Rev: But somehow new content is still being created ...

Jake: Well, the one guy who got Los Angeles is still producing excellent material.

Tass: Yes.

Rev: Such a range.

Jake: Man. I don't feel like I'd be very good in most, like, wilderness things. Because I don't know at all how to handle animals, either for food or to protect myself.

All: [laugh]

Jake: I don't know ... I don't know how to hunt. I don't know how to like clean a fish. I don't want to do any of that, either. Like, it would make me very upset. So I think, like, zombies. I still think zombies would probably be my best one.

Rev: Yeah. I honestly kind of feel like I would probably do the best in like a Fallout type world. Because I know enough about new technology and a lot about older technology that I think I could make some shit work, or find books to make other shit work.

Kim: I think it's gonna be a desert for me. Because I'm allergic to trees, so like a forest is just like not going to happen for me. But also I grew up in Arizona, and —

Tass: [Bane impression] She was born in it. Molded by it.

Megan: [laughs]

Kim: It's true. But when I was in elementary school, we had to read this book called Danger in the Desert. I swear I read this book like three or four times over the course of my, like, first through fifth grade life. Which is all about two children who get, as the title suggests, trapped in the desert and then are forced to, like, survive. And I feel like we were forced to read this in order to have like some semblance of survival skill in the event that we also become trapped in the desert.

Rev: That's like the Arizona state book, right?

Kim: Yeah, pretty much. It's like the desert version of Hatchet, essentially.

Tass: That's what I was gonna say! Like in the Midwest, do we read the Hatchet and nobody else does? And then y'all read that out there.

Megan: They give it to every new baby that's born. It's a book of ABCs, and Desert Dangerousness — I don't remember what you said the book was called.

All: [laugh]

Kim: Danger in the Desert.

Megan: Yeah.

Kim: But the thing that I remember is that these kids were like abducted, essentially. Like they're in a gas station and the mom gets out to go get gas and the two kids are in like the back of this SUV and then someone gets into the car and just drives off with them. And this triggered me so much when I was a kid, that then every time we were in a gas station, as a child, I was terrified that someone was going to just hop into the car when my parents left and drive away with me.

Megan: Oh, no. That's awful.

Kim: [laughs]

Megan: I don't think I would do great in a lot of, like, survive on your own situations. I'm a social butterfly. I would do OK, I think, in a more wilderness situation, just because it's like — I've done a lot of like camping up in the mountains. And I do know how to, like, clean fish and, you know, animals and stuff. I likewise would never want to do any of that, so it'd be incredibly difficult for me. But I feel like my best chance at survival is going to be like, to find other survivors and be like, "Hey, I know how to knit. Like, I can sew and stuff. I can build things. So you guys defend me and help keep me alive because I'm not good at that, and I'll make you some dope hats."

Jake: How accurate is Hatchet? Because I've read Hatchet and its sequels a lot. I don't know that I've retained a lot of like the wisdom therein, and I don't know if it's realistic at all. But it might just come out of me. Like, it might be like buried deep down in there, that if I was caught in the wilderness, suddenly I'd be like, "Oh, I know! Brian did this!" And then be able to muster my survival skills.

Kim: You just activate like some sort of sleeper agent?

Jake: [laughs] Just like a Hatchet Manchurian Candidate.

All: [laugh]

Rev: I'm sure that after like so many days of not eating, that just your survival instinct of, "Well, I guess I'm gonna figure out how to scale a fish."

Jake: I remember that if you're stuck in the Canadian wilderness in the winter and you hear what sounds like a gunshot, it might be the sap in a tree freezing and blowing open part of the tree. That's what I remember very vividly from one of those books.

Rev: And that howl might be the howl of the wendigo.

Jake: Yeah, that's — they got really supernatural around the third book in the series.

Megan: They were really trying to keep it fresh and new.

Rev: So I think I'm gonna try to stream a little more of that game. That is over at Twitch.tv

...

Jake: [laughs] I forgot that's where we came from! Oh, man.

Tass: It's been such a long journey.

Kim: Hatchet, the video game.

Rev: That's over at Twitch.tv/TheCritshow. And actually this week, just a couple of days ago, we started our newest game, Afterlife: Wandering Souls. If you missed the first

episode of that, you can head over to our YouTube channel tomorrow, and we will have the first episode of that posted. And then episode two will come out next week. Afterlife: Wandering Souls, we have a bunch of guests. We have Hallie from Quest Friends, we have Lara from Fate of Cthulhu, we have Tim from Greetings, Adventures! We also have Landon from our Mask game, as well as Shadows of St. Fleur. And then wrangling them from our side is Kim.

Kim: You might know me from such shows as The Critshow — the one you're listening to right now.

Rev: So that is on Mondays at 8:00 p.m. over at Twitch.tv/TheCritshow. I'm very excited to see how this game plays out, and I'm getting very excited for Star Wars and Ghostbusters. But I think with that, it's time to let the recap roll.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Megan: "Did I hear something about them like getting a hostage? Somebody in the casino?"

Kim: "Yeah, he told me that the hostage that The Monarchs took was Lana King."

Tass: "Oh, shit."

Kim: "Yeah. Anyway, Jake, I had another vision about you."

Jake: "Stop it!"

Kim: "I wish I could!"

Jake: "Great. Yeah, what doom do I have awaiting me now?"

Kim: "It's still related to Zui, so I guess it's the same doom? It's just a variation. He's going to find out about Dani."

Rev: BORBAUK: Well, if it is exchange of services for information, I would gladly make the trade for you. There is something that I actually am very interested in getting my hands

on. In the zoo right now, they have a nightmare on display. It's beautiful. And I would like to get some of the hairs from its tail.

Kim: "I think we could do that for you."

Rev: BORBAUK: Excellent. Excellent.

Rev: And he goes around and he pats each of you on the back. As he does, he stops at you, Jake.

Rev: BORBAUK: There's something funny about you.

Jake: "Thank you. I like to think that I'm a funny guy."

Rev: BORBAUK: No, not funny "ha ha." Funny "no no."

Rev: He grabs a hold of you with both hands and starts sniffing you.

Rev: BORBAUK: [sniffs] Hmm ...

Rev: And his eyes get big.

Rev: BORBAUK: You have the scent of The Lost Ones on you. Tell Borbauk, which of my clan have you been spending time with?

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Jake: I try to like back away a little bit, if possible. "Hey, no, it's — look, this feels kind of personal. I just don't like ... I need my — I have a bubble. I need space. Could you please just back off a little bit?"

Rev: He continues to advance on you.

Rev: BORBAUK: No, no. It's very strong. It's very specific. It's something I haven't smelled in a while.

Jake: Shit, can I Channel?

Rev: Sure.

Kim: Oh, no.

Jake: Thirteen. So I hold 3. And I'm going to spend one of them to teleport.

Rev: Where to?

Jake: Back to the car. In the driver's seat of the car.

Rev: So you vanish and appear inside the car, and you see Borbauk's head whip around like he's trying to look for you. And he sees you, and he rears up on his hind legs and starts charging towards the car.

Rev: BORBAUK: Oh, a game!

Kim: "Hey! Hey, hey, hey."

Rev: BORBAUK: Yes, what?

Kim: "Borbauk!"

Rev: BORBAUK: He's playing hide and seek. I will seek out what I want to know from him.
[laughs] You think that shell will protect you?

Rev: And he slams his front two hooves down on the ground, and you can see that it cracks the cement.

Kim: "Borbauk!"

Rev: BORBAUK: What?

Kim: "Brizack is a friend of mine."

Rev: BORBAUK: We playing friendly game!

Kim: "OK. But also, we're gonna need that car, and I'm going to need Brizack in order to get the hairs from that nightmare for you."

Rev: BORBAUK: Well, I don't want to hurt him. I just want to smell him.

Megan: "That does seem a little — a little personal. You probably shouldn't smell people unless they tell you that you can smell them. But also, can you tell me more about this nightmare? Because I'm really, really excited to go get these hairs for you. But I don't know — I've never seen a nightmare before. So can you give me some more information, so that we can get this for you?"

Rev: Megan, I think Persuade an NPC. When you persuade an NPC with seduction, promises, or threats — I think this is weirdly kind of seduction, because you're trying to get him interested in the topic that he is passionate about. We'll say it's a mental seduction, if you will.

Megan: Yeah, that sounds about right.

Rev: On a hit, they see your point and do as you ask. On a 7 to 9, they counter your offer or demand payment — a debt, a favor, resources — before agreeing to follow through. If you cash a debt in with an NPC before you roll, you get to add 3 to your total.

Megan: Six.

Kim: Can I try to help her out?

Rev: Sure. How so?

Kim: I'm referencing one of the last times that we were together and Borbauk sniffed someone without getting permission and kind of got in trouble.

Rev: All right. So roll Lend a Hand, and you will roll with Megan's Circle. When you lend a hand or get in the way after a PC has rolled, roll with their Circle. On a hit, give them a +1 or a -2 to their roll. On a 7 to 9, you expose yourself to danger, entanglement, or cost.

Kim: That's a ten.

Rev: All right. So Megan, that bumps you up to a seven. And so on a 7 to 9, they counter your offer or demand payment. So Borbauk hears what you're both saying about no, we need to get this job done right now. And, you know you shouldn't do this without permission.

Rev: BORBAUK: Yeah. All right. Very good. Very good. I agree, for now. But when you come back, oh, I get to smell him. I am not going to let this game go.

Megan: "I don't have the authority to tell you that you can smell somebody else, but I'll talk to him and see if he'll be better about it."

Rev: BORBAUK: Oh, no, no.

Megan: "Mmhmm?"

Rev: BORBAUK: You ask him now.

Megan: "OK, I'll go ask him now."

Rev: BORBAUK: OK.

Megan: And I walk over to the car and I knock on the window.

Jake: I roll it down halfway.

Megan: "Jesus, Jake, take a bath."

Jake: "What? I beg your pardon?"

Megan: "He can smell her all over you."

Jake: "Ok, I'll launder my clothes. I didn't ... I didn't know this was a thing I had to worry about."

Megan: "You have to promise to let him smell you when we get back from doing this nightmare thing. For him to be like, cool with letting you go right now. So do you think you can get rid of this smell by then? I don't know how strong this magical thing works."

Jake: "Oh yeah, I'll just get real close to everything at the zoo."

Megan: "I hope it overpowers. But like, you have to agree right now to let him do it when we get back."

Jake: I hold my hand out and give a thumbs up.

Rev: BORBAUK: OK, good. Smell you later!

Jake: "I ..."

Megan: "Oh, that was good. That was a good one."

Jake: "Do you think this whole thing was him setting up to make that joke?"

Megan: "I hope so, because that was actually pretty good."

Jake: "Damn." I give him another thumbs up.

Tass: "Borbauk, we can hang out, man."

Rev: BORBAUK: Nice.

Kim: "All right, bud. It looks like we've gotta head to the zoo. Um ... Can we just meet you back here? Is that OK?"

Rev: BORBAUK: Yes, that's great.

Kim: "OK."

Rev: BORBAUK: Oh, and you had asked me about the nightmare, to tell you more about it. It's all black fur and fiery hooves. But the thing that I have discovered ... [chuckles] Is that you can calm it down. What would you think a nightmare would like?

Tass: "Sugar cubes."

Rev: BORBAUK: You would think that because horse, right?

Tass: "Yeah. Yeah."

Rev: BORBAUK: What else might it like?

Megan: "Nightmares."

Rev: BORBAUK: Nightmares. Ooh, because if it's name. Like, you think it eats the nightmares. Ooh, that's good.

Kim: "Does it maybe eat, like, good dreams?"

Rev: BORBAUK: Good thoughts. If you feed it a good thought, if you think a good thought at it, it kind of ... It almost calms it down, if you can focus and just think good thoughts at it.

Megan: "Oh, that should be super easy then. We're going to a zoo. I'm gonna be chock full of nothing but good thoughts."

Tass: "You know what thought I'm gonna feed it?"

Rev: BORBAUK: Hmm?

Tass: "How cool you are, bub."

Rev: BORBAUK: Oh, nice. Maybe that will make us bonded, or something.

Tass: "Yeah, there we go."

Rev: BORBAUK: So, some hairs from the tail. Or the mane. I just need some of those fiery hairs.

Megan: "You got it, pal."

Rev: BORBAUK: Excellent. And when you get back, if you've got what Borbauk is looking for, I have got the information that you need.

Tass: "Best day ever."

Kim: "Dude, it was so nice to see you."

Rev: BORBAUK: Oh, you too. You too. Bring me back something from the zoo, like to munch on. I'm almost out of the things I brought, and I don't get the dinner break for a while.

Kim: "You got it, bud."

Rev: BORBAUK: Thank you.

Megan: "What's your favorite flavor?"

Rev: BORBAUK: Oh, I like the spicier the better.

Tass: "My man."

Megan: "OK, sounds good. We'll look for something like that. And if we can't find anything, then I make some really good like spicy rosemary chocolate chip cookies that are real, real tasty. And they got a little bit of sea salt on them. It pairs really well with chocolate. And then the cayenne pepper kind of draws out the sweetness. I'll make some of those.

Rev: BORBAUK: Oh ...

Rev: And he stomps his hoof.

Megan: "Cool. Let's go to the zoo."

Rev: So you all hop into Jake's car and head in the direction that Borbauk gave you. And you drive about a mile and a half before you see a sign for the Olympus Zoo.

Tass: "I am very intrigued to see what all we're gonna find in here, if they have stuff like nightmares."

Kim: "Oh yeah, I haven't been here in the longest time. You know that thing where it's like you live in a cool city, but then you never go to any of the touristy stuff unless you're taking out of town people there?"

Tass: "I do. I do."

Kim: "Yeah."

Tass: "Well, all right. I assume this isn't something that we can just walk up to a worker and say, hey, can we go in and pet the nightmares, is it?"

Megan: "Yeah, I don't know what kind of restrictions this place is gonna have as far as like ... Like, you know, you go to the zoo normally and there's some space, so you can't just jump in and hang out with the sea lions. I imagine that there's gonna be some sort of precautions to keep people from getting close to whatever is here. I'm like super excited to find out what's actually in here too, but I imagine a distraction is gonna be necessary?"

Jake: "I felt foolish asking, but it seems like maybe you guys know. What is a nightmare? It sounds like maybe a spooky horse of some kind?"

Kim: "Yeah, pretty much a spooky horse."

Jake: "Oh, OK. Well, I'm great with horses. I'm kidding. I've encountered horses maybe twice in my life, so."

Kim: "I'm honestly kind of afraid of horses. They're so tall."

Jake: [laughs]

Kim: "They are!"

Jake: "How do you feel about giraffes?"

Kim: "See giraffes I don't mind, because they're almost comically tall. But like horses, you have to like, get kind of up close to, like in order to ride. I don't know. I've just always had like a weird fear of like a horse kicking me for some reason."

Tass: "Sure."

Jake: "OK. I mean, that's fair."

Kim: "Yeah."

Jake: "But that's unrelated to their height. Very powerful haunches. That's true."

Kim: "Yes. They're very tall, powerful animals. And I am a very small, semi-powerful animal."

All: [laugh]

Megan: "I'd ride a giraffe."

Jake: "Oh, yeah. I can't imagine an animal in the zoo that I wouldn't ride, given the opportunity."

Tass: "Well, I used to own horses. It's been a long, long, long time. I was a small child. But that might help?"

Megan: "Yeah. I mean, I was definitely around horses growing up too, but I feel like this is going to be a different ... I'm imagining, like ... Like a Clydesdale. Like I'm imagining that this thing is like big and powerful. But I guess I have no idea. I think the — just the name is really cool, so I'm imagining it looks really cool."

Tass: "God, I hope they're like tiny little mini ponies."

Megan: [quietly] "Oh my gosh, yes."

Jake: "Like a Shetland nightmare."

All: [laugh]

Tass: "I have those a lot."

All: [laugh]

Jake: Yeah, I'll pull us into the lot and find us a convenient spot, here. "So it eats good thoughts. But we need like tail or mane hairs, right?"

Tass: "Yeah, I mean, that sounds right. In theory, they're like, what? Like fire, though, right? Like fiery hair or something?"

Megan: "I imagine we probably shouldn't go for the tail hairs, because again, powerful haunches. But yeah, I don't know. I feel like we just gotta get in there and see what we're actually working with."

Tass: "Yeah, let's do this."

Kim: "OK."

Rev: All right. So you park the car at the Olympus Zoo. There are probably four or five dozen cars here. It's not overly crowded because it is kind of early in the day, but there are a fair number of patrons here. The zoo itself has large brick walls and huge arched double door that leads inside — almost kind of like Jurassic Park. And you can see that there is a face carved on top of the arch. And for anybody who is familiar with the statue of Ozymandias, that is the face. So as you get here, what is everybody going to try to take in with them?

Jake: All I've got's the Glock. So what's, uh ... What are carry laws like at this point in the future? Am I legal?

Rev: I would think so.

Jake: Well then I'm good. I'm just, I'm bringing the gun in.

Rev: OK.

Tass: I don't think I have a justification for a pump shotgun, so I'll probably leave that. But I think I still have my chain, like wrapped around like a belt.

Rev: OK.

Kim: As far as you all have seen, I don't appear to carry a weapon at all. So, I'm good.

Tass: That's ominous.

Jake: Yeah, OK, needless distinction. But whatever.

Megan: Yeah, I suppose I shouldn't go carrying a crossbow around in a zoo, so ...

All: [laugh]

Megan: I will similarly use my whip and kind of fashion it into a belt, and then I'll try and keep my hand axes covered, if possible.

Rev: OK.

Jake: Yeah, I'll go up to the ticket counter and get us all admission.

Rev: OK. Yeah, no problem. They give you four tickets and direct you towards the front gate. And you can see that there are two guards outside who are taking tickets, but they are armed.

Jake: Damn. Harsh zoo. All right.

Rev: And the four of you walk over to the entrance. They take your tickets and let you in.

Tass: Awesome.

Rev: As you step in, there is a small souvenir shop on the left side, and then an information desk on the right. And you can see directly ahead of you are two paths that very clearly break off in different directions.

Megan: I will run over to the information booth and ask for a map.

Rev: OK. Yeah, they give you a map, and this map on it has information about the current attractions. Because, as Borbauk had told you, this is something that was new. From the map, you can see that the zoo is broken up into four areas, and they are very large. But it doesn't seem like they ever have more than four creatures at a time. One of them is a staple. It has a permanent home on the far northeast side of the zoo. It is where they keep the phoenix. And then on the southeast side, it currently says that that area is actually empty. And then on the northwest side, there is a section for a basilisk that it says is on loan from the leader of Clan Ozymandias. And then the southwest side lists that that is where currently the nightmare and the pegasus are both being held.

Tass: "Well, do we want to see the other ones first? Or ..."

Megan: "Yes."

Tass: "OK, cool."

Megan: "Yeah. Yeah, no. Like, I want — I want to go see ... I want to go see all of them. I want to go see — there's something — there's like an empty corner here. I don't know like if we can just get around there or something. Just kind of see like what's there normally? I'm just really curious as to like, what's there that's not there."

Jake: "Yeah, let's just do a big counterclockwise loop, here."

Tass: "All right."

Rev: OK.

Tass: We'll start heading that way.

Rev: Yeah. So as you all head around, you get to that first area and there isn't anything there. It's just a big, open, empty, almost blank space. Like the ground is white and the high walls are completely blank. But there is a fence that goes around it, very high. But there are spots where you can walk up to look down. But inside of it, there isn't anything. This area right now is just entirely empty.

Jake: Is there like any leftover signage from like what was here last, or anything?

Rev: There's not, but there are workers around.

Jake: Oh, I want to ask one of them. "Hey, is this, like, is this being remodeled for a new exhibit or something?"

Rev: RORY: Oh, it will be once they get the new ones lined up. But currently, the space that would be occupied for this one, the pegasus and the nightmare, they travel together.

Megan: "I know that voice!"

Rev: RORY: Hello? Hey, wait a minute ... Alice? Is that you?

Tass: Oh my god ...

All: [laugh]

Rev: RORY: Rory. I worked at the prison.

Megan: "Rory!"

Rev: RORY: Yeah.

Megan: "How are you?"

Rev: RORY: Good. How are you?

Megan: "I'm good. That was a long time ago."

Rev: RORY: Oh, yeah. It sure was.

Jake: "Not even a thing for immortal folk though, right?"

Rev: RORY: Yeah.

Jake: "Like the blink of an eye, right Alice?"

Rev: RORY: Very true.

Megan: "Yeah. I didn't at the time realize that you also were immortal."

Rev: RORY: Oh, I wasn't at the time. But then as the world started to change, I discovered that I was, and so ... I was still this way a couple of years later, and here we are.

Megan: "Well, welcome. Glad to have you as one of us."

Rev: RORY: Yeah. Time's been kind to you. You're, uh ... [nervous laughter]

Jake: [laughs]

Megan: "Thanks. Uh ... So you went from being a prison guard to a zoo guard?"

Rev: RORY: Well ...

Megan: "Employee? Keeper. Zookeeper."

Kim: [laughs] Zoo guard ...

Megan: A zoo guard.

Rev: RORY: I wasn't ... I also wasn't a prison guard. I just gave the ...

Megan: "Oh, you were a tour guide!"

Rev: RORY: Yeah.

Megan: "That's right. Yep, that's right. You know, when you live for as long as I have, it all just kind of blends together sometimes."

Rev: RORY: That's true. I didn't forget you, though. I'd recognize you anywhere.

Megan: "Great."

Tass: "It's the hair."

Megan: "Yeah, it's definitely the hair."

Rev: RORY: Would you all like a ... I could — I could give you ... Just, let me give you a tour of the place.

Megan: "Sure."

Rev: RORY: OK.

Megan: And I'll fall back.

Kim: Every alarm bell in Kim's head is going off right now, and I'm walking up to Megan. "Is everything OK here? Did you, um ... Do you two know each other?"

Megan: "Uh, kind of. We ran into each other a long time ago, and ..."

Kim: "Oh!"

Megan: "Yeah. So Rory was a tour guide at a prison that I went to go check out because there was some supernatural things happening there. And that's ..."

Rev: RORY: Yeah.

Megan: "Yeah, it was —"

Rev: RORY: I used to think that was malarkey. Look at me now.

Megan: "That's why I had to be super sneaky when I was talking to you."

Rev: RORY: Oh, yeah.

Megan: "Couldn't just straight out tell you what I was doing. I mean, it's obvious now because I ... Yeah, I'm immortal." And I look at Kim and I'm just like, "Because I'm immortal."

Megan: RORY: Yeah. Alice and I go way back.

Megan: "Mmhmm."

Kim: "Oh, really? How far?"

Rev: RORY: Oh, like a hundred and some years, probably, since I worked at that prison.

Kim: "Wow."

Megan: "Yeah. And so Rory is now a zoo guide. A zoo guide."

Rev: RORY: Yeah.

Megan: "And is going to give us a tour! Isn't that so kind of him?"

Kim: "Yeah, absolutely."

Megan: "Well, do your thing."

Rev: RORY: Zoo my thing! You almost said that. It would have been a good pun.

Megan: "What? I don't get it."

Rev: RORY: Instead of "do your thing," "zoo your thing."

Megan: "Oh!" [chuckles]

Rev: RORY: Well yeah, as you can see here, this area is currently not being used. As I said a moment ago, because we house four animals at a time. And the only one that stays is the phoenix. It stays here and it is a constant inhabitant here. But the nightmare is new, as is the pegasus, and they stay together. And so we don't want to take the danger of having an extra creature here, so we just left this one empty. We had originally talked about trying to somehow connect these two areas, but we can't really move the phoenix, and the basilisk was already booked. And it would be very difficult to link the front two sections without making folks walk a long way around.

Tass: "OK, that's pretty cool. So four total."

Rev: RORY: Yeah.

Tass: "Yeah, OK."

Rev: RORY: Yeah. At any one given time, we are hosting four of the miraculous mythological creatures of the world that have been either found here once again or brought over from other dimensions.

Tass: "Nice."

Kim: "Very cool."

Rev: RORY: So which way would you like to go first? Would you like to see the phoenix first or the basilisk or the horses? Well, I shouldn't call them horses. That's ...

Jake: "Reductive?"

Rev: RORY: Yeah.

Jake: "We were planning to make a big — just a big loop, here. So let's hit that phoenix and then continue on the way around."

Rev: RORY: All right. Well, the phoenix has been here since the zoo was created, about 15 years ago now. It is currently the only known phoenix to exist on our realm of existence, and it has a very specific diet as well as a number of predators. So it actually is much safer here. It really enjoys its time with its trainer and it enjoys its inhabitation? Cohabit? No. Its habitat?

Tass: "There we go."

Rev: RORY: Yeah.

Tass: "Yeah."

Megan: "So educational."

Rev: And he gestures towards a very large stone building that is designed with flames all over it. And there is a nest at the top with a large crystal egg. But down below it is just a set, again, of double doors that lead inside.

Jake: Yeah, I'll go in.

Kim: Yeah.

Rev: It is very warm inside of this atrium. And though it looks like it's stone on the outside, as soon as you get inside, you can very clearly see the sky all around you. But it is not the sky that you recognize. Its tones of orange and yellow, and it matches the heat that you feel inside of this room. The ground below you is almost like charcoal. And there are maybe a dozen other people in here sitting in seats on risers that come up behind you after you walk in. And out in the middle, you can see this bird made of fire, flying around. And it settles on the ground and starts to, like, peck at the ground like it's hunting for something.

Tass: "Wow."

Megan: "Oh my god, it's beautiful."

Tass: Like, how big is it?

Rev: It's about three feet.

Tass: OK.

Jake: Like wingspan?

Rev: No. Like as it's walking around on the ground, it's about three feet tall.

Jake: Oh dang, all right.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: "You said it had a lot of predators?"

Rev: RORY: Yes.

Megan: "Look at — the whole thing is like made of fire. What hunts something made of fire?"

Rev: RORY: The issue is that if we were to let it out here and it gets into an environment that's particularly humid or if it starts to rain, that actually saps a lot of its strength.

Megan: "Oh, no.

Kim: "Interesting. What about its diet? You said it had a unique diet? What does it eat?"

Rev: RORY: I don't do with the nutrition, but it feeds off of quite a number of different mineral deposits.

Jake: "Is that what it's doing now?"

Rev: RORY: Yes. Well, we refreshed them from — it's a very interesting system. There a area underneath here, and we feed those into the soil, and they then process up through the dirt. And then it picks them out of the soil and eats them.

Jake: "Oh, interesting. Is that bubble just underneath the phoenix enclosure? Or is that something that like runs underneath the whole zoo? Is that how you interact with all the exhibits?"

Rev: RORY: I imagine there probably is one underneath each of the exhibits. This is the only one I know about for certain. But yeah, I mean, if we had to make sure that something was getting its diet from the ground, I would imagine they probably set it up so that all of them could work that way.

Megan: "Are they all, like, separate? They're not all connected, like Disneyland?"

Rev: RORY: Connected in — like, they're not just one big room. But like you could get to one from the other through like tunnels and stuff.

Megan: "Yeah. That's super cool."

Rev: RORY: Right?

Megan: "Is that like a separate place that you guys have to go down into?"

Rev: RORY: Yeah.

Megan: "Cool."

Rev: RORY: Yeah, you have to have like the proper clearance. The nutritionalists, and things like that.

Jake: "Do you have that clearance? Do you get to feed the animals?"

Rev: RORY: No, no. I don't ...

Jake: "Oh, that's a shame. Is that something you want?"

Rev: RORY: I'm not sure. Because they spend so much time, you know, doing research and then collecting the things that the animals need, and then underground or above ground ... For something like the basilisk, that's a much more enjoyable feeding process

because it's a little bit of a show. So that would be enjoyable. But I think that on a whole, they probably get to spend less face time with the patrons and the animals in a not-controlled environment.

Tass: "Nice. Well OK, let's go see that show. Let's go. Check out the basilisk, then."

Rev: RORY: All right.

Megan: Can I like look around this atrium, this enclosure, and kind of check it out? See if there's anything I can pick up on that maybe wouldn't be noticeable to like regular patrons coming through?

Rev: Yeah, why don't you Study a Place of Power? And you're gonna roll with Power, because this is a area that belongs to The Immortals.

Megan: OK. Eight.

Rev: So as you look around this atrium, the thing that you notice that is not exactly what it seems is that at the very top of the risers behind you, you can see that there is glass underneath some of the seats. And you can see movement inside of it, like there are guards inside of this atrium watching the phoenix at all times. But it's not something that you would ever see from the outside. It seems like this is just the two guards at the front door that you encountered so far, and that's it. And then along with that, you can also, if you have not done so so far, mark Power.

Megan: "Yeah, let's go check out the basilisk." And I'll grab the guys and Kim and widen my eyes a little bit and then look over in that direction, where I can kind of see through the glass and these risers.

Tass: All right. I'll track that, and turn for the basilisk.

Rev: Rory leads you out and over to the area where the basilisk is. It's a much more temperate climate here. This area is outside. It almost seems like the same kind of location where you would keep giant tortoises. And you can see the basilisk right away when you arrive. And this basilisk is large, it's about nine feet long. It has eight legs, and this giant head. And there is a line of people next to its closed-in area, taking turns going

inside. You can see that the person at the front of the line is admitted. They run down closer to the basilisk, and it turns and it looks at them and it hisses, and they turn to stone. And then there's a beat and some liquid pours onto them from a little device above their head, and they change back. And they giggle and they run back out of the enclosure.

Tass: "What the hell?"

Jake: "OK, so all I know of basilisk is from Harry Potter. Is a basilisk not a big snake?"

Tass: "Usually not."

Jake: "Oh, OK."

Megan: "Well I mean, there is a basilisk lizard. And those are the ones that like run on water."

Tass: "Oh, nice."

Megan: "So I didn't know if it was going to be like Harry Potter or if it was gonna be more like that. They've kind of got like the frills? Like how they made a dilophosaurus look in Jurassic Park, but the dilophosaurus didn't actually have the frills. But the basilisk lizards do kind of have that. But this thing doesn't have the frills, so maybe it doesn't walk on water either."

Kim: "It doesn't walk on water. It just definitely turns you to stone if you look at it."

Tass: "Yeah, wow. So this is like a party trick that they're using it for, kinda."

Rev: RORY: Yes. If you harness some of the ... The basilisk also has a very strong venom in its teeth, and you can use the venom to reverse the petrification. And so we have harvested basilisk venom, and that is the mixture that drops on them and turns them back. It's a much more expensive ticket to get that experience.

Tass: "I bet. I mean, that makes sense. It turns its prey to stone, then its teeth work it back into normalcy to eat the meat."

Rev: RORY: Yeah.

Megan: "I want to try."

Rev: RORY: Oh, OK.

Rev: And he reaches in his pocket and digs around, and he pulls out a pass that has a green band around the outside.

Rev: RORY: Shhh. On the down low.

Rev: And he hands it to you.

Megan: "Thanks. That's very kind of you. So do I just ... How do I do this?"

Rev: RORY: Just go stand in the line.

Megan: "OK." And I'll go up and stand in the line. And I want to take out my now useless salt shaker and unscrew it and dump out the salt, and kind of hold it inside my jacket.

Rev: All right. Is there anything that the three of you are doing while Megan is waiting in line?

Jake: I guess keeping an eye out to see if there are any more of those kind of hidden guard stations like viewing more common areas of the zoo? Or if it's just gonna be exhibits, or what?

Rev: Yeah. Why don't you Study a Place of Power?

Jake: OK.

Rev: With Power.

Jake: Eleven.

Rev: So I think the thing that you notice that most people would miss about what is going on here is that there is a very, very faint, almost tan line around the basilisk's neck, as if it normally wears a collar. And you do know that this is on loan from the leader of Clan Ozymandias. And you know, when it turns and it looks, it also makes a little bit of a hiss sound. And as the next person goes, because you're kind of focused on this event, instead of hearing the people kind of cheering and the people laughing, you hear someone somewhere speaking a word. And the next couple of times, it's the same command word every time. It seems that there is a word that is causing the basilisk to look and petrify the person. So it seems very well trained. And after about the third or fourth time, you can make out the word, and the word that's being said is efesh. E-F-E-S-H.

Jake: All right. For my follow up question about the Circle ... I know it's on loan from the faction leader. We don't know who that is. Is there a way for me to glean that information from here? From ... It's his pet, this is the word that this person has chosen to command it, does that give any insight into like, OK, who would have chosen this word? Who would wield a basilisk, et cetera, et cetera? Could I suss out who the faction leader is from here?

Rev: I think what you can piece together from this: that word that is being used to trigger the basilisk's attack is an Egyptian slang word, and it is slang for something that is bad of appearance. And its root word is ebshay, the word for beetle.

So by this time, I think, Megan, you have made it to the front of the line, and the person working the gate opens it and tells you just to go down, stand on the X, look at the Basilisk, it'll turn and look at you, and then a moment later turn around and come back up to the exit.

Megan: "Got it. Thanks." And I will start heading that way and just kind of hold my salt shaker like just inside my coat, but then like, turn it outwards as I stand there. So when this stuff falls on me, I'm hoping that it'll collect some of it.

Rev: All right. I think this is going to be a Keep your Cool.

Megan: OK.

Rev: So tell me the situation you want to avoid, here.

Megan: My goal is to kind of position my hand to make a little bit of a funnel. So as the stuff runs down, like even if I'm turned to stone, it'll still hit kind of the area. And I want to avoid guards seeing me do this, because I'm assuming that there are also guards here watching the basilisk. And I'm hoping that I can blend in enough as a person of the crowd who is not trying to, like, approach this thing, that they won't notice me doing this.

Rev: OK. Roll with Spirit.

Megan: [muffled groan] Five.

Tass: Oh ...

Kim: Oh, no.

Tass: Alice, how could you?

Rev: So as you walk down, you position the empty salt shaker and stand on the X, and the basilisk turns towards you. And for the briefest of moments, you feel your whole body tingle, kind of like when your leg falls asleep. Like it's not pleasant, it's not awful, but it's a very weird sensation that just flows up the entirety of your body. And then you feel that sensation flow back out of you from the head down. Your salt shaker is full. But as you turn, you can see that along the wall, below where everyone is standing and watching, is more of that glass. And you can see people inside of it gesturing in your direction. But at that time, the person working the gate opens the door and gestures for you to go back out.

Megan: Oh, shit. OK. I screw the lid on the salt shaker, and I just kind of like gesture to the people behind me and jump in the air. And I'm just like, "That was so much fun!" And I will like nod at the person that's gesturing me out and rush back outside, up to Jake and Tass and Kim. As I get closer, I'll again, "Oh my gosh, that was ... That was so wild!"

Rev: RORY: Yeah? What did it feel like? I haven't had the courage to do it yet.

Megan: And I want to ... I want to look at Tass and I want to make a movement with my arm and then throw the salt shaker to him.

Rev: So Tass, I think this is gonna be on you. Megan turns and she throws something at you, and I, as the keeper, know that it's a bottle of poison. So Keep Your Cool.

Tass: Yeah ...

Rev: What would you like to avoid happening, here?

Tass: I would like to avoid dropping it.

Rev: OK.

Tass: Uh ... [laughs] I have no other context for this move, so that's it.

Rev: OK. So roll with Spirit.

Tass: OK ... Six.

Kim: Could I try to help him out?

Rev: How so?

Kim: I think I had a brief vision of the future, and I just kind of subtly move Tass. I push him like a step or two to the left, so that he's in a better position to catch the salt shaker.

Rev: Yeah. All right. Roll with Wild.

Jake: I'd like to teleport away.

All: [laugh]

Tass: How far?

Jake: Till I can't see any of this anymore.

Rev: Yeah. Spend 2 hold.

Kim: Three.

Rev: So Tass, as Megan comes out of the basilisk enclosure, she very quickly pitches something to you underhand through the crowd, and you reach out to grab this object. But you feel yourself get jostled to the side as Kim nudges you. The thing in the air slips your grasp as liquid spills out of it, onto Kim's sleeve, and it starts to eat away at the fabric. And then there is the sound of something hitting the pavement and shattering. You look down, and between your feet are the broken pieces of Megan's salt shaker.

SFX: OUTRO MUSIC

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