



The Dragon's Gambit

Screenplay by: DL Morris

"When a world breaking glitch traps his friend in a fantasy land, Imreoir must embark on a quest to save everything, but this game may be more than they can handle."



OHIO, USA

DLINEAR DECA TEF R0DD IABERT

EXT. STREETS OF APPLEPINE - NIGHT

NOTE: at no point do we actually have on camera a character pick up or put down anything, and they never open and close doors on screen

It is a cold and rainy night. The streets are empty. A few torches flicker barely casting any light further than a few meters away.

A lone traveler, IMREOIR (M, 'Dark Elf'/irish) 30's, dressed in dark leathers and a hooded cloak, walks down the street, heedless of the rain. He approaches the tavern in the middle of the town, despite shades being drawn, light still emanates from the windows and the torches on both sides of the door glow a bright but not harsh orange. Despite clearly having been light long ago, there is no smoke, or the blackening it should have caused, the light casts perfect circles.[Maeve needs to be more antagonistic to Imreoir in the first acts, only softening at the ogre fight as its clear he cant change her life too much]

IMREOIR (V.O)

(Quiet and muffled as if through bad radio) have you figured out what 'unspecified error' means?

VOICE (V.O)

(quiet and muffled as if through bad radio) it still means we have to get eyes on target before we risk mucking it up more.

Imreoir pauses for a moment, standing back to the camera, a faint blue/white glow momentarily illuminates his front before he crosses the street to approach the door. This shall be referred to as 'devkit tools'

He starts to the tavern

VOICE (V.O.)

(quiet and muffled as if through bad radio) Remember this is a pre alpha build, things are bound to be a little chaotic, not even Bethesda would release it in this state.

CUT TO:

INT. PINE HOLLOW TAVERN - NIGHT

Imreoir stands in front of the closed door in the middle of a puddle, yet he is not dripping, he is strangely already dry. The floor is worn wooden planks.

Hood still up, he takes in the carnival-like atmosphere unnoticed.

Representatives from many races, HUMAN, ELF, ORC, BEAST/WERE FOLK, LIZARD FOLK, ECT are all present, each has appropriate food and sized chairs.

Imreoir strolls around checking various people with his devkit

NPC 1

Wonderful weather, I love it when the sun is shining...

IMREOIR

Sure...

He turns away still looking for his friend, paying as little attention to the NPC's as possible, the NPC turns to another NPC

NPC 1 (CONT'D)

...My garlic crops have really been coming in great this year...

NPC 2

Have you talked with Konstance lately, she's the one that sells the apples...

NPC 1

Ugh I can't stand dark elves, always so sneaky...

NPC 2

That's why I shoot on sight, none of those kind will get near me...

IMREOIR

Ugh, where can he be? What avatar is he using? Ugh, these readings are so garbled, like his code is...

Noting a space at the bar he strides over, not not dripping. [expand with more activity, things Imreoir can do that others cant, some only Igrok can see, NPCs ignore out of place things, but Igrok who can see and understand, refuses to abandon the fantasy, investigates things and is accused of trying to steal before approaching barbaid] make clear that Imreoir is a dark elf and dark elves are considered untrustworthy, when he bumps into NPCs they start a convo with him, if he walks away they continue as is or turn to another NPC to have the same convo

IMREOIR

How's the mead tonight?

BARMAID

Warm and plentiful, Traveler. We don't get many Dark Elves...

A flagon is already in front of him, he continues to look around.

BARMAID (CONT'D)

Can I offer you some fresh stew, vegetarian?

IMREOIR

What, no quest?

BARMAID

Traveler?

IMREOIR

Never mind, I'm looking for a friend...

BARMAID

You'll find plenty tonight...

IMREOIR

Perhaps you know him, goes by the name Igrok Stal'
Shest'devyat?

She shrugs and inclines her chin to the back corner.

BARMAID

(smiling broadly) That crazy orc is always in and out, but he happens to be in tonight. Ask him about the beast of burgundy, or oh, the raid of Flame Piit Keep, he loves telling that story.

IMREOIR

So he's an orc, figures.

He starts off to the back corner, not carrying his mead, heedless of the Barmaid asking if he really knows Igrok.

Despite the tavern being crowded, there is a clear path to the table with Igrok, there are few people are walking around, when they do, it is very deliberate and short, some bump in to others, some step out of the way, some are pushed with out taking a step. Imreoir Bumps into a few patrons and they start talking as if he is their best friend, one takes a deliberate step, completely oblivious to Imreoir, who is moved despite not taking a step, now the NPC talks to him as if that was the point of taking a step.

NPC A

...They say you can't trust a dark elf...

IMREOIR

Is that so?

NPC A

My brother was killed by one, I will never trust a dark elf again.

IMREOIR

They also say dark elves like to steal the shirt off your back.

NPC A

That's true, got to keep your pockets sealed around them...

Imreoir activates his devkit and the NPC is suddenly shirtless.

He steps passed the NPC to continue to Igrok, the NPC turns to another NPC

NPC A

...It's been chilly, friend.

NPC B

Have you talked with Konstance lately, she's the one that sells the apples...

IMREOIR

So lame, no wonder we didn't give you a name.

Imreoir finally makes it to the table in front of Igrok.

IGROK (M, orcish barbarian, presents as russian) is seated behind a long table with many people seated and standing around him enjoying the party. As crowded as it is, there is a spot right in front of him ready for the approach of a stranger, and there is plenty of room for him to get up and leave, despite others being blocked in.

There is a dizzying array of folk, from all races. Two notable women seated next to Igrok are KATRINA, (F, 30's, presents as spanish) bard, and MAEVE (F, lizard folk presents as french) mage. [needs more subtle talk of igrok knows what he is]

IMREOIR

Brat, eto byl dolgiy sezon, ty gotov nazvat' eto igroy?
(‘Brother it’s been a long season, might you be ready to call it a game?’ in russian)

IGROK

Davno ya ne slyshal rodnoy yazyk, ya tebya ne uznayu,
kakiye priklyucheniya u nas byli?
(‘Been a long time since I heard the mother tongue, I don’t recognize you, what adventures have we shared?’ in russian)

PARTY GOER

You speak orc? What did he say, Igrok?

IGROK

Perhaps we stick to common, Da? How can I help you, weary traveler? And what of this game you speak?

IMREOIR

I’m here to rescue...

IGROK

Another brave adventure seeks to join our quest to save the princess! Ura!

IMREOIR

(defeated) Sure, let’s save the princess, that’s not cliché at all, Dimitri. (under breath) Shíl mé go raibh a shamhlaíocht níos fearr ná sin. (I thought his imagination was better than that. in irish)

He takes a big swig of his mead that is now suddenly in his hand, they all toast to a new adventure.

KATRINA

¿Conoces a nuestro valiente líder del partido? (You know our brave party leader? In spanish) You must tell of your alte adventures, Lo hare immortalize them en canto!

Maeve takes an instant dislike to Imrreoir and sneers.

MAEVE

Cette fête est pleine, nous n'avons qu'une elf... (the party is full, we don't need an elf. In french) How do you know we can trust anything he says?

IGROK

Now, prekrasnyy Maeve, the Flame Piit Keep is dangerous. We will need all the help we can get. Khotya, Traveler, what skills do you offer? And why did you take that guy's shirt

MAEVE

What shirt? Tout ce qu'il a volé, je vais probablement le lui revendre plus tard. (Whatever he stole, probably going to sell it back to him later. In french)

Maeve is taken aback by him knowing her language.

IMREOIR

It's Imreoir, Grok, you helped me get that name, remember? And that's a good idea reselling the shirt, though I have the infinite wealth... Speaking of, we don't need them... (indicating the girl)

IGROK

Whoa, Brat, Thats not the team I play for.

IMREOIR

What? No, I mean Save your progress, come back later, we need to check your head....

IGROK

Yeah, we start the quest tomorrow, my head is fine where it is...

IMREOIR

What If I told you, this was an artificial world inside a computer, Dimitri?

IGROK

I'd ask what a computer is. Also, kto Dimitri?

MAEVE

You are a bit too friendly for a stranger, why gaslight a simple orc?

IGROK

Simple?

KATRINA

If simple is loving adventure with Groky, count me in!

IGROK

Spasibo, Kotenik... (thanks Kitten)

Imreoir activates his devkit, the floor turns into stone.

IMREOIR

What is the floor made of, Igrok?

IGROK

(shrugs) Oak, pine, mozh et byt'. Some kind of wood...

MAEVE

What kind of weird question is that? Its clearly flagstone, like its always been.

Igrok looks down, and frowns.

IGROK

Hunh, so it is... Thats right, from the quarry down the road...

IMREOIR (V.O.)

I ndáiríre? Cad eile is féidir liom a dhéanamh? Má athraíonn mé an iomarca go tapa beidh an baol ann go dtimpeallfaidh mé an tógáil... (Really? What else can I do? If I change too much too quickly I risk crashing the build... in irish)

Imreoir looks at Maeve then smiles, she is creeped out

IMREOIR

How about a nice escargot?

MAEVE

Tasty as that is, they don't serve that here.

Devkit is activated and a perfect plate of escargot is in front of Maeve

IMREOIR

(indicating the food) Do do you explain that?

MAEVE

Uh, I ordered it an hour ago...

Igrok looks at the plate in confusion, then back and forth between Maeve and Imreoir.

IMREOIR

Igrok, your inventory, you always have your two handed war ax that's as tall as you, you wear heavy orcish armor but your grieves are mithril. Ten healing potions, Maeve has that mana brew...

IGROK

How do you...

MAEVE

He's a dark elf, you know thief, of course he knows...

PARTY GOER

You can't trust those dark elves, always trying to sell their snake oil...

IMREOIR

(looks at the party goer) Really? Met any of them lately?

PARTY GOER

Oh, not likely stranger, you can't trust dark elves...

IMREOIR

Thank you, go away, skip out of this conversation...

The party goer turns to another NPC

PARTY GOER

Have you talked with Konstance lately, she's the one that sells the apples...

Light starts to flicker and dim, and NPCs start to glitch, one even noclips into a table. Igrok breaths hard for a second and shakes his head, things go back to normal

IMREOIR

Ceart go leor, níl ag éirí go maith leis seo. (okay, this is not going well. In irish) (pause) Are sure you don't remember me? Nothing seems out of the ordinary?

KATRINA

Nuestro Jefe has taken many great blows...

IMREOIR

That may be the answer, Caithfidh mé smaoineamh ar seo ('I'll have to think on this'). To remind you, I am a skilled shadow archer, and mechanist...

MAEVE

Alores perhaps we can avoid pièges, cette adventure.

IMREOIR

Muid Feicfidh. (We shall see. In irish)

INT. SLEEPING ROOM OF PINE HOLLOW TAVERN SECOND FLOOR - LATER THAT NIGHT

The medium sized room is full of closely packed beds, all of which are full, there are even a few sleeping soundly on the floor. The window in the back is open and Imreoir sits on the side of his bed near the window facing away from the door. A dull blue white glow barely illuminates him from his lap.

Even the sound of the door opening and closing does not disturb him.

After a moment the camera rotates to show Maeve standing in front of the door eyeing Imreoir through angry slit eyes. She watches for a moment, silently judging.

IMREOIR

...Yeah, I found him, (shakes head) Its worse than we thought.

VOICE (V.O)

(quiet and muffled as if through bad radio) We knew a direct jack was dangerous, be weary of dissociative breaks, it could be both of you trapped.

IMREOIR

How do I convince someone, probably with brain damage their world is fake?

VOICE (V.O.)

(quiet and muffled as if through bad radio) Fix the brain, reclock it...

IMREOIR

How, we don't have nootropics here?

VOICE (V.O.)

(quiet and muffled as if through bad radio) Introduce the right code...

IMREOIR

Tried, can't do it directly...

VOICE (V.O.)

(quiet and muffled as if through bad radio) And changing too much in run status could crash the... Wait, use the code that's there, the right potion, (beat) I'll work on a recipe and get it to you as quick as I can...

IMREOIR

The longer I'm in, the harder it is to...

VOICE (V.O.)

(quiet and muffled as if through bad radio) Then, you should move quickly...

MAEVE

Shouldn't you be holed up in a dark belfry waiting for the perfect shot?

Imreoir sit bolt upright, and deactivates the devkit

IMREOIR

I think you found the wrong room...

MAEVE

Shadow archers don't typically need scrying tools, unless they stole them. Are you looking for a fence? Maybe an exit strategy?

IMREOIR

Is that an offer, what will it take for you to walk away from the orc?

MAEVE

What will it take to get you to quit, leave us alone? I found the orc first, I will protect him, especially from the likes of you, a doubletalking... I need him to... You have to leave.

IMREOIR

Is that the reason you are snooping about like a lowly cut purse, misdirected sense of, justice...

MAEVE

(quietly) Le Neint... (outloud) I prefer not to associate with misbegotten adventurers...

IMREOIR

Yet, you hang out with Di, Igrok.

Maeve stands over him, glaring accusatively.

For a moment more the two stare daggers at each other, faces revealing nothing.

MAEVE

What's your game?

IMREOIR

Is that an admission?

MAEVE

Répondez directement (Answer directly in french), or do I have to get creative?

IMREOIR

Didn't the party leader say we're rescuing, sorry you're rescuing, the Princess?

MAEVE

I don't trust random adventurers. Never know who is going to leave you alone in the nothing. Igrok has to stay the leader, I don't want the dark...

IMREOIR

Don't worry, companion quests are not on my bingo card. Rest assured, I will finish my quests.

Silence.

MAEVE

J'ai besoin que les choses restent telles qu'elles sont. Ne me gêne pas. (I need things to stay as they are. Don't get in my way. In french)

IMREOIR

Same to you.

EXT. TRAINING FIELD - MORNING

The yard is a decent size, there are training dummies in rows and a few archery targets. Archers shooting from quivers that never seem to empty, the arrows in the targets disappear randomly. There is a circle in the middle where two men trade blows from blunted weapons, their moves simple and repetitive. Igrok carefully practices with a wooden sword on a straw dummy striking in an escrima pattern repeatedly. Katrina appears under an awning near the entrance and watches in captivation while Igrok strikes precisely.

KATRINA

You keep practicing like this, you won't have the energy to complete the quest.

Igrok smiles and continues to strike the dummy, but with renewed vigor.

IGROK

Not to worry moi Little Kotenik. My stamina regen is top notch, and with your supportive ballads, I could take on the Piits alone!

KATRINA

That's why I like you, always willing to help out the little guys, regardless of your actual skill...

IGROK

With my lucky charm, I don't need skill!

KATRINA

(smile) Come, your stamina cannot regenerate if you don't eat.

She turns to indicate a picnic table suddenly loaded with a feast.

Igrok Stops his practice mid swing, his sword suddenly not in his hand and approaches the table, inhaling deeply and full of satisfaction.

IGROK

You're too good for me Kotenik!

They hug and are seated.

KATRINA

I am only doing my part, you are MY great hero. Maeve my like you keeping away La Nada, whatever that is, but you are all I need... What else can I do to thank you, you did save my life, and life is what you make it.

IGROK

You may be a bard, my beautiful muse, but your cooking is to die for...

KATRINA

I promise I didn't use poison this time: How was I supposed to know it had gone bad...

While not ignoring her, Igrok begins talking over her, his lips in a pleasant smile.

IGROK

I have always liked you lute better...

KATRINA

Looting with you is the best, and I love cooking for you, all the adventures we have...

IGROK

There has to be more...

KATRINA

What, like blacksmithing? You'd scare the horses. (both laugh) Uhm, this sweet roll is so good, crazy how changing one ingredient can change the whole thing...

Suddenly Katrina's eyes go wide and she is in a dark featureless void looking around in fear begging for someone to help.

As quickly as it happens, Katrina is back with Igrok

IGROK

Not really, what we call S tier ingredients have the same macro profile as C tier, it's just the micros that matter. All the minerals and such, the ground has to not only be fertile but have the right profile. The soil can only be trucked in and used more than once before the micros are used. I wrote an entire paper at university...

KATRINA

Universi? What, how could you, what?

Igrok is as dumbfounded as Katrina, and struggles to remember what he was saying.

IGROK

Well, that was weird, maybe a mage enthralled me. Katik, are you really happy, is this enough for you?

KATRINA

We have good friends, great adventures and we save the world countless times a year. What more is there?

IGROK

I don't know, I have always been happy adventuring with you, and Maeve, but last night...

KATRINA

Imreoir?

IGROK

Yeah, he, I don't know, makes me think of other things, and you know how I hate thinking...

KATRINA

Yeah, when you think, weird things, unexplainable things happen, I just want you to be happy, lets run away!

IGROK

I am an orc of my word, Kotenik, I invited Imreoir to join us, and I think we may need him, for more than just this quest.

EXT. PINE HOLLOW TAVERN - DAY

The town is far more lively during the day, there is no sign of the rainstorm of last night. A food merchant has set up shop across the street from the tavern selling his fresh produce. Every so often a carriage trundles by with calls about how great and fresh it is.. Citizens walk to and fro interacting whenever they bump into each other, then moving on along the same route.

INT. SLEEPING ROOM OF PINE HOLLOW TAVERN SECOND FLOOR - DAY

The room is empty except for Imreoir who lies in bed.
He suddenly opens his eyes

IMREOIR

Is fuath liom sioga. (I hate mages/fairies.)

The camera pans to the side to look out the window then back at Imreoir who is now standing beside his bed going through a leather bag. Objects and weapons alternately appear and disappear organized on the bed as Imreoir goes through his belongings.

IMREOIR

At least she didn't take anything. Where are they now?

He pulled out a worn journal already opened to a page with a crudely drawn map on one page and 'quests' logged on the other. The map shows different colored dots that move along the streets and buildings marked on the map.

FADE TO:

EXT. ALCHEMICAL SHOP - LATER

The shop is a charming retro steampunk haven, nestled within the heart of the bustling city. Its exterior, adorned with brass gears and intricate clockwork, hints at the wonders within. Villagers walk past engaged in their own affairs. Every so often a villager will disappear or appear at the door and go about their business.

INT. ALCHEMICAL SHOP - SAME TIME

As you step through the door, a symphony of ticking clocks and bubbling potions greets you. Shelves line the walls, displaying an array of mysterious vials, gleaming crystals, and antique apparatuses. The air is infused with the scent of exotic herbs and smoky incense, creating an atmosphere of enchantment.

In the center of the room stands a grand oak counter, polished to a shine. Behind it, the SHOPKEEPER, clad in a leather apron and goggles and robes of deceptively expensive cloth, tends to a bubbling cauldron with practiced expertise.

Customers browse the shelves, seeking remedies for ailments mundane and magical alike, while others come in search of rare ingredients for their own alchemical experiments. In this shop of wonders, the possibilities are endless.

The sound of the door opening and closing prompts him to turn and face Igrok, Maeve, and Katrina standing in front of the door.

SHOPKEEP

Ah, welcome traveler, feel free to peruse my wears, if you have the coin, I have the concoction. If you have any questions, feel free to ask.

Igrok strolls around looking at the various potions and poisons each in distinctive and elaborate bottles as the Shopkeep gets behind his counter.

Maeve walks beside Igrok as Katrina remains by the door, with no intention of moving.

[occasionally Mave takes Katrina to the side to try to convince her la neinet is real and once Imreior enters that he is an agent of it. Imreior tries to procure rare ingredients, through theft or negotiation, Igrok works desperately on not having an existential crisis, he wants to believe he is an adventurer and not a boring programer]

IGROK

...I mean, he could have said goodbye. Who just goes off and leaves without notice. I thought he wanted to help save the princess?

MAEVE

(insistent) We don't need him! Trust me, Chef, It's better he is gone. You just met him last night...

IGROK

He claims to be my friend, friends don't bail...

MAEVE

You remember him?

IGROK

I have been hit in the head a lot...

KATRINA

How long have we known each other?

IGROK

Longer than I can remember, which is odd because I know we didn't grow up together. I have the strange impression of colorful onions on tall buildings...

MAEVE

Yeah, your whole life revolves around onions...

KATRINA

He's not an ogre, he's an orc...

MAEVE

In any event, Garçon voleur is gone, bon débarras, we have no need for an agaçant voleur...

KATRINA

I don't understand your dislike of him. I mean, he is a dark elf, but they are not that bad...

Maeve rolls her eyes then starts monotonously, distracted.
Increasingly Igrok and Katrina look on, confused.

MAEVE

Oh, yeah, not that bad, right. Darkness descends upon the lands, their reach like inky tentacles, we exist at their whim...

KATRINA

Soo, it's good we have them?

Suddenly back in reality she looks around and shrugs as if nothing is wrong.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Anyway, I don't have a problem with elves, or even dark elves, generally, just him specifically, currently, I just know he wants us back Le nient.

IGROK

Lenient, on what?

KATRINA

Before your time...

Maeve glares at Katrina.

MAEVE

(to Igrok) Mind your business. (quietly to Katrina) We don't discuss that, even with him...

Igrok turns to the shopkeep with a shrug.

IGROK

So, heard any good rumors lately?

SHOPKEEP

They say our steam tech comes from the Lava lands...

Ignoring Igrok and his pointless banter with the Shop keep, Maeve leans into have a private conversation with Katrina

MAEVE

You like Igrok, yes? Well The stranger wants to take him away from us, you...

KATRINA

Why would he want to do that?

MAEVE

He is an agent of Le Neint, angoisse (trouble)...

KATRINA

For as long as I have known you, you have been on and on about that, lets tell Groke, he can help...

MAEVE

NO! The more he knows about it, the less safe we all are!

Imreoir is now in the middle of the group, between Igrok with the ShopKeep and Maeve with Katrina.

IMREOIR

What's dangerous for me to know? BTW, your sleeping draught needs work, I have a recipe, all you need to do....

Igrok strides up and bear hugs Imreoir, cutting him off from speaking.

SHOPKEEP

...Have you talked with Konstance lately, she's the one that sells apples...

Imreoir manages to disentangle himself, takes a few deep breaths and turns to the shopkeep.

IMREOIR

Why don't you go tell it to that guy....

The Shopkeep walks to another NPC guest.

IGROK

Ah, friend, you made it! How about a mana potion, on me!

IMREOIR

Thanks, I appreciate it, but...

IGROK

We're going to have the best adventure...

KATRINA

(to Maeve) Why is never this excited about adventures with me?

MAEVE

(grimaces) he does, He's constantly, (her face lights up with an idea) See Le Garcon voleure wants to take Grokie away...

KATRINA

Well, If it makes him happy...

MAEVE

No, he's happier with you! You have to help me stop Le Garcon!

We return to Igrok and Imreoir's conversation.

IGROK

So, you are an adventurer? What tricks do you have for questing?

IMREOIR

Alchemy, archery, subtlety, basically everything you lack...

IGROK

Thats why I have Maeve, she's also pretty good at spells and potions,

IMREOIR

Oh, so a full set of talents, hunh?

Igrok shrugs.

IMREOIR (CONT'D)

So, tel me about this quest?

IGROK

(shrugs) your standard, a castle on the Lava lakes, some traps and grunts to deal with, and a nego...

IMREOIR

So, multifaceted, different victory conditions?

IGROK

Da, Just get the princess out of her room...

IMREOIR

Lava lands hunh, going to need some good heat balms

IGROK

This shop has all the potions and balms we need...

Imreoir looks at the Shopkeep and a flash of soft blue white light can momentarily be seen from his right hand.

IMREOIR (CONT'D)

I think even your stats are better than his, no offense.

SHOPKEEP

Not in my nature, I'm just here to run a shop, sell some tonics and provide amusement to P...

IMREOIR

Good to know at least that is working, mind if I use the setup?

SHOPKEEP

(sarcastic) Oh sure, not like it was made for me...

Imreoir sighs and rolls his eyes as he approaches the chemistry bench.

IMREOIR

(Under breath) Ugh skip... Weird reaction from a...

SHOPKEEP (CONT'D)

...So, you adventurers are out to save the princess?

IMREOIR

Word gets around fast.

Un seen by anyone, Maeve glares at Imreoir as he works with the set.

MAEVE

Is this village not here to support Adventures?

KATRINA

So, Flame Piit Keep, are we going to need burn salves? What are you crafting, Novamigo?

IMREOIR

I find myself in a sticky situation, I need a solvent. Your companion code is more intricate than normal, Dim, Igrok programed his companions well...

KATRINA

(confused) Uh, thanks?

IGROK

Solvent? I usually use a bigger hammer?

IMREOIR

Not an option on this op, pal. With so many wheels within wheels the wrong solution could devastate everything, and destroy what I am here to save.

MAEVE

Is there a reason, au-delà de l'intrigue, (besides plot) You do just come out and say...

IGROK

I, (pause) get the impression he needs me to figure out a puzzle...

KATRINA

In that case, this may be a longer adventure than just saving a princess...

MAEVE

(quietly) Not that that is a bad thing. More adventure, that is, time with Garcon Voleour, bad. Igrok, he is still trying to mislead you.

IMREOIR

Really? To what end, why would I need mislead the Great and Powerful Igrok Stal, whatever?

MAEVE

How should I know? You need to leave.

IMREOIR

Don't know how you did it, Grokie, but your girls are really life like. Got that jealousy and everything. (to Maeve) You have any spare scales I can use?

EXT. STREAMSIDE TRAIL - DAY

The grass, almost perfectly manicured in a cheap golf course kind of way, is starting to show signs of yellowing.

The quartet follow the trail with Katrina playing a melodic traveling tune on her lute. Every so often Maeve glances at the quiet creek.

VOICE (V.O.)

This is getting old.

IMREOIR (V.O.)

Your telling me, he can activate his kit, so subconsciously he is a player, but If I cant convince him

to leave on his own, we could loose him. I don't play to lose.

VOICE (V.O.)

Its getting harder to contact you, the corruption is spreading.

IMREOIR (V.O.)

You keep working your end, I'll keep working mine.

MAEVE

Must you look at every rock and twig?

IMREOIR

To figure out what went wrong I need to find an uncorrupted...

KATRINA

There's no government out here...

IMREOIR

Not what I meant, Kat, but, interesting perspective. Hey Grok, does it bother you that all the rocks look the same?

The quartet paused near a wider section of the creek.

IGROK

What else is a rock supposed to look like?

MAEVE

Uncut gems look like rocks...

She continually glaces at the creek.

IMREOIR

But each rock, being exactly the same as any other, like they were just pre rendered set dressing?

Katrina looks at the rocks in Imreoir's hand.

KATRINA

He's right, I don't see a difference...

MAEVE

(under her breath) Not that we would, we don't need to...
(aloud) Why does a rock need to be anything more than a rock?

IGROK

So that a collector can tell them apart and chide others for not seeing the difference.

MAEVE

So, Le Garcon is a rock brain, Makes sense his head is full of enough. Look, you want to collect every rock from here to the Piits, that's your business, just leave Igrok out of your psychosis. (beat) Ugh enough of this, since we are stopped anyway...

Without warning Maeve jumps in and starts moistening her scaly skin in the cool water

IMREOIR

What are you doing?

MAEVE

You know I can't sweat...

IGROK

It's not that hot...

Katrina, with a mischievous grin splashes Maeve, who works her jaw for a moment.

Then she sucks in some water and, like a fountain, soaks Katrina, who glares in the way only a wet, but not angry, only disappointed cat, can.

Igrok laughs heartily and hugs her, his devkit activating unconsciously she is soon dry.

IMREOIR

(to himself) Ionas gur féidir leat é a úsáid. (so you can use it) (aloud) I thought we had a mission...

IGROK

Doesn't mean we can't enjoy ourselves while we're on the go.

Imreoir rolls his eyes..

EXT. STONE PILLAR PLAINS - DAY

The quartet walk along a path amongst large stone pillars.

The sun is obnoxiously bright, after a moment, Imreoir holds up his right hand like he was serving a dinner platter, a blue glow emanates and the sun's glare is adjusted like one was adjusting the settings on an old TV.

As soon as this starts, Igrok looks around in minor confusion, but the girls are oblivious to this adjustment.

IMREOIR

That's better...

IGROK

Yeah, who would have thought?

KATRINA

What's better?

MAEVE

Don't encourage him.

As the team walks along the paths, Imreoir picks up rock, some he saves, others he doesn't. Each time Katrina eyes him curiously. The plains are beautiful, there are several ibex-like and gazelle-like creatures bounding about in groups. Katrina eyes the herds and licks her lips as her mouth waters. Igrok sees this desire and starts running off to chase one of the herds, his battle ax appearing in his hand. Katrina jumps up and down excitedly as Maeve and Imreoir watch, exhausted by the tom foolery. After a moment of watching the fruitless endeavor, Maeve turns to glare at Imreoir as if to say, do something or we'll be here all day, I can't take another day of this nonsense. Imreoir looks back about to suggest she do something, then grasps his bow and crouches, disappearing.

KATRINA

Where did Reior Go?

Igrok stops and looks at the group as Imreoir 'teleports' to and from the tops of the pillars.

IGROK

He's literally crouching right in front of you...

IMREOIR

My sneak is too high, only another player can see me...

IGROK

Makes sense...

MAEVE

What makes sense?

After a moment, a lone arrow fells the beast Igrok was stalking. The creature attempts a final jump but falls and slides to end up at the base of a stone pillar, part of the beast's back is in the pillar. The quartet approach.

KATRINA

Nice shot...

Igrok kneels to start field dressing, and notes the incongruity.

IGROK

...Hunh, mesh collision error...

MAEVE

Mesh what?

Igrok takes out a worn notebook.

IGROK

I'll have to make a note, fix it later

The notebook disappears, replaced by a field dressing knife.

IMREOIR

Why not just fix it now?

KATRINA

Fix what?

EXT. ATOP A HILL IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - DAY

The quartet stand atop a hill arguing over a giant map, comparing it to what they see.

EXT. FIELD OF FLOWERS - DAY

The quartet wander through a field of flowers,

Katrina bounds about, collecting butterflies.

She shows her catches to Igrok who smiles and approves, she asks him for a jar to keep it in, he shrugs and indicates she should ask Imreoir.

KATRINA

You like collecting things, isint this cool?

IMREOIR

I'm not...

Igrok looks at him sternly.

After a moment, Imreoir's shoulders sag and he sighs producing a jar with a perforated lid..

IMREOIR

You better not make a habit of this...

Katrina gathers some wild flowers, shows Igrok, who smiles and indicates she should ask Imreoir for containers

IMREOIR

Seriously? Ugh, Fine.

Imroir again reluctantly produces a container for the collections.

EXT. TRAIL, EDGE OF THE FOREST

As the quartet approaches a fork in the road they look down the path that leads into the forest, a good sized tree blocks the road, but there is room to walk off the trail and get around the blockage.

Igrok stares for a moment hands on hips and shakes his head in frustration, the girls are likewise upset, Imreoir watches the trio with a mixture of confusion and curiosity.

Finally Igrok harrumphs and starts down the second path.

IGROK

Guess we'll have to go around...

IMREOIR

Really, it's just a little tree, we can go around...

Katrina who had been following Igrok turns and raises an eyebrow to Imreoir

KATRINA

Uh, that's what we're doing...

IMREOIR

No, I mean around the tree, or over it...

MAEVE

The path is blocked, it's literally impossible.

IMREOIR

Yeah, there is a tree in the way, but we can jump, go around...

IGROK

That's what we're trying to do, go around, but you insist on arguing...

IMREOIR

Uhg, we don't have time for this, are we not even going to try?

MAEVE

It's impossible...

IMREOIR

We can all jump...

KATRINA

We're not acrobats...

IGROK

You want to complain about wasting time...

MAEVE

There are certain things in this world that are not possible...

KATRINA

Reoir, if a mage says it's impossible...

Imreoir looks at each of them in turn and finally shakes his head in defeat and starts off the other trail.

IMREOIR

Uhg, fine, we'll go around. Supposed to be a mcguffin around here anyway.

KATRINA

Mcguffin? What's that? Are they cute?

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY

The air is crisp and the leaves of the trees are various shades of red, orange, and yellow. The path is wide and there are numerous side areas for carts for travelers to step off the trail and not block traffic. The quartet walk in silence, Igrok in the lead followed closely by Katrina then Maeve, with Imreoir bringing up the rear.

Soon they approach a clearing that looks to have been decorated for All Hallows eve.

Igrok, oblivious to the decor, pauses and takes out a water skin to take a few gulps of water.

Imreoir looks at the clearing carefully, a fall picnic has been laid out and apparently abandoned. [maeve has to try to use splash damage to hit Imreoir as it would look bad for her to target him, she doents want to tip Igrok off that she is out to get imreoir]

IMREOIR

Hunh, who ordered cosmic demon ants?

The others look at him quizzically.

KATRINA

Que? Who would want cosmic demon ants?

Imreoir raises an eyebrow at their lack of impetus.

IMREOIR

Who else would leave a picnic out overnight on Samhain?

Suddenly apprehensive, they exchange weary glances as they scan the edge of the clearing for any sign of trouble.

Katrina's lute appears in her hand, she grips it tightly, ready to unleash melodic destruction.

Igrok's massive double bearded war ax is suddenly in his hands, his muscles like massive steel springs coiled ready to release destruction.

Maeve's hands begin to weave intricate arcane patterns in the air, preparing spells for battle.

MAEVE

You make too much sense...

A noise attracts the attention of all.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Attendez! What's that!?

The team's attention follows her gaze as a mighty horde of murderous demon ants from half to a full meter in length skitter from the edges of the clearing.

The ants are breathing fire attacking with legs tipped with blades, scratching and biting anything that moves.

MAEVE

La glace coule et l'obscurité règne, mon pouvoir dévore
la nuit (Ice flows and darkness reigns my power devours
the night! In french)

IGROK

Unrite shestinogiye URODY! (die you six legged freaks,
in russian)

The battle cry still ringing in the air, Igrok storms into the horde swinging his ax with reckless abandon, clearly enjoying the battle far too much.

KATRINA

(singing)

En el fragor de la pelea, de espaldas a la pared,
Nos mantenemos unidos, atendemos el llamado.
A través de la noche más oscura, seguiremos adelante
con fuerza,
Con valor en nuestros corazones, corregiremos el mal...
(see katrina's song attachment for full song)

Several of the ants' attacks meet glowing shields unable to penetrate, each strike evoking a power chord that invigorates Igrok.

With a great sigh, Imreoir knocks an arrow and dances into the shadows, releasing torrents of arrows each volley taking out multiple foes. Several times the battle field seems to pause or slow, though Imreoir and Igrok always move at normal speed.

For every ant that falls two more seemingly take its place

MAEVE

Des vagues de gel, froides comme le nord, gèlent leurs
os et brisent leur esprit ! (waves of frost, cold as the
north, freeze their bones and shatter their spirit! in
french)

Waves of cold radiate from Maeve, soon the demon ants are frozen solid. Igrok merrily smashes them with his ax.

KATRINA

(singing) Deja que mi canción suene verdadera,
destroza los huesos, protege a mis amigos, suelta
flechas de verdad en la sombra de la duda. (let my song
ring true shatter the bones, protect my friends, loose
arrows of truth in the shadow of doubt. in spanish)

The quartet continue their fight and soon the last of the demon ants is pulverized. At times just after a blue glow emanates from Imreoir or Igrok's hands, but mostly from Imreoir, there is a rewind effect that affects all but the two men. When Igrok uses the power it is unconsciously. In all the commotion, the picnic is not disturbed, even when people and/or ants are right on top of it. They gather back at the picnic, winded but in a better mood.

IMREOIR

Well, Grok, you always did know how to throw a party.
[Imreoir confronts maeve about her splashing him with damage, she denies, and so he turns off her friendly fire]

IGROK

Well, your skills with the bow should be legends!

From the woods, a group of five raiders emerge ready to rumble.

RAIDER 1

Well, lookie lookie, we have a party that thinks they can avoid the toll.

Imreoir sighs in exasperation and tries not to appear too exhausted.

IMREOIR

You just saw us take out an army of cosmic demon ants, ar mhaith leat a rince? (do you really want to dance? In irish)

RAIDER B

Who do you think summoned them?

RAIDER A

They were summoned to soften up any foolish players that think they can avoid the game.

RAIDER LEADER

And it looks like they did their job with aplomb. (pause)
Tell you what, just pay the toll, I'll let you go.

The two teams look at each other for a few moments, daring the other to challenge. A pale blue light can be seen from Igrok's right hand, Imreoir looks at him with curiosity.

IGROK

How about you pay me for the privilege of staying alive?

For a moment Igrok and the leader stare at each other, suddenly the raider leader smiles.

RAIDER LEADER

Intimidate failed, roll for initiative...

In the blink of an eye Imreoir draws his bow and shoots the Raider to pierce between his eyes, the raider easily catches it without looking.

RAIDER LEADER (CONT'D)

La Nient shall not claim me!

Battle instantly erupts, the leader and 1 attack Igrok, B who is a mage squares off against Maeve, the raider bard, A, battles Katrina, and Imreoir and 2 dance into the shadows, taking shots at each other and each other's team.

After a few heated moments Igrok decapitates Raider 1, and starts forcing the leader back.

MAEVE

Bord de la flamme, fenêtre de la douleur, incinérez ces entrailles, préparez-vous à la fin du jeu! (Flame's edge, pain's window, incinerate these innards, endgame prepare! In french)

Raider B bursts into flames and begins running around in pain and panic, Maeve turns her attention to assist Katrina. Together they overwhelm the man.

Imreoir, after a tense 'bow kata' manages to get his raider through the eye.

The quartet focus all their attention on the Raider Leader.

Backed against a large tree the Leader remains defiant.

Suddenly fear overwhelms him.

RAIDER LEADER

Please, don't let it consume me!

IGROK

Awfully self aware for an ENN PEe...

He trails off, blinks profusely, starts shaking his and in a panic strides away.

KATRINA

Grok, whats, What's wrong! How can I...

She tries very ineffectively to calm Igrok as Maeve and Imreoir continue to interrogate the raider.

MAEVE

What are, can you, be afraid of?

The raider is barely able to speak

RAIDER LEADER

You, you know, the noth...

With a quick gesture from Maeve, he burst into flames and is soon ash.

Imreoir glares at Maeve in astonishment

IMREOIR

Way to go, now we can't question him!

Maeve looks at him in defiance, but a hint of fear

MAEVE

What answers do you intend to get from...

IMREOIR

Good point.

Imreoir kneels down to examine the corpse, a glow emanating from his hand
Igrok and Katrina are in the middle of the field, Igrok struggling to come to his senses. Periodically he 'glitches' and the world almost blinks out

IGROK

What's real, am I lost...

KATRINA

(singing) Ha llegado la noche, dormilón, descansa la vista y sueña. (The night has come, sleepy head, rest your eyes and dream. In spanish)

Igrok resists at first, but is soon overcome by fatigue and drifts off to sleep in Katrina's arms.
The glow stops and Imreoir looks at the pair and sighs.

IMREOIR

Sin an fáth go gcaithfidh mé a bheith cúramach mura bhfuil sé réidh d'fhéadfadh an domhan titim. (That's why I need to be careful if he isn't ready the world could collapse. In irish)

[Mave asked about her not damaging imreoir anymore, he tells her he turned off her friendly fire, basically lowering the difficulty mave is low key pissed]

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

The camp is in the middle of the dark forest, its a crisp autumn night and the quartet gathers around the campfire as Katrina prepares dinner. It is a jovial atmosphere they reminisce about past quests. They discuss goals and there is a few 'thats not how its done where I come from.' ect.[Imreoir starts to suspect Mave might be part of the glitching]

IMREOIR

...Then his head was gone, but couldn't get the bull's eye because someone...

IGROK

What, was I suppose to let him gut me?

IMREOIR

(gestures at the other two) We have healers! It was my XP!

IGROK

(quietly) Opyt? V stadii razrabotki pre-alfa (XP? on a dev pre alpha)

MAEVE

Don't press your luck, we had our own business to attend to....

IGROK (CONT'D)

(quietly) Eto ispytaniye, nam ne nuzhen opyt, (we don't need experience in a test)

IMREOIR

Well, you know what they say, all the worlds a stage...

KATRINA

Who says that? sounds like an idiot...

MAEVE

Doesn't matter, whomever it was, he's not from around here. When is that stew going to be done?

IMREOIR

You are a bit more, complicated than a typical companion...

MAEVE

And you're not, gaslighting must take a lot of energy...

IMREOIR

Or hot air. It's like you have a vested interest...

MAEVE

Am I being too subtle?

IGROK

Now, druz'ya (friends), we're a team...

MAEVE

Mais dehors! (But out!)

KATRINA

Don't be so hangry, it's almost done. (beat) Hey you remember that time Groki was up against 5 doom berserkers, but he had perfect timing his swings were amazing, it was almost as if he...

IMREOIR

...Had precognition like he was replaying...

KATRINA

Si, How did you...

IGROK

Ha, that's not the trick, the trick is stitching together the chain combos so the timing works out, had to replay that 9 times...

IMREOIR

And--- that doesn't strike you, any of you, as odd?

Maeve shrugs, moving to sit between Imreoir and Igrok

MAEVE

It's not stranger than when I was at Mage's college. Magie peut résoudre beaucoup de problèmes, même des intrigues. (Magic can solve a lot of problems, even plot) (beat). Phillipe Du'Orange LaFiette cast this one spell, it was like we were going through heat, Let me tell you, as a reptile...

KATRINA

...Hunh, I had an uncle like that back in the caravan...

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY

It is a lovely autumn day, the trees sporting festive reds, yellows, and oranges, the grass a satisfying mix of yellow and green.

The team walk the forested path, Igrok leading the way, and Imreoir bringing up the rear, continually checking his notebook.

Presently they pause and water skins appear in their hands as they take in the view of the forest and majestic mountains rising in the distance.

KATRINA

Ah what a wonderful adventure it's like I'm a kitten again... (sees caravan encampment) Oh look, new friends!

Without waiting for anyone to acknowledge, she rushes into the encampment.

IMREOIR

Hunh, weird that we find some fellow travelers all the way out here, isn't it, Grok?

Igrok shrugs and casually follows Katrina

IGROK

You are way too suspicious, Reoir, if it turns ugly we can always reset...

MAEVE

Reset what? (under her breath) Cela semble horriblement proche du néant. (sounds horribly close to 'the nothing'.)

EXT. CARAVAN ENCAMPMENT - DAY

The encampment is a buzz with activity. This is a tribe of beast folk like Katrina, their wagons like that of gypsies.

Katrina bounds up excitedly.

KATRINA

Groki, come, meet my cousin, Karl! Now remember these are friends, and ¿Qué hacemos con los amigos?

IGROK

(groans) We don't steal from friends...

KATRINA

¡Correcto!

She pulls his arm and he playfully resists.

Imreoir casually follows.

IMREOIR

Weird how those wagon wheels didn't leave tracks. (no response from Igrok) Hunh, its almost as if they manicured that grass around the fire pit, why would a caravan bother.

One of the beastfolk is walking around the fire pit, placing and removing benches and large trunks that could be used as benches.

IMREOIR

Always in a line, snapped into place...

BEASTFOLK

That's where they go. (pause) Can I help you traveler?

IMREOIR

No, I'm talking to...

Igrok is not in the area any more

BEASTFOLK

¿Has hablado con Konstance últimamente? Ella es la que vende manzanas. (Have you spoken with Konstance lately? She's the one that sells apples.)

IMREOIR (CONT'D)

Well, this is going well, (to beastfolk) Do you even have a name? (under breath) Skip.

The beastfolk shrugs and goes back to arranging the fire area and Imreoir pulls out his notebook.

IMREOIR

Troupe de la Jugadores de la Gatas Orange...

MAEVE

How could you possibly know that?

IMREOIR

PFM. You know, everytime I get close to convincing...

MAEVE

Gaslighting...

IMREOIR

What do you know about trojan worms?

MAEVE

Don't accept their gifts?

IMREOIR

What's your game? Why are you so protective of him?

MAEVE

Thats what team mates do, they don't try to convince them to give up on them, to abandon...

IMREOIR

WOuld that be so bad, you could go back to school...

MAEVE

If he leaves... You are going to ruin everything if you don't stop with your nonsense...

IMREOIR

It's not nonsense if it is true. Ba cheart dom tú a scriosadh i ndáiríre ... (i should really delete you)

MAEVE

(defiantly) Je te défie! (i dare you)

The NPCs continue their scripts, oblivious to the conversation they are not a part of.
Imroir considers the situation carefully

IMREOIR
Not worth the risk of crashing the game.

He walks off to find Igrok.

MAEVE
(under her breath) Dieu merci. (Thank goodness.)

Igrok, Katrina, and two of the beast folk, KARL and FERDINAND (the leader) are talking near the wagon of the chief.

After looking at his notebook, Imreoir puts it away and approaches.

IMREOIR
Ah, Ferdinand, Que pasa?

FERDINAND
¿Nos conocemos? (have we met?)

IMREOIR
No, but we are kind of bussy...

FERDINAND
Si, Flame Piit Keep, a most dangerous place...

Imreoir looks around while the chief talks.

IMREOIR
Has your wagon always been half invisible?

They all look at the wagon, only Imreoir and Igrok notice something amiss.

KARL
What's wrong with the wagon?

IMREOIR
Grok?

IGROK
(absently) Cairbre, it's a texture format we can always tweak the algorithm...

MAEVE
...Cair who?...

KATRINA
...Algawha?...

Unseen by Imreoir, Maeve makes a gesture an aquamarine light flashes from her hand, Igrok shakes his head and looks at Imreoir confused.

IGROK

Sorry, did you say something?

Imreoir rolls his eyes and sighs.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL - DAY

The team walk up a mountain trail, come across a cross road, Igrok produces a map and they discuss. Imreoir activates his devkit just before he produces his notebook.

IMREOIR

The marker is down this road.

MAEVE

How can *YOU* possibly know that?

He shows her the notebook

IMREOIR

That's the GM's suggestion...

MAEVE

That's a blank page.

He looks at the notebook

IMREOIR

Really?

Igrok looks at the notebook

IGROK

The quest notes clearly say it is that way, let's go.

From Igrok's and Imreoir's perspectives we see a subtle glowing golden light trail following the exact center of the real trail, Igrok sticks close to the glow, the girls can't see this trail.

Maeve stares daggers at Imreoir as Katrina merrily skips along following Igrok, then Imreoir shrugs and follows, with a grunt of dissatisfaction, Maeve finally follows

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL - LATER

Near the top of a mountain pass, the quartet meets up with another band of adventurers.

IGROK

Hail and well met, Fellow traveler.

TRAVELER 1

Hail, to you as well, Igrok the great, I presume?

IMREOIR

You've met?

TRAVELER 2

Of course not, but all in these parts know the legends...

IMREOIR

(to Igrok) You don't find that odd?

KATRINA

You heard the traveler, we're legends...

IMREOIR

Can we skip this interaction...

Both activate their devkits, but Igrok's despite being unconsciously activated glows a bit brighter and nothing happens.

IMREOIR (CONT'D)

Cacamas (crap)

TRAVELER 1

As well traveled as you must be, can you tell me about this treasure?

The traveler produces a talisman of gold and gems, Maeve accepts it and she and Igrok look it over as Imreoir produces his notebook and his devkit glows.

VOICE (V.O)

(indistinct as if through bad radio) Its a mcguffin, we were trying to expand the lore...

IGROK

What was that?

KATRINA

Que el que?

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

We haven't had time to give it any actual properties, but its the standard sacred cultish jewelry...

IMREOIR

(sigh) its an amulet of Farseeker, charmer nathair na Blarnen, It grants +10 to doublespeak when party building... [imreoir makes something up to try to sus out Maeve's motives]

VOICE (V.O.)

...You just made that cannon...

KATRINA

That's amazing!

MAEVE

How could you possibly know that? The Farseekers aren't from around here...

IMREOIR

How could you not?

MAEVE

Let me guess, you want it...

IMREOIR

Why would I need it? I'm just trying to get Grokie here to leave...

IGROK

The quest isn't done...

KATRINA

And we never leave a quest unfinished!

EXT. SWAMPY STREAMSIDE TRAIL - DAY

The team walks down the trail, no sign of fatigue.

IMREOIR

We've been at this for hours, feet sore yet?

IGROK

My stamina meter is full, I'm ready for another picnic, How much Ibex jerky do we have left

Katrina shrugs, as she is about to answer she sees a wagon trundling up..

KATRINA

Oh look, a traveling merchant

As they round a corner on the path they can see a large wagon trundling down the trail.

IGROK

Hunh, so we're in that region already, no wonder you're tired, I guess I got lost in the ambiance, we really out did ourselves on this procedural build...

Imreoir raises an eyebrow at this but shrugs it off.

IMREOIR

Just as well, this merchant is programmed to have rare
potion ingredients...

KATRINA

...Programmed?...

They approach the wagon and greet the driver.

MAEVE

What brings you this far from the Mage's Collage?

MERCHANT

Ah, Maeve, long time well met! Where do you think I find
my poltice ingredients?

IMREOIR

Speaking of, you should have griffin claw root?

The merchant shakes his head sadly

MERCHANT

Just sold the last batch...

Imreoir holds up his hand and the devkit activates, the scene rewinds

IMREOIR

Speaking of, you should have griffin claw root.

The merchant smiles broadly.

MERCHANT

You're in luck, traveler...

IGROK

..You could have warned me you were going to do that.

KATRINA

Do what?

MERCHANT (CONT'D)

...Here we have a fresh cutting.

MAEVE

Isn't that a primary ingredient for elixir of unbound
brilliance?

IMREOIR

Amongst other things.

MAEVE

Why are you here?

Imreoir's devkit threatens to envelop a resistant Maeve.

IMREOIR

Are we really getting into this again?

Maeve glares fighting the effects of Imreoir's attempt at changing the RNG in her.

IGROK

Into what?

MAEVE

(struggling) It's about him isn't it? Why do you want to change him?

Imreoir snaps his fingers and she shakes her head

MAEVE

(Pleasantly) So what kind of potion are you making?

IMREOIR

Need to know.

He turns and starts down the trail again.

MAEVE

(under her breath) Je voulais le gronder, puis je ne le voulais pas ? (I wanted to tell him off, then I didn't want it? In french) I don't know how he is so powerful at enchantments and not even a mage, but je vais l'arrêter (I will stop him). Le neint shall not claim me. I will have to play my cards more carefully. À vrai dire, je suis plutôt impressionné... (Truth be told, I'm kinda impressed...)

INT. CAVE NODE A - DAY

NOTE: this is a 'respawn' point, we will be back to this very moment.

The cave is cold and wet, though it is large enough for the team to walk comfortably upright. They carry torches, Maeve has a fireball floating above her hand, as they make their way around a bend to be faced with a few choices on where to go next, right and down up in the middle or continue left. [during some fights Maeve makes it a point to hit Imreoir with splash damages, he confronts her about it, she denies it, he ultimately turns off friendly fire, wished he did that sooner, and Igrok calls him a cheat]

IMREOIR

Uh, must you spelunk every dreary cavern we come across?

MAEVE

Surprised you still have to ask...

KATRINA

...If you were really his friend, you would know...

IGROK

One never knows when they will come across some shiny trinkets. (looks at the choices) Speaking of, we should go this way...

Imreoir pulls out a notebook and a 'crudely' drawn map that shows the entrance all the way up to their location in it, but only dotted lines marking the possible trails beyond.

IMREOIR

Uh, actually, that's a dead end...

KATRINA

How could you possibly...

IGROK

All the better to ensure we don't miss anything.

KATRINA

I may have dark-sight, but they all look the same to me.

IMREOIR

Trust me, people, uh, with skills like us, can tell.

After only a moment more they start off down the path.

INT. CAVE PASSAGE 1 - LATER

The quartet venture into the cave, there is a group of assassins laying in wait.

IMREOIR

(talking trying to convince Igrok of game)

IGROK

(dismissing claims)

IMREOIR

(changes tactics but is cut off by assassination)

After the team pass them and start around the corner they are jumped Both Imreoir and Igrok are stabbed in the back of their necks as a hand covers their mouths.

INT. CAVE NODE A - DAY

The cave is cold and wet the team round a corner facing a few choices on where to go

IMREOIR

...Uhg, must you spelunk every dreary cavern we come across...

As he talks, he grimaces in confusion and pulls out a notebook with a 'crudely' drawn map that shows the entrance, where they are, and a passage that has been filled in.

IMREOIR (CONT'D)

...shábháil pointe?... (save point?)

MAEVE

Surprised you still have to ask...

Igrok looks at Imreoir with fear and confusion

KATRINA

...If you were really his friend, you would know...

Igrok shakes his head to dislodge the doubt

IGROK

One never knows when they will come across some shiny trinkets. (looks at the choices) Speaking of, Still think we should go this way...

Imreoir puts the notebook back in his pocket

IMREOIR

...Dead end...

IGROK

(angrily) ...I know...

KATRINA

How could you...

IGROK

All the better to take out those zadnitsy shlyapy. (ass hats)

Igrok angrily stomps down the corridor.

KATRINA

I may have dark-sight...

IMREOIR

Drop it, trust me.

Imreoir follows Igrok, after looking at each other the girls follow.

INT. CAVE PASSAGE 1 - LATER

The quartet approach the spot they were jumped before, Imreoir crouches and disappears, Igrok's battle ax appears in his hand, Maeve and Katrina both reluctantly wield knives.

The assassins wait in their spots as the trio passes but as they emerge Imreoir stabs one in the back and Igrok yells and chops off the heads of 2 assassins and the girls double team the last.

After a moment the quartet circle up.

KATRINA

Que Demonios?! (what the hell)

MAEVE

(attempts to comfort) ...Le nient...

IMREOIR

Are you starting to remember?

IGROK

Remember what? We can't let assassins have free reign to kill travelers...

Confusion bubbles to the surface of his face as he tries to reconcile this apparently pre-cog ability with how cause and effect should work.

IMREOIR

Do you know how you knew?

MAEVE

(worried Igrok might wake up) Defenders of the weak are often inspired by the divine...

KATRINA

We've never felt that... Estoy asustada (i'm scared)

MAEVE

Tu devrais être (you should be)

IMREOIR

Ní hea, níor chóir duit a bheith, níor cheart duit a thuiscint fiú. (no you shouldn't be, you shouldn't even understand.)

They are quiet for a moment, then Igrok snaps back to his 'normal' self.

INT PASSAGE 1, DEAD END - CONTINUOUS

Igrok looks around, treasure chests materialize at the end of the passage, Katrina stands at the exit, immobile

IGROK

Ooh, Look, treasure

IMREOIR

Oh yeah just what we need, more useless crap to lug around hoping it will be useful someday.

KATRINA

Grokie says we have to be ready for anything. Its not like any of this is bulky or really that heavy, it doesn't slow us down...

Imreoir holds up a two tined fork

IMREOIR

Really? What use could this possibly have?

He wields it like a weapon and thrusts a few times.

IMREOIR (CONT'D)

Nope, no enchantments...

IGROK

(shrugs, absently responds still looking through chests)
Could have some kind of enchantment.

Imreoir stares at him agape, then looks at Maeve, who sighs and rolls her eyes.

MAEVE

There is nothing magical about that or any of the other table sets we have back at the tavern...

Imreoir tries to walk past the immobile Katrina for a moment, she doesn't notice, respond or move. After a moment, Imreoir tries to run full tilt at Katrina, still no movement.

IMREOIR

See, we're wasting time, dáiríre níl tú chun bogadh (seriously you're not going to move)?

KATRINA

We have to be through, Hey look, a cave we should explore it...

IMREOIR

Seriously? (sigh) sure be thorough, you have to move around to look...

KATRINA

I heard a rumor...

IMREOIR

SKIP, skip, ar son grá Dé, skip!(for the love of god skip!)
I thought you wanted a mcguffin , you have to look for
them, they are sneaky...

MAEVE

I remember that, like the time that shawmen tried to
mind control you Grok.

IGROK

Joke was on him...

KATRINA

¡Grokie no tiene mente para controlar! (Grokie has no
mind to control!)

Imreoir is still trying to get past Katrina

IMREOIR

Oh yeah, really funny, brilliant even. Look I'd like to get
this over with before...

IGROK

Ohh, look amulet of poison resist!

Imreoir rolls his eyes

IMREOIR

Oh yeah, glad we spent time looking for that.

IGROK

Com'on, princess wont rescue herself.

He strolls down the passage, followed by the girls

IMREOIR

Níl a fhios agam, tá amanna ag athrú, seans go
ndéanfaidh sí amhlaidh. Conas a éalaíonn tú cluiche
briste? (Never know, times are changing, she may very
well do so. How do you escape a broken game?) We did
make this thing procedural.

With a heavy sigh he follows the trio.

INT. CAVE PASSAGE 2 - LATER

The cavern goes on and on as the quartet talk as they continue to explore.

IMREOIR

So, how did you two meet. Kinda odd seeing a bard hang around with an orc, am I right?

KATRINA

Me and Grokie have been adventuring for years...

IMREOIR

I asked how, you met, not how long...

MAEVE

He doesn't need to know...

IGROK

Uhg, can you two stop fighting? For the love of tantalus...

IMREOIR

Let me guess, It's like you have known each other forever, like a dream...

INT LARGE CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

The team rounds a corner to a cavern chamber that is amazingly big. There are shelters and treasure chests, even a few lit fires.

They slowly enter and marvel at the cavernous village.

Suddenly Imreoir's eyes widen in shock.

IMREOIR (CONT'D)

It's a Tr...

INT. CAVE NODE A - DAY

The team round the corner again.

IMREOIR

...Uhg, must you spelunk every dreary cavern we come across..

MAEVE

Surprised you need to ask...

IMREOIR

This is getting annoying...

KATRINA

If you were really his friend...

IGROK

(slowly realizing he is saying the same thing again) One never knows when they will come across some shiny trinkets. Der'mo...

IMREOIR

Dead end?

IGROK

Da, bystro, ya ustayu (yes, quickly now I'm getting tired of this)

Igrok storms off.

IMREOIR

You heard the orc.

He follows.

INT. CAVE PASSAGE 1 - LATER

The quartet approach the spot they were jumped before, Imreoir crouches and disappears, Igrok's battle ax appears in his hand, Maeve and Katrina both reluctantly wield knives.

The assassins wait in their spots as the trio passes but as they emerge Imreoir stabs one in the back and Igrok yells and chops off the heads of 2 assassins and the girls double team the last.

After a moment the quartet circle up. Katrina's back to the way forward.

KATRINA

Madre los mio! You two are amazing together

IGROK

Spasibo, Kotenok (thanks kitten)

MAEVE

Seriously, what's your game? How do you constantly know what's about to happen? This never happened before you showed up...

IMREOIR

I'm an elf, get used to it. You seriously don't remember losing time, him having premonitions, (shrugs) yeah, that tracks actually. (to Igrok) You remember what's coming?

Igrok struggles with his words, unsure what he knows and not comfortable with the implications

IGROK

I, I have flashes, its not like I know, but I, feel the future. It was a stronger sensation when I was angry, but now its, i don't know ephemera drifting away...

The conversation is worrying Katrina, she is scared and she doesn't know why.

KATRINA
Grokie? I, No me este gusta...

Full of worry himself, Igrok moves to comfort Katrina

IGROK
Kotenik...

Maeve turns to Imreior with fire in her eyes.

MAEVE
What have you done to him?

Imreior stands silent, unreadable

MAEVE (CONT'D)
Why do you want us dead?!

IMREOIR
That's, Death is not what I'm after. DIm, Igrok needs to
wake up...

KATRINA
What if he doesn't want to? We like our adventures, he...

IMREOIR
(to Igrok) We have responsibilities...

MAEVE
We need him here!

IGROK
(shrugs) I don't, It feels like I was never appreciated...

IMREOIR
And you think I am? (silence) Let's just finish this.

With that, he walks off, after some hesitation Igrok follows, Maeve approaches Katrina.

MAEVE
We have to protect Igrok.

KATRINA
I know, I have always helped Grokie.

MAEVE

That dark elf needs to go, violently if needed.

Katrina hesitates

KATRINA

You cant hurt him. (pause) What was it he said, he turned off your friendly splashes, What does that mean?

MAEVE

I know, that's why I need you to help.

Katrina swallows hard, the idea of hurting and adventurer makes her sick to her stomach. Maeve follows the boys, and after a fearful shutter, Katrina follows as well.

INT. CAVE PASSAGE 2 - LATER

The team rounds a corner to a cavern chamber that is amazingly big. There are shelters and treasure chests, even a few lit fires.

Just before the last turn Imreoir steps in front of Igrok and attempts to strategize.

IMREOIR

Not so fast, chief. We need a plan. There were what? At least four in line of sight, they had, like four manticores, half had wings...

KATRINA

How could **you** possibly know?

MAEVE

What spell of sight are you using, mine have never been that detailed? I'm not even sensing you draw mana...

IGROK

I have a plan...

IMREOIR

Storming the breach is not a plan!

IGROK

What? Play, die, repeat not working for you anymore?

The girls talk over each other.

MAEVE

...What are you talking...

KATRINA

...So, you do know each other...

IGROK

You want a plan, here's the plan, you go high, I'll stay low and tank the damage.

INT. GRAND CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

As Igrok runs headlong into the chamber toward the nearest building, he releases a primal war cry and his ax appears in hand.

Arrows fly from two raised platforms on either side of the cave's entrance.

Imreoir draws and knocks 2 arrows, combat rolls into the chamber, releasing the arrows to pierce the two guards on the platforms center mass

Maeve and Katrina look at each other and shrug, then rush to join the battle

Maeve starts casting spells of fire, ice, and lightning.

Katrina strums her new Battle ax style guitar, 'gifted' to her offscreen by a condescending Imreoir, sending forceful waves of song to strike nearby enemies.

From a chair by the steps to a mezzanine on the north wall a large bad guy with a bastard sword raises and joins the fray, rushing to the aid of his team having his ass handed to him by Igrok by the building.

Five more bad guys rush from a barracks near the back of the cave and a blacksmith/archer from a forge area near the barracks focuses his efforts on counter sniping Imreoir.

Maeve's spells face off with a mage bad guy from near the entrance to the manticore cage. They trade fireballs, ice spikes, and lightning bolts, all the while sneaking in healing spells for their respective parties. The enemy mage makes his way to the gates.

Katrina rapidly shifts between the assorted enemies trying to hit Igrok, occasionally instigating friendly fire.

IMREOIR

At least the soundtrack is more exciting

IGROK

Something's off. Kotenik, focus on one, big hits, remember! (underbreath to himself) Or did we discuss that on one of the time lines you forgot?

KATRINA

I remember Grok, but I don't like to see...

MAEVE

Remember what we discussed...

Igrok is almost grazed from her song strike, Katrina is visibly ill at the thought of targeting non enemies.

IGROK

Concentrate, Kotenik!

The mage Maeve is fighting manages to open the manticore cage.

As soon as the gates swing open, the mage is taken out

MAEVE

Heads up, Elf boy was right, Manticores on the loose!

Maeve cast a healing spell for all but Imreoir

IMREOIR

Seriously! (rolls away from damage) Fine, I've soloed souls.

A health potion appears in his hand and he chugs it.
The team focuses on the last 6 bipeds, but avoids the manticore attacks.
After a few more moments the last man is down.

IGROK

We take the big smelly one first!

KATRINA

They all stink!

IMREOIR

The brown fur, it's more aggressive!

On cue, the largest, the brown one with wings roars and charges Igrok
Igrok rolls out of the way and the manticore arches its back and poisoned quills erupt from its fur
Maeve manages to erect an energy shield just in time and the quills atomize.
The purple manticore with no wings charges, they all roll out of the way, Imreoir stands facing a green furred manticore with no wings
The last manticore, dusty deep yellow with wings circles the ridiculously high ceiling of the cave
Igrok punches the green furred manticore on the snout, disorienting it and drags Imreoir behind the building

IGROK

Looks like I'll have to tank it. Maeve, keep my HP topped off, Kotenik, ballad of berserker rage, please, Reoir, where did he go?

Imreoir had jumped to the top of the building to snipe at the manticores

MAEVE

We don't need elf boy!

KATRINA

Uno, dos, ready break!

Igrok rounds the building and rage roars at the manticores
Focusing on the largest brown furred manticore Igrok ignores the attacks of the others, Imreoir alterantly shoots the flying yellow one and the brown one.
Like clock work Maeve casts ice spikes at the brown one, heals Igrok, throws lighting at the green one, fireballs at the purple one and back to the beginning, all the while tracing a large circle and some symbols on the ground, all around the fight.
Katrina stays out of direct fire and keeps up morale with a 'symphonic metal symphony'.
Maeve finishes her large casting circle.

MAEVE

Duck and cover!

The circle erupts in flame. Knowing her spells can't hit him, Imreoir looks up into the raining fire with bemused appreciation.

The brown fur falls, the yellow drops from the sky, the green one dies and the purple one runs off. The team start to pursue, but Igrok stops them

IGROK

Let it go, we don't have the strength to take it on right now.

With heavy sighs and only a small amount of grumbling they stop the pursuit and circle up with Igrok. Suddenly the brown furred mantichore spasms and manages to clamp down on Igrok's arm. The mantichore is immediately beset by the other three and falls, finally dead. The girls rush to Igrok's side

IMREOIR

Oh sure, rush to the aid of an orc, probably enjoyed getting his ass kicked.

IGROK

It was fun, wasn't it?

KATRINA

We killed the monsters, where's the loot you promised?

Igrok shrugs and motions to the north wall.

IGROK

Clearly the mezzanine over there.

INT. CAVE MEZZANINE - LATER

Igrok leads the team up a rickety set of stairs to the mezzanine.

Imreoir casually looks over and sees a section of wall that has no texture and only an endless void.

IMREOIR

Hunh, is that a null texture map?

They all stop and look at the wall indicated.

MAEVE

Looks like a cave wall to me.

IGROK

The texture was never applied, sue me. We'll fix it in post...

He shrugs and starts off to the middle of the mezzanine again.

The others follow.

IMREOIR

Wait, isn't this a bit too...

The stairs fall away, the ground shakes and a large Golem ogre lands in the middle of the mezzanine with a bone rattling roar. The creature is a little over twice as tall as Igrok, and has a third arm out of its right shoulder.

KATRINA

I hope that's not a mcguffin, it's ugly!

IGROK

This is going to take a heavy hand.

A potion appears in Igrok's hand, Imreior sees it and his eyes grow wide as he tries to stop Igrok from chugging the potion.

IMREOIR

Dimitri, no! It's not ready!

Heedless of the warning, Igrok downs the potion

IGROK

Alright, let's get this thing done! Leroy Jenkins!

He charges the creature with his ax over his head.
Each takes a few swings at each other, then vertigo hits Igrok and he stumbles
The creature roars and knocks him right through the missing cave wall

KATRINA

Grokie!

She rushes to the missing wall, but is stopped like it's a real wall. She paws at it, trying to get through
The beast roar and rages
Maeve grabs Imreoir

MAEVE

What the hell Elf boy, where did he go!

The creature charges Imreoir pushes Maeve away, she nears the edge of the mezzanine but is stopped from going over by a mysterious force

IMREOIR

Survive first, I'll explain later!

Imreoir shoots the creature, then maneuvers away
Maeve casts lack luster spells, but does very little avoiding

KATRINA

We lost Groke, we can't do this without a tank!

IMREOIR

It's large and slow, just keep moving bob and weave.

Igrok, floats just outside of the frame watching the ensuing battle.

Imreoir opens up his hand and a blue glow emanates, muscles almost instantly develop and he now has twin katana, the left hand is reverse grip.

IGROK

Ohh this is trippy. Kotenik, I'm fine, go help Shayne Oh that's right, I've no clipped, they can't hear me.

He concentrates and floats to hover near Imreoir, who is engrossed in a weapons based MMA, each are taking as well as they are getting.

IGROK (CONT'D)

This thing is weak against health potions and spells, use them as weapons. NO! Not the poisons!

In a momentary pause Imreoir was about to douse his blades in poison stops, turns to Maeve and rolls out of the way as time starts moving again.

IMREOIR

(to Maeve) Do you have any light spells?

MAEVE

Not my forte!

IMREOIR

Good enough just cast light! (to Igrok's ghost) We don't have any more health potions! (to Katrina) Ball of confusion, we can't let it lock on to us!

The trio keep circling the beast taking pot shots, whittling away at its health pool.

After a valiant effort the creature picks up a large rock and throws it at Imreoir who can't dodge it.

INT. CAVE NODE A - DAY

The team round the corner again.

IMREOIR

...Uhg, must you spelunk every dreary cavern we come across..

MAEVE

...Surprised you need to ask...

IGROK

Shayne, what the hell is going on!? What have you done to me?

IMREOIR

I'm trying to help...

IGROK (CONT'D)

I mean the witch... Last thing that is clear...

FADE TO:

EXT. MAGE COLLEGE GRAND COURTYARD- NIGHT

FLASHBACK

The four moons are full. We are in a high fantasy grand garden courtyard, there are numerous pairs of mages practicing spells, talking, and going to and from various locations.

IGROK (V.O.)

I was going over the Casters guild story, specking out the bosses, this was supposed to be the climax, we were worried the power curve for tank builds might have been off so I was going to fight the Dragon Matron as an orc.

Maeve and PHILLIPE DU'Orange (M 60's Dark elf/human) are by a fountain talking. The grand gates at the end of the courtyard away from the tower open and Igrok steps through. He strolls about occasionally a blue glow emanates from his hand, but for the most part he is admiring the scenery.

PHILIPPE

Oh look what the dragon spit out.

MAEVE

Really, your anti orc too? At least I'm not alone.

PHILLIPPE

You proved yourself. *He*, is an orc, none of them can use magic.

MAEVE

Like magic is helping you. You still think Le neint is out to get us?

PHILIPPE

It is! You've witnessed the time slips...

MAEVE

Your spell went wrong! The whole collage... Time never slipped.

Igrok approaches and listens.

PHILIPPE

That's not what you said... Can I help you?

IGROK

Your scripting says you should be practicing aquamancy, but your conversation is unusually deep...

MAEVE

How can you possibly...

IGROK

(to himself) Shayne really nailed the AI emulator. (turns away) Where is that trigger...

From the tower end of the courtyard a dragon lands and roars. Katrina runs toward Igrok and then into him.

KATRINA

Help me, I don't know...

For a moment Igrok is lost in Katrina's eyes, then he looks past her and sees the dragon breathing fire toward them. He puts himself between the flames and Katrina, shielding her.

KATRINA

How did you...

Igroks activates his devkit.

IGROK

Bard, right, how about an emboldening shanty.

He turns to the dragon and smiles.

IGROK (CONT'D)

Nothing like Napalm in the morning!

He rushes the dragon with a giant ax as a lute appears in Katrina's hands and she begins to play. The assorted mages in the courtyard make way and rush to the edges of the yard, while Philippe and Maeve stare wide eyed.

The dragon takes flight and ice breath covers the field in giant ice crystals, including Igrok. The ice around Igrok shatters and he looks at Philippe and Maeve

IGROK

Be a good pair of NPCs and help out.

PHILIPPE

I'm not in your...

The battle shifts to slow motion as Igrok stays in real time. With a grimace he opens up his hands and the blue glow penetrates the pair of mages.

For a moment their eyes glaze over then they start casting spells and the battle slips back to real time.

The dragon swoops down and tackles Igrok who punches like a mad man until he manages to knock off the dragon.

He opens his hand and the blue glow washes over him, the world slows again.

IGROK

Half already? Should have given myself more healing potions. Damn not even a cheese wheel.

He looks around and spies Maeve casting a spell of water bending, in slow motion. He walks to her in real time.

IGROK

Maeve, bud' khoroshey sestroy (be a good sister), and top me off...

MAEVE

I don't know any... Hunh I know how to heal...

The water dragon puppet she is controlling loses form and she starts casting a healing spell as the time shifts back to normal.

A golden yellow glow engulfs Igrok and he shudders in ecstasy.

IGROK

Spasibo, Cestra.

The dragon, now uncontested, looks at the pair and roars. Her tail sweeps towards them, just before impact Maeve sees it and tries to knock Igrok out of the way, but they are both knocked into the fountain.

MAEVE (V.O.)

...And then Nient, a time slip we were in Applepine Hollow, but I don't remember how we got there, I knew I had to stick to Igrok to figure it out.

INT. CAVE NODE A - PRESENT

The quartet look each other over. Imreoir has his hand up and the blue glow is scanning Maeve.

IMREOIR

I didn't write that code, it's too advanced, the compression might have altered things. Who the hell is Philippe?

MAEVE

He, (hesitates) didn't make it.

IMREOIR

Well, if we make it --- out, we can bring him back...

MAEVE

Who said I want him back?

KATRINA

(to Igrok) Where are you going, can I come?

IGROK

(uncomfortable sad sigh) This, us, this isn't my world
Kotenik, I, we have to... (turns to Imreoir) Can we, bring
her with us?

Imreoir's jaw hits the floor, for a moment he is too stunned to speak.

IMREOIR

NO! That tech doesn't exist, not even a proposal for its
development. (turns to Maeve) Maybe, perhaps, Maeve
can...

MAEVE

I can what? Leave her with the same existential dread as
me? Let the thought of Nient haunt her dreams? Not a
chance.

KATRINA

(sadly to Igrok) Will, will I miss you?

Igrok has to steady himself for a moment before he can speak without crying

IGROK

No, no sweet Kotenik. You wont even Know I'm gone.
But I'll miss you.

MAEVE

So, you'll just leave? Then what?

IMREOIR

I don't understand how you are self aware, but when the
program is not running it will just be...

MAEVE

..Le Nient. (beat) For how long?

The boys look at each other

IGROK

Instant?

Imreoir shrugs searching for words.

IMREOIR

The fact she can refer to it suggests some kind of temporal persistence, no way we can know how long it will 'feel'.

KATRINA

I don't understand 'off', but that is the opposite of 'on' right? Can you leave us on? No nada then, right?

The boys look at each other and eventually shrug

IGROK

How will they get back to Apple Pine?

Imreoir shrugs

IMREOIR

Fast travel. We can drop them off before we exit.

Igrok hugs Katrina

IGROK

I'll come back as soon as I can...

Imreoir looks at Maeve.

MAEVE

Don't you dare!

IGROK

Let's get this over with.

Igrok and Imreoir close their eyes and inhale deeply. A blue glow starts to be emitted from their hands.

Imreoir opens his eyes

[whatever altered the NPCs to make a few of them self aware and giving them agency might have changed what we coded]

IMREOIR

Uh, why are we still in the cave?

Igrok holds up his hand and his blue glow lights the cave. Katrina jumps up and down and hugs Igrok.

KATRINA

Grokie! Your back!

IGROK

Kotenik, we didn't leave. (to Imreoir) The pause and save parameters are corrupted. Fast travel, fire walls too, looks like the corruption spread...

IMREOIR

Well, best I can tell, whatever gave Maeve her sapience and agency...

MAEVE

So, I'm still stuck with you?

Katrina jumps up and down in joy.

KATRINA

Yeah More adventures!

IGROK

I think we might have to beat the game, Take Flame Piit Keep...

Imreoir groans and starts toward the entrance.

IMREOIR

Then, we'd better get started.

IGROK

That mission was meant for experienced players, supreme difficulty spike, JRPG like. We will need the orb.

Imreoir stops and rolls his eyes and turns back to the cave.

IMREOIR

(as he passes Igrok) I kinda hate you right now.

INT. CAVE MEZZANINE - LATER

The quartet climb the stairs as Imreoir leads. From this time on Maeve is more tolerant of Imreoir as he has 'proven' he cannot send her to 'the nothing'

IGROK

...I'm just sayin, that was an impressive fight for a rogue build.

KATRINA

(Quietly to Maeve) you have any idea what they're talking about?

MAEVE

(whispers back) I haven't understood anything since they casually took out those assassins as an afterthought, while deep in discussion about the Flame Piit, that none of us have been to.

IMREOIR

I didn't expect to be fighting that much, this wasn't supposed to be a long term mission. I made this OC to rush and sneak not fight. I came to figure out why you hadn't reported in, and this was a ready to go build.

IGROK

Huhn, what was that thing with the muscles?

KATRINA

(to herself) I Kinda miss having Grokie to myself, his muscles are the best.

IMREOIR

What? Oh, my build graft, trying a few things with creation, you know I like to be prepared, especially when I have no idea what I'm getting into. (shrug and sigh) It just didn't work out...

MAEVE

(eyes glazed over and off handedly) Maybe if I hadn't been such a bitch...

The boys stop in their tracks and look questioningly at each other searching for answers, the blue glow starts to emanate.

IMREOIR

You remember?

Maeve shakes her head to get out of the brain fog she suddenly found herself in, struggles to think for a moment

MAEVE

Uh, not exactly, That's a strong word for this. I get flashes like scrying an enemy, but it's me...

KATRINA

Grokie says that we are approaching a Golem Ogre, I don't think this is the time...

IGROK

Right, Remember what we discussed.

Igrok rushes to the trigger point and the giant ogre golem drops from the ceiling.

IGROK

That is significantly bigger than I remember designing.

The Ogre roars and swipes first with its main right hand, then left. Igrok deftly dodges both, then raises his ax over his head for a powerful downward swing
As Igrok chops, the ogre catches the shaft of the ax below the head with its smaller upper right arm, picks Igrok up to look directly into his face and roars.

IGROK

TIC TAC!

Maeve throws some ice spikes, Imreior launches arrow after arrow while running around at the edge of the battle field.

Katrina, at the edge near the stairs up strums mighty chords on her 'battle ax' each note an energy bolt launched at the enemy, a symphonic metal track punctuates the action.

IMREOIR

Definitely a better playlist than before...

IGROK

Don't listen Kotenik, Your songs were perfect!
(underbreath to himself) Somethings different though...

MAEVE

Here's an idea, let's beat the Ogre before we turn on ourselves!

IGROK

This is significantly more shielding and HP than...

IMREOIR

I've an idea...

The Devkit light oozes over his form and once again bulks out. Now with a giant war hammer, Imreior rushes from behind and aims a mighty blow at the head of the ogre.

For a few moments the two 'tanks' 'juggle' the ogre between them, blow after blow chipping away at the ogre's health. Despite their bulk, they maneuver and fight like medium weight martial artists, jumping and hitting.

With a mighty roar the ogre finally manages to back hand Igrok and send him flying to slide to Katrina's feet.

IGROK

Power curve may be a bit too steep.

Katrina stops playing to help him up.

KATRINA

You're the smartest Orc I know, you can figure this out!
Your friend is taking more hits than I thought he would be able to.

Igrok stands and brushes himself off. Suddenly a thought brightens his face and he holds up his hand to start the devkit glow. Action for all the non players slows down, even Imreoir seems to slow as the devkit glow envelops Igrok.

IGROK

You know, Kotenink, you're right, now for something completely different.

As if in a character editor his body proportions are changed randomly until he is a bit taller, less bulky and now clothed in dark silky leathers.

Katrina stands in shock.

KATRINA

Grokie?!

IGROK

You're the best, Kotenikl.

He turns to start throwing lightning bolts at the ogre, Maeve stops and stares in shock.

MAEVE

What fresh hell is this?

Katrina hugs Igrok.

KATRINA

Grokie's great, Hunh?

The ogre knocks Imreoir over then throws a large rock at Igrok, he is knocked to the ground.

IGROK

Wow! That shouldn't have hurt that much

Imreoir struggles to keep fighting the ogre

IMREOIR

You altered your stats idiot! The MP points had to come from somewhere, now your build is weak to physical!

IGROK

Hunh, guess I should have planned this better.

IMREOIR

Flagalate later, help now!

IGROK

Right.

He looks at Maeve and Katrina, they nod at each other and turn to slowly approach the Ogre. Igrok and Maeve hurl fireballs and Katrina resumes her Metallic rock ballad of hero fury. Suddenly Igrok stops and looks accusingly at Katrina

IGROK

Wait, didn't you use to play the lute?

Katrina continues to play, but raises an eyebrow

KATRINA

What are you talking about?

IMREOIR

Ogre first, questionable music tastes later!

Igrok restarts hurling fireballs.

MAEVE

You want to use the health revivals now, or wait until elf boy is paste?

IGROK

You remem... right.

The pair start to cast an elaborate spell of health restoration. All the while Katrina continues her symphonic metal and Imreoir kicks ass to the doom music.

At last the spell is cast, the ogre growls in pain as Imreoir's health bar fills to the top.

Imreoir swings his hammer like a baseball bat across his foe's face, and knocks the weakened ogre to the ground.

The quartet circle up as the devkit glow restores the players to their normal forms.

IGROK

Well, we got the orb, now we just need to stock up on treasure and potions, the next chapter is a long one.
(turns to Imreoir) Now, let's talk about messing with companion codes without consent.

EXT. FORREST CAMP - NIGHT

[note from this time on, the players both slip into not realizing its agame, Imreoir's personality slips more]

The quartet mill about a chilly camp, light snow begins to fall as Igrok desperately tries to explain to a nonplussed Katrina that he never meant to hurt her. Katrina, for her part goes about preparing dinner, not really understanding why Igrok is so frenetic, she insists that she has no animosity toward him, not in her programming.

Imreoir strolls around the outskirts of the camp, still looking for answers, every once in a while he stops, stoops over, picks something up, his devkit flashes. Maeve approaches and watches for a moment.

MAEVE

Didn't you already convince Igrok this is all an illusion?

IMREOIR

(offhandedly) Game, not illusion, just as real as any other world in the system...

MAEVE

Not what I meant.

He turns and looks her over for a moment before he speaks.

IMREOIR

It doesn't make any sense. I can't find the source of the corruption. (beat) Is it an iterative fractal, is it a misplaced bit. (beat, sigh) You should be ignoring me right now, what I am doing has nothing to do with the program, and I can't explain that.

MAEVE

Me watching you bothers you?

IMREOIR

It scares me, Maeve, it means, I, don't know and the unknown is the worst...

She shrugs and starts to turn back to the camp.

MAEVE

Well, maybe if you would stop doing weird things, I could ignore you.

IMREOIR

(groans) Ugh it's getting worse, NPCs shouldnt be able to respond to non game prompts...

We leave this conversation and turn to Katrina preparing dinner, stirring the stew, and Igrok hovering behind her.

KATRINA

...Groki, I know you have always done what you consider right and have treated me as best you can...

IGROK

Kotenik, I swear, I didn't...

She turns to smile at him. Imreior approaches with curiosity.

KATRINA

You know what I think? I think you are projecting your feelings of failure onto me. Immie comes, shakes up our

world, now you feel inadequate because you didn't know.
 (beat) Its all good, you are exactly what I need you to be.

Imreoir stops at their side and is agasp.

IMREOIR

What could you possibly know about projecting, is there
 a consciousness leak...

Oblivious to his questioning, she turns back to the pot

KATRINA

What?

For a moment Imreoir stares then the devkit lights up and his face contorts with concentration
 Katrina hands Igrok a plate with a bowl of stew and some rolls and veggies on the side the turns to Maeve
 to hand her an identical plate, then turns to Imreoir with a third identical plate. Still searching for answers
 he absently accepts the plate and the three others take seats around the fire, with identical plates of food.
 After a moment Imreoir joins them and sits down to eat, still focused on the devkit, Maeve cocks her
 head.

MAEVE

Do you even need to eat?

KATRINA

Of course they eat, they would have to, to stay big and
 strong...

Imreoir closes the devkit

IMREOIR

Something is interfering with my ability to communicate...

MAEVE

It's called language, use your words, Elf boy.

For a moment there is silence, then he chuckles

IMREOIR

Not what I meant Maeve, I'm trying to call the outside for
 help...

IGROK

Are, you sure? Are you Okay?

IMREOIR

(grimaces) I'm fine, why would I lie? About what?

IGROK

Well, this was meant to be a solo boss raid, so, the code must be affecting it as normal...

Suddenly back to normal Imreoir shakes his head and responds

IMREOIR

Yeah, but what's more concerning, NPC's understanding complex issues, not adventure related...

MAEVE

Are you saying you made us stupid?

IMREOIR

See, right there, you should be ignoring us...

MAEVE

Again, stop being weird, and I could...

IGROK

Well, they do have adaptive algorithms designed to improve gamer experience, and there was a gated fire wall that was supposed to allow for additional processing using the players brain, that could have...

KATRINA

So, I'm in your head? No wonder you're so concerned about me!

Igrok is stunned to silence as she gets up to hug him

IGROK

That's not, no? Part of the autonomic sub system is hijacked to more immersively game, and so that is used by the system as a buffer of sorts... We can partition petaflops. Mixing brains with computers is bad, if you don't know what you're doing, particularly with AI...

IMREOIR

(sighs) A faulty firewall can't explain all, (looks at Meave) but some. (more to himself than anyone else) Could it be a command line drift, the kind that only happens with improperly implemented and maintained distributive computing with multiple command line inputs...

IGROK

There is more, Shayne...

KATRINA

...Using his real name, uhoh...

IMREOIR (CONT'D)

Particularly of an organic nature...

IGROK

...I didn't have time to complete this mission, to get it even partially functional...

Suddenly completely focused on what Igrok is saying he hesitates and swallows hard.

IMREOIR

...Dimitri, please say you didn't...

IGROK

...I didn't anticipate getting trapped and needing a master key, or source code...

IMREOIR

...Cut the crap Dimitri...

IGROK

(sigh) It's a procedural build, this section completely uncharted, programmed to beat...

IMREOIR

Don't say it...

IGROK

Us, not the characters...

IMREOIR

Like Moriarty and Data?

IGROK

(lowers his head) Da.

There is silence for a moment.

MAEVE

So, you're telling us, everything before this was easy?
And now you have no idea how to win?

IGROK

(shrugs) Well, you wanted an adventure...

IMREOIR

No, I recall being pretty opposed...

KATRINA

Yeah! Another adventure with Grokie!

MAEVE

Staying with you means, no Nient, so...

IMREOIR

You better hope we don't die...

IGROK

Is that even possible?

Imreoir's jaw is on the floor he has to think for a moment before he responds.

IMREOIR

We're in a procedurally written world designed to kill...

IGROK

...Pose a challenge...

IMREOIR

...That we may no longer be able to control...

MAEVE

...didn't know you had those kind of issues, makes sense...

IMREOIR

...And may be corrupting our brains.

EXT. CLIFF OVERLOOKING FLAME PIIT KEEP - NIGHT

It is a semi volcanic hellscape, noxious fumes rising from fissures, flame red and orange plants are sporadically located. The quartet lead by Igrok and Imreoir approach the edge of the cliff and gaze over. We see that the castle is a 'high fantasy nightmare', a river of lava flows at the base of the cliff in front of the castle.

A single drawbridge provides the only access.

KATRINA

Look at it, its what nightmares are made of....

IGROK

That is our destination, Flame Piit Keep, the final boss of our game...

IMREOIR

Boss? Game?

IGROK

Uh, yes the reason we are here, to escape...

IMREOIR

Oh, uh, right. (looks over the castle) Looks a bit more thriller schemed than I remember designing...

MAEVE

You claimed to never have been here...

IMREOIR

(distracted) No, never been here, but I did see the concept art...

KATRINA

I see only 2 guards, this is going to be fun, just like last...

She starts to hurry down the trail to a road at the base of the cliffs but Igrok steps in front of her

IGROK

Not so fast, Kotenik, you know there are more on the other side of the gate...

KATRINA

Oh, yeah, non sequitur memories are hard to keep track of...

IMREOIR

Yeah, according to lore, I think, four, no, five in the courtyard...

MAEVE

That seams, (beat) Why does that sound like a bad thing?

KATRINA

Because he, like you, is a party pooper.

IMREOIR

Because things haven't been going right...

MAEVE

Oh yeah, control issues...

KATRINA

So, what do we wait for another supply run and sneak...

IGROK

We did that last...

IMREOIR

We have other means, don't worry, RNG is on our side.

With that he walks casually down the path. The others look at each other.

IGROK
Does he seem diff, oh right, NPCs never mind.

He starts to follow Imreoir.

MAEVE
Great, it's rubbing off...

KATRINA
Don't worry as long as we have Grokie, it will all be alright.

She follows the boys and Maeve sighs and shakes her head.

EXT. DRAWBRIDGE APPROACH - LATER

The guards are standing at attention as the quartet led by Imreoir casually walk up to them. As the team comes to a stop in front of them, they cross their long pole axes to block further advance

GUARD 1
Halt travelers, the Keep is closed, What business have you in the keep?

MAEVE
We have come to see the Princess...

GUARD 2
Wishes have no value here, Lizard.

Maeve smears

IMREOIR
Let us in...

GUARD 1
Nobody sees the princess, not nobody, not no how...

GUARD 2
How did a smelly lizard even make it across the ember plains?

Maeve looks to Igrok, Imreoir stands still like a statue.

MAEVE
Can I please?

IGROK

(smiles) Sure.

She mumbles an incantation and makes a few gestures and the guards puff out and disappear in a puff of snow.

MAEVE

That was surprisingly fun.

KATRINA

I know, Grokie has the best adventures!

IGROK

That was the easy part, next the challenge.

KATRINA

And the fun!

They wait for a moment, Imreoir doesn't move.

KATRINA

So you said you had a plan to get across?

Imreior is shaken out of his stupor.

IMREOIR

Oh, right, sure...

He holds up his hand and activates the devkit.

The drawbridge starts to lower

IGROK

I'm worried about you man...

IMREOIR

Don't worry buddy, we'll save the princess...

IGROK

And escape the game?

IMREOIR

(Shakes his head to clear it) Oh yeah, of course. Now lets kick some ass.

EXT. FLAME PIIT KEEP, COURTYARD - LATER

The courtyard is mostly red brick and stone of various hues with black mortar. There are seven guards milling about, some spar, some shoot arrows at targets, some just watch. There is a large iron gate in the front of the courtyard,

The blue dev kit light sparkles up the gate and it starts to raise. The closest guard sounds the alarm and the action stops, they all carefully approach the entrance.

The quartet walk in, the boys in the front, the girls behind like wings.

IGROK

You going to space on me again?

IMREOIR

You're one to talk, you spent the whole game, (beat) As long as I keep moving I'm good, reflexes should keep things on the up.

Katrina has her lute again and is playing a song that causes a shimmering shield to form around the team Maeve is casting frost and ice spikes.

Hands held up to keep the dev kit on , they march forward none of the arrows and or spells cast by the enemy land, in fact, some pass through them

As time around them slows and speeds up around them as they continue in 'rea time', Imreoir acrobatically jumps and fires arrows, and Igrok swings his ax. Occasionally Igrok with cut though an arrow in mid flight, and Imreoir mutli kills.

Every once in a while Igrok and Imreoir will teleport, sometimes we see it from their perspective, time stops, they rush to the next spot, nod at each other and time starts again.

A force of reinforcements start to storm out of the keep, Imreior activates his devkit and the door is suddenly a wall, after a dozen get through.

The flame knights that do get through turn to the new wall, do a double take, then the leader sneers at the team

FLAME KNIGHT CAPTAIN

Alright now you really pissed me off!

He raises his sword, capturing the attention of the other flame knights, inspiring them

FLAME KNIGHT CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

For Lord Xelos!

The Flame knights yell and rush to attack

Igrok activates his devkit and the blue glow ripples over him as he shrinks to the size of a nerdy goblin, he is now in his 'mage build'. Imreoir signs and rolls his eyes, as he casually paries the attacks of some knight, Katrina and Maeve are focused on fighting the knights.

IMREOIR

Your mage form sucks!

Igrok casts a few lightning bolts

IGROK

Don't worry, I rebalanced (dodges a rushing attack from a knight) But if you could take some heat?

Imreoir sighs, but activates his devkit. He quickly grows into his tank built with a massive bastard sword, and shining plate armor.

IMREOIR

Ready?

IGROK

Manas full, ready to rock and roll!

Imreoir charges the flame knights, who all start to focus exclusively on him. Igrok starts a spell for a lightning storm, Maeve calls out to him.

MAEVE

A frost flash would be more useful here!

IGROK

So? Kotenik, keep our pools topped off!

Imreoir is a one man army, kicking ass and taking names, Maeve and Igrok take turns taking pop shots at unwary flame knights, and Katrina's ballad is like when the doom music kicks in. Soon the skirmish is over and the team gathers back in the middle of the courtyard.

MAEVE

If you can do all this with your magic, that even I cant understand, why cant you use it to finish your quest or whatever

IMREOIR

(smiles) You trying to get rid of us?

MAEVE

You, yes. Igrok, I kinda got used too. Why don't you magic us to the princess?

IGROK

We only have low level dev access, this is supposed to be an immersive world, make too many changes too fast, the program crashes trying to make corrections, it safer to simply tweek the code rather than break it.

MAEVE

Does that mean you can't make it easier for me to stand this heat?

Igrok activates his devkit

MAEVE (CONT'D)

What, wait, now I'm sweating?!

IMREOIR

Glistening...

MAEVE

Oh now you have a sense of humor, I hate you more,
and I'm getting tired of the orc too.

The boys look at each other and chuckle

KATRINA

Com'on we have a princess to save!

She start toward where the door to the castle itself was then stops,

IGROK

Com'on, it's time to attack from the rear.

INT FLAME PIIT KEEP HALLWAYS, APPROACHING INTERSECTION - LATER

The team is sneaking down the hallways towards the inner keep tower. The boys are back in the normal forms.

Imreoir stalls and grimaces

IMREOIR

Hunh, my sneak stat just went up.

IGROK

That must mean there are enemies nearby.

KATRINA

I Don't see anyone...

MAEVE

There's three around the corner, what? Its a simple
detect life spell.

Imreoir shrugs and turns to stare at the wall just before the corner

IMREOIR

Aye, three mid tier guards, a simple obstacle to
overcome.

He knocks an arrow and inhales deeply before jumping out and blind firing three times before he lands
and rolls to a stop on the other side of the intersection.

The three guards stop, stand erect, then fall as they fade away.

MAEVE

Not bad, elf boy.

IMREOIR

(smiles) Thanks.

INT. FLAME PIIT KEEP HALLWAYS - LATER

The passages are quiet, The team has to traverse rooms with traps and such, They are not sneaking, but they are actively being quiet, checking around corners before proceeding.

This is a large chamber with a few columns, ceremonial guard suits, decorations and plants from the area. There are a few carpets and tapestries, and steam pipes.

Katrina is about to step on a slightly raised stone in the floor, Igrok grabs her and pulls her back fast.

KATRINA

Que, los dio?...

IGROK

Careful, Kotenik, there are traps!

KATRINA

Why would there be traps, it's a long hallway in actively used ...

IMREOIR

It's a boss's castle, Kat...

He kneels beside the raised stone and activates his dev kit.

MAEVE

Is it safe?

IMREOIR

Yep, trap deactivated...

Katrina walks onto it and jumps, as the boys are too slow to stop her, and shock covers their faces

KATRINA

Wow, almost as good as Gokie!

MAEVE

So, where to, Monsieur Peroit?

Imreoir pulls out his tattered notebook, checks the map and indicates a passageway

INT. FLAME PIIT KEEP HALLWAYS, OUTSIDE PRINCESS' CHAMBERS - LATER

The team approaches the door to the princess' room, the hall is quite large with many statues and other decorations.

IGROK

(reaching for the handle) Well, here we are...

IMREOIR

Wait, (beat) traps.

IGROK

Uh, aren't you the one that says not every quest requires excessive force?

IMREOIR

Hunh? We have to beat the boss...

IGROK

Are you OK? We don't have to kill...

IMREOIR

OH? Coming from you, that's rich, especially since you are the one that wrote this quest. (momentarily losing confidence in his memory) Right?

IGROK

Uh, Da, I did program this quest...

Imreoir is confused again, searches his memories, finally shakes his head.

IMREOIR

Yeah, that's right, but you did say you didn't have time, and, you got AI on line to run amok, and it can only build on what already is... You said yourself its trying to kill us

IGROK

Uh, When did I say that, its just trying to beat us

MAEVE

I'm really starting to worry about you...

KATRINA

Don't worry Gokie will figure it out.

IMREOIR

Always have a back up. (pause) Right? We don't know what's going to happen, we have to be ready, right?

Igrok looks at the girls they all shrug and he finally relents

IGROK

Uhgm, Fine, let's lay out the traps.

KATRINA

You already disabled all the traps?

IMREOIR

Yeah, but this is right before the final battle, we need to set our own...

IGROK

So, a few fireball...

IMREOIR

Really, fire, here?

MAEVE

I know a few good mystic frost runes...

KATRINA

Oh, what about the poison jars?

IMREOIR

Right, runes here in the middle, I'll set some arrow rigs,
Di, Igrok and Kat, poison jars in the ceiling.

The other three look at each other,

IMREOIR (CONT'D)

Now, hurry!

The team carefully set traps and runes to ambush the main boss of the quest.
With the traps set,

MAEVE

Wait, what about that orb you two were so hard up about getting?

IMREOIR

Oh, yeah, right

Pulls out orb

IGROK

That's not...

IMREOIR

I'll just put it on that column, it'll be alright

IGROK

UHG, fine!

After he puts the orb in place, they return to the door, Imreoir activates his dev kit

IGROK

Oh you're just going to do it the easy way?

IMREOIR

What? You want to pick the lock?

KATRINA

That's my job, step out of the way and let the master show you how it's done!

She kneels in front of the door and begins to pick the lock.

KATRINA (CONT'D)

There, job well done!

She smiles and pushes the door open.

INT. FLAME PIIT KEEP, PRINCESS' CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS

The medium sized room is well furnished and elaborate. The princess, XELDA, basketball player build in a pretty skirt, is playing a large harp in the middle of the room. As the door opens, she looks and brightens up.

She stands as the team enters and rushes to Igrok.

XELDA

Oh, my hero! You have come to save me at last!

Imreoir rolls his eyes.

IMREOIR

Really?

IGROK

It's what gamers want...

INT. FLAME PIIT KEEP HALLWAYS, OUTSIDE PRINCESS' CHAMBERS - SAME TIME

The boss, XELOS, tall M. Bison type over the top personality, approaches and steps into the middle of the ice runes

XELOS

Not so fast.

The traps are set off

After the smoke clears, he chuckles, the team rush back out into the gallery

XELOS (CONT'D)

Did you really think it was going to be that easy?

IMREOIR

I was hoping....

XELOS

The kingdoms had been at peace for generations, we had the best trade agreements, it was a great time, we made the kingdoms great again And the trade we

supplied their chillies and they sold us ice cream, mint chocolate chip, excellent...

IMREOIR
Villain Monologue, really?

Igrok shrugs

IGROK
People love lore...

IMREOIR
...Not lore dumps...

IGROK
How else are you going to tell the story?

XELOS (CONT'D)
...But King Roland of Kinsburo decided on subterfuge. He wanted to use our industrial might, without the proper paperwork! Can you believe it, Bureaucracy makes the world go round, we all know this (Imreoir rolls his eyes and groans) And how can we survive without the tax revenue? So we closed our borders, but that wasn't enough. They vilified us in their news, and said I was a mad man, a psycho...

XELDA (O.S)
It was really my own fault, I ran away...

XELOS (CONT'D)
And I welcomed her, nursed her back to health, let her join my legions of doom!

Xelda steps to the door

XELDA (CONT'D)
...Its so hot here...

XELOS(CONT'D)
You just have no respect for your elders, You were grounded for a reason!

XELDA
You couldn't ground me at Seterra Resort...

XELOS
How would that be a punishment...

IMREOIR

Not that I don't truly enjoy drama. I don't but I got places to be, worlds to escape...

XELOS

Your right, (to Xelda) Back to your room little lady, we'll finish this later.

XELDA

You always say that, but we never do. I hate you!

She storms back into her room

XELOS

She doesn't mean that, now where were we? Oh yes, Fight to the death!

Xelda's door closes and iron gates drop from the ceiling to block all exits.

With a heavy sigh, Imreoir retrieves his bow, knocks and draws an arrow, Igrok charges with his ax held high over his head, Maeve starts the spell to summon an internal blizzard, and Katrina begins to strum power chords on her lute that summon projectiles of sound to strike her enemy.

Xelos easily blocks or deflects all the projectiles, catches Igrok's overhead swing with his own massive sword and forcibly moves him to block Imreoir's arrows.

IGROK

Argh, I thought you turned off friendly fire!

IMREOIR

Only for Maeve...

Igrok grumbles as he attempts to start a chain of combos on Xelos who continues to toy with them and the girls still try to score hits, Igrok is still being used as an orc shield.

IGROK

Ugh! Any time!

Imreoir stops his barrage of arrows and opens his devkit.

XELOS

Hey, no cheating!

He body slams Igrok to the ground and swipes hard with his sword causing a pressure wave that knocks the team back into walls and pillars.

XELOS

Oh what a glorious day for a battle! (notices the orb and retrieves it) Oh, I've been looking for this!

As he picks it up a wave of energy rushes over him and he grows a few inches.

XELOS (CONT'D)

Oh yeah, thats what I'm talking about!

Imreoir and Igrok attempt to double team Xelos, with speed and strength respectively, Xelos easily counters all attacks, even as the summoned blizzard rages and the girls still provide their ranged support. Xelos body slams the boys to the ground, teleports to the girls and attacks them with lightning infused punches and kicks

IGROK

You had to give him his talismen, didnt you?

The boys try to rush Xelos again, giving the girls time to retreat and regroup. Xelos is still easily countering most attacks and taking little damage comparatively. After a moment of intense battle Igrok, still fighting calls over to Imreoir who has started sniping again

IGROK

Down to one hit point, you?

IMREOIR

Too low...

IGROK

What about phase two?

IMREOIR

Two it is!

They nod to each other and activate their devkits.

A wave of energy emanate from them and the whole team transforms: Imreoir is now in his warrior form, Igrok in his Mage form, even the girls have new forms, Maeve is a punk rocker with a huge 'battle ax' and Katrina is now a kodachi, or female ninja

MAEVE

What?! Why do I have an ax? (starts playing without conscious control) Since when do I know power ballads?

KATRINA

Ohh, cool! Does this mean I can use the power of the shadow?

She disappears in a puff of smoke, reappearing occasionally as she lands multiple hits in quick succession on Xelos

KATRINA (CONT'D)

Kakoidas! (cool in japanese)

XELOS

And here I thought the cheating was over! Umfh

Xelos gets body slammed by the warrior Imreoir

XELOS (CONT'D)

Hey, no fair!

Xelos manages to hold his own for a few moments against the new style and strategy of attacks, but finally get run through from behind by a tiring Imreoir. He falls to the ground in an overly dramatic death and the devkit wave washes over the group, transforming them back to normal. The team catch their breath for a moment and gather in front of Xelda's door again.

IMREOIR

I thought you said the quest was about saving the princess...

IGROK

It was...

IMREOIR

Then why are we still here?

Xelda's door opens to ask if it was over and notices her father, eyes wide with shock, she gasps and rushes over to futilely slap at Imreoir.

XELDA

You didn't have to kill him!

She swats for a moment while Imreoir protests and tries to explain the gives up and activates his devkit

IMREOIR

You know what, Fine!

The wave of energy washes over the scene and Xelos appears again, the Xelda rushes to hug him

IMREOIR

Why would you write a quest like this?

IGROK

Well, first off, I thought you hated the mindless beat-em-ups? You were always telling me you wanted something that needed thought. And secondly, I told you, procedurally generated, your presence changed the dynamic...

IMREOIR

So because I'm here the quest isn't deadly?

MAEVE

Maybe you inspire the insipid family love, We lizard folk

XELDA

Why do you want to kill everything?

IMREOIR

I don't!

IGROK

We did bring back the orb, that has to count for something, and He brought back your dad...

XELOS

Much appreciated, and thanks for bringing back the orb...

KATRINA

Grokie says, only quests that have consequences are worth it, last time we...

IMREOIR

Last time?

XELDA

Yeah, they come by every few months to keep things interesting.

IMREOIR

Fine, whatever, Why are we still in the game, the quest is over...

MAEVE

Didnt you imply the bugs as you call it, started at the college?

IGROK

The dragon, I thought it was especially powerful

KATRINA

We didn't actually defeat it, we ran like scared kittens.

XELOS

If you need a lift to the college, I can help, after all, you did save my life.

EXT. SKY OVER LAVA LANDS, VIEWING THE AIRSHIP DRAGON'S GAMBIT - LATER

We see a large airship of distinctive steampunk design. The camera orbits the ship as Xelo introduces us to the airship.

XELOS (V.O.)

From the time we settled this land, we learned that though vast and lightly populated, we needed a way to traverse our realms, with all speed due, we built a fleet, led by our own Dragon's Gambit...

KATRINA (V.O)

We had this earlier...

XELOS (V.O.)(CONT'D)

Indeed, people too often choose violence, when communication is far more useful. As I was saying, The Gambit is our finest ship of the line, it shouldn't take too long to get back to the college of Magi.

The camera slows it orbits, then we move towards, then enter the bridge.

INT. AIRSHIP DRAGON'S GAMBIT, BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The airship is very steampunk, there is a helmsman and a captain, but they are only scenery.

IMREOIR

Very steampunk, Something you came up with, Igrok?

XELOS

The Gambit was designed by the merchant master Clive Coutier...

XELDA

It has been in the family for generations, I can't wait until I inherit it!

XELOS

Honey, I'd have to die first...

XELDA

So I wait longer...

IGROK

How long will the trip take, we have preparations to make.

XELOS

Not long, about exactly as long as you need, I'd wager.

INT. DRAGON'S GAMBIT, GALLEY - LATER

The galley is on the cusp of being small, NPCs are sitting at tables with food in front of them that they are not eating. The team is at a table in the middle also ignoring their food.

Xelos and Xelda appear and join in the conversation, he asks about what kind of ice cream they want when it's over.

XELOS

So, have you talked with Constance lately...

IMREOIR

Oh, yeah, she's the one that sells apples, right?

IGROK

Even here? Man, I have to update the conversation packs.

XELDA

Why do you spend time doing this? Wandering around, picking fights, isn't there something more social you could be doing?

KATRINA

Grokie says its all about the loot!

IMREOIR

Prost!

XELOS

After a big adventure, I enjoy a nice ice cream...

MAEVE

Apple?

XELDA

That's for pie...

IMREOIR

Constance sells apples...

The team are suddenly silent and stare at him

IMREOIR (CONT'D)

What? Its true, right?

IGROK

I've always liked chocolate...

MAEVE

I can't eat ice cream, really any dairy...

XELOS

Oh, your missing out on one of the glories of live

MAEVE

Oh, yeah, frozen bovine lactate, must be dreamy...

KATRINA

Some of it comes from goats...

IMREOIR

It is more creamy, I'm a fan of mint...

XELOS

With chocolate chips is amazing

IGROK

Shouldn't we plan or something

XELDA

My sources say the collage has been quite for a while,
no one or out.

IMREOIR

Since when does a trapped princess have sources?

XELOS

She is still the commander...

IGROK

Uh, I actually have a memory gap, Maeve, what do you
remember?

She thinks for a while then shrugs defeated

MAEVE

It scares me I don't really remember anything before
you.

IGROK

This is going to be a problem.

EXT. EXTERIOR GATES OF THE MAGES COLLEGE - NIGHT

The castle containing the mages college is high fantasy and at the top of a tall mountain range. The airship is parked at an air pier just down the road, and Xelos and Xelda join the party as they approach the gate.

IMREOIR

So, what do you remember about this dragon?

XELOS

Legends tell of a fell beast that breathes fire and
manipulates lightning in its claws...

IMREOIR

Who asked you?

XELOS (CONT'D)

...They say, she can petrify a man with a simple gaze...

IGROK

(activating dev kit) Skip! He's right, thing is I don't remember programming a dragon, it's supposed to be a griffin...

IMREOIR

Program?

MAEVE

Yes, you claim to build worlds on your computers...

KATRINA

It's getting worse...

MAEVE

Funny thing is, I like him better this way.

IGROK

Yeah, we better hurry, I'm starting to forget too...

MAEVE

And that's a bad thing?

IMREOIR

Yes, because if we are trapped, they may kill the program to try to save us.

They stop in front of the gate a sign reads "かわいい獣に注意してください" (beware the kawikaiju', or 'cute beast').

Imreoir looks at it for a long time, inhaling deeply and unhappily.

IMREOIR

(to Igrok) Cute Monster!

IGROK

It's a placeholder...

IMREOIR

(more insistent) CUTE MONSTER!

IGROK

You know how gamers are!

IMREOIR

CUTE MONSTER!? (inhales deeply to calm himself)
Fine whatever, I swear, there better not be tentacles on
this thing.

He storms to the door and disappears

XELOS

Should we follow him, we have some great ice cream on
the ship...

IGROK

What is it with you and Ice cream?

KATRINA

Com'on we have to help Reoir!

She bounds excitedly to the door and also disappears, Igrok shrugs

IGROK

You heard her.

EXT. MAGE COLLEGE GRAND COURTYARD- NIGHT

The four moons are full. We are in a high fantasy grand garden courtyard, there are numerous pairs of mages practicing spells, talking, and going to and from various locations. But the residents are seemingly frozen in time.

They walk around the courtyard trying to figure things out, eventually arriving at the central fountain, and are approached by a tall lady with long golden hair, This is The Dragon.

DRAGON

Ah Brave adventurer, welcome home.

IGROK

What have you done to me?

DRAGON

Nothing, to you, but for you...

IMREOIR

No jokes, no lies, let us go!

DRAGON

What you ask is not in my power, I am only here to share
this world...

IMREOIR

So, you're a spy?

DRAGON

Not the right word

Phillipe arrives

PHILIPPE

My master has need for this world, and if you leave, we
lose the initiative

IGROK

Then I'm afraid you have to die!

Igrok attacks, but a gust of wind knocks them all down

DRAGON

I can't let you do that.

Imreoir is first to recover, he starts shooting arrows at the dragon and she casually flings them away, Maeve recovers and starts throwing ice balls as Katrina begins her songs. Igrok and Xelos recover at the same time, they nod to each other and rush the dragon with their most powerful weapons, she easily counter the double team as Imreoir and Maeve continue their long range attacks and Xelda joins the fray with two wakizashi in reverse grip. Phillippe starts casting fireballs at the supporting crew, Maeve, Imreoir, and Katrina launch projectiles at him and then, no one really making any headway. At first it appears that the dragon will counter all attacks but is soon overwhelmed. She falls at the feet of her three aggressors then begins to laugh maniacally as the team back up.

DRAGON

Fools! This isn't even my final form!

She begins to glow with a blinding golden light and transforms into a multi headed golden dragon. She takes off and repeatedly dive bomb with flame attacks, Phillippe dodges in and out of the fray as the team try to avoid the flames and fight him at the same time. One by one the team falls. After a climactic battle, only Imreoir and the dragon are left. She lands, roars and Imreoir, in his warrior form charge, she inhales to breath more fire and then The screen suddenly cuts to black, without revealing who won

After a second a voice can be heard

VOICE

(quiet, indistinct, and muffled as if through bad radio) Do
you think he's dead?

THE END