

Magic Goes Awry - Into the Research

Garden

Transcribed by Critshow Studios

Music and Sound Effect Descriptions by Larcie

INTRODUCTION #1

[Happy, bouncy, electronic music plays.]

Fay Onyx: This is a special collaboration episode that was created for the **2020 International Podcast Month** event. This diverse and inclusive event is all about building community and sharing our love of podcasting. I highly recommend checking it out at InternationalPodcastMonth.com. Links are in the show notes.

[The bouncy music fades out.]

TEASER #1

[An upbeat electronic song starts playing.]

Tracy: Hey there, I'm Tracy.

Robin: And I'm Robin.

Tracy: And we host Not Joanna Eggs, an animation review podcast.

Robin: Join us as we discuss underrated animated movies, lesser known anime films, and also TV shows.

Tracy: In the past, we've done Infinity Train, Napping Princess, BoJack Horseman, Akira, and many more.

Robin: We update every other week, wherever you get your podcast.

Both: Not Joanna Eggs. Because animation is for everyone.

[Music fades out.]

TEASER #2

[A slow, ominous track featuring piano starts playing.]

Rev: You wake up startled in the middle of the night, convinced that there's something out there in the darkness. Your brain tells you that there's nothing to be afraid of. Unfortunately, your brain is dead wrong.

[Music changes to a more energetic electronic piece.]

If you love the mix of horror, mystery, and comedy in shows like *Buffy*, *Ash vs the Evil Dead*, or *Supernatural*, you'll feel right at home on *The Critshow*, a *Monster of the Week* actual play podcast where the players, playing as themselves, are tasked with being the last line of defense from the forces of evil that go bump in the night. You can find *The Critshow* at thecritshowpodcast.com, or wherever you listen to podcasts.

[Music ends.]

TEASER #3

Voice: It's more like she's going to cut in front of you in the lunch line –

[A bright, mysterious piece featuring flute and percussion starts playing.]

Fay Onyx: [laughs]

Voice: -- And pretend nothing happened.

Fay Onyx: [laughs]

Writing Alchemy is a storytelling podcast that centers intersectional characters. Including a fairy tale series that combines humor and magic with serious topics, and a tabletop role playing series about the adventures of disabled and mentally diverse heroes. Check out **Writing Alchemy** at writingalchemy.net, or subscribe on **Stitcher**, **iTunes**, or **Google Play**.

[Music ends.]

START OF

GAME AUDIO

Fay Onyx: Hello and welcome to The Magic Goes Awry one shot of International Podcast Month 2020. And yeah, so this game is using the game system Magic Goes Awry, which is basically a game system that aims to capture the detailed character creation that's awesome about DnD with a lot less things to keep track of, and kind of a more comedic, humorous gameplay.

And the basic scenario we're working with is that all of these characters are junior investigative reporters at The Crossroads Observer, which is an important newspaper in the land of Crossroads.

And we're just going to go around and introduce ourselves. So I'm Fay Onyx, I use ze/hir pronouns, and I'm the game master -- so I'm playing the world. And my favorite plant is kind of ... Pretty much culinary herbs. So like rosemary, thyme, and oregano. I'm kind of cheating by giving three. But, um ...

All: [laugh]

Mads: So hard to choose!

Fay Onyx: But yeah, basically they smell amazing, and you can eat them, and they make food taste amazing, so. That's my favorite plants. Mads, would you like to introduce yourself?

Mads: Yes. So I am Mads Upton. I use they/them pronouns, and my favorite plant is the passion fruit vine. Because passion fruits are my favorite fruit, and also the flowers are really cool, but also really weird.

Fay Onyx: Yeah.

Mads: And I like that about them. [chuckles]

So I will be playing Bob the Blob, who also goes by Bobby. They are a slime person who uses they/them pronouns, and they are a druid. They spent a lot of time kind of just wandering around, following people for fun. And one day they followed around a journalist who was like, "Hey, you can squeeze into that hole, right? Would you go in there and tell me what's happening?" And they just kept doing it.

Fay Onyx: That was awesome. And Robin, can you introduce yourself and your character?

Robin: So I'm Robin. I use they/them pronouns. My favorite plant, I'm going to go with the grapevine. Because grapes are my favorite fruit, and also they are used to make wine, which I enjoy. So, that's my logic there. And I am playing Nikau the parrotfolk rogue. He is a handsome little fellow who got into investigative journalism because he got very angry with poachers sort of causing damage to his home. And so he's gotten into investigative journalism as a way of not only undermining what they're doing, but also exposing what they're doing. So that he can let everyone know and hopefully push that out of his home.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. So Rev, can you introduce yourself?

Rev: Yeah. And I'm Rev, and I use he/him pronouns. And I feel like I'm kind of cheating on my plant. Because I want to say it's the weeping willow, even though I know that's a tree. But when we got this question, all I could keep -- all I kept

thinking about was weeping willow trees, because I had them near our house growing up. And so ...

Fay Onyx: It's a great plant.

Rev: I just remember swinging on them a bunch as a kid. And I thought, man, this is the thing that keeps coming to my head. Scientifically, I'm kind of cheating.

All: [laugh]

Fay Onyx: It's fine. I already cheated. I cheated first.

Mads: I think it counts.

Rev: And I'm playing Arey, and they use they/them pronouns. And Arey is a magical machine. They are a living statue of a former hero, Ariaknightis. And they got into investigative journalism because when they were animated, they took up the job that Ariaknightis had before, which was roaming up and down this border between a couple of towns, and one of the danger areas where undead roamed.

Fay Onyx: Mmhmm.

Rev: But after a while, that threat went away.

Fay Onyx: Yeah.

Rev: And when the threat went away, people just started coming to them for help. And they would just take people at their word and help them, and then realized, "Oh, I'm not always getting both sides of the story. Sometimes I'm doing things that aren't really what I should be doing." And so then that got them into just real minor investigation, to make sure they were doing the right thing. And then it kind of led into a passion for knowledge.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. OK, so. As we start, it is just before dawn, and each of you has been roused by an urgent messenger telling you to come into The Crossroads Observer office at once. You all arrive to a building that has been completely trashed.

[A jazzy, mysterious track starts playing.]

Drawers have been pulled out and dumped, wooden furniture has been broken into pieces. Fabric is ripped, papers are

everywhere, and all of the lighting fixtures have been smashed. It looks like someone was searching for something. The other Observer employees are there, doing their best to salvage what they can from the devastation. However, the three of you only have a moment to take everything in before someone grabs you and ushers you into the supply room, which has been turned into a makeshift office at this point. There, Elora Veracity, the lead reporter of The Observer, sits at a salvaged desk, writing with furious intensity. Elora is a four foot tall dwarven woman with brown skin that has warm undertones. She's wearing a simple dark red sari and her black hair is pulled back into a thick braid. As the three of you enter the room, she looks up and immediately sets her writing aside. Her eyes are filled with an overwhelming clarity of purpose. She gestures to three hastily repaired chairs and says ...

Fay (as Elora): Thank you for coming in early. Please sit down. I have an important matter to discuss with you.

Fay Onyx: So what do each of you do?

Mads: Since it was such an early morning call, Bob the Blob has not assumed a human shape and is in blob form. And kind of just, um, doesn't really sit on the chair so much as covers it in their slime.

Fay Onyx: Awesome.

[Sound of slime falling onto a surface as wood creaks.]

Robin: Nikau will hop into the chair and sit on it.

[Sound of wood creaking.]

Fay Onyx: So you're just kind of standing on it then, as a parrot person?

Robin: Yup, exactly. Which is probably a bit odd because parrotfolk are I think as you described, like five feet tall.

Fay Onyx: Yeah. Just a very large parrot.

Robin: [chuckles] A super big parrot standing on a chair.

Rev: Yeah, and Arey goes over to the other seat and sits down.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. OK. Is the -- how heavy is Arey? Is this kind of like a strain for the barely repaired chair?

Rev: Yes. Like the chair kind of creaks and groans under Arey's bronze weight.

[Sound of wood creaking.]

Fay Onyx: Awesome. OK, so Elora starts the briefing ...

Fay (as Elora): As some of you might know, the Steward family is a wealthy merchant family that is a prominent maker of magical components and items. We have long suspected that the Stewards are involved in multiple unethical business activities, including making misleading promises, diluting magical ingredients, and buying illegally harvested plants. The Crossroads Observer has been investigating the Stewards for nearly a decade. However, they are good at hiding and explaining away their misdeeds. But it seems that they have finally slipped up.

Fay Onyx: Elora holds up a fist-sized white sphere that glows with a flickering light. The three of you recognize this as a

lamp stone, which is a common, moderately priced magical item that is used for illumination. OK, so how are the three of you reacting to this so far?

Robin: Nikau, at the mention of illegally harvest plants, his eyes kind of flash and he tilts his head like a curious bird.

Fay Onyx: Awesome.

Rev: Arey is taken in by the light stone. Just simple magical items are always fascinating to them.

Fay Onyx: Mm hmm.

Mads: I think Bob is kind of just confused, and is like, hmm. Kinda looks like my lamp.

Fay Onyx: Doesn't usually flicker, yeah. That's abnormal.

So Elora sets the lamp stone on the desk and continues.

Fay (as Elora): Three months ago, a batch of 30 lamp stones was created in a workshop run by the Steward family. Their lamp stones have always been cheap, but less reliable than other lamp stones. However, something specific was done in

this batch, which makes it more extreme. Several of them have developed striking magical irregularities. One of them exploded, injuring five people. And the Steward family started tracking down and collecting these lamp stones, but we were able to get to one of them first. The representatives of the Steward family claim that the binding magic used in creating this batch went awry and created a hidden, magical side effect.

[Jazz music fades out.]

Fay (as Elora): However, our own magical analysis has conclusively determined that there is nothing wrong with the binding magic on this lamp stone, nor is there anything wrong with the alchemical components or processing. This means that the only thing that it could be is the glowing stone cactus extract, which is the most essential and most expensive ingredient in lamp stones.

[Another mysterious jazz track starts playing.]

Fay (as Elora): And considering that there are problems with the illegal harvesting of the wild relative of the glowing stone cactus, which is the flashing stone cactus, this could be it.

This could be the evidence we need to prove that the Stewards are buying illegally harvested plants.

Rev (as Arey): Elora, may I ask, is it likely that that in your hand will explode?

Fay (as Elora): Well, the main thing is to not get it wet. But it is a possibility, yes.

Rev (as Arey): Oh, that is not a simple task. Many light stones seem to be outside for nighttime. And it rains at night, or gets at least moist or damp.

Fay (as Elora): It is a significant safety hazard, indeed. And one more piece of evidence, if we can prove it, that they are being irresponsible. Not only by buying illegally harvested plants, but by creating -- knowingly creating -- a more dangerous lamp stone that is a safety hazard.

Mads: At the mention that it explodes when it gets wet, Bob definitely scoots back a little bit.

All: [chuckle]

Robin: Yeah, I think --

Mads: Cause they're not exactly water, but like, they're wet.

Robin: I think Nikau hops off the chair and is now standing behind it.

Fay Onyx: [laughs] Awesome. So Elora continues.

Fay (as Elora): Juniper Huckleberry is a prominent magical plants expert who was involved in the breeding of the glowing stone cactus for lamp stone production 50 years ago. Her research is famous and her words carry a lot of weight.

Juniper is the perfect person to help us with this, and she has agreed to analyze this lamp stone. Unfortunately, Juniper is also a recluse who lives in a massive research garden full of dangerous plants and anti-poacher protections. She's impossible to contact on short notice. But the Stewards are desperate to get this lamp stone back, and as you can see from the state of our office, they know that we have it. So we need both a distraction for the Stewards, and we need a team of people to take this lamp stone to Juniper. I will distract the Stewards' agents with a decoy. Meanwhile, I want the three of you to take this lamp stone, go into Juniper's garden, find her without

causing too much havoc, and give her any help that she needs to get her analysis done as quickly as possible. I'm going to give you one potion that heals plants, just in case you run into problems with one of her more dangerous specimens. So here's the potion. And yeah, just don't get it wet. You should be fine. It shouldn't explode unless you get it wet. Any other questions?

Rev: I think that Arey is looking at Nikau and Bob.

Rev (as Arey): Bob, may I ask, are you technically wet?

Mads (as Bob): Um ... Yes. I come from a lake, so ...

Rev (as Arey): Yes, I had thought as much. I believe that means it is between you and myself, Nikau, as to who is to carry this.

Robin (as Nikau): Oh, I actually have a bag here that might help.

Robin: And Nikau will pull out his enchanted bag.

Rev (as Arey): Oh, wonderful.

Robin (as Nikau): It's bigger than it looks.

Mads (as Bob): I can ... I can carry other things that don't explode when they get wet.

Fay Onyx: So Elora hands the lamp stone over to Nikau. And who picks up the potion of plant healing?

Rev: I think hearing Bob having said that they could carry other things that didn't explode when wet, Nikau would pick up the potion and hand it to Bob.

Fay Onyx: Awesome.

Mads: Yup. Just, it goes right on in and floats within me.

[Sound of slime enveloping an object.]

Fay Onyx: Perfect. Do your characters have any other questions for the moment, or do we want to just cut to 10 minutes from then and get you all teleported?

Rev (as Arey): Elora, may I ask, what does the doctor look like?

Fay (as Elora): Uh, Juniper. Yes, she's ... She's a gnome. She almost always has some sort of large piece of magical plant technology. It's regularly different, so I can't tell you which one she'll be using today. But yeah, two foot tall gnome, dark skin, curly hair. I don't think there's that many people in her research garden. I think she's the only gnome. It's hard to tell. They don't come out very often.

Mads: Sweet. I don't have any questions. Bob is mostly like, we're going to an interesting garden where weird things can happen. I'm good. I'm ready to go.

Fay Onyx: Awesome.

Robin: Yeah. Nikau is just excited, too. He's very intent on exposing what the Stewards are doing, so.

Fay Onyx: Mmhmm. All right. So the Observer does have a on-staff teleporter person, and his name is Umer Ramsay. And so he is going to teleport the three of you. So basically what he does is he's going to first use a thing of magic to make himself invisible. And then he has you all hold hands in a circle. And he's such a good teleporter that he actually got an

outstanding success on this. And um, and he actually gets you to right exactly outside of Juniper's garden.

[Music is replaced by the sound of birds chirping.]

Fay Onyx: So. Here's what the three of you see:

The three of you arrive at the entrance to an enormous, magical dome that is over a mile wide. Its kaleidoscopic surface makes it impossible to see what's inside. But you can tell that there are many different shades of green. Directly in front of you is the shimmering portal that lets people into the dome. Just to the right of that portal is a weather beaten mailbox that is overflowing with letters. So at this point, your teleporter friend, who's invisible, is just going to go kind of around the corner. So that they're ready to teleport you out as soon as you've completed your mission, but staying out of sight in case anyone comes by -- especially someone who's working for the Stewards. What do the three of you do?

Robin: So it's a giant ... It's like a giant greenhouse basically, right?

Fay Onyx: Yeah, a massive, over a mile wide, circular greenhouse.

Robin: Gosh. Where's the door?

Fay Onyx: Yeah. So that's the portal that goes in. It's basically ... It's like a magic surface, very much like what you say -- it's a greenhouse. So it keeps things that are in, in. And things that are out, out. So there's one little portal that goes in that's directly in front of you, and it has kind of like this sort of shimmering magical membrane over it. And that membrane basically, again, it's to keep, you know, plant seeds and spores and stuff that are inside, inside -- and that are outside, outside. So it's kind of like ... It's the one thing that's not kaleidoscopic, but just kind of like a shimmering membrane that's kind of like a ... Just a large, door-shaped, little membrane portion of it.

Rev: Arey walks over to the overstuffed mailbox.

Rev (as Arey): This is very strange. I find that most check this at least once every couple of days. And they'll look inside the box, just to see how much stuff is crammed inside.

Fay Onyx: Well, there's actually so much stuff crammed inside that the small amount of air current that happens just from you looking causes several letters to fall out onto the ground.

Rev: Oh.

Mads: [laughs] Oh, boy.

Rev (as Arey): Do you think that we should take this in with us?

Robin: Nikau immediately starts going -- like, pulling mail out and looking at it.

Fay Onyx: Yeah, there's all sorts of stuff in here.

Mads: Bob is going to just look at it and be like ...

Mads (as Bob): Do we have enough room to carry all of that mail inside?

Robin: Can I put that mail in my magic bag?

Fay Onyx: Oh, yeah.

Robin: With the orb. Good.

Fay Onyx: Yeah.

Robin: Then I will do that.

Fay Onyx: You know, you keep pulling out, and you're really impressed that whoever put this mail into this mailbox actually got as much mail into it as they did.

Robin: Does it feel like I'm pulling mail from one endless receptacle to another?

Fay Onyx: It's not endless, no. But it is ... It is larger on the inside than you might otherwise think. And it's a lot, it's just all sorts of things. Some fairly prestigious institutions are mentioned on some of the envelopes. You get like all sorts of people asking for ... Who knows? Trying to invite her to something, asking her for favors. But just a lot of different plant-related groups, as well as workshops that make magical items. Just all sorts of stuff.

Rev: As we get closer to the end of this stream of mail, I want to check and see if there's like a date on anything, to

see if we can see how long it's been since they've checked their mail.

Fay Onyx: Yeah. So if you were glancing at that, it definitely looks like this is at least two weeks worth of mail.

Rev (as Arey): Oh, my.

Rev: And I'll hold it up so that the other two can see.

Rev (as Arey): That's a very long time to stay inside of a dome, I would think.

Mads (as Bob): That is very odd. I wonder what they're doing in there.

Robin (as Nikau): Maybe they're not a fan of the postal system, and this is their strange way of protesting.

Mads (as Bob): You know, it's a possibility. Should we go inside now?

Robin (as Nikau): Yes, let's do that.

Mads: Um, I'll go first, since Arey and Nikau were at the mailbox, and I didn't wander that close. So I'll start heading for the door.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. Do the other two of you follow close behind?

Rev: Yeah. And I think just because of that idea that they haven't been outside in two weeks, I'm actually going to take the bow off of my back and have an arrow in one hand, just on the chance that there's something amiss going on inside.

Fay Onyx: Mmhmm. Mmhmm. Awesome.

Robin: I'm probably the last to go in, because I'm making sure that I've gotten all the mail. [laughs]

Fay Onyx: All right. So once you go through the portal, you come through on the other side and you're inside a hedge tunnel.

[Chirping is replaced by bright yet relaxing music featuring synths and percussion.]

Fay Onyx: And that tunnel turns first left, then right, and then left again. And then it opens up into a circular courtyard, surrounded by hedge walls that grow all the way up to the dome above. In the center of the courtyard is a large tree with irregular spreading branches. Behind the tree, on the opposite side of the courtyard from you, is a doorway in the hedge wall that leads further into the garden.

Robin: So you said the hedge walls grow up to the top of the dome?

Fay Onyx: Around this courtyard they do, absolutely.

Robin: OK. Nikau the parrotfolk would still like to get up into the air and kind of fly around this courtyard.

Fay Onyx: OK.

Robin: Just to take a look around.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. Well, as soon as you start flying, what happens is the tree starts to move. So ...

Robin: [sighs]

Fay Onyx: First, slowly, the branches start to stretch backwards. And then with a sudden swoosh, it basically flings forward, and several nuts go flying through the air at you. And I'm going to need you to roll your physical defense.

[Sound of branches creaking, followed by the rustle of leaves and the whoosh of objects hurtling through the air.]

Robin: Oh, no! So what am I rolling, here?

Rev: Would I be able to help out with this?

Fay Onyx: I'm going to say you won't be able to help for this specific one, because Nikau's in the air away from you. But you could potentially take an action that would be helpful after this happens.

Rev: OK. Yeah, because what I was thinking is that I've already got my bow and arrow out, and I'm skilled in trick archery. So I thought shooting the acorns out of the air as they flew towards him might be beneficial.

Fay Onyx: Oh, yeah. Um, well, you know what? You do have a few seconds. So yeah, why don't you go ahead and roll

your roll, to see if you can do any of that. And if you are successful, then Nikau will get an additional die to dodging.

Rev: OK. OK, so let's make sure ... So my ranged combat, I get one. I get one for effort.

Fay Onyx: Absolutely. One for effort, one for being trained.

Rev: Um, I do have a -- I don't know if this counts. My third ability's **Specialized Weapon**, and it is magically infused, and the other one is it breaks stone?

Fay Onyx: You won't need that for this specific one, but you certainly could use it in other situations.

Rev: OK, cool.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Rev: So that is two successes.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. So yeah, that arrow takes ... I think actually, since you got a full success, I'm going to say that you're able to take out all of the walnuts that are flying

towards Nikau. So, yeah. Congratulations. Nikau has been, for the moment, defended. What's Nikau doing?

Robin: Upon realizing what just happened, first when the walnuts -- the acorn, sorry -- fly at Nikau --

Fay Onyx: They are walnuts, actually.

Robin: Oh, OK. When they fly at him, his immediate response is to squawk in fear. And then once the arrows hit the walnuts, he looks down and then looks back at the tree and goes ...

Robin (as Nikau): Maybe I won't risk this.

Robin: And decides to land.

Fay Onyx: OK. So where is Nikau landing?

Robin: Uh, probably like maybe five or ten feet in front of his friends.

Fay Onyx: Ok, so you're landed just very close to where everyone else is. And what is Bob the Blob doing?

Mads: Bob the Blob is very familiar with nature and natural things, being a druid as they are.

Fay Onyx: Absolutely.

Mads: And so I would like to try and get a read on that tree.

Fay Onyx: Absolutely.

Mads: And see if I know anything about it.

Fay Onyx: Absolutely. So that would be your Nature knowledge. And I'm going to say -- I know you have several abilities that are ... That enhance your capacity when your character is in a familiar environment or familiar nature zone. This would not count for that at this point, because it's basically kind of like a manicured garden at this point.

Mads: Yeah, it's not -- it's not something I'm ... Yeah, I get you.

Fay Onyx: So unless you have some other special ability that you want to add to things, that would be two die. Two dice.

Mads: Let's see. I have sensing magic?

Fay Onyx: That would be -- so that would be something you'd be doing instead of using the Nature skill. So yeah, that's the one thing about the abilities, is some abilities enhance skills, and some are kind of like they allow you to do something that is outside of what skills do.

Mads: OK, then I'm cool just taking the two dice.

Fay Onyx: OK.

Mads: I think everything else would just be instead of.

Fay Onyx: Yeah.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Mads: Oh. That's one success, one fail.

Fay Onyx: Ok. So a single success is a partial success. So you've seen these before. They're called catapult walnuts. And in the fall they become extremely dangerous, because they basically attack any animals that come near them. This is both a method of spreading their nuts out farther than if they just

fell, and also deterring any animals that would want to eat their nuts. So there's no other magical properties to them. It's just a projectile, which is large enough to be -- potentially cause an injury if it hits the wrong place. But there's no additional things to worry about with these.

Mads: OK. And am I correct in thinking that we are currently in fall, when they are the most dangerous?

Fay Onyx: Yeah. Yeah, I would say kind of late summer, early fall. Yup. Definitely.

Mads: Ok, um.

Mads (as Bob): So that there tree is very dangerous and will throw its nuts at animals who approach it. So we might want to think about getting around it? Maybe? Somehow? Giving it some room?

Robin: Nikau gasps.

Robin (as Nikau): I'm an animal! We should avoid this tree.

Rev (as Arey): Yes. Nikau, are you all right?

Robin (as Nikau): Yes. Thank you for hitting those arrows. I -- I was not expecting that.

Rev (as Arey): Yes. I honestly wasn't, either. That's not what I expected, if there was a threat. But I'm glad that we -- I'm glad that you didn't get hit.

Rev: How much room is between like, the walls? The shrub walls and the tree in the middle?

Fay Onyx: Well, it's 30 feet across and it's a pretty big tree, so not as much as you'd like.

All: [laugh]

Fay Onyx: There's room to go around it. But it does kind of seem like this was a planned situation, here. There is not an easy path around.

Rev (as Arey): Yes. I think that if we want to try to get around it, it might just be a matter of the good old one, two, three, everybody scatter.

Mads: Since we're going to be going for a speed approach, Bob is going to transform from their blob state into a humanoid

state. And so now they look kind of like a halfling, but they're still blue and they don't have any, like, actual features. They're just halfling-shaped now.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. OK, so it sounds like everyone's just going to dart past it as fast as possible?

Mads: Yep.

Rev: Yeah, I think so.

Robin: Sounds like. However, I would like to, despite what just happened, fly. Because I'm a bird, and hence more apt to fly than to walk or run.

Fay Onyx: Have you ever seen parrots walk?

Robin: They look hilarious?

Fay Onyx: It's a waddle.

Robin: And adorable. Yeah.

Fay Onyx: It is a waddle. You are definitely going to be faster flying.

Robin: Yeah. Yeah. So that's my plan.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. OK. So in that case, you're all independently trying to get past it. So I'm going to need all of you to roll your physical defense.

[Music changes to a more dynamic, suspenseful track.]

Robin: OK.

Mads: Is this just going to be one die each, or --?

Fay Onyx: Two die, because you are trained in your favorite form of physical defense.

Mads: OK. Cool.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Robin: I got ... You're trying to roll below your body in this instance, right?

Fay Onyx: Yeah. Yeah, it's always -- always lower numbers are better.

Robin: Oh. How fortuitous for me, who rolls low.

All: [laugh]

Robin: I got two successes.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. So that's ... Nikau, now that you know what to expect, darts over top, flying super fast. You kind of see the branches stretch back. But now that you've seen it happen once, you know exactly what to predict and you're able to avoid it.

[Sound of branches creaking, followed by the rustle of leaves and the whoosh of objects hurtling through the air.]

And you zoom out that little door on the other side.

Robin: Sweet.

Rev: So what I'm thinking is I would try to run by. And having seen how it moves now, watching it lean back and forth to throw the walnuts at Nikau, that I would wait until it was -- you know, Nikau has just flown by. So my hope is that its focus will be someplace else, and I'll actually use one of its lower branches to swing off of to get close to it. Which it may not be expecting, if everything is going far around.

Fay Onyx: OK. So why don't you do a quick Perception roll first, and we'll see how effective that is. And if it is effective, then it'll give you a -- make you prepared.

Rev: OK.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Rev: That is one success.

Fay Onyx: OK, so that's a partial success. So ... OK, so what I'm going to say is this is good enough to get you prepared, in terms of when you run past it. But in doing this, you're not going to have any ability to look at what you're about to run into, because you're focusing on the tree.

Rev: Yeah, OK.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. So go ahead and roll, I guess, your physical defense to get past it real fast. But you get that die for being prepared, so it's three.

Rev: OK.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Rev: That is two successes.

Fay Onyx: Awesome, so you perfectly get past this thing.

[Whoosh of something moving quickly through the air.]

Fay Onyx: But again, you have no idea what you're about to run into. So we'll deal with that in just a moment.

Rev: [chuckles]

Fay Onyx: All right, Bob the Blob?

Mads: I rolled two successes.

Fay Onyx: Awesome.

Mads: So Bob is kind of just like ...

Mads (as Bob): Mmm, don't feel like finding out if I count as an animal today.

Mads: And just like, hugs the hedge and runs past it.

Fay Onyx: All right. Well I believe Bob also is a dodger.

Mads: Yes.

Fay Onyx: So yeah. So Bob, again, manages to dodge this. You're all going at the same time. Works out great.

[Whoosh of something moving quickly through the air.]

Fay Onyx: OK, so all of you emerge into a grove of fruit trees. And I'm going to need specifically Arey to ... I kind of think let's have you roll mobility, and see if you're able to avoid the almost instantaneous tree trunks that are right in front of you.

Rev: OK. Two successes.

Fay Onyx: OK. Well, somehow ...

Rev: Finally, a world where rolling low is OK!

All: [laugh]

Fay Onyx: Somehow, despite having been going so fast that you completely can't, like, dodge anything effectively, your practice at different mobility training things allows you to slightly adjust your course, not hit any of the tree trunks. But you are now in the middle of this grove of fruit trees.

[Flowing, slightly eerie track begins playing.]

Fay Onyx: There's a carefully maintained path that goes through the center of this grove that kind of gently weaves around the tree trunks. And looking around, you can get glimpses of an enormous garden around you. The garden is divided up into sections, each with different types of plants in them. And if you look up, you can see flocks of these darting gray-purple kind of bat-like shapes high above. Yeah.

Rev: I think, upon seeing those, I duck down and just get close to the ground and wait.

Robin: I don't have any knowledges, but I'm just kind of curiously looking at these shapes that are flying around.

Fay Onyx: Sure.

Robin: I assume they're at a higher altitude than I am.

Fay Onyx: Oh, yeah. They're way up there. The orchard you're in -- fruit trees tend to be shorter -- but there's a lot of very tall trees farther into the garden. And these shapes are

smaller shapes that seem to be up in the ... Just up in the top branches of those tall trees.

Robin: OK. Nikau is going to fly to the nearest fruit tree and land on one of the sturdier looking branches, and just kind of wait and look around.

Fay Onyx: Yeah. Well, from up there, Nikau gets a little bit more of a clear view of ... Yeah, there's just a lot of very different sections in the garden. You can also see some sections where -- the same sort of hedge that you already encountered in the entrance? There seem to be like little arcs or walls of it that seem like they're separating different parts of the garden from each other.

Robin: Hmm.

Fay Onyx: So are the three of you kind of moving forward a bit?

Mads: If I could take a moment, I want to look around and see if I can tell if someone has been here recently. Like, we know that the mail hasn't been checked for two weeks. And

Bob would like to do a quick scan to see like, if everything around here also looks like no one's been through in two weeks.

Fay Onyx: Sure. The standard skill for kind of looking for like tracks would be your Survival skill.

Mads: Oh, sweet. I have that.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. So you're still in a fruit tree grove at this point, so that would still just be, at this point, two die -- dice. Two dice.

Mads: OK, cool. Yeah. Because it's -- since there's so many different options of where we could go, Bob's kind of like, hmm. Let's see if maybe this will give us a direction.

Fay Onyx: Sure.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Mads: Two successes.

Fay Onyx: Oh, awesome. Well, it seems like what you've seen in there does seem to be activity of people using the paths. A

lot of the activity, though ... Seems to be two people who do most of the activity. And you would guess that like, based on where some of the tracks go, it seems like people are coming, checking on the trees, pruning things, mostly using the paths. And there are some smaller feet from a person who's maybe three or four feet tall. And then there's some other tracks that are kind of like punctures in the ground. Like a fairly large thing with very -- many pointed feet.

Mads: Oh.

Fay Onyx: Yeah. Something that you would say in the kind of maybe spider shape or crab shape, or something with multiple larger pointed limbs.

Mads: Oh, wow. Bob is definitely going to point that out to the other two.

Mads (as Bob): All right. I am seeing two different sets of main footprints here. We got our standard smaller person ones, and then we have something else. Very pointy feet, very big. Don't know what it is, though.

Robin (as Nikau): Big pointy feet, you say?

Mads (as Bob): Yes, like ... Large, but stabby.

Robin (as Nikau): How curious.

Rev (as Arey): Should we follow, and hope that we are able to find ... Well, perhaps not who the stabby feet belong to. But if these are Juniper's feet.

Robin (as Nikau): Do gnomes have large, pointy feet? I thought they just had, you know, feet.

Rev (as Arey): Oh, I mean, the other set. I don't want to find the ones attached to the big stabby feet.

Mads (as Bob): I also don't want to find the pointy feet ones. So I would be OK with following the smaller footsteps.

Robin (as Nikau): Yeah, I'm down for that.

Fay Onyx: Yeah. So most of the foot traffic of all people seems to be using the paths. So right now you have a path that's kind of just winding through these tree trunks in front of you. You gonna just follow down that?

Robin: I think that's the plan. Can I fly? Is there a way I can -- this is a preposterous question -- is there a way I can fly ahead, but doing so quietly? So that I'm a sneaky bird?

Fay Onyx: Oh, yeah, you're very sneaky. You could definitely try to fly ahead, for sure.

Robin: So would this be like a stealth roll?

Fay Onyx: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. To fly silently. Yeah.

Robin: OK. And so since I've got **Dexterous** ...

Fay Onyx: Yeah. For sure.

Robin: So would it be two dice, then?

Fay Onyx: Well, if you want to use **Dexterous**, three times a day, you are prepared to use one of those skills. So if you wanted to be prepared and use one of your **Dexterous** kind of moments, you could get three die on this roll.

Robin: So if I use **Dexterous**, I'll have three? Is that what I heard?

Fay Onyx: Exactly. Yeah.

Robin: Oh, yeah. I'll do that.

Fay Onyx: Awesome.

Robin: Let's see what we get. And so this is a body roll.

Fay Onyx: Absolutely.

Robin: Meets is considered a failure, right?

Fay Onyx: Yes.

Robin: OK. I still got two successes.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. You fly ahead very quietly. All of the little flying things in the air don't notice you. And you have a pretty good vantage looking around. So as you look ahead, you can see that there is a fork in this path. The left fork goes off into a grassy meadow. The right fork goes into a dense patch of bushes and trees. And right at the fork is a tree with these beautiful, gleaming golden apples. And the moment you see that, you feel something start to come over you.

[Delicate yet ominous track with a high-pitched, repetitive melody replaces previous music.]

Fay Onyx: So I'm going to need you to roll your mental defense.

Robin: Oh, no. So is that two dice as well? Because I have Deflection?

Fay Onyx: Mmhmm. Deflection. So.

Robin: OK. This I will probably do worse at. Yup. And that's a -- zero successes.

Fay Onyx: Oh, wonderful!

Mads: Oh, no!

Fay Onyx: I was hoping someone would fail this one. OK, so those apples are amazing. And before you've even completely caught up with yourself, this magical compulsion comes over you. You don't get to finish making your Deflection gesture and you just fly over to that tree. You pick an apple, and you eat that apple.

Robin: [sighs]

Fay Onyx: And it's amazing. It tastes so good. You feel amazing after having eaten it. It's wonderful. But there's this apple core now. So I'm kind of imagining you as having plucked it off with one of -- with your beak, and you have the whole parrot one-handed ... Perching one-handed, with the other foot like up, and you're eating it. And now you have this apple core, and it's just ... It's really important to you. You cannot put this apple core down. You have to carry it with you. It is the most important thing.

Robin: All right. So one of my claws is now dedicated to this apple core.

Fay Onyx: Yup.

Robin: All right.

Fay Onyx: Congratulations.

Robin: So when they --

Fay Onyx: But you feel amazing.

Robin: Yeah. I feel great.

Fay Onyx: You feel amazing.

Robin: When they catch up with me. I'll point one wing left to one wing right. And then I'll say ...

Robin (as Nikau): Check out this apple I got! Well, I ate it, but it was great.

Fay Onyx: All right. So when the other two catch up, though, you both are going to need to also roll your mental defense.

Mads: Oh, boy.

Robin: Just all walking around, carrying golden apple cores.

Fay Onyx: [laughs]

[Dice rolling noises.]

Mads: Oh, shoot. That was also a full failure.

Robin: Oh, no!

Rev: I got one success.

Fay Onyx: OK. So ...

Rev: I carry half an apple core.

Fay Onyx: Well, OK. So the one success is ... You feel this magical start -- magic start to come over you. What's your defense? Is that Deflection, as well?

Rev: Yes, it is Deflection.

Fay Onyx: OK. You feel magic starting to grab hold of you. You make this magical gesture, and you're just not quite fast enough to fully deflect it, but you still feel it starting to take hold. And so you go over, you pick an apple, and you hold it. You don't actually have to eat it, though. It's right there in your hand. You feel like it would be amazing, but you're not actually compelled to eat it.

Rev: Yeah, I feel this compulsion to eat the apple, and then I set it down, realizing that I don't necessarily eat things. Um ... Being a bronze statue. Like ...

Rev (as Arey): I don't -- I don't know what came over me. This ... You're right. They do look delicious. But I'm sure this would do terrible things to me.

Fay Onyx: Most beautiful apple you've ever seen. And Bob the Blob?

Mads: Oh, I failed. I failed real hard. So I think I see the apple that Arey put down, and Bob just runs over and is like, mine!

Mads (as Bob): I'll have it!

Fay Onyx: All right. Awesome. Well, you eat that apple. You also feel amazing. And now you have an apple core that's really important to you.

Mads: Can it just float inside of me?

Fay Onyx: Um ...

Robin: Oh, gosh.

Fay Onyx: I think you're going to feel like you want it a little bit more protected than that.

Mads: Oh.

Fay Onyx: You got to keep this safe. This apple core and the seeds inside it are just so important. What does Bob do?

Mads: Because I have the pouches inside of me that I could put it in.

Fay Onyx: Sure, yeah.

Mads: Yeah.

Fay Onyx: Yeah. So you can just go ahead, pop that in a pouch, and put that inside you.

Mads: Yeah, I think I will empty out one of the pouches, because I feel like I have to make room for it.

Fay Onyx: Sure.

Mads: Oh let me see. What will I drop? My soap. I will get rid of my soap.

All: [laugh]

Fay Onyx: OK. Oh, there goes the soap. OK. So in front of you, the path diverges. On the left, open grassy meadow. On the right, dense bushes and trees.

[Ominous music stops playing.]

Rev (as Arey): Does anyone have a strong hunch one way or the other? Left or right?

Robin (as Nikau): I wouldn't say it's a hunch so much as I'm more comfortable in a meadow, because I can fly more.

Fay Onyx: OK.

Mads: Am I familiar with either of those environments?

Fay Onyx: Very good question. Why don't you roll your Nature knowledge and see if either of those looks familiar to you?

Mads: Well, that is one success, one failure.

Fay Onyx: OK, so with a partial success, the grass one looks pretty familiar. The tree -- the tree bush thing, not so much. That's not something you're familiar with. But yeah, that grass meadow definitely looks like some of the ones you've experienced before.

Mads (as Bob): I'm with Nikau on this. I like the grass, please.

Rev (as Arey): Very good.

[Slow, gentle guitar music starts playing.]

Fay Onyx: OK. So you're entering the temperate grassland. There are many different kinds of grass in this meadow, creating a patchwork of different textures and colors. Oddly, despite the still air in the rest of the garden, a constant breeze blows through this meadow, creating shining ripples as the grass dances in the wind. So unless any of you are doing anything specific as you're moving through this meadow ...

What's Nikau doing? How are they moving?

Robin: Nikau is definitely flying in this area. And since he's sensed breezes, he's just kind of more lazily gliding around than anything else.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. So I'm going to have the two of you who are walking on the ground, I'm going to have you both roll Perception. And this is definitely a temperate grassland, so Bob the Blob is in their element, here.

Mads: Ooh. So do I get an extra die?

Fay Onyx: You do.

Mads: Ayy.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Mads: Ooh, I got two out of three successes.

Fay Onyx: So we're just counting the numbers of successes, so that would be a full success for you.

[Guitar music fades out.]

Rev: Oh, I got -- I got no success.

Mads: Oh, no.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. Cool. This is going to be so much fun.

[Playful track, featuring what sounds like a marimba or xylophone, starts playing.]

Fay Onyx: So what happens is that Arey just trips over something. There was nothing there, and all of a sudden you're flat on your face.

[Thump of a heavy metal object hitting grass.]

Fay Onyx: And something that you're holding goes flying in the air. So I guess that you had your bow and arrow out?

Rev: Yeah.

Fay Onyx: So your bow goes flying through the air. It lands on the ground in front of you. And you get this brief glimpse of something green wrapping around your bow, and that bow is being dragged away.

Rev (as Arey): Oh. Oh no, I need that.

[Ethereal droning notes begin playing over the marimba/xylophone.]

Fay Onyx: [laughs] Meanwhile Bob the Blob, being familiar with this grassland, notices the subtle signs of invisible grass on the ground. And you -- basically, you're like going to trip over it, and then all of a sudden you're like, "Oh! No, no, no. I know what these little small little bare spots are. These are invisible grass spots." And you beautifully avoid them.

Mads: Am I allowed to call out to Arey?

Fay Onyx: So you notice this right when Arey trips. But yeah, at this point, Arey's bow is being dragged away, and the three of you can all take actions.

Robin: I would like to, seeing that Arey's bow is being dragged away, Nikau the parrotfolk is going to go ...

Robin (as Nikau): How is that happening?!

Robin: And starts following after it.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. So the bow is being dragged towards that ... You know that dense area of bushes and trees I mentioned previously?

All: [laugh]

Robin: Noo!

Fay Onyx: Yep. That's where it's going.

Robin: No ...

Fay Onyx: You can fly after it without hindrance, and you're able to kind of track where it's headed from above at this moment. But once it gets into those bushes and trees, you're going to either have to get into them with it to keep watching it, or take some sort of other action.

Robin: I'm going to shout that it's heading towards the bushes in the other direction. And then yeah, I'm going to try and intercept it so I don't actually like land, but I want to hit the ground before it hits the bushes.

Fay Onyx: So you're ... Sorry, you're not landing, or you're landing?

Robin: I am landing, but I'm trying to land in between the moving bow and the bushes, before it reaches the bushes.

Fay Onyx: OK. Well, I think that would be your Flying skill, to see how good you can do this.

Robin: That sounds about right to me. So I will do that.
That's one success.

Fay Onyx: OK. So you're able to land beside the bow as it's moving, but you're not able to intercept. It is moving quite fast.

Robin: Oh, no.

Fay Onyx: So what are the other two doing at this point?
Nikau's close to the bow. What about Bob and Arey?

Mads: Seeing Nikau go after the bow, I'm going to try to grab the arrows. Right? Were arrows also dropped?

Fay Onyx: Um, only the one that was in the hand.

Mads: I'm still going to go for it. [laughs] Like ...

Mads (as Bob): Oh, no!

Fay Onyx: Sure.

Mads (as Bob): One of your things! It's very important.

Mads: And I will call out ...

Mads (as Bob): You got to watch out for the bare spots. That's invisible grass. Real tricky thing.

Rev (as Arey): Well, how do you know to watch out for invisible grass?

All: [laugh]

Rev: And I ask that question as I'm pushing up off the ground and trying to sprint after the bow.

Fay Onyx: Sure.

Rev: I guess trying to avoid places where there are not grass, because there may secretly be grass.

Fay Onyx: Right. Right. So now that you know there's invisible grass, you are prepared because you're trying to avoid bare spots. So you can do ... You'll get an extra die for being prepared as you run after your bow.

Rev: OK.

Fay Onyx: So that'll be Athletics.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Rev: Um. And that is physical, so two successes.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. So you're solidly able to keep pace with it. So you're able to track where it's going as well, and it's not getting further away from you. And yeah, you're avoiding those bare patches. Haven't tripped over anything yet.

Rev: Good.

Fay Onyx: OK. Bob the Blob.

Mads: Yes. I am diving for that arrow with everything I've got.

Fay Onyx: Sure. OK. Um, so I'm guessing -- I'm thinking diving for something would be Athletics.

Mads: Oh no .. Oh -- well, yes.

Fay Onyx: But you can always argue a different skill if you have some idea of how you're diving.

Mads: Um ... I have Acrobatics.

Fay Onyx: OK. So you're going to try to acrobatically do this?

Mads: Yes.

Fay Onyx: Sure.

Mads: Because are there a lot of bare spots on the ground?

Fay Onyx: I'd say this particular zone has a few more than average.

Mads: Then I'm going to try to be light on my feet and cartwheel over to the arrow.

Fay Onyx: Perfect. OK. Yup. So that'll be your Acrobatics, then. Using anything else to boost this? You are prepared to spot the invisible grass.

Mads: Uh ... No, I think -- I think those are fine. So is that two or three?

Fay Onyx: Oh, sorry. Yeah. You're doing three.

Mads: OK. Cool.

[Dice rolling noise.]

[Music fades out.]

Mads: [laughs] I failed! All three.

Robin: Oh, no!

Fay Onyx: Yeah. Invisible grass, yeah. Definitely invisible grass. So you're going to be tripping over the invisible grass.

[Thud of a collision combined with a wet squelch.]

Fay Onyx: So at this point, you're also going to drop something.

Mads: OK.

[Fast, lively piano music starts to play.]

Fay Onyx: So ... Um ... You know, I think I'm going to do it. I think the pouch with the potion in it gets dropped.

Mads: [gasps] Oh, no!

Fay Onyx: And as it falls and goes off into the grass, something seems to have grabbed it, and it's being pulled away too, now.

Mads: Oh, no!

Fay Onyx: You might want to do a Nature knowledge to see if you know what's pulling them.

Mads: Yes, I would.

Fay Onyx: OK.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Mads: Well, that one went places. They were both failures again.

Fay Onyx: OK.

Mads: I got too excited about cartwheeling and I lost everything else.

Fay Onyx: Yeah. This is weird behavior. You think maybe it's some sort of vampire vine that feeds on magical items?

Mads: Oh, that doesn't ... That doesn't sound good. I will warn the others, because that sounds dangerous. So Bob will call out -- I don't think I've specified -- Bob uses telepathy. Because Bob is a Blob, who does not have a physical mouth or vocal cords. So using telepathy, Bob calls out to the others ...

Mads (as Bob): Be careful! They're vampire vines!

Fay Onyx: OK. So at this point we have ... The bow is being pulled still, and now this potion is being pulled. So Arey's behind the bow but in front of the potion, and Nikau is next to the bow. What are the two of you going to be doing now?

Robin: I'm going to try and yank the bow off the ground. Pull it from this invisible grass.

Fay Onyx: Yeah, OK. So how are you going to be yanking it? Are you just kind of doing a brute strength? You diving for it?

Robin: Man, I have no idea. Nikau is not a brute strength parrot.

Fay Onyx: All right.

Robin: So I think he's going to try and just, like, swipe it really quick, and hope that he snatches it so fast that they don't even notice that it's gone. And just like kind of keep moving.

Fay Onyx: OK. OK. OK, so you're going to be trying to -- I would go with, that would fall under the manual dexterity skill. I mean, your beak also counts for that, because you can use your beak in a hand-like way. So yeah. Go ahead and see if you can kind of -- do kind of a quick swipe and grab this bow.

[A series of quiet clicks is heard as Robin uses a dice rolling program.]

Robin: Oh dear. One success.

Fay Onyx: OK. Well, so here's the thing. You're able to grab on to the bow, but you don't quite know what's holding onto it

just yet, but it's not something that's just letting go. You got the bow. It's got the bow.

Robin: So I'm just imagining that Nikau is unfortunately like, running along the ground, and has his beak like, playing tug of war basically with this bow. Against something he can't see!

Fay Onyx: Right. Yeah, something that's kind of -- there's invisible grass everywhere. It makes it harder to see things. You're beginning to notice that things behind the invisible grass are kind of invisible. So it creates a really weird effect with things that are moving on the ground. But I think at this point, you can probably see that the thing on the other end of the bow that's pulling back is some sort of tendril. It's some sort of viney tendril-y thing. So tug of war for Nikau. What's Arey doing?

Rev: So I think seeing Nikau start playing tug of war with something that I can't quite see, I want to use my Supernatural Warrior ability.

Fay Onyx: Sure.

Rev: Which allows me to channel supernatural power into combat.

Fay Onyx: Absolutely.

Rev: So I want to try to do an unarmed strike in the area opposite of Nikau. Like, where the pull is coming from.

Fay Onyx: Right, right. So you're going to just kind of attack the thing that you can't quite see in the invisible grass?

Rev: Yeah, like just leap in that area and strike down wherever the kind of opposite side of force is coming from the pull.

Fay Onyx: All right. Yeah, go for it. So that would be two dice, unless -- two dice. What is with my brain today? Two dice, unless you have a different thing you want to be using, too. Or unless you have something to boost it.

Rev: The only thing I could think to boost it is, um, if I were to use Alert, could I do, like, Insight or Perception to see what's there before I strike?

Fay Onyx: So you can spend a moment like honing in on ...
Honing in on like the zone you want to strike in. Because
Nikau has stopped it from pulling it farther, you can take the
moment to kind of use your **Alert**, focus your mind, try to
get the exact right positioning.

Rev: OK.

Fay Onyx: It does mean that the potion bottle is going to be
moving while you're doing this, but you can take that moment
to do that, yeah.

Rev: OK.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Rev: Two successes.

Fay Onyx: All right. You know exactly where. You see this
little glimmer of this vine right in between -- like right on the
other side of the bow. You know exactly where to strike. You
are prepared.

Rev: All right, let's see if I can do it, now.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Rev: Three successes.

Fay Onyx: Oh, cool. OK. So with that, why don't you describe me the strike that you're doing on this vine?

Rev: So what I see in my head is Arey takes a few steps and does a leap, and just -- almost like a superhero landing -- um, landing on the ground on a knee and punching into the ground at the same time.

[Sound of a heavy metal object hitting grass.]

Fay Onyx: Right. OK, so you do this punch and it manages to sever the end of this vine. And so the vine retracts away, but the bow stays. And I'm going to say that the other tendril that was pulling the potion bottle also gets severed with this. So you actually have stopped it from stealing both items.

Rev: Oh, great. Yeah, like I imagine hitting the ground and just a little ripple of earth, and it, you know, being jagged and cutting the vine.

Fay Onyx: Absolutely. Like some rocks and stuff and it just --
[cutting noise]

Rev: Yeah.

Fay Onyx: Perfect. All right. So you all are halfway through a meadow with lots of invisible grass, some vampire vines that are trying to steal magic items, and you're kind of near this bushes and trees zone. And, you know, as you're just standing there next to the edge of the bushes and trees zone, you can actually hear this kind of ethereal flute music kind of hovering in the air, coming from that that area.

Rev (as Arey): Oh, thank you so much, Nikau.

Rev: And I'll pick up the bag with the potion in it and carry it back to Bob.

Fay Onyx: Awesome, how are you walking back to Bob? Can you describe a little bit about what you're doing, there?

Rev: Yes, I'm going to avoid patches where there are no grass, for fear there may be grass.

Fay Onyx: Right. So you're going slowly and carefully.

Rev: Yes.

Fay Onyx: All right. You're totally fine if you go slowly and carefully.

Rev: Probably too slow. Like, sidestepping around any empty patch, even if it was one that I made.

Fay Onyx: Right. Right. Absolutely. OK. So is that how you all are moving through the rest of this meadow?

Robin: Nikau will continue to fly, having seen the dangers of walking in the meadow.

All: [laugh]

Robin: He's like, "No, thank you."

Fay Onyx: Very fair. Very fair. OK, so bow is back, the potion is back, and you all have made it through the meadow. No one went into my swamp!

All: [laugh]

Fay Onyx: Oh my goodness. You all avoided it. It's very pretty in there, you know. It's so pretty.

Mads: I'm sure it is.

Fay Onyx: Don't you just want to go into the swamp?

Mads: Maybe on the way back.

Robin: I've been emotionally scarred by swamps. I don't need to go to one right now.

Fay Onyx: [laughs] Oh, no!

Robin: Although the flute is tempting.

Fay Onyx: It is very beautiful in there. I promise you, it's beautiful.

[Lively music stops playing.]

Fay Onyx: OK. So you've made it through the grassland meadow. And so the paths join back up with the path that comes out of the swamp, and then it branches again.

[A delicate, cheerful piece featuring what sounds like a marimba or xylophone begins to play.]

Fay Onyx: And the left fork leads to a lush forest that has a hedge wall around most of it, and the right fork leads to

an open woodland. So do people have knowledge checks they want to make, or thoughts about which way they want to go?

Mads: Do the footprints that we've been following, is it the same deal? They both look about the same?

Fay Onyx: Yep. All the paths seem about equally used. So Bob the Blob could do a Nature check to at least identify which ecosystems these two zones might represent?

Mads: I would like to do that, actually.

Fay Onyx: Ok. Now, roll your Nature skill.

Mads: All right.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Mads: Two successes.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. Yeah, that left fork? That's definitely a rainforest. And that right fork is definitely a temperate forest -- one that you're very familiar with. You know a lot of the plants that you're spotting there.

Mads: Ooh. Um, so Bob is going to turn to the others.

Mads (as Bob): So it looks like we have ourselves a rainforest and a temperate forest. I'm more familiar with the temperate forest, to be honest. And seeing as we have a thing that explodes in ... With water, we should not go in the rainforest.

Rev (as Arey): Yes, I would be inclined to agree.

Robin (as Nikau): That's a fair point.

Rev (as Arey): Um, before we go in, is there anything invisible I should be on the lookout for in there?

All: [laugh]

Mads: I would like to make a check for invisible things.

Fay Onyx: Sure. You can roll three dice, since you were thinking about a ecosystem you're familiar with.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Mads: That is one success.

Fay Onyx: Invisible things? Not a specific thing that you would think of for a temperate forest. There's definitely some possible hazardous plants, but nothing invisible. No, not that

you're aware of. You do know that sometimes fairies make magical plants that play tricks on people and sometimes they do that in forests, but usually they work with mushrooms.

[Music fades out.]

Mads (as Bob): In general, Arey, I would be just cautious around any mushrooms. I always look out for the mushrooms.

Rev (as Arey): Oh, good to know. Thank you.

Mads: Bob gives thumbs up.

Robin: Into the forest!

[Calm harp music begins playing.]

Fay Onyx: Into the forest. OK, so this open woodland is an old growth forest with enormous trees. Rays of sunlight stream through the tree branches to illuminate patches of ferns, lacy bushes, and the delicate leaves of wild herbs. This peaceful scene is completed by little brown mushrooms hopping along through the underbrush on their springy stems.

[Springy hopping sounds play in the background.]

Fay Onyx: And all of you will identify these as the common hopping mushroom. Or at least that's what they look like. You've seen these before. So they're just little mushrooms hopping along, spreading their spores. Looks peaceful.

Robin: Hmm.

Fay Onyx: So is anyone doing anything specific? Or are you just walking along through the beautiful woodland, enjoying the scenery?

Robin: Lazily gliding through, but yes.

Fay Onyx: Sure, sure, sure. OK, well, I'm going to have everyone do ... Roll their Perception skill.

[Dice shaking noise.]

Mads: That is one success.

Fay Onyx: OK.

Robin: Is that mental, right?

Fay Onyx: It is a mental skill, yes.

[The hopping sounds fade out.]

Robin: OK. Zero successes.

Fay Onyx: OK.

Rev: One success.

Fay Onyx: OK, cool. So both Bob and Arey are able to catch glimpses of something kind of tall that's sort of back behind some tree trunks. So it's kind of a vertical-ish shape that seems to be ducking behind trunks. It's ... Yeah, like it seems maybe like about as tall as an average person, maybe like six feet, but it's a very vertical sort of silhouette. But you just get very quick glimpses. You don't actually get to see what it looks like.

Mads: Hmm. I ... That worries me, and I would like to use my sensing magic.

Fay Onyx: Sure.

Mads: To set up an alert for if it gets any closer to us.

Fay Onyx: Oh, that sounds like a great idea. I'll have you go ahead and roll to use your sensing magic. And so you already

stated what you're trying to do, so that would be a two die roll to use your magic.

Mads: OK.

[Dice shaking noise.]

Fay Onyx: And it's a mental roll.

Mads: Two successes!

Fay Onyx: Awesome. So, um ... Well here, you tell me what the magic looks like, and then I'll see what the -- what results it gives.

Mads: So Bob uses a stone as, like, to focus their magic. And so you kind of see the pouches that float around inside of Bob move around until the stone like, comes out of one. And it glows faintly, so the rest of Bob starts glowing.

Fay Onyx: Awesome.

Mads: And I think there's just now like a small circle around Bob and Arey. So if anything crosses it, they will be notified.

[Harp music stops playing.]

Fay Onyx: Right. Well, as you go through the forest, this thing -- maybe one thing, you're not sure if it's one or if there's a couple -- it seems like it's getting closer. And how wide is your circle? Your kind of, like, alarm zone?

Mads: Uh ... I'll say maybe five feet? Because I don't know how dangerous it is, I just want a warning. So I'll say five feet.

Fay Onyx: Sure, sure. So you're going to say five feet. That's pretty close. You did a very good, successful job with this magic. So you know, I'll say that you can kind of get -- kind of like five feet, you get a really strong warning. And maybe like ten feet out, you can kind of sense things starting to get close?

Mads: OK.

Fay Onyx: So as you're getting close to the edge of the woodland and it seems like the path is going to enter a new zone, something gets within ten feet of you.

[Ominous piece with droning notes and percussion starts playing.]

Fay Onyx: And since you have this warning, I'm going to let you all roll another Perception roll to see if, once it starts getting close, if you can see what's happening here.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Robin: I got a success that time.

Fay Onyx: OK.

Mads: Two successes.

Fay Onyx: Awesome.

Rev: I also got two.

Fay Onyx: OK, so the two of you on the ground, you have this magic circle right around you. And from your vantage point, when this thing gets within ten feet of you, you get a good look at it. And it's this kind of pale green color with spots on it, and it's ... There's kind of this dog-sized, medium dog-sized kind of thing on the ground that has a lot of legs

and is crawling. And it has this really long, like six foot tall scorpion tail above this like small dog body. And ...

Robin: [nervous laughter]

Fay Onyx: It is horrifying. And I'm going to actually say that Bob can roll your Nature knowledge to see if you know what this is, but it does not actually belong in this place. So you don't get the benefit of being familiar.

Mads: OK.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Mads: That is one success.

Fay Onyx: OK. So this is a very hazardous plant. You've heard of it before. It's a scorpion tail fungus. They're usually swamp creatures, interestingly.

Mads: Oh, no!

Fay Onyx: And you know, thinking back, maybe they're spreading out. They like to hide behind trees. And basically what what you know about them is that they, instead of

having venom, they have spores. So they basically go after animals, trying to inject spores into them.

Mads: Oh, wow. I don't like any of these details.

Fay Onyx: [laughs] That's what you know. OK, so you all have a chance to make one action before this thing is coming at you. But it is definitely coming at you.

Rev (as Arey): Uh, Bob?

Mads (as Bob): Yes?

Rev (as Arey): Run?

Mads (as Bob): Yes.

Robin: Nikau's going to use his ability Shadow, to blend into shadows.

Fay Onyx: Melt into shadows. Surprisingly enough, in a wooded forest, there are plenty of shadows. So Nikau just instantaneously melts into the shadows. Do you have any details of what you think this looks like?

Robin: I think, realizing how big this thing is and that hearing them say, "We should run" -- Hearing Arey say that, he flaps up and goes higher, and I think you just suddenly lose him in the foliage of the nearest tree.

[Sound of flapping that echoes through the area.]

Fay Onyx: Absolutely. Well, it can't see Nikau -- you're totally fine. It's not going after you. OK. The two people on the ground?

Mads: I have ... I have a slight idea. I don't know if it's going to work.

Fay Onyx: Go for it.

Mads: Because it's based on not a lot of knowledge. So I have -- I have my lantern with me.

Fay Onyx: You do.

Mads: My telepathic lantern that's been following me. Is there any chance I can make it brighter?

Fay Onyx: Oh, sure.

Mads: So it gives off a really bright light?

Fay Onyx: Yeah. I kind of figure your lantern's been just kind of hanging out. Not really -- you've been in the bright sunlight, so like, you haven't needed it. But yeah, you can make it all bright and do stuff, for sure.

Mads: Yeah. I want to just -- because I don't know if this is true -- but I get the impression that mushrooms don't like light. So I'm going to try to scare it away with a bright light.

Fay Onyx: OK. So let's see, we could either make that sort of a intimidation, or if you're going based on kind of your knowledge of nature, you could go with that.

Mads: I would like to try nature, because ...

Fay Onyx: OK.

Mads: That's my skill.

[Music fades out.]

Fay Onyx: Sure. You're going to try to make this behave in an aggressive manner, as best you know how from your knowledge of animated funguses.

Mads: [laughs]

Fay Onyx: All right. Give me a roll.

Mads: All right.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Mads: Oof. That's a no.

[Tense, energetic track featuring a variety of instruments begins playing.]

Fay Onyx: Oh, dear. Yeah. So this one doesn't seem like it cares about light at all. It's just going for animals. And it's clearly coming after the two of you. And I'm going to say that you've been focusing on trying to get the lantern to kind of scare it, so you're falling behind a bit, and you are now close to it. So I'm going to have you roll your physical defense to dodge this thing as it comes after you.

Mads: Yes. All righty.

[Dice shaking noise.]

Mads: [laughs] No! Is that a no on that one too?

Fay Onyx: Another failure?

Mads: Yeah. Completely.

Fay Onyx: Oh, my. OK. Well, yeah. It's got a stinger and it's going to stab it right into you, your nice soft jelly-ness. You try to dodge out of the way, but this thing is fast.

[Sound of slime being punctured.]

Fay Onyx: And you're going to take one injury. So that's a -- it's a moderate injury, so it will affect one category of skills. So it could either affect your knowledge skills, your social skills, your perception skills, combat skills, strength skills, or dexterity skills. Is there one set that you think this injury might affect you?

Mads: I'm thinking since it's physically injecting spores into me, it's going to affect my dexterity skills.

Fay Onyx: OK.

Mads: And I maybe won't be able to move the same way.

Fay Onyx: Sure. So until you're healed from this injury, you are going to take a one die penalty to dexterity skills with this injury.

Mads: OK.

Fay Onyx: OK. So at this point, what is Arey doing?

Rev: So I think they notice that Bob is not there.

Fay Onyx: Yeah.

Rev: And I will turn around. So the scene back there is Bob being stabbed by this fungus with this enormous tail?

Fay Onyx: Yup.

Rev: Um, I want to try to use, um, Supernatural Warrior again. And I'm going to try to pin part of it to the ground. So at least when Bob gets free, it won't be able to pursue.

Fay Onyx: Perfect. Absolutely.

Rev: And I think that because this -- like I see that, "Oh, no. Bob has been stabbed." I'm actually going to take a moment to line this shot up to try to prepare myself for it.

Fay Onyx: So I will say that if you're really spending some time focusing, if there's not a quick action you can take, if it's like you're going to spend time, that does mean it will get a chance to attack Bob again before you are able to shoot it.

Rev: Oh, OK. No, I wouldn't risk it. I would just fire from the hip, then.

Fay Onyx: OK.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Rev: I think I'm going to use one of my points for Trick Archery.

Fay Onyx: Sure. Absolutely.

Rev: Three times a day, I can reroll. And I think I'm going to do that.

Fay Onyx: Absolutely. Go for it. You're an amazing archer. You got this.

Rev: OK. The exact opposite result: two successes.

Fay Onyx: Beautiful. So you ... So here, tell me what it looks like. You're definitely pinning this thing to the ground.

Rev: So I'm imagining that it's got this ... You know, it's scuttling along the ground with this huge tail. And that when it's got Bob stabbed, that part of it is low to the ground because Bob is pretty low to the ground.

Fay Onyx: Yeah. There's also tree trunks, too. Yeah.

Rev: Yeah. And this arrow comes, it glows and comes firing through, and pins part of the tail to the ground. You know, pulling it a little bit out of Bob.

[The sound of a bow being fired and an arrow whooshing through the air.]

Fay Onyx: Absolutely. Yeah. It's pinned. Who knows how long that's going to last. But for this moment, it is pinned. What do you two do?

Rev (as Arey): I'm not sure if we should be destroying anything in here. I would hate to destroy something that's someone's life's work, but we also should not be destroyed, ourselves.

Mads (as Bob): I ... We should -- we should run. I should have been running.

[Tense music stops playing.]

Fay Onyx: All right. So does that mean you two are running?

Rev: I will wait for Bob to catch up, but then I will go as well.

Fay Onyx: I'm going to say that since it's pinned to the ground that you two can just run away. You did use your Supernatural Warrior, so that means that you can do -- like, it is pinned. It is a really good pin. More than what a normal arrow could actually do. So you two can run out. Here, what's Nikau doing at this point?

Robin: So Nikau was preparing to do something until ... He was going to drop something on it, and then the arrow pinned it,

so. Seeing his friends run, Nikau will continue flying forward and just kind of pop up near, like, above them, once they're sort of safer distance, I guess.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. OK, so ... You all emerge into the center of the garden.

[Calm, cheerful music begins to play.]

Fay Onyx: There's a bunch of different paths converging, here. In the middle, there's a small house that is built low to the ground. Its gently sloping roof merges into the garden around it. On top of the roof is an exuberantly overflowing vegetable garden. Surrounding the house is a ring of lumpy bushes that have overgrown the path. So the paths basically are going through this ring of bushes, and they're kind of converging on this house. Also, there is a -- actually a whole little grove of these golden apple trees, but none of you feel compelled to interact with it. It's like you've already interacted with one and you're now, like, more prepared for its magic.

Mads (as Bob): That apple did make me feel really good, last time I ate it.

Fay Onyx: Mmhmm. It did feel good.

Mads (as Bob): And I'm feeling kind of bad right now.

Fay Onyx: Yes, you are.

Rev (as Arey): I must say, Bob. You are looking a little more opaque than before.

Mads (as Bob): Yeah, I'm not used to having this many things inside of me.

Mads: I think I want to eat an apple.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. All right. So you eat an apple. It also tastes amazing. And yeah, you're healed.

Mads: Oh! Yes!

Fay Onyx: Yeah. You know? Now that you think of it ... Did you -- I can't remember -- did you do a knowledge check on what these apples are?

Mads: No, I didn't. I think I failed.

Fay Onyx: Why don't you go ahead and roll then, and see what you remember about these things?

[Dice rolling noise.]

Mads: That's two successes.

Fay Onyx: Two? Oh, yeah. You know, now that you think about it, now that you've experienced the healing for yourself, these gotta be what they call discord apples. They have a very strong magic compulsion. But the main thing is like, yeah, the apples are very healing. They're delicious. You know, if you have an apple tree, it's totally fine. The main danger is if the apple gets taken away from the tree and then multiple people are enchanted by it and they really want it and people start fighting over them. But as long as you're next to the apple tree, you're good. The only downside is you're stuck carrying around apple cores until you can find the exact right soil conditions it wants for them to be planted. So ... But yeah. Since you're literally carrying things inside you, you can put another apple core inside you.

Mads: Yeah. [chuckles] I'll just add it to the list.

[Sound of slime absorbing an object.]

Fay Onyx: OK.

Robin: Seeing the vegetable garden, Nikau is going to fly to that and just start sort of looking around curiously.

Fay Onyx: OK. Are you being stealthy or obvious?

Robin: Um, I think probably obvious. He's letting curiosity overwhelm him right now.

Fay Onyx: Sure. So what I'm going to say is that Nikau, from the top of the house, you can actually -- it's not that tall of a house, but it's still kind of a clear-ish zone around it. And you can actually see into different parts of the garden. And you can see that across the way from where you've been exploring is a zone that is really strange looking. It's kind of like bare rock. But then there's these little pockets of plants that have totally different things in them. So there's like this kind of nothing growing, and then there's this little circle and there's this beautiful blue crystalline tree. And then there is kind of a barren space, and then there's like maybe a short, constantly on fire shrub, for example. And you can actually see in that area, there are four people that are all doing

something. So the tallest person is about six feet tall and they're sort of ... They look like a bunch of vines that are all entwining, and they're like a plant person. And there's another person that is ... It basically is like a crab that's very large. So like maybe like five feet tall. Big, big crab -- but it's made out of plants. So instead of crab legs, it's roots. And the center of the body is just like a bunch of leaves. And that's what you can see from this angle. And you can also see a dwarf. And then, most interestingly, hovering in the air, you can see a person that is attached to -- basically, imagine a jetpack crossed with a hot air balloon. But made out of plants.

Robin: Uh ...

Fay Onyx: [laughs] So it's kind of like a cluster of little balloons attached to kind of like this basket-like harness thing, that a person is then strapped into.

Robin: OK. Um ...

Fay Onyx: But made out of plants. So they're all like green little pods.

Robin: Right.

Fay Onyx: So I'm going to just say that there's a person strapped onto the front of that who is -- it's like kind of like a hover backpack -- and you see that person is about two feet tall. They've got dark skin, dark hair. And all of these people are busy around ... They're busily working around this tree that is like a small pine tree, but it's like glowing bright red. And they're all busy doing something to it.

Robin: OK, so the person strapped to the little planty hovercraft matches the description we've gotten of Juniper?

Fay Onyx: Absolutely.

Robin: OK.

Robin (as Nikau): Bob, Arey, I think they're -- I think they're up ahead.

Robin: And I'll point with my wing in that direction.

Rev (as Arey): Oh good. Well, let us head in their direction.

Fay Onyx: So quick question: how are people getting to going in that direction? Are you going through the ring of bushes, around the house, and then down the next path? Or are you trying to do something more circuitous?

Rev: Do I think that I might be able to climb over the bush?

Fay Onyx: So basically what's happening is there's ... These pathways all go through this ring of bushes, but the bushes are very overgrown. So you could try to climb over them. You could try to push through them, if you're going to follow the pathways.

Mads: Can I use my malleable form to just --

Fay Onyx: Sure you can.

Mads: Squeeze my way through them?

Fay Onyx: I'd say that with how malleable your form is, you could potentially ... You'll definitely be able to get through this whole. Now, getting through without touching the bushes will require a roll. Or you could just go through, and not worry about touching the bushes.

Mads: Yeah, I think I will go back to blob form, and I'll just roll on through.

Fay Onyx: OK. OK. Cool, cool, cool. And what's Arey doing? And I presume Nikau's flying?

Robin: Yeah. Any opportunity where I can fly is what I'm doing.

Fay Onyx: OK. You don't have to worry about the bushes. What's Arey doing?

Rev: Um, I think I am trying to ... To use my mobility to try to avoid touching anything, because we haven't encountered a plant here yet that has liked us. So just on the off chance that these things are hungry as well ...

Fay Onyx: Aww, the discord apples loved you!

Rev: Yeah, that -- well, that's fair.

All: [laugh]

Fay Onyx: OK, cool. So I'll have you roll your mobility to see if you can make it through these without touching them too much.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Rev: OK. One success.

Fay Onyx: OK, cool. So here's what happens. So as Bob goes through -- Bob's super malleable. Just touches them a tiny bit, not much. Where Bob touches them, they start to glow just a tiny bit, just on the areas where Bob touched them. And as you go through them, you don't do anything too -- you don't damage them too much, but you do touch them a bit. And where you touch them, they start to glow. And there's a very soft sound that starts to come out of them. And just a single bush lights up and makes this [siren noise] alarm sound. And it's kind of like a very awkward, fluffy, lumpy dog. It's kind of going after you.

[Sounds of bush moving (rhythmically hitting the ground with occasional loud rustles) begin to play over the music.]

Rev: Oh.

Fay Onyx: Just the one bush.

Rev: Yes.

Fay Onyx: Just the one bush. So I'm going to just say that that happened just as you were exiting towards this area where all the people are. So you have a single bush going after you.

Rev: Oh, gosh. I think that I keep, like, run in the direction that Nikau indicated that the people were at, with kind of my hands and my bow in the air. Just like ...

Rev (as Arey): Hi. We were sent here. We were looking for you. But I think there is a giant bush dog chasing me.

Fay Onyx: Absolutely. OK, so you're just going to run up to the people?

Rev: Yeah. And hope that ...

[Bush moving sounds end.]

Fay Onyx: OK. So when you approach ... Everyone -- the four people -- seem really engrossed in whatever's happening to

this. And then they all quickly turn, they see you, they see the bush. And then the person you believe to be Juniper says to someone ...

Fay (as Juniper): Plip, go deal with this.

Fay Onyx: And the crab-like entity turns around to come face you. And you can now see that their face/middle is this kind of giant red pitcher plant sort of thing? With these two little eye stalks on either side, with these little beady black eyes. And this person comes over to you, and they look a little flustered. They're like ...

Fay (as Plip): Oh! Oh, goodness. Oh, goodness. Who are you? What is this?

Rev (as Arey): Hello, my name is Arey, and I'm here with my companions, Bob and Nikau. We were sent here to bring you something to look at. We were -- we were sent by The Crossroad? The Crossroad Observer.

Fay (as Plip): Oh! The, the -- oh yes. Lamp stones. Yes. The Stewards. Yes, yes. Oh. Oh dear. You couldn't have chosen a

worse time to come, though. We're transplanting the lava pine. If that goes wrong ... Oh, that would be bad. That would be bad. OK, OK.

[Bush rustling sounds begin to play over the music, with a rustle occurring every few seconds.]

Fay Onyx: And then it looks at the bush that is, I think at this point, caught up to you because you're standing.

Rev: Uh-huh.

Fay Onyx: And it's trying to kind of like, jump on you. But there's only one of it and you're really dense, so it's just kind of jumping at you. And it's going to say -- it's going to say ...

Fay (as Plip): Walter! Walter, stop! Stop.

Fay Onyx: And then the bush kind of sits down, like a dog.

[Bush rustling sounds end.]

Fay (as Plip): OK. Um, OK. Oh, this is -- this is not good timing. OK, so ... Oh. See, it's almost midday, and in order to

do the analysis we need to get a flower from the tree of eternal sleep. But it has to be picked right after it opens, but we're not going to be done transplanting the lava pine for at least another hour. We might have to wait till tomorrow if we can't get a flower.

Rev (as Arey): Oh. Um, is there any way that either we could help with the transplant, or we could go get the flower? Because our office building was ransacked. This may not be safe for that much longer.

Fay (as Plip): Oh, poachers. Oh ... Oh, oh, oh. OK. Um, uh ... I think

Fay Onyx: And Plip looks back at the group of people, and is like ...

Fay (as Plip): OK. Uh, you know, they're still kind of working on getting the last two roots, like, adjusted before we move it, so ... OK, OK. Follow me right -- right this way.

Fay Onyx: And so Plip kind of charges off down one of the little paths, and are the three of you coming after them?

Mads: Yes.

Robin: Yep. I am.

Rev: Yeah.

[Music changes to a smooth, low-pitched, eerie track.]

Fay Onyx: OK, so they're charging off down this path. So Plip leads you to a rocky desert area where there is a large tree. Its dark green branches spread over hardened ground that is strewn with pale yellow rocks. Anyone who looks closely at the rocks, though, notices a number of animal skulls and bones scattered among them. In the branches of the tree, fleshy red flowers bloom. So as soon as Plip gets you there, Plip's going to point and say ...

Fay (as Plip): OK, so we need a flower that has just opened. So thing is, tree of eternal sleep -- I don't know if you know this one -- it makes everybody fall asleep. So you gotta be real careful because you won't ever wake up if you ... I mean, we could probably try to get someone to drag you out, but you won't have gotten the flower. Anyway, don't fall asleep.

You have to pick a flower within a minute of it opening. So you got to just wait. And then when you see it, you got to go. Just don't all get stuck asleep, OK? I got -- I got to go. I got to go.

Fay Onyx: And so then Plip runs off, leaving you next to this creepy sleep tree.

Rev: I think with that word vomit that came from Plip, like as they run away, Arey just slowly turns their head and wide eye watches him run back down the path.

Fay Onyx: Yeah, they're moving quite quickly, because they're trying to ... Yeah, they're really concerned about the lava pine.

Rev (as Arey): Did they just say fall asleep forever?

Mads (as Bob): They did. But now we know what made those weird stabby footprints, so.

Robin: Nikau just lands next to you two, and goes ...

Robin (as Nikau): I'll be honest, guys. Not a fan of this tree.

Fay Onyx: [laughs]

Robin (as Nikau): It spooked me.

Rev (as Arey): Yeah, I was asleep for a very long time before I was awake, and I would hate to be asleep forever again.

Fay Onyx: I am going to say that if Bob wants to think back on their nature history, they can see if they remember much about this tree.

Mads: Yeah, I would like to do that. It seems important.

Fay Onyx: You do know what it's called. So I'm going to say you're prepared for this.

Mads: So am I going in with three dice?

Fay Onyx: Yeah.

Mads: Yeah. OK.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Mads: Ooh! All successes!

Fay Onyx: Ooh. OK, you know all of the things. That's really cool. So yeah, this is a tree that is a prominent, extremely

dangerous tree. So you've learned a lot about it. It is a desert tree. And basically what it does is to avoid getting eaten by herbivores, six feet out from its outer branches, there is a zone where it casts this kind of sleep-inducing magic. And basically the main issue is if a person or animal is alone and they fall asleep underneath it, they won't ever wake up. But you can actually drag people out of its magic sleep zone, and they will wake up at that point. The main hazard is if you're, say, climbing it and you suddenly fall asleep, that could be dangerous. You wouldn't be able to fall correctly. And also, if everyone were to fall asleep and no one remember to look for them ... Not as likely in this situation, but that could be very deadly. Because once you're asleep, it doesn't ever stop while you're in its space. Though interestingly, you also remember that how its flowers work -- because it needs pollinators. So it actually has a nectar that's a stimulant in its flowers, and that the effect of the stimulant lasts for a long time. So the pollinators can come in and pollinate it without succumbing to its sleep. So you know that any fruit or flowers

from it will act as stimulants, while the rest of it creates this magic sleep zone.

Mads: Interesting.

Robin: Hmm.

Mads: Are there any fruit growing on it right now?

Fay Onyx: You know what? I'm going to say there are a couple of fruits on it. Yeah. It's actually kind of similar to a fig tree. I don't know if fig trees have flowers and fruit at the same time, but this tree does.

All: [laugh]

Fay Onyx: So it kind of has a fairly perpetual flowers and fruit situation. So you know that a lot of people who professionally harvest them, they'll get like a fruit and take little bits, and then they can use that.

Mads: OK. Cool, cool. Bob is going to turn to the other two and be like ...

[Music fades out.]

Mads (as Bob): I've got some good news. Yes, this is a very dangerous and gross tree. But if we eat some of that fruit, we won't fall asleep.

Robin (as Nikau): OK. Here's a thought, then.

[Playful track, featuring what sounds like a marimba or xylophone, starts playing. This is the same music that played when Arey tripped over the invisible grass.]

Mads (as Bob): Mmhmm.

Robin (as Nikau): I will fly and grab fruit, hopefully quickly enough to not get put to sleep, and bring back the fruit. Failing that, I hope one of you will drag me out of the zone and not fall asleep in the process.

Rev: I will actually get into my bag and pull out my rope.

Fay Onyx: [in a whisper] Yes.

Robin (as Nikau): This is ...

Rev (as Arey): Would you like to tie this around your leg?

Robin (as Nikau): ...I wouldn't like to, but it does seem like a wise choice. So I will do it.

All: [laugh]

Robin: So I'll tie the rope around my leg so that they can hold on to it.

[Ethereal droning notes begin playing over the marimba/xylophone.]

Fay Onyx: Is that the leg holding the apple core?

Robin: Yes.

Fay Onyx: It's permanently balled up into a little foot fist.

Robin: Yeah. Still holding tight to that apple core.

Fay Onyx: [laughs] Yup.

Robin: And I will ... Can I make ... Would it be manual dexterity or just flying, to fly in and grab that fruit before --

Fay Onyx: I would say that it's up to you how you want to do it. So if you want to do like a really flying focused thing, you could do that. If you want to kind of focus on the kind

of being able to snatch it without slowing down, then you could do manual dexterity.

Robin: OK. Then I'm going to go manual dexterity.

Fay Onyx: Sure. Absolutely.

Robin: And I'll go ahead and use my Dexterous again.

Fay Onyx: Absolutely. Cool.

Robin: So three dice. Good. I needed three. OK, so that's two successes.

Fay Onyx: Oh great. Yeah, so ... You know what? I'm going to have you very quickly roll your magical defense while you're doing this.

Robin: That's fair.

Fay Onyx: To see how fast it affects you.

Robin: Probably very fast. Uh, it meets, and ... Yeah, no. No successes on that.

[Playful track is replaced by fast, lively piano music. This is the same piece that played when Bob tripped over the invisible grass.]

Fay Onyx: OK. So basically what happens is you're like so fast in your -- you grabbing this with your beak or your claw?

Robin: Beak, in this instance.

Fay Onyx: You're grabbing this in your beak. You are so good with your beak, and you do this so fast. And you're actually like falling asleep as you're flying. So you kind of like ... And you slant your angle down, so you kind of like tumble to the ground in the last few feet of flying.

[Sound of a fairly light feathered being hitting the ground.]

Fay Onyx: And you kind of just roll out of the zone of the tree. And your beak is clutching a fig. And you are briefly asleep on the ground ...

All: [laugh]

Fay Onyx: With an apple core in one foot.

Rev (as Arey): Oh, look at that.

Fay Onyx: With a rope.

Rev (as Arey): He's all tuckered out.

All: [laugh]

Robin: [chuckles] I worked very hard today. I deserve this nap.

Fay Onyx: Napping on the ground with the fig.

Robin: [chuckles]

Fay Onyx: That's amazing. OK. So you're pretty much there.

You got yourself the fig. So I'm going to just have you all roll your Perception to see how good you are at figuring out when this flower is going to happen.

[Dice rolling noises.]

Robin: I'm still snoozing. [laughs] It's not happening for Nikau.

Fay Onyx: Yeah. So you're just barely outside the zone, but you are asleep. So unless someone wakes you up ... I mean, you would wake up after the standard length of a nap --

Robin: Mmhmm.

Fay Onyx: But you are asleep.

Robin: Yeah.

Rev: I got one success.

Fay Onyx: OK.

Mads: I got two successes.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. OK, so --

Rev: But honestly, I probably would be focused on waking up Nikau. Because I think even with this fruit, Arey's a little hesitant to go anywhere near this tree. Because if they fall asleep, they don't think anyone would be able to drag them back.

Mads: [laughs] Oh, no!

Fay Onyx: Yeah. Yeah, that is an issue. That is an issue. You're very heavy. That would make it very hard. OK. So while the two of you are busy dealing with that situation and

waking Nikau up, Bob's looking at the tree. And yeah, there is a flower that's opening right now.

Mads: Oh yeah. I'm like vaguely worried about falling asleep, but also this is a weird tree, and I want to know more.

Fay Onyx: Sure.

Mads: So I am ready.

Fay Onyx: OK. So what's Bob do -- what are you all doing? The flower's opening right now. And it's opening -- it's not like a super, like, slow opening. This is opening in a, "You can see it opening" time scale, as befits a magic tree.

Mads: Um, yeah. I think I'm trying to climb up there as fast as I can and grab it.

Fay Onyx: OK. Are you taking any of the fruit?

Mads: Oh, yes. I would like to take a bite of the fruit before I go.

Fay Onyx: Awesome.

Mads: Which feels, like, really mean. To just like ... Nikau knocked out, just take the fruit from them ...

All: [laugh]

Robin: Just gently pulling it out of my beak.

Mads: Just like, "I need this. Thank you."

Fay Onyx: OK. All right. So you've absorbed a bite of this stimulant fruit. All right. What are you doing? It's -- the flower's up there in the branches, opening right now.

Mads: I guess I will take a humanoid form again, so I actually have hands and feet to climb with.

Fay Onyx: Sure. Well, sounding like you're climbing in the kind of traditional climbing way, so I'm going to say that's a Climbing skill roll.

Mads: Ooh, I don't have Climbing.

Fay Onyx: That means you got one die for effort.

Robin: Oof. Oof.

Rev: Can I ... Can I pitch you on a help out?

Fay Onyx: You definitely can help. So how do you want to help?

Rev: Um, putting some arrows into the tree, so that Bob has handholds.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. That would be perfect. So I'm going to have you roll your ranged combat to go ahead and do that.

Rev: One success.

Fay Onyx: OK. So the arrows aren't as deep into the -- you don't want to hurt the tree too much. Obviously, this is an important tree. You do want to get them super deep in, so they're a little shaky.

[Sound of five arrows whistling through the air and hitting the tree, one after another.]

Fay Onyx: But like, yeah, there's a few handholds there for Bob. Let's see how good Bob is at climbing.

Mads: All righty. So here goes the one die.

Fay Onyx: You get two, now. Because you got the help.

Mads: Oh, yeah. OK, cool.

Fay Onyx: Yeah.

[Dice rolling noise.]

Mads: Oh ... So, I failed.

Fay Onyx: Oh, no!

Robin: Oh, no!

Fay Onyx: Yeah. You know, the thing is ... Arrows are great, and it totally would have worked probably for like ... Like somebody who wasn't a blob. But like ...

Robin: Oh, no.

Fay Onyx: The arrows are really skinny shafts, and they're not that solid in the tree. And you're just kind of sliding back down the ladder.

Mads: Oh, no!

Fay Onyx: You're not feeling sleepy. But you try to -- you start to go up the ladder, and you're kind of just sliding back down. The arrows just are too skinny.

[Sound of slime sliding.]

Fay Onyx: And you're at the trunk of the tree.

Mads: Oh, no. Um, Bob's going to call out to Arey and Nikau, then. And be like ...

Mads (as Bob): I can't get up the tree. We got to get the flower. Someone else has to go.

Rev: I'm gonna turn and look at Nikau.

Robin (as Nikau): [groggy waking up sounds]

Rev (as Arey): Um, there's a little bit of a fig left in your mouth. You should swallow it, and see if you can get that flower.

Robin: Munches on the fig and goes to get that flower.

Fay Onyx: OK. So do you know which flower it is?

Robin: Oh gosh, um ...

All: [laugh]

Fay Onyx: So it's, at this point, has just finished opening. So you can fly over. You're fine on the sleep front -- not going to fall asleep again for a while. But you don't actually know which flower this was.

Robin (as Nikau): Uh, which one is it again?

Mads: Can I help? Yeah. Can I point it out?

Fay Onyx: Yeah. So Bob can try to point it out. So how are you two trying to communicate this? What's Nikau doing? Because there's a bunch of flowers in this tree.

Robin: I'm basically flapping like, near one, and if I don't see a reaction from Bob, then I move to the next one.

Fay Onyx: OK, cool. So we'll just have you roll your Flying skill to see how well you can do this sort of hovering thing.

Robin: Sure. I'm also going to use my last Dexterity for the day.

Fay Onyx: Sure.

[A series of quiet clicks is heard as Robin uses a dice rolling program.]

Robin: That's two successes.

Fay Onyx: Ok, cool. Yeah, so you're so awake right now. And you feel so alert. And yeah, like, you're trying to sort of hover, and you're like looking at Bob. And you're trying to like, "Is it this flower? This flower? This flower?" And yeah. You're able to get that flower, like, pretty quickly -- within the time. And you got that flower.

[Piano music ends, and a cheerful yet relaxed track featuring a variety of instruments begins to play.]

So maybe about an hour later they have completed their transplanted process for this lava tree. And you get to meet all of these people, and you've got the flower. And so Juniper, she takes the lamp stone and she scrapes off a portion of it, and she adds a drop of this nectar to the scraped off little sample bit. And she basically explains that in deserts, people historically were using the flashing stone cactus extract with this nectar from this very dangerous tree to

create lighting. So when the nectar drop goes onto the sample, it starts glowing more brightly, and it stops flickering. And that is clear evidence that a significant amount of flashing stone cactus extract is in this ... In this lamp stone.

So you have conclusive proof from someone who is an expert -- specifically in these. And she actually leaves the garden with you to make a report at the newspaper, and then start the legal process for seeing if you can all prosecute the Stewards for using illegally harvested plants. Which will change ... basically, a lot of communities won't buy things from people who are engaged in buying and selling illegally harvested plants. So it will significantly change the situation.

Hooray, you did it!

All: [cheer]

Fay Onyx: Cool. Well, thank you all for doing this. I've been looking forward to this for a long time. I hope you enjoyed my weird plants.

Mads: Yeah.

Robin: It was a lot of fun.

Rev: Yes.

Fay Onyx: Awesome. Yeah, making these plants was so much fun. If you want to just say, like, where people can find you? I'm sure all of you have amazing projects that people can check out.

Mads: Yeah, I can -- I can go first. So ...

Fay Onyx: Awesome.

Mads: I am Mads Upton, again. You can find me on any social media stuff at @MadsUpToNoGood.

Fay Onyx: Oh, that's good.

Mads: I ... Thank you. [laughs] Um ... The main things I do is I am a writer for some podcasts that are currently in production. One is **Pastamancy & Other Accidental Magic**, which is about some witches and some of the hijinks they get up to. And also a new one called **Heroes of Another Kind**, which is about some sad superheroes doing things.

Fay Onyx: Awesome.

Mads: And you can hear me voice act in things. And I did a bunch of stuff for International Podcast Month last month, as well -- last year.

Fay Onyx: Awesome.

Robin: I'm Robin. You can find me on Twitter at @Lobster_Writer. And then my other podcasts are, I do a podcast with one of my best friends called Not Joanna Eggs, where we review sort of underappreciated animated films. And then my other podcast -- just started up recently -- is called Tabletop Buffoonery, in which I drag my friends, sort of kicking and screaming, through the world of DnD.

All: [chuckle]

Rev: And I am Rev, and you can find me on Twitter at @RevDeschain. And I am the host and GM of The Critshow, which is an actual play podcast where we play Monster of the Week in the first season. And then as the seasons go on, they discover they have to go to other dimensions to get the

things they need to defeat their big bad. And so each dimension they go to is a different Powered by the Apocalypse game.

Fay Onyx: Ooh, super cool.

Mads: Yo.

Rev: We teach you the games as we go through. And then we also make Let's Plays for smaller independent games and companies as they launch their Kickstarters or release their games. So you can find all of that at thecritshowpodcast.com.

Fay Onyx: Super Cool. And I'm Fay Onyx, and I'm the creator of Magic Goes Awry, which is kind of in its beta form right now. And I'm hoping to release some of the cool plants and maybe kind of the outline of this adventure with this. And I have a podcast called Writing Alchemy that has ... Right now what we're focusing on is a series of adventures that all feature characters with disabilities, played by people with disabilities. Creating stories that basically have realistically portrayed disabled characters. So those are my main projects. And yeah, I hope that you all enjoyed this adventure and that

you all enjoyed listening. And enjoy the rest of International Podcast Month. Do we all want to say goodbye together?

Robin: Uh ...

Mads: Yeah.

Robin: We can try.

Rev: Yeah.

Fay Onyx: OK. I'll do a countdown, OK? Three, two, one ...

All: [slightly out of sync] Bye!

Fay Onyx: [laughs] OK. That's going to be funny.

GAME

CREDITS

[Music changes to a slow, mellow, jazzy track.]

Fay Onyx: Audio editing and sound design were done by me,

Fay Onyx. Because I forgot to give my links when I was

talking earlier, I'm going to give them now. You find me on

twitter at @ Writing underscore Alchemy and you can find all of my work at Writing Alchemy dot net, where you can also find a wide range of resources, including accessibility resources for tabletop role-playing games.

Transcription was done by the wonderful folks at Critshow Studios, and the music and sound effect descriptions were added by the amazing Larcie. Most of the music was from Kevin MacLeod at incompetech.com, the other artists can be found at Free Music Archive dot org. Sound effects were from Free Sound dot org. Detailed music and sound effect credits can be found in the show notes, along with links to the extras, which include character sheets and plant descriptions, links to our game system, Magic Goes Awry, and links to everyone's social media and all the awesome podcast projects that were mentioned here.