Gaige's ECHO logs
by Discar

Summary

A continuation of the Mechromancer’s ECHO logs. Text only, unfortunately (Cherami hasn’t returned my calls). EDIT: We’re back! As part of the lead-up to the Pre-Sequel, I’ll be publishing the ECHO’s for the Headhunter Packs every Monday morning until then.
GAIGE: Greetings, fifty—fifty *thousand* subscribers? Holy...okay, um, so a lot has happened since my last ECHO cast. I landed on Pandora, dodged Hyperion customs, Deathtrap killed like, three or four people, blah blah blah, it was no big deal. But when I was helping this old guy repair a Marcus Munitions vending machine—it was just a glitch in the digistruct matrix, the safety thought there were errors in the data when there weren’t, I just bypassed the whole thing—I mentioned the Vault, and he said that Handsome Jack was looking for Vault Hunters! I was *immediately* suspicious because, come on, the guy who declared everyone on the planet who isn’t a Hyperion employee bandits wants help? Anyway, I decided to go anyway, just to see what’s up. Had to hack the greeter bot to let me on the train, but that was easy, it barely even had a rudimentary sentience matrix. I had more trouble with the vending machine. [snorting laugh]

GAIGE: So there were four Vault Hunters on the train, like real, actual Vault Hunters, they’d each been running around Pandora for a while fighting bandits and everything. The short guy was actually born here, but more on that *in a moment*.

GAIGE: Right. It was a trap. I mean, obviously. Armed loaders started dropping in, bullets started flying everywhere, whatev. Deathtrap did pretty good, what with the whole ghosting through solid matter thing. Can you believe I was considering pulling that function? *Please*, that’s almost as cool as his levitation!

GAIGE: So the train crashed, the five of us were thrown out into the snow and left for dead, all that. Jack’s a douchebag. But get this: A *Claptrap* found us and dug us all out! Yeah, I can’t believe it either. I mean, that’s one of the things that pretty much everyone was actually, you know, pretty on board with when Jack ordered the destruction of that product line. They were glitchy and annoying before they tried to take over the planet, and at that point it was a no-brainer. Not sure how this one survived, but I guess it wasn’t by being less annoying than the others. Apparently we’re his minions now. So, um. Yeah. That’s cool.

GAIGE: Oh, and that reminds me about the *worst part* of this whole thing! When I was thrown from the train, my ECHO system got damaged! I mean, the thing was freaking *powder* by the time I found it. I think I got hit by some weird power surge or something, I dunno, I was in a sort of mini-coma at the time. No chance of recovering any of the data, which means I have to start from scratch. I can’t even summon Deathtrap right now, because a bunch of the necessary drivers were in my ECHO!

The others can’t do their cool stuff either—oh yeah, the others lost theirs too—and I think Axton was crying about his turret—

AXTON: I wasn't crying!

SALVADOR: You were weeping, just a little.

GAIGE: Right, but Claptrap gave us some new ones, so as we use them, they should learn from any of our still-functioning implants, and slowly let us recover all our *133t skills*. I think. I mean, the theory is sound, anyway...
GAIGE: This is Gaige, signing—oh wait, I totally forgot to introduce the others! Yeah, so, they're all older than me, which I guess I should have expected? But it's still kinda weird. Anyway, Axton—

AXTON: Hey there!

GAIGE: Axton is an ex-Dahl commando, still has his turret—[sniffling sounds]—er, had his turret, and is probably going to get it back really soon! Anyway, he said he left because, uh, well he said something about being “way too awesome for those assholes,” but I don't know, he almost got in a fight with Zero over which one got to land the killing blow on Knuckledragger, this giant ape-thing that stole Claptrap's eye. Maya just shot it in the head while they were bickering.

GAIGE: Maya's really nice. She's from Athenas, and apparently had some trouble with the local authorities. I understand that. She's also a fricken' SIREN, can you believe that? Six Sirens in the galaxy at any one time, and I just happen to hack my way onto a train with one of them on it! I, uh, haven't actually seen her powers yet—with her ECHO gone, her implants aren't set up right to enhance her powers, so all she can do is make a couple blue sparks appear—so...yeah. Axton is a little skeptic she really is a Siren, but you know what? I think she's trustworthy. She's like, the exact opposite of Marcy, so I feel like she's telling the truth.

MAYA: Thank you, Gaige.

GAIGE: No problem. Besides, you'll be back to your usual self by tomorrow night! Probably.

GAIGE: Anyway, so that short guy I mentioned earlier is called Salvador.

SALVADOR: Hola!

GAIGE: Yeah, hola von...muchachos...anyway, he's actually a Pandoran native, like born and raised. Yeah, sometimes I forget that the planet has been colonized for a while...not everyone is a Dahl miner who got abandoned when spring rolled around. He says he's a “Gunzerker,” which I'm pretty sure isn't actually, you know, anything, but whatev, I'm a Mechromancer, so. Yeah. Glass houses.

GAIGE: Last, we've got Zero...[pause]...aren't you going to say something, Zero?

ZERO: No.

GAIGE: O...kay. Right, so Zero is totally the mysterious warrior of the group. I think he might have like, a checklist or something. I mean, he's got a face-concealing helmet, he's got a cool sword, he's got four fingers on each hand...you ever gonna explain that one, buddy?

ZERO: No.

GAIGE: Yeah, I...yeah, I expected that. Oh, though he sometimes speaks in haiku, which I guess is cool. I don't know, not really my sort of thing, but whatever.

GAIGE: We're camped outside some place called “Liar's Burg” for the night. Well, a few hours anyway, since the nights are waay too long here. Axton wanted to just jump right in and start shooting, but Maya convinced him we should at least wait until we've had some rest. We've all had a loong day. Oh, and we buried Claptrap in the snow because he was too loud.

GAIGE: This is Gaige, Mechromancer of the Vault Hunters, signing off.
Chapter Summary

Cleaning Up the Berg/Best Minion Ever

GAIGE: Hello, subscribers! Gaige here, still alive and on Pandora.

GAIGE: Liar's Burg was fun. Well, except for all the murderous bandits. And the bullymongs. And there was this flock of rakks that we didn't see until like three seconds before they were on top of us. Okay, mostly, it sucked, but we met Sir Hammerlock! He has a robotic arm, like me! Well, not exactly like me, mine is way more awesome—I'm pretty sure his doesn't do anything other than, you know, be an arm—but still, he's a pretty chill dude.

GAIGE: So, right, there's kind of...an elephant in the living room I need to discuss. [deep breath] I...killed some people today. Not Deathtrap, me. I mean, I had no choice, there were just so many bandits, we were getting overwhelmed. Yesterday, Salvador and Axton were able to handle most of the bullymongs, but that wasn't an option here. Maya tried to get me to stay back, but they just kept coming and we were surrounded and I had this gun we found in a refuse pile and...

GAIGE: [sniffling] I don't know if I've had time to get over Marcy's death, or if using Deathtrap to get past customs inured me to it, or maybe it was that the bandits were shooting at me at the time, but...I'm okay. I'm seriously, surprisingly okay with it. Like I said, they were shooting at me. Fair's fair, right? I mean, okay, maybe I had a little bit of PTSD when one guy's head exploded all over me, but a couple hours later and I was fit as a fiddle!

GAIGE: Once I was up and running again, Hammerlock gave us some directions. There was a nearby Crimson Raider outpost—that's the resistance, most of them used to be Crimson Lance before Atlas went belly-up—that got abandoned when Hyperion moved in. We got some decent shields there, which was a fricken' godsend. I mean, Insta-Health works wonders, but, you know, better to not get hurt in the first place. Preventative care.

GAIGE: Anyway, did a couple minor things for Hammerlock—he needed some bullymong hair because he's writing an almanac on Pandoran wildlife, there was a midget riding on one that he wanted dead, that kind of thing—and by the time we had finished all that, our ECHO's had finally learned our behavior and fighting patterns, downloaded the relevant software updates, and re-mapped our implants! In other words, everyone gets their action skills back, and I am proven to be as awesome as usual. No, no, more awesome. Because I was the one who noticed first, which meant that the first any of the others heard of it was when a legless, levitating death robot digistructed out of thin air and started slashing bad guys! Can you say dynamic entrance? Oh, though Deathtrap's not as strong as he was before, the ECHO's still aren't anywhere close to done restructuring, but, you know. Baby steps.

GAIGE: Anyway, so we followed Claptrap to his ship, and Handsome Jack called us. Like, three or four times. To brag about his freaking pony. Ugh, I swear, I think he might be almost as bad as Marcy Holloway. Almost.

GAIGE: Oh, and before I forget, yes, Maya really is a Siren. You should have seen Axton's face when Captain Flynt just started floating with this purple-blue glow around him. [snorting laugh] It
was so funny I almost stumbled into one of the fire things he had everywhere.

SALVADOR: Don't forget I'm the one who saved you!

GAIGE: Yeah, but...ugh, I'm completely out of order here. Okay, so Captain Flynt was Claptrap's previous owner. Jailer, whatever. Claptrap's ship was...docked? I'm not sure what the, you know, word is here, but there was a crane on the back of Flynt's ship, holding Claptrap's little dinghy. So as we got closer and closer to Claptrap's ship, we were fighting more and more of Flynt's men. We were doing pretty well, I think. I guess. I haven't really killed dozens of people before, but. Yeah. We survived, they didn't. I'm taking that as a win.

GAIGE: Right, so we fought off Flynt's first mates, Boom and his brother Bewm—I know, don't even say it, I know—which gave everybody a chance to show off. Salvador started blasting away with two guns at once, Zero turned invisible, Axton's turret was kinda cool...it was a pretty awesome fight. Maya didn't phase-lock anyone, which I think she did on purpose so that when she did it later, it was more shocking. She's got a little mean streak in her. I like it.

GAIGE: Well, Axton was a little too trigger-happy with the cannon, so we got separated from Claptrap. Anyway, killed more people, found the annoying little robot, he opened the door to Captain Flynt for us. Oh, and Claptraps still can't use stairs. Another reason levitation is awesome!

GAIGE: Which brings me to Flynt himself. We fought him on the deck of his ship, and he had these giant grills that shot out pillars of flame every couple minutes. Man clearly liked fire. I can respect that. I mean, he's obviously wrong, shock is the best, but hey, whatever, everyone is entitled to their opinion. Even when it's wrong.

GAIGE: This is when Maya proved her Siren...ness? Sirenicity? This is when she used her powers for the first time. She kinda locked him in an alternate dimension for a second—I'm not sure how that works, it clearly isn't like any sort of technology I've ever seen, but I'll figure it out eventually—she phase-locked him, which gave us a second to deal with his crew without him dropping a fire nova on us every three seconds. And that's when Axton's jaw hit the floor, and I almost stumbled into the fire thingy, and Salvador pulled me back.

SALVADOR: De nada.

GAIGE: ...yeah. So, Flynt is dead, Maya has a bitchin' new fire pistol, and we're on a boat with Claptrap for fifteen hours.

CLAPTRAP: Minion! What's that you got there?

GAIGE: Uh, I gotta go. Gaige out.
GAIGE: Greetings, loyal subscribers! Another update from the Mechromancer of the new Vault Hunters!

GAIGE: After fifteen very long hours on a boat with Claptrap, we finally reached Three Horns Divide, which is sorta like Aziraphale Junction back on Eden-5—just sort of a quiet, pretty place you drive through to get somewhere important—except with more ice and snow. And monsters. Bullymongs and rakks, mostly, but I saw my first skag too. I can't believe people actually eat those things.

GAIGE: Anyway, we got off the boat, and left Claptrap's ranting behind—finally—and walked to a vehicle digistruct station. That's when Angel called. Oh, crap, I didn't mention Angel before! Okay, so, she's some kind of AI who's hacked the ECHO network to communicate on an exclusive feed. Pretty neat trick, and I still haven't figured out how she did it. But the thing is, she's weirdly...sane. I mean, the smarter an AI is, the more quirks it has. That's just basic programming. But Angel, she seems at human or above intelligence, and yet...she's normal. She can hold a conversation without rambling about something random that caught her attention.

GAIGE: So, we're at the digistruct station, but we can't use it. This guy named Scooter owns them, and he locked them so the bandits can't use them. I tried hacking it, but no good. This guy must be a genius—he didn't just put up a firewall, he physically hooked every essential system to the authenticator, so if you're not an authorized user, it can't do anything! Obviously, I'd be able to hack it in a few hours, because I'm awesome like that, but Angel managed to find an inactive Hyperion bot in a nearby bandit camp. I think there were like, ten bandits total, it took about five minutes. Anyway, I pulled the uplink adapter out of the bot and then installed it in the “Catch-a-Ride” station. Yeah, that's seriously what they're called.

GAIGE: So, uh, Angel hacked the station for us, and we spawned three cars, since they only had two seats each. Axton and Salvador were in one, Zero in the other, and Maya and I took the last one. She kinda insisted, actually. She still seems a little worried about the boys, which I guess is fair, but...still seems paranoid, you know?

MAYA: I can hear you.

GAIGE: Uh, right. So I was in the turret, blasting bullymongs and rakks, which was kinda fun, but it just got tedious after a little while. Really, just not my thing, you know? But then we got to Sanctuary. They wouldn't actually let us in, because we had to prove out worth or something—hello? Survived a trap set by Handsome Jack himself? Exploding train? Ringing any bells?—so we got sent after Corporal Reiss, who had a power core for the city's shield.

GAIGE: Well, by the time we found him, the power cell was stolen, and Reiss was almost dead. He managed to tell us who took it—the Bloodshots—before, um, taking a nap. And not waking up. I mean...[sniffle]...I didn't even know him, so it's not like I, I guess, care or anything, but...they killed him just because Jack offered them money. Money which he probably won't even give them. Well,
he definitely won't, since we killed them all in a glorious orgy of destruction when retrieving the
power core—

MAYA: Okay, who taught Gaige the word 'orgy'? Axton? Was it you?

AXTON: Don't look at me.

MAYA: Salvador?

SALVADOR: ¿Yo? No hablo Inglés.

GAIGE: So anyway, Zero spoke a haiku over Reiss's body before, you know, all the killing and
destructing and retrieving, which I thought was nice.

GAIGE: After all that, we ECHO'ed Roland, the leader of the Crimson Raiders, again. He was the
one who sent us after Reiss in the first place. He seemed nice enough, but we still haven't actually
seen him, because he got ambushed while we were talking. We'll rescue him from the Firehawk
tomorrow.

GAIGE: AGGH, I'm doing everything out of order again! Okay, okay, so, when we got the power
core and destroyed the Bloodshot camp, Roland got kidnapped. Lieutenant Davis let us into the city,
we plugged in the core, restored the shield, and they let us into the city. The inner city, I mean.
There's this sort of outer ring that is pretty much just a wall and the shield control center, but anyway.
That's when we met Scooter.

GAIGE: Scooter is...hm. Yeah, I'm...huh. Not really sure what to say about that one. I mean, he's
kind of funny, I guess, in a sort of...okay, I'm just gonna say it: He talks like a redneck from a frontier
world where they don't care about incest laws. He sounds exactly like what everyone on Eden-5
thought borderworlders sounded like. I mean, he called me a unicorn.

GAIGE: But what I said before? About him being a genius? I...I'm still not sure whether the
equipment he's got is just so low quality, or if he really is an idiot, but...you know, I'll get back to you
on that one.

GAIGE: Anyway, with Roland gone, Scooter decided to initiate “Plan B.,” or, as Scooter put it—
[click]

SCOOTER: Plan “Turn this city into a floatin'-ass fortress of airborne awesomeness!” [laughs] B.

GAIGE: [click] Which, honestly, I think, sums it up pretty well. Or, well, it would, if it had worked.

GAIGE: You see, Sanctuary city used to be Dahl's greatest interplanetary mining ship, but I guess
something happened to the core systems or whatever, so when the company abandoned Pandora,
they left the ship behind. So, although it should be able to fly just fine, plugging in a few fuel cells
didn't do anything but make the ground shake. I tried helping Scooter take a look, but, uh, levitation
isn't really my strong suit. Deathtrap uses an off-the-shelf unit that I just modified a little to work with
his power supply. Macro-scale anti-gravity is a little beyond me.

GAIGE: So after that, he sent us to the Crimson Raider Headquarters, where Roland lived. Lives.
There was a woman named Tannis there, too, but she was asleep when we first got in. The important
part is that now we have a clubhouse!

AXTON: Say “base of operations.” It sounds cooler.

GAIGE: Oh come on, it's totally a clubhouse. It has a freaking balcony. And like, a dozen washing
machines, for some reason.

GAIGE: Anyway, there was an ECHO for Roland from the Firehawk, telling him to come to some place called “Frostburn Canyon,” or he'd kill people. Scooter said this guy is some mercenary or bounty hunter, and even the Guardian Angel seemed worried. She says we need to find Roland as soon as possible.

GAIGE: But, as we were leaving, it turned out a bunch of people in the city needed help. I mean, I don't know why they're asking us for help, I guess...they just don't want to leave the city, because of Hyperion and the bandits? Whatev, totally doesn't matter, they were willing to give us cash and loot. Lots of loot. Such wonderful loot. All sorts of pretty weapons and gizmos. We got this one gun, it uses Eridium-based technology to deconstruct ammunition and reconstruct it as exploding needles. It is the sexiest thing I have ever seen.

MAYA: Gaige, you're doing it again.

GAIGE: What?

ZERO: Drooling.

GAIGE: Oh, uh [wiping sound] anyway, we went to Three Horns Valley, which was on the way to Frostburn, and helped fix up the Happy Pig Motel. I enjoyed that, but I think everyone else got bored when I was playing around with the steam pump.

GAIGE: Anyway, after we got all that sorted, we headed off to deal with the Firehawk. By the time we got to the canyon—which lives up to its name, by the way, lots of snow everywhere and the bandits like fire—the Bloodshots were attacking the place. Which actually turned out to be a good thing, for us. The Firehawk's lair was kinda hard to find, but by following all the screaming and dying bandits, we only got lost once.

GAIGE: But here's the funny thing: The Firehawk isn't a bad guy! He's not even—

MAYA: Gaige.

GAIGE: Uh, I mean, okay, so we found the Firehawk. Um, he was fighting off a bunch of the Bloodshots, and he explained that he was actually a friend of Roland's! That ECHO we found wasn't a threat, it was a warning! Anyway, he and Maya had a good long chat about—

MAYA: Gaige.

GAIGE: Right, sorry, I keep forgetting! Okay, so we fought off the bandits—Deathtrap's Robot Rampage tech is working wonderfully, by the way—and after the Firehawk explained that the Bloodshots actually had Roland, in their base on top of the old Dahl Dam.

GAIGE: We were all ready to hare off after him, guns a'blazing, but Zero, of all people, pointed out that we still had time before Flanksteak—that's the Bloodshot leader with the overly graphic insults—decided to sell him to Hyperion. The Firehawk agreed, saying Roland could handle any torture they could dish out. I dunno, I'd think that maybe less torture would be better, but apparently these two have some history or whatever. Kinda cold, I know I wouldn't want one of my ex's to be tortured if I could stop it. Or, uh, if I had any ex's.

GAIGE: Anyway, the point is that with Doc Mercy—that's where we got the E-tech gun—and everything else that happened at Three Horns Valley, in addition to raiding the Firehawk's lair only to find out we didn't actually need to do any of that so it was a complete waste of time—Roland couldn't have left an ECHO address we could use to contact, uh, him? The Firehawk, I mean.
Would've saved like, five or six hours.

GAIGE: Well, we were all pretty beat after all that, and Sanctuary was on the way to the dam anyway so...yeah. We're holed up for the night. Just gonna tune up Deathrap a little—maybe manage to restore the Discord circuits—then take a quick cat nap, and we'll be out in a few hours.

CLAPTRAP: [distantly] Hey, you wanna hear the new dub-step song I wrote?

GAIGE: Ugh...if we can get any sleep. Mechromancer, out.
GAIGE: Uh, hey, subscribers. Gaige here, checking in after the mission at the Dahl dam. And I've just gotta say, Bloodshots are freaking weird, man.

GAIGE: We found a bunch of ECHO logs scattered around the fortress. Turns out they've been worshiping Marcus—of Marcus Munitions—as the “Gunbringer,” they built a giant statue and everything. I actually met Marcus, and I've gotta say, not really the kind of guy who is gonna give out free stuff, whether you're worshiping him or not.

GAIGE: But that's not the worst part, not by a long shot. Besides that, um, well, see...

GAIGE: Okay, I died. There was this jackoff named Mad Mike with a rocket launcher, and I was, you know, trying to dodge him because he had a freaking rocket launcher, and I accidentally jumped off the bridge above this whirlpool called the Devil's Gullet, and...died. Yeah. That's also when I found out I was in the New-U system, which is weird, I was never even in Eden-5's system—because Eden-5 doesn't have one—I can't understand why I'd be in Pandora's—

ANGEL: That was me. Sorry, I meant to explain it earlier. The old Vault Hunters are locked out now, but I took preemptive measures with you. No matter what happens, Jack will not be able to remove you from the system.

GAIGE: Oh. Well. Um. That explains that...thank you Angel?

ANGEL: You're welcome.

GAIGE: But that wasn't the point. The point is, even though I know how the system works—digistrates a clone body and pastes your neural patterns in using quantum encryption technology, ensuring that there's only one copy running around at a time—I know that. And I know that, you know, technically as a woman of science, I'm not supposed to believe in the soul. Or at least accept that quantum encryption is close enough. But, I mean, I died! And now I feel all...weird, and I'm not sure if I'm the same person or—

MAYA: Gaige, you should know that as a Siren, I can see things. Everyone has a...an energy field. And yours is the same as it was before, I promise.

GAIGE: ...oh. Thank you, Maya. Honestly, that does help—

SALVADOR: She made that up.

MAYA: [sighs]

GAIGE: ...ah.

MAYA: Gaige, listen, I—
GAIGE: Just...just leave me alone for a little while, okay? Please?

MAYA: ...okay. We'll be downstairs if you need us.

ZERO: “We?” I like listening.

MAYA: Yes, we. Come on, boys. [sound of footsteps leaving]

GAIGE: [sniffling] I know Maya meant well and everything, but I really...I mean...I think I felt better when all I had was a few stupid theories about why quantum encryption works.

GAIGE: Okay, but...okay. Right. So, a lot of stuff happened before that. That was, like, the very end of the day. I really need to get better at organizing my thoughts.

GAIGE: When we first tried to get into the Bloodshot Dam, they had a sudden attack of intelligence, and realized we weren't friends. So Scooter suggested we head off to the Dust to meet his sister, who might be able to help soup up our ride to be all bandity. He kinda threatened to kill us if we made fun of her. You know, he's getting creepier every day.

GAIGE: Anyway, it was a bit of a long drive, but we got there eventually, and found Ellie's scrapyard. She kinda, uh, squished a bandit and his truck in her car crusher. Well, uh, I'm sure she had a good reason. Probably.

GAIGE: Well, turns out that truck was exactly the one we needed, so. Yeah. Thankfully, she had another one in her garage, but it wasn't all bandity yet. She sent us out to blow up a bunch of bandit cars to get the pieces we needed—spikes, skulls, that kind of thing.

GAIGE: Some stupid ex-Vulture pilot—Vultures are these bandit fliers, very annoying—also wanted us to go to the Vulture training camp and get revenge for him, burn down their volleyball net, stuff like that. I wanted to go along with it, but Maya didn't think it was a good idea. But Axton and Salvador insisted on helping—Axton thought it sounded cool, and Salvador doesn't seem to be able to say no to anyone.

GAIGE: Again, I really don't care about Scooter's stupid cars—uh, don't tell him I said that—but, still, boosting off a giant rock formation and landing in the middle of a bandit camp is kinda the definition of awesome. Those guys never saw us coming! We just ground through the camp, shooting everything in sight, lit a few things on fire, Deathtrap shot a few of those stupid Vultures out of the sky...awesome.

GAIGE: [coughs] Anyway, once we were done with all that, we got back to Ellie, and she fixed up the truck for us and scanned it into her brother's system. And she hit on Axton a bunch too, which was actually pretty annoying. Not that I'm jealous, or anything. I mean, even if I had a chance in the first place, if anything had happened, she probably would have ended up squishing me to death...

GAIGE: Er, uh, right, so, Bloodshots! Yes, let's focus on the Bloodshots. Where was I...

GAIGE: Well, we went back to the Dahl Dam in our shiny new spiky deathtraps—oh, heh, Deathtrap, I didn't even mean to do that [snorting laugh]—and the bandits lowered the gate for us. They figured out we weren't theirs pretty quick, but by then we were already inside.

GAIGE: Flanksteak—that's the Bloodshot leader with the overly graphic threats—set this big guy named “Bad Maw” at us. He had this giant shield...with a bunch of midgets chained to it. Live midgets. What the hell is up with these freaking bandits? What do they have against midgets? And why are there so many midgets on Pandora? Questions for the ages, loyal subscribers. I suppose we'll never know.
GAIGE: Right so, kinda soon after that, I...died, and after that, Salvador managed to distract Mad Mike long enough for me to shoot him in the face. That made me feel a lot better. Oh, also, on a related note, the Anarchy tech is working great.

GAIGE: But other than the whole thing with…with that, moving through the dam wasn't too hard. The enclosed spaces worked well with Deathtrap and Anarchy, Axton covered me with his turret, all that. Maya's learned a few cool healing tricks, though I really wish she had mentioned her Restoration tech—that's like an Atlas Soldier's Cauterize tech, if anyone is wondering—was working again. You know, before she started shooting us.

GAIGE: Anyway, we got to the top of the dam, with all the holding cells and everything, and finally found Roland. Which, uh, is also when we realized that maybe we should have hurried a little bit more. At the very least, we should have skipped the third course of the breakfast Zero prepared. I mean, don't get me wrong, it was a really good breakfast, with pancakes, and bacon—or something that tasted like bacon anyway, and I didn't ask too many questions if you know what I mean—but, yeah. We should have hurried.

GAIGE: Because right when we found Roland, so did Hyperion.

GAIGE: They landed a bunch of repurposed loader bots on top of the dam—well, when I say “landed,” I mean they shot them from the moon base, which was actually pretty cool—and kidnapped Roland right out of his cell.

GAIGE: So then we had to follow this specially modified constructor bot that had him held hostage. We fought all the way over the ramparts of the dam—that's where that statue of Marcus was—fighting loaders the whole way. On the plus side, we didn't really have to deal with the bandits at the same time, since they were busy fighting the loaders. We mostly just hung back and mopped up the bots after. On the not so plus side, the loaders' armor acts as a basic Faraday cage, meaning all my shock weapons were basically useless! Salvador was the only one with any corrosive weapons, so we kinda just hid behind him the entire time.

GAIGE: And, uh, well, I guess we shouldn't have done that. I mean, we should have hurried a bit more. Because before we could destroy the constructor, it managed to escape with Roland, to some place called the Friendship Gulag.

GAIGE: The prison was in the Dust—thank God for the Fast Travel network—so we ran into Ellie again. She actually noticed me this time, uh, where'd I put that recording...

ELLIE: Don't get many visitors around here! Especially not ones so cute.

GAIGE: [click] So that was a little bit of an ego boost. You know, every bit helps right now.

GAIGE: Anyway, after she almost hugged me to death, she pointed us in the direction of the Friendship Gulag, and we were off.

GAIGE: Hyperion being, you know, Hyperion, the Gulag was all shiny and pretty with lots of repurposed loader bots trying to kill us. And some human engineers, too, who were actually more annoying than the loaders. C'mon guys, are you really buying what Jack is selling?

GAIGE: Anyway, the Gulag was actually harder than the Ramparts. It was more open, which meant Axton and Salvador were a little more useful, but also meant loaders were coming at us from every direction. Oh, and of course, there were digistruct stations set up to spawn more loaders, so that was fun too.
GAIGE: And, as if you even needed to ask, the constructor that took Roland also spawned more loaders. That's why they're called constructors, they...construct things. Anyway, the point is, we managed to kill the thing, thanks in no small part to me, Anarchy, and my shock-tech shotgun. Oh yeah. Who's awesome? I'm awesome.

GAIGE: The Guardian Angel called to congratulate us on rescuing Roland, and she mentioned someone named Wilhelm. She's talked about him before, I think, I'm not sure. Roland said he's some sort of super-cyborg loader. I don't know, he didn't seem to want to talk about it.

GAIGE: And...that was about it. Roland mentioned he had another job for us, but it's been a loong day, so he said we could just rest first. Oh, before I forget, listening to him and, uh, the Firehawk talk was pretty funny. You know how he got captured? The bandits grabbed him when he went to the bathroom. [snorting laugh]

GAIGE: ...wait. He was on the ECHO with us when he got grabbed... [knocking sound]

MAYA: Gaige? You still in here?

GAIGE: Uh, yeah, I'm just finishing my log. What's up?

MAYA: Zero just finished dinner. I thought you might want something to eat.

GAIGE: Oh, sure, thanks. I'll be right down.

MAYA: I'll save a seat for you. [sound of footsteps leaving]

GAIGE: Well, I have to go. For someone who doesn't seem to eat, Zero makes some really good food. Anyway, this is Gaige, Mechromancer of the Vault Hunters, signing off.
ECHO 9

Chapter Summary

before A Train to Catch

GAIGE: Remember what I said about the Bloodshots being crazy? Yeah, they've got nothing on the Children of the Firehawk. She—uh, I mean, uh...okay, so we got sent to take a look at this cult that the Firehawk accidentally inspired. Without going into too much detail, let's just say they like fire. A lot. One of them sent us to set a bunch of his friends on fire. I mean, what the hell?

GAIGE: Anyway, that whole thing was kinda annoying, I don't really feel like talking about it.

AXTON: Tell them about that guy who started worshiping us.

MAYA: Ugh, no. Let's skip that.

SALVADOR: It's kinda important. Here, I'll do it. After we shot a bunch of people—

GAIGE: Maya said no! Besides, you're doing it wrong.

AXTON: Yeah, we didn't get a worshiper because we killed people, we got one because we saved people. Although I think I'd prefer a girl...

SALVADOR: We saved people by killing people. What's the difference?

MAYA: I really hope you're joking.

SALVADOR: Eh, a little.

GAIGE: Moving on, we got a mission from Tannis, this scientist researching the Vault, eridium, Sirens, and all that. She lives in the Crimson Raider HQ, actually, we just missed her the first time. She's...well, she's...actually, here she comes now.

TANNIS: Maya, was it? I wish to inform you that I've finished analyzing your blood sample.

MAYA: Wait, my what?

TANNIS: I was not able to detect any irregularities between your blood and normal human blood, and I'm afraid I've exhausted my current supply. I would like another sample.

MAYA: Back up. Where'd you get the first?

TANNIS: Oh, don't worry, I was just using my own blood as the baseline. Self-sacrifice is a key part of scientific discovery, you know!

MAYA: No, I mean where'd you get my—

TANNIS: Oh, and I'll also need—DEAR GOD WHAT IS THAT?

MAYA: [sound of turning quickly] What—ow!
TANNIS: Thank you, this hair should do quite nicely.

GAIGE: Wait, last time you got a Siren hair you ate it.

TANNIS: Hm? Yes, robot-child, that is correct. But how did you know that?

GAIGE: We found one of your ECHO logs when we killed those Hyperion spies in Three Horns Valley.

MAYA: Oh yeah, I remember...wait. Are you going to eat my hair? Did you drink my blood?

SALVADOR: She's un vampira?

TANNIS: I did not drink your blood, or the hair, I tested them. Honestly, you neanderthals have no appreciation for the nuances of science! [sound of footsteps stomping away]

GAIGE: ...yeah. That was Patricia Tannis, everybody. Believe it or not, this was one of her more lucid moments. I heard her proposition one of the washing machines earlier.

MAYA: Should I go get my hair back?

GAIGE: Anyway, she sent us back to the Bloodshot Stronghold, which is already repopulated—I'm beginning to think the bandits might have a couple New-U stations squirreled away, but I dunno, I haven't really had a chance to ask Angel—to kill these mutants who escaped from some Hyperion lab.

GAIGE: That was a weird one. I mean, we got in disguised as pizza delivery men. Are all bandits completely insane? Seriously, I'm honestly asking here.

AXTON: This from the girl who chopped off her own arm over a scratch.

GAIGE: If you're going to use things against me that I told you in confidence, we can't be friends.

GAIGE: Back to the mission. We actually got a pizza—which was probably unnecessary, but whatever—from Moxxi, Scooter's mom. Moxxi is...not like Scooter. Or Ellie. Well, she's a little like Ellie, in the whole “make a pass at anything that looks like it has a pulse” sort of way, but otherwise not so much.

SALVADOR: Gazongas.

GAIGE: So we got the pizza from Moxxie, went back to Bloodshot Stronghold and fought our way halfway through until we found the entrance to this sort of...back-alley sewer system. It looked like some kind of refurbished maintenance center to me, but I'm not sure what exactly it was for. Seems a bit off the beaten path to be the nerve center for the entire dam.

MAYA: Don't forget the loader.

GAIGE: I'm getting to that, geez!

AXTON: But you're already past it.

GAIGE: Okay, fine! Before we got to the rats, we found these bandits beating up a loader, and after we killed them it had us pull out its AI core and install it into various bodies, which then tried to kill us, culminating in the radio back at Moxxi's. And then we had Doctor Zed turn it into a shield, which Salvador is now using. Are you happy now?
AXTON: But most of that happened after the rats.

GAIGE: I KNOW! THAT'S WHY I WAS SAVING IT FOR LATER!

MAYA: Gaige, calm down.

GAIGE: I AM CALM!

AXTON: Geez, I don't think I've ever heard you this worked up when you didn't have your Anarchy maxed.

GAIGE: Wait, what are you talking— [click]

GAIGE: I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA!

GAIGE: [click] What—where did you get that?

AXTON: Recorded it when we were fighting the loader core in the constructor. You're not the only one who can use an ECHO, you know.

GAIGE: Okay, fine, so maybe my Anarchy tech goes to my head a little bit, but it's new, I haven't worked out all the kinks yet, and besides, that only happened once. [click]

GAIGE: I AM THE INFINITE!

SALVADOR: [click] I know how to use it, too.

GAIGE: You...but...UGH! [sound of wood breaking]

SALVADOR: Ooh, Roland's not going to happy. He liked that table.

GAIGE: Ah, sorry, just, uh—

ZERO: Dinner is ready/please come and—what happened here?

AXTON: Gaige smashed Roland's table.

ZERO: Oh, well. Dinner time.

MAYA: We'll clean this up later, okay?

GAIGE: Okay...

AXTON: You don't want to miss one of Zero's meals.

SALVADOR: Maybe next time, I could cook!

MAYA: Yeah, that's not happening.

AXTON: We've all seen your wanted poster, buddy.

GAIGE: Well subscribers, I guess that's it for now. I think I covered everything today. Tomorrow, we're taking a break. This is Gaige, signing off.
GAIGE: Helloo, subscribers! Today was a good day, I think, and I'm looking forward to telling you all about it.

AXTON: Good day? You shot me!

GAIGE: Whatever, it was an accident! Next time, just stand behind me.

AXTON: I was standing behind you!

GAIGE: Okay, yeah, so I should probably mention that everyone made me re-spec my implants, because apparently my Anarchy tech combined with Close Enough is “a recipe for friendly fire.” Whatever, they're just overreacting.

AXTON: You shot me!

GAIGE: Oh come on, you've got that Preparation tech, you were only bleeding for like, five seconds!

GAIGE: So, yeah, I decided to go more for Deathtrap. Invested in Fancy Mathematics, Buck Up, that kind of thing. That should keep these narcs off my back.

MAYA: We're right here.

GAIGE: Oh, I know.

GAIGE: Right, start from the beginning. So after another of Zero's wonderful breakfasts, we decided to take a walk around town. Roland mentioned he might have a job for us soon, but right now we can just kinda take it easy. Zero just...disappeared, still not sure where he went, Salvador headed out to do some hunting, Axton spent most of the day at Moxxi's, and Maya talked to the Firehawk about —

MAYA: Gaige.

GAIGE: —stuff. They talked about stuff. Yeah.

GAIGE: Uh, while all that was going on, I spent some time with Scooter, you know, trying to help out with some of the mechanical stuff the city needs. I couldn't really do anything for the anti-grav, but I know a little bit more about shields.

GAIGE: So I went outside the wall and played around with that a bit. Scooter pointed me to his junk pile, so I was able to cobble together a decent current regulator and install a pulse dampener, just little stuff like like that. It's not as good as getting a new fuel cell, but it will keep the shield going a little longer.
GAIGE: That ate up most of the morning, and once I came back into the city for lunch, Doctor Zed grabbed me. He—oh, crap, I didn't mention Zed yet, did I? Okay, he's in charge of all the medical vending machines on Pandora, which is kinda impressive, but it would be more if they weren't blatantly just repainted auto-vends from other companies.

GAIGE: Anyway, he's not like, legally a doctor, he's just an honorary one because he keeps people mostly healthy and doesn't kill too many people. Except for, uh, bandits. And he sent us to kill a rival of his a while back—that's where we got that E-tech gun. And Marcus mentioned something about zombies...

AXTON: He was probably joking about that.

SALVADOR: No, I heard stories about this. It was at Jakobs Cove—

GAIGE: Hey! Guys, c'mon, you keep interrupting when I'm ECHO-casting.

AXTON: ...sorry.

GAIGE: As I was saying, Zed grabbed me. Not literally, I probably would have gone all ninja on him if he had done that, but...you know.

GAIGE: Turns out he just wanted to talk about the Hyperion occupation, as a native of Pandora. He heard about my ECHO-cast, and thought he could get the word out a little better this way. Anyway, I recorded the conversation, so I'll just do that here. [click]

GAIGE: Is this thing...okay, there we go. Ahem, I'm here with Doctor Zed Blanco, here to talk about Handsome Jack's military occupation of his homeworld. Doctor, this was your idea, so why don't you tell me what you wanted to talk about?

ZED: Ah, first missy, there's that teensy little matter we discussed earlier—

GAIGE: Oh, right, sorry. Uh, Doctor Zed is legally required to inform anyone listening that he is not a real doctor. He lost his license...how'd you lose it, again?

ZED: I'll spare you all the messy details—let's just say that some people can't stomach the sight of a little bit of blood, and some people shouldn't be in charge of revoking medical licenses.

GAIGE: Uh, right. Sure, I...guess that makes sense...

ZED: Glad you think so.

GAIGE: So...I guess I'll start. You were born in Jackville, right?

ZED: Fyrestone. Definitely wasn't named after that faceless bastard while I was living there, that's for sure.

GAIGE: I...faceless? Wha?

ZED: Ah, don't worry about that. I just heard some stuff about him from Moxxi after she had too many drinks...let's, let's just move on.

GAIGE: Okay, so you were born in Fyrestone, in the...

ZED: Arid Badlands. That's right next door to the Dahl Headlands and a few mines. It was one of the biggest mining towns on the planet for a long time, you know.
GAIGE: But LiiiiRoland...Roland said that you were the only one there when the old Vault Hunters got off the bus.

ZED: Er, yeah. Well, ya see, when Dahl pulled out, and Nine Toes started his bandit gang, everybody either joined up with him, or got killed. I stayed because I had a stake in the place, and the bandits left me alone. More or less. Not even they were stupid enough to try to kill the only doctor! Except when they were really drunk.

GAIGE: Okay, let's, uh, move forward a bit, all right? Roland and the others opened the first Vault, killed the Destroyer, and then...what? I'm still kinda fuzzy on the details there, cuz, I mean, Jack kinda has a stranglehold on information coming out of Pandora.

ZED: Ah, yeah, that was what I wanted to get at. Well, I'm sure you know Claptrap did his whole... [sighs] Robolution thing, and after the old Vault Hunters handled that, that's when Jack came in. Atlas was still here at this point, but their grip was failing, and most of the other big guys never really had a big stake in the planet. You understand.

GAIGE: Right, that was news for a long time.

ZED: Well, Hyperion used that whole cluster as an excuse to get their claws into the planet, and that rat-bastard was leading the charge. Now, I ain't never been one to get involved in politics, but when somebody starts building a giant frikken' satellite in front of my favorite moon, I sit up and take notice.

GAIGE: Not to mention shooting robots at your house.

ZED: Ah, no, no that happened later. I don't know all the technical whosawhatits of the thing, but Scooter said they didn't have the equipment up and running for a good long while. Most of the time, it was just kinda...glaring at us.

GAIGE: Yeah, the whole thing is weird. Judging from the way those moonshot cannons operate—

ZED: Ah, missy, I thought we agreed you wouldn't do any of that technical babbling.

GAIGE: Right, sorry! [clears throat] This is about you.

ZED: Anyway, it wasn't too long after that that Jack sent Wilhelm to take out New Haven—ah, that was sorta the unofficial capital at the time, and where Marcus and all of them lived.

GAIGE: And that's when Lilith died.

ZED: What? Oh, uh, yeah. That's when things really started to go downhill, you understand. Before the Crimson Raiders fortified here in Sanctuary, they were getting picked off everywhere they poked their heads up. To be honest, it was only when Atlas finally pulled out that Roland managed to get his little gang off the ground.

GAIGE: Really? Back home, they said that's when the occupation started. Officially, I mean. Or, as officially as these things get. That's when Handsome Jack passed the law saying everyone on Pandora was a bandit, that's what I'm trying to say.

ZED: Well, yeah, that's about the meat of it, but you're missing something important. See, when Atlas pulled out, they left the Crimson Lance behind, just like Dahl did with their workers. So suddenly Roland had a big pool of trained soldiers, just itching for something to shoot. Wasn't too hard to convince a lot of them to come to Sanctuary. Corporal Riess brought in a bunch personally, I believe. Wasn't really paying too much attention to the finer details, I'll admit.
GAIGE: Okay, but what about...uh...

ZED: Misplace your notes?

GAIGE: One sec, I know I have them right here...

ZED: Look, I'll just get down to the meat of it. Hyperion says me and mine are all bandits, we're not. So, when they show up, they're shootin' at us, so we shoot right back.

GAIGE: I guess that—

ZED: I mean, sure, when somebody shoots at me I kill them, loot the corpse, and stick the body on a pike as a warning to others, but I don't understand why everybody's all bent out of shape over that sort of thing. Most of my friends are rotting on pikes right now, and you ain't gonna hear me complaining!

GAIGE: I...I was gonna ask if those propaganda pics Jack sent out were real, but I guess—

ZED: And maybe every once in a while I perform experiments that have been declared “unethical” or “inhumane” or “war crimes” accordin' to galactic law, but does that really make me a bad guy?

GAIGE: I think maybe we should quit while we're ahead. [click]

GAIGE: ...yeah. That was Doctor Zed, everyone. Just thought it would be a good idea to get a closer look at the occupation from a native's point of view.

SALVADOR: I'm a native.

GAIGE: Yeah, I wanted a native who knew about the occupation before the army showed up at his house.

AXTON: Did you really just do that?

GAIGE: Do what?

AXTON: Play a recording, manually recording it a second time, instead of just splicing them together?

GAIGE: Uh...maybe?

AXTON: Some techie you are.

GAIGE: Anyway. After Zed, we all joined up again for lunch, Zero cooking, uh, something—

SALVADOR: The skags and rakks I caught.

GAIGE: Really didn't need to know that! Well, after lunch, we headed out again to do this minor job for Sir Hammerlock—he's writing a book, and he needs a better name for bullymongs than, you know, bullymongs—which is also when Axton got himself shot.

AXTON: Whoa, no, you shot me, it was not my fault.

GAIGE: We'll just have to agree to disagree on that one. Even though I'm obviously right. Anyway, I guess that's it for tonight. Not sure this was really interesting for you all, but whatever, I just felt like trying something new, y'know? Tomorrow we're back to the main quest.
Chapter Summary

A Train to Catch

GAIGE: [constant sound of engine] You know, I didn't have high hopes for today, but I guess I was wrong.

AXTON: I told you train jobs are always a blast.

MAYA: Can you at least wait until we're back at Sanctuary?

GAIGE: Zero said I should do this while it's still fresh in my mind.

MAYA: Axton, bring us closer to their runner. I'm gonna shoot them.

AXTON: Sure thing.

MAYA: I wasn't being serious.

AXTON: Oh.

GAIGE: Anyway, Roland gave us a mission to go to Tundra Express and talk to this spy of his who thinks he knows where Handsome Jack has the Vault Key. That's...uh...it's a key. That opens the Vault. Yeah, I guess you could have figured that out.

GAIGE: Hammerlock grabbed us again before we left, asked us to do this thing with the varkids. He said something about meta...whatever. Point is, they're these bugs the size of a dog, if you shoot them they get into a cocoon thing, and he asked us to jab them with the injector. He thought...uh, actually, I have no idea what he thought would happen. But they turned into these ugly giant flying bugs, and then [snorting laugh] he had us kill them. Uh, it was funny because...yeah. You know, I think you just had to be there.

GAIGE: Well, what Roland wanted was a bit more involved. His spy was sleeping off a bad bender, so we had to wake him up. By, uh, lighting a bunch of varkids on fire. I mean, yeah, they made this really, you know, unique screeching sound when they burned but...really? That was the only way to wake him up?

GAIGE: Anyway, we were having a lot of trouble with that because someone kept killing them too quickly.

AXTON: Salvador can't hear you.

GAIGE: Ugh, whatever, the point is, it was a lot harder than it had any right to be—not least because I accidentally summoned Deathtrap and he started cutting through the bugs like a farmer through wheat, and then he wouldn't de-summon because of that Upshot Robot tech I installed during my re-spec yesterday—but we found these little...towers that sprayed the varkid fields with fire, so it all worked out without too many bug bites.
GAIGE: Turns out Roland's spy was actually Mordecai, one of the old Vault Hunters. He was perched on top of this...water tower, I think, and provided sniper support for the rest of the mission, which was nice.

GAIGE: So he told us about the train that runs through Tundra Express—actually, I think the place is named after the train, but whatev—and that the Vault Key was on one of the cars.

MAYA: Carriages.

GAIGE: Huh?

MAYA: The different sections of a train are called carriages.

AXTON: What? No they're not.

MAYA: Yes, they are, I'm sure of it.

AXTON: Look, I've robbed more trains than you've seen, and I'm telling you, they're just called cars.

GAIGE: Okay, look, that's really not important right now. The point is, the trains don't slow down enough for us to rob them, so Roland sent us to Tiny Tina. He described her as “odd”, but—

AXTON: Mechanical arm.

GAIGE: Would you stop bringing that up? Anyway, Roland seemed a little worried about, I dunno, how we'd react to a thirteen year-old demolitionist who talks like my Great-Aunt Nelly after she's downed a few beers, but, I mean, c'mon. Thirteen year-old demolitionist! What's not awesome about that? The only thing that could be better would be an eighteen year-old smoking hot babe who invented her own floating death robot.

MAYA: Subtle.

GAIGE: Tina sent us to get uh, what'd she call them? Badonkadonks, I think? She sent us to get the bombs, which some nearby bandits had stolen, you know how it goes. Walk in, let Deathtrap run around, Axton drops his turret, bullets start flying everybody's having a swell old time! Except for the bandits. They get shot.

GAIGE: After we brought the bombs back to Tina—

AXTON: I think you skipped a part.

GAIGE: What? No I didn't!

MAYA: The part where you accidentally hit the alarm and called about fifty more bandits.

GAIGE: Oh. Right. That. Yeah...that happened. Well, I mean, c'mon! Is anyone really complaining? Axton got a cool Dahl grenade launcher from one of those Nomad-type guys.

AXTON: No, it was one of the ones with the shields.

GAIGE: Aren't those still Nomads?

AXTON: I thought they were Bruisers, or whatever.

MAYA: Bruisers are the ones with the masks.
AXTON: No those are the goliaths. I definitely remember those freaks.

MAYA: No, the other masks. The smaller, spiky ones.

GAIGE: You're thinking of Psychos.

MAYA: No, I am not thinking of Psychos, I know those when I see them.

GAIGE: Look, it doesn't matter anyway, we can yell at whoever put the names in the ECHO system later... [pause]

MAYA: ...something wrong?

GAIGE: This is just normally when Angel pops in with some interesting tidbit or whatever.

MAYA: Well, I doubt she's listening to us twenty-four seven. We finished the job, she can ignore us for now.

GAIGE: Yeah, yeah. So after we brought the bombs back to Tina, she attached these doll/detonator things to them, and sent us to go stop the train. There was this bandit with an ECHO recorder and a trap on the way...whatever, it's not important, I mean, Salvador died a little bit, but he's fine now, and that was his bad anyway.

GAIGE: We found the spot Tina picked out, set up the rockets, and started the countdown. Tina launched them early though, which [laughs] I thought was kinda funny, but made Zero jump about three feet in the air.

MAYA: He did?

GAIGE: Yeah, he totally did. Don't tell him I said that, though! I don't think he knows anyone saw.

GAIGE: Tina's plan for stopping the train was actually pretty clever. I thought we were supposed to actually blow up the train, but I guess that might have damaged the Vault Key or whatever, and plus, the train moved too fast for us to put bombs on it. Which was the point of the rockets.

GAIGE: What I'm trying to say is, we blew up the rail itself, and it was awesome. The train just fell into a chasm and barreled right into a cliff at full speed. Cars—

MAYA: Carriages.

AXTON: Cars.

GAIGE: —train sections were flying everywhere, just got completely thrown off the track and into this long-ass gorge. I think the gorge might have been actually carved by the crash—this all happened on a glacier, so, you know, it's not impossible.

GAIGE: But anyway, Roland directed us to where he thought the Key would be, and we got there—after having blasted through about a hundred or so loaders, it seems like Handsome Jack packs every train with them—and then frikken' Angel said [mocking tone] “Don't worry, if Jack really wanted to protect the Vault Key, it wouldn't be on a train. He'd have Wilhelm guarding it.” Well, we all knew what that meant, so we were ready when this giant cyborg...loader...thing threw off a ten-ton chunk of train and started shooting us.

GAIGE: Roland and the others tried to get us to run, since last time the old Vault Hunters fought this guy was at the fall of New Haven, which...well, if you've been listening to these ECHO's, you know
that, uh, that was bad. Angel convinced us to stay though, saying we were stronger than the old Vault Hunters. Also, there wasn't really anywhere we could run to anyway.

GAIGE: Well, what the old Vault Hunters couldn't do, the new ones could. That's right bitches, we took down Wilhelm! Yeah! Jack's most feared lieutenant, and we managed to turn an ambush around and stab him in the face with it!

MAYA: I don't know, it still feels weird. Maybe we got lucky.

AXTON: Or we're just badasses.

GAIGE: Well, that's what Roland and everyone said, so I guess I'm with Axton on this one.

GAIGE: The bad news is that Wilhelm didn't have the Vault Key. The good news—besides the aforementioned awesome defeat of a super-strong combat cyborg—is that we managed to recover a super-unique power core from him. I took a look at it, and I gotta say, I've never even seen anything like this. I mean, it has the standard universal socket and everything, but it's definitely not a standard model. It's custom-built from the ground up.

GAIGE: I did a couple quick tests, and I was able to mathematically determine that it has a buttload of power.

AXTON: [sound of tires skidding to a stop] We're back.

GAIGE: Oh, wow, that was faster than I thought. [sound of boots on gravel]

SALVADOR: Dinner time?

MAYA: Roland wants us to get this power core in first. But after that, I think we'll have time. Right, Zero?

ZERO: Yes.

[a few minutes of footsteps on gravel]

GAIGE: Lieutenant Davis? We have a new core for the shield!

DAVIS: As much as I hate using Hyperion tech, that core you brought us earlier is nearly burnt up. Why don't you pop it out.

AXTON: I got it. [sound of machinery powering down and a metallic click]

DAVIS: Now shove in that new core you found harder than a shiv into a Truxican's sternum!

MAYA: Pleasant.

DAVIS: Sorry. Old Crimson Lance saying.

AXTON: Gaige, you wanna do the honors, babe?

GAIGE: Sure thing!

MAYA: Don't call her babe. She's like ten years younger than you.

AXTON: What? I was just being friendly!
SALVADOR: Didn't you say the reason you were here was for glory and babes?

AXTON: You are *not* helping.

GAIGE: I'm putting it in now!

AXTON: Neither are you.

GAIGE: Huh?

MAYA: Nothing. Just...swap in the new core.

GAIGE: Right. [metallic click and sound of machinery powering up]

DAVIS: Okay, I think we're in busin—what the hell?

JACK: Hey, you know, I think it's finally time to tell you that little secret: Angel's working for *me*.

GAIGE: Wait, what?
ECHO 12

Chapter Summary

Rising Action

ANGEL: ...lowering Sanctuary’s shields, Jack.
ANGEL: Executing phase shift. [sound of digital reconstruction]
[explosion]
DAVIS: That's not a power core! Raiders, the shields are down! The shields— [explosion]
GAIGE: LIEUTENANT!
AXTON: God-damn—
GAIGE: Ohgodohgodohgod—
MAYA: Everybody, move, now!
SALVADOR: Gaige no se mueve!
MAYA: Gaige? Can you hear me?
GAIGE: GETITOFFGETITOFFGETITOFF!
MAYA: Crap, she's going into shock again!
JACK: Nicely done, Angel! Now...let's kill ourselves some Vault Hunters.
[sound of moonshot cannons]
ROLAND: What the hell?! Did something just get through the shield?!
SCOOTER: Shield's down, Roland! Oh man, somebody start gettin' everybody underground!
MAYA: We have to move! Salvador, grab Gaige!
GAIGE: DONTTOUCHMEDONTTOUCHME—
[sound of metal smacking flesh repeatedly]
SALVADOR: Oof, got her.
[more moonshot cannons]
MAYA: Then c'mon!
[running footsteps and more moonshot cannons]
LILITH: Everybody, I've got a really bad idea. Scooter, get Sanctuary in the air! Roland, get me some Eridium.

[explosions, sound of citizens crying and screaming]

SCOOTER: Pretty sure we can't do that without killing, oh I don't know, everyone in the city! It ain't ready to fly, Lili!

ROLAND: You've got your orders, Scooter! Move!

SCOOTER: Meet me in the center of town, now! I'ma need your help real bad!

MAYA: We're here, Scooter! [explosion] What do you need?

SCOOTER: Okay, uh, if we cycle...the ignition primers...shoot, I—it'll get us somewhere!

GAIGE: Put me down!

SALVADOR: Quiet!

GAIGE: No, I'm fine, and [explosion] I can help! Put me down!

SCOOTER: Mechromaid! Cycle the—

GAIGE: I heard you the first time! I got it! [more running]

MAYA: Axton, cover her!

AXTON: From what?! The moon?!

GAIGE: First switch cycled! Ninety-six percent!

SCOOTER: Alright, I got this one! All you gotta do is hit the last switch!

[explosions]

GAIGE: Done! Ninety-two percent!

SCOOTER: Alright, we're primed! [explosions] Everybody get ready!

[very loud sound of engines cycling up]

[explosion]

ROLAND: Ah, you son of a—I'm pinned soldier! I can't get the Eridium to Lilith! Get to me, quick!

LILITH: I need that Eridium! Get to Roland!

[explosions and screaming]

MAYA: Axton, Salvador, you're with me! Zero, keep an eye on Gaige! Make sure she doesn't—

ZERO: Understood.

[explosions]

JACK: You only survived our train ride together because I wanted you to.
GAIGE: AGH! Will this guy shut up?!

JACK: Five years ago, Roland and his friends opened the Vault because Angel and I tricked them into doing it!

ZERO: ...crap.

SCOOTER: Mechrogirl! Cycle the second booster again!

[explosions and screaming]

JACK: Everything you Vault Hunters have ever done—it's all part of my plan. I'm such a rock star.

MAYA: Done!

LILITH: You've got the Eridium? I need it. Get to the center of town!


LILITH: Just help Scooter, okay? I'll be fine!

MAYA: Lilith! We're here!

LILITH: I've never used this much. You might wanna hang onto something.

MAYA: Gaige! You okay?

GAIGE: Yeah, I'm fine—

[thrumming sound of an energy build up which suddenly cuts off]

ZERO: ...huh.

AXTON: What the hell? How the hell did we get outside the city?!

MAYA: I think Lilith—

LILITH: Sorry, kids! That was an accident. I'll see you on the other side though, I promise. Hit it Scooter!

MAYA: Everybody here? Gaige? Where'd you go?

SALVADOR: Por aquí.

GAIGE: Yeah, por...por...ow, what is wrong with my head...

AXTON: Holy...

SCOOTER: Man, this is one of them moments! CATCH A RIIIDE!!

MAYA: She actually...she managed to...

[sound of moonshot cannons]

[rising thrum of energy]

JACK: That's the best you got? A flying city? [laughs] What could you chumps possibly have that
makes you think you've got a chance against me?

ROLAND: A Siren.

LILITH: 'sup.

[thrum reaches a crescendo before cutting off suddenly]

JACK: ...huh.

[two full minutes of silence]

AXTON: What the hell was that? What the hell was that!?

GAIGE: Guys, I'm not feeling so good...

MAYA: Gaige, you need to get up. We need to get out of here. Find some...find some cover. Go...

SALVADOR: ¿A dónde? En caso de que no se dio cuenta, la ciudad se ha ido.

MAYA: ...Salvador, really, just...not the time.

SALVADOR: ¿Cuándo estará el—

MAYA: Salvador! Just shut up!

AXTON: ...hey there, calm—

MAYA: CALM?! We just lost every single friend we had on this planet, because, oh that's right, the frikken' GUARDIAN ANGEL was working with Jack!

AXTON: You're supposed to be the sane one! So why don't you shut up and figure out what the hell is wrong with the cyborg!

GAIGE: I'm in favor of that plan...


GAIGE: Ugh...Axton...you have a really cute butt.

MAYA: No, sweetie, focus.

ZERO: Looks like teleportation sickness.

SALVADOR: Como cuando un—

MAYA: Salvador.

SALVADOR: Uh...like when a fast travel station glitches? That kind of sickness?

AXTON: If that's the case, she should be fine in an hour or so.

MAYA: Yeah, but why was it just her?

ANGEL: I know you're angry at me right now—

MAYA: What? No! You do not get to play us again!
ANGEL: —but we don't have a lot of time.

MAYA: Don't ignore me! You got a lot of people killed today!

ANGEL: I'll explain everything, just...get to the Fridge. It's the only way to reach the Highlands.

AXTON: I don't think she can hear us.

ANGEL: I detect Lilith might have phased your city there.

MAYA: ...fine. Dammit. Uh, Axton, Zero, go get us a couple of trucks. Bandit technicals, we need the extra space. Salvador, you know the way to this 'Fridge?'

SALVADOR: Si—yes. And it does lead to the Highlands.

MAYA: Okay, you'll be in Zero's truck, Axton will follow you. I'll get Gaige ready.

SALVADOR: What's this light?

MAYA: Don't touch—oh. Her ECHO is still recording. Let me see...here we go.
Chapter Summary

Bright Lights, Flying City

GAIGE: Greetings, loyal...sub...scribers...wow, that is...a...wow...I didn't think the counter went that high...

GAIGE: Uh, so, uh, apparently you all already know about what happened with Sanctuary, and Angel's betrayal, and all that. I guess that's a side effect of uploading these things live. Oh yeah, I guess, I should...clarify a couple things...Lilith, the Siren from the old Vault Hunters, was alive the entire time! She faked her death, uh, when Wilhelm attacked Old Haven, I think, and became the Firehawk. She has some weird ability to use Eridium to supercharge her Siren powers, I guess it has something to do with opening the Vault, because Maya can't do it.

GAIGE: But so she teleported us out of the city, and then teleported the entire city. It was glowing purple, and you could feel the energy coming off it ten thousand feet away, and then just FWOOMPWSSSSHHH! Yeah, it was super badass!

GAIGE: I got a bit of teleportation sickness—apparently the homemade integration circuits I use to control my arm glitch a bit when hit with Eridium energy, combined with the distance screwing with my inner ear and internal GPS and all that—but whatever, I threw up a couple times and I'm fine now. I mean, I maybe went into shock a little bit too when I got covered in chunks of Lieutenant Davis, but psh, like that'll stop me! Okay, sure, Maya was going on about how it was [mocking tone] “Indicative of deep-seated psychological trauma that will need to be addressed at some point” or whatever, but she's just being overprotective again.

GAIGE: When I, you know, regained my senses, the others told me that Angel sent us to the Highlands to look for Sanctuary. I mean...ergh, I can't even—GRAH! She betrayed us once, she doesn't get a vote!

GAIGE: But apparently, we didn't really have any other options available, so I guess we just have to kinda...go, and hope for the best. I mean, we weren't able to get in touch with anyone—some of the comms infrastructure would have been underground, and was probably severed during lift-off—so I can see it, but...still. Just...dammit.

GAIGE: Okay, okay, lemme just go through what happened, and...yeah. To get to the Highlands, we had to go through the Fridge, which is this system of caverns through a mountain that's really cold for some weird reason. I dunno, maybe it's some quirk of geology, or somebody left an atmospheric winterizer on...whatever, it doesn't matter. The point is, it was cold as balls in there, with all this ice and snow and stalagatitemites whateveres the hell they're called. That, was all mildly annoying. Then there were the Rats.

GAIGE: Not actual rats, no, [cynical laugh] those frikken' bandit Rats like we had to fight in the Dahl dam. They...they don't move like humans any more, which—in addition to being really creepy—makes them hard to shoot. And they're thieves! The little ones grab up all the loot and then run away! Throw in those Lab Rat freaks, and...yeah. Not fun. Oh, and they're cannibals too, just for added giggles. This freaking midget Rat got me in the ankle...
GAIGE: Well, we managed to grind our way through without anyone else dying. Uh, I mean, any of us dying. Obviously there were lots of dead Rats. Just because it was hard to shoot them didn't mean it was impossible. Besides, Deathtrap is pretty good about that kind of thing. Try dodging an intangible floating death robot, fools! [laughs]

GAIGE: The Rats were the main problem, but, you know, this is Pandora. You never get one type of bad guy when you can get three. There were a bunch of rakks swooping down on us all the time, which was annoying and stuff, but I can actually hit stuff with my shotgun now, so they were just, uh, annoying. Which I said already. Well, they were!

GAIGE: The thing that was really interesting, though, were the crystal...crystak...hey, Maya? What were those crystal things called?

ZERO: Crystalisks.

GAIGE: Holy shit, where'd you come from?!

ZERO: Getting food.

GAIGE: Um, okay...anyway, there were these weird...three legged tripod mobile rock formation thingies, I don't know what was going on with them. They had bright yellow crystal clusters on each leg, and then another one on top, and they shot us with exploding things, and they had this piston...thing...I dunno what was up with them. They were weird.

GAIGE: We kept trying to shoot them, and that didn't really work, so there were bullets bouncing all over the place. Then Salvador unloaled on one of the leg crystals, which shattered, so...yeah. That was the weakness. Keep that in mind, loyal subscribers: If you ever find yourself fighting a ten-ton rock monster, go for the leg crystals. Oh, and the crystals they drop were considered alternate currency by our digital pockets, so we got money the second we picked them up. Which was unexpected, but not in a bad way.

GAIGE: After all that, we found our way out of the freezer—

SALVADOR: It's called the Fridge.

GAIGE: Well, it was cold enough to be a freezer! I mean, seriously, there was frikken snow and ice and...whatever, I don't care. The point is, we tumbled out onto the Highlands. And sure enough, Sanctuary phased in right when we got there, and Lilith called to say she was still alive. And awesome, because of the phasing the entire city thing.

MAYA: I still can't understand that.

AXTON: What, Lilith being awesome?

MAYA: No, I mean the city getting there the same time as we did. We spent hours hiking through the mountains.

AXTON: And didn't you say her phasewalking isn't instant?

MAYA: Even if it's not, it would be faster than us. It shouldn't have...de-phased the same second we showed up.

GAIGE: Whatever! Point is, it was there. We tried the Fast Travel network, but it didn't work, which was expected. Anything designed to teleport anything living has more safeguards and programming locks than a trademarked designer dress. Sanctuary moved...what? A couple hundred miles? I'm not
sure, but well outside the safety zone.

GAIGE: There was no way we were getting that stupid thing working any time soon—if we were at Sanctuary, Scooter and I might have been able to do something, but not from this end of the problem—so...ergh...Angel suggested we pick up a Hyperion lunar supply beacon, so we could drop a Fast Travel beacon closer to the city, which would let us get Sanctuary back on the network. Still don't think trusting her is a good idea...gah! Give me a broken transetheric regulator any day. Easier to deal with.

GAIGE: Well, there was this Hyperion dam, you know, lots of loaders and engineers. I was worried about killing the engineers at first but, uh...Zero, what was it you said.

ZERO: Working for Jacky/Highest of stupidity/Culling the gene pool

GAIGE: ...I've gotten too used to you. The weirdest part of that for me was calling Handsome Jack 'Jacky.'

GAIGE: So we fought our way through the dam, blah blah, we had to ride a shipping crate over the water because a loader took out the bridge, standard stuff. There was this constructor bot that was annoyingly hard to kill, all that. Also, that stupid Hyperion announcer wouldn't shut up. Ugh, I think we should have spent a few minutes hunting down the loudspeakers, but whatever.

GAIGE: When we found the lunar supply beacon is when things got interesting. This thresher—that's sort of a sand worm thing with lots of tentacles—popped up out of the ground and ate the damn thing! Which gave it a shield, for some reason. I mean...maybe it had already eaten a shield, and the beacon's power source you know, uh, powered it up? I have no idea, that's like a one in a million chance, but whatever. It had a shield.

GAIGE: The thresher probably would have been really annoying, but luckily Hyperion wanted the beacon back as much as we did, so they shot a bunch of loaders at it! I tell ya, there's nothing more fun than watching your enemies fight each other. Once the bots killed the thresher, we stepped in and mopped up the survivors. Easy peasy!

GAIGE: The beacon was mostly undamaged, except for some corrosion of the polycarbonate casing that made it a little hard to open, but I managed. Pandora's animals are ridiculously dangerous, and have stomachs that compare to industrial-strength molecular acid, but these beacons are designed to be shot into some of the most hostile environments in the universe and survive. It was fine.

GAIGE: That's when we got to the Highlands proper, and I've gotta say, the place is pants-dropping beautiful. I mean, honestly. When I was a kid, my dad had to move around a lot because of work, so I saw some pretty nice places back on Eden-5, but none of them compare to the Highlands. Even with Hyperion industrializing the place, there's just this sense of...I dunno, I dunno how to describe it. Just...rolling green hills, waterfalls and bubbling streams...it looks like something out of a freaking post card.

AXTON: Except for the stalkers.

GAIGE: ...yeah. I was, uh, getting to that.

SALVADOR: And the threshers.

GAIGE: I don't remember any threshers after the Hyperion dam.

MAYA: You forgot about the threshers? They blew up Zero's truck. Did you hit your head again?
GAIGE: No, I'm—

MAYA: I think you have a bump—

GAIGE: Maya, stop touching—I said I'm fine!

GAIGE: Anyway, yes, there were...dangers. The aforementioned sand worms, and these frikken invisible assholes called stalkers—they have organic shields and biological cloaking! Where the hell did they get organic shields and biological cloaking?!—but we were mostly fine. I mean, stupid Handsome Jack was still calling to gloat about how everything was according to plan, we helped destroy the Crimson Raiders for him, he used Angel to trick the old Vault Hunters into opening the first Vault, blah blah blah. I swear listening to that bastard talk was worse than the stalkers.

GAIGE: Thing is, our probably-not-homicidal AI sent us to the only friendly town in the Highlands, a little place called Overlook. It's been taken over by Hyperion—big surprise—and everyone has the skull shivers, which is some fun local disease brought on by exposure to slag dust. Did I mention slag? It's a byproduct of mining and refining Eridium, and has all sorts of weird side effects.

GAIGE: Overlook was pretty much the only place we could go, really. In addition to being nice and high up, in full view of the moon base, it was pretty much the only spot in the Highlands that isn't infested by threshers or stalkers or Hyperion. The plan was I would set up the beacon, and then we just had to wait for the moon base to shoot down the new Fast Travel station. Simple, right?

GAIGE: But this is Pandora, where you can't shop for groceries without a decent shotgun.

GAIGE: Handsome Jack figured out we were the ones with the beacon...somehow. How the hell did he know? There should be dozens of these things lighting up across the planet every hour! Angel says she didn't do anything, but I think it's mighty suspicious how her boss always knows exactly what we're up to.

GAIGE: Anyway, he started shooting loaders at us, so I stayed near the beacon while everyone else tried to keep the bots from getting too close. At first, we weren't going to get the station for three to six weeks, but Angel bumped us up the queue. Then the lunar engineers, or Jack, or someone stepped in to keep us from getting the station, and sent another couple dozen loaders down instead.

AXTON: Then captain douche-bag started freaking out.

GAIGE: Who—oh, right, duh. Yeah, Handsome Jack started screaming at Angel about how she shouldn't be helping the 'bad guys' and sent a bunch of constructors and more loaders at us, which weren't too hard to handle. Salvador has a pair of corrosive machine guns for exactly this sort of thing. But I'm really not sure how much of all that was for our benefit. I mean, I guess he was faking it to get us to trust Angel again? But it's a pretty big stretch to think we'd fall for it, and I really don't know what else he has to gain at this point.

MAYA: Well, Sanctuary is still flying. Maybe he wants to handle that?

GAIGE: But we don't have a shield any more. Can't they just blast us out of the sky?

SALVADOR: Ah, I hear Lilith when we came in. She told Hyperion she can phase the city whenever she wants.

GAIGE: ...can she?

MAYA: How should I know?
GAIGE: Okay, point is, we managed to hold off the waves of loaders without anyone dying. I mean, I got like four EXP loaders to the face, and Maya had to revive me, and then I had to recalibrate the beacon while bots were shooting at me, but other than that it was great! Angel threatened to cut off life support to the moon base, which got us the station pretty quick, and then we zipped right back to Sanctuary.

GAIGE: It's weird, how it felt like coming home. It's been less than two weeks, but I guess...I just took Roland's offer to treat the Crimson Raider headquarters as home to heart. I didn't really...expect that.

GAIGE: Also, I was a little disturbed how happy I was to see Scooter, Zed, Tannis and all them. I mean, don't get me wrong, the first thing I did was tackle-hug Lilith, but I kinda missed Scooter's annoying voice.

GAIGE: Anyway, once we were settled in back at base, trying to figure out what to do, Angel called again. Roland was just about ready to unplug the comms station—wise move, in my opinion—when she mentioned that she was the one in charge of charging the Vault Key, so it was with her. That definitely got everyone's attention.

GAIGE: Then she started going on about the three barriers to reach her chamber. A Hyperion deathwall energy field thing, a bunker filled with enough firepower to blow a new hole in the moon, and a door that only Handsome Jack can open. She's going to give suggestions on how to get past them all later. Apparently, her calls are still being monitored. Psh, yeah, like I've never heard that excuse before. That's just what boys say when they don't want to have to call you back.

GAIGE: Roland actually has an idea for getting past the CDF, but he said he'd tell us in the morning. Right now, we just finished one of Zero's wonderful meals, which I think we all deserved, and then going to sleep.

GAIGE: But before I sign off, I just wanted to mention that yes, I know. The three barriers thing is obviously another trap. I mean, it's straight out of a bad video game. Collect the plot coupons to bypass the mystical door to get to the MacGuffin. Actually, I think there was this exact set-up in...crap, what was it—

ZERO: Triangle Quest 3.

GAIGE: Uh...yeah. That's right. How'd you know that?

[silence]

GAIGE: Of course. Silly me, expecting you to answer a question. Anyway, I think that's it for tonight. Mechromancer, signing off.
GAIGE: Hellloo, subscribers! Today was...maybe not the best of days, but a hell of a lot better than yesterday.

GAIGE: It started with Tiny Tina, back in Tundra Express, calling to say she had a job for us. Apparently, she was having a tea party, and she wanted help inviting the guests. Which sounded stupid, but she promised us money and a gun, so why not?

GAIGE: But we weren't really on a time crunch, so we spent some time just hanging around Sanctuary, making sure everyone was okay after the big move. They were mostly doing fine, more than I thought, anyway. Sure, Marcus was freaking out about his safe and there was little stuff like that going on everywhere, but other than that it was no big deal.

GAIGE: Oh, I almost forgot! Speaking of parties, it turns out today was Claptrap's birthday! He invited pretty much everyone in the city! And, uh, I was the only one who came. Yeah. That was...I mean, Maya and them were busy...with...something...and...

GAIGE: It was pretty awkward.

GAIGE: Ahem. Uh...anyway, after the party—if you can call it that—I hooked up with Maya and the rest again. Apparently there had been some murder involving identical quadruplets or something as the suspects. I dunno, I think Salvador was messing with me. But after all that, we finally used the Fast Travel to get back to Tundra Express and Tina.

GAIGE: Tina sent us to grab Sir Reginald, who turned out to be this tiny little varkid in a jar with a mustache and a pimpin' top hat—we had to fight a badass varkid she called “Madame von Bartlesby,” for some reason—and then a doll she calls Misses Fluffybutt. Oh, and some parts from buzzards to make a teapot.

AXTON: And the crumpets.

GAIGE: Hey. I thought you guys were helping Zero with dinner.

AXTON: He kicked us out. He said...I don't remember, it was another haiku. But he's got it handled.

GAIGE: Okay, well, yeah, Tina also had us steal crumpets from the bandits while we shooting down buzzards, fighting through their base, and generally being badasses. I don't really know, you know, why bandits had a plateful of crumpets just sitting out there, but whatever. After that, things got a little...weird.

GAIGE: Tina sent us to collect the “guest of honor,” a bandit named Flesh-Stick—which tells you pretty much everything you need to know about this asshole—and bring him back to her cave. Well, surprise surprise, he wasn't really in the mood for a visit. Anyway, we managed to get him back anyway, mostly by letting him chase me, screaming all sorts of threats about eating me and blah blah blah. He was a psycho, they're all the same.
GAIGE: Tina had this really cool electric trap thing set up that grabbed the bandit and piped him through some vents and popped him out tied to a chair at the table.

GAIGE: This is where the story goes from hilarious to depressing.

GAIGE: Tiny Tina is unbelievably awesome. I mean, she's like four feet tall, talks like my grandma —

AXTON: How does your grandma talk?

GAIGE: What? She talks—she talks like Tina. She talks like a pimp.

AXTON: Then just say that.

GAIGE: Whatever. So, Tina blows stuff up and all that. She's cool. But she's thirteen which is, you know, kinda weird. Kinda weird...age. For all that. Well, today we found out what's wrong with her.

GAIGE: She had to watch her parents die. Then...she went kinda kooky.

GAIGE: Flesh-Stick killed them—or sold them to someone who killed them, it was a little bit blurry on the finer details—and Tina's been hunting him down ever since. With our help, she finally got him. I don't want to go into the messy details...let's just say that Flesh-Stick won't be pulling that trick again. Because he's dead.

AXTON: Subtle.

GAIGE: Shut up! Ahem. There was also this Eridium mine that Lilith sent us to check out, turns out the bandits were mining Eridium for Hyperion. We killed them all, but it's kinda hard to feel bad about it. I mean, Hyperion would have done the same thing once the mine dried up anyway. Oh, and then Tina had us blow up the money train, which was pretty awesome.

GAIGE: There were a few other little things too. Claptrap had us blow up some bandits' furnaces, since he thought that would make them too cold to fight or something, and then Scooter sent us back to the Fridge to woo an ex-girlfriend of his—turns out he's the reason she left in the first place—and there was this midget who had been swallowed whole by a stalker that he wanted us to kill. I mean, that was kinda funny, especially when we found out Laney—that's the girl—joined the Rats.

MAYA: We knew Laney had joined the Rats from the start.

GAIGE: What? No we didn't.

MAYA: Yes, we did. Were you paying attention when Scooter gave us the mission?

SCOOTER: Yeah, remember, I tol' you to get flowers and junk to un-brainwash her!

GAIGE: Dammit Scooter, stop hacking our ECHO's!

SCOOTER: Wha? I'm just sayin' hey, what's the—

GAIGE: I hate how everyone on this stupid planet thinks they can just butt into our conversations whenever they feel like it! And as for you, I know you spy on me in the shower, so quit it!

SCOOTER: Oh, come on, I only did that like, three times, and it was a friendly kind of spyin', you know what I'm sayin'? Just checkin' up on you and such.

AXTON: Gaige, let me handle this. Scooter, you there?
SCOOTER: Uh, yeah?

AXTON: Remember earlier today, when you sent us into the Fridge, and we killed about a hundred bandit Rats and twenty or thirty stalkers?

SCOOTER: Yeah? I mean, that's what you were just talkin' about—

AXTON: Do you really want to get on our bad side?

SCOOTER: Uhhh...hey, look, someone needs help with...somethin'!

MAYA: Sounds like he's gone.

GAIGE: Thanks. Well, subscribers, I guess you all can see why Laney ran off to join the Rats.

GAIGE: Anyway, once we were back in Sanctuary, we got a call from Sir Hammerlock and Marcus. Uh, separate calls, I mean. They weren't working together, or anything. Point is, they both wanted us to go to the same place: Sanctuary Hole, the spot in Three Horns where the city used to be, before all the floating and phasing and you know. Well, actually Hammerlock wanted something under the Sanctuary Hole, but we'll get to that in a sec.

GAIGE: It's only been a day, but there are already a bazillion bandits squatting in the city ruins. I guess it's a defensible position or whatever the, you know, military term is for that kind of thing. Point is, Marcus wanted us to find his safe, which fell out when the city started floating and stuff. Well, we fought our way through the Hole—which had a bunch of old houses and stuff, which I think were mostly Sanctuary's basements and all that—only to find that the safe had fallen into the giant hole in the ground. I mean, the hole in the middle of the Hole. It's kinda hard to explain. There was this big pit in the ground, and that's where Sanctuary originally landed, so now, there's a crater around the hole.

GAIGE: Anyway, that place is the Caustic Caverns, and it's where Hammerlock wanted us to go too, so we got lucky on that one. We took the elevator down, and it turns out that the place is really well named. There's just oceans of naturally occurring industrial-grade acid everywhere, in this massive cavern complex something like two hundred feet tall, maybe more. I don't really know how big it was—the oceans kept going as far as I could see in every direction.

GAIGE: It also turns out this is where the crystalisks originally came from. Or where they were first discovered, or whatever. So Sir Hammerlock sent us down here to collect some old ECHO logs and figure out why they became hostile to humans in the first place. That...that was a sad story, and I don't see the need to repeat it. Let's just say Dahl got what was coming to them. Oh, sorry Axton.

AXTON: Why would I care?

GAIGE: Uh...right! So the Caustic Caverns had lots of those crystalisk guys, and also a whole bunch of varkids, and spiderants off in one corner, but they weren't too much trouble to deal with. They kinda stayed away from each other, so it's not like we were fighting them at the same time. The real trouble was the threshers.

GAIGE: I mentioned threshers, right? Sand worm things with like a billion tentacles? Well, there were a whole bunch of them, I mean like...I don't even know how many. We must have killed almost a hundred. And Deathtrap is no good against them, because they burrow underground before he can attack, and Zero can't snipe them easily, and they're too big for Maya to phasedock, and Axton's grenades worked pretty well, but then he almost killed the rest of us with the explosions. Salvador was pretty good, but he didn't have any fire weapons.
GAIGE: So we kinda had to just grit our teeth and grind our way through that, which wasn't fun, but we survived, which is the important part. Then we finally managed to find Marcus' stupid safe, which this giant blue crystalisk had found, and we had to kill it, which I felt bad about. I mean, apparently it was the pet of the Dahl security chief, or something, I'm not completely sure.

GAIGE: But we found the safe. Turns out it had a bunch of saucy pictures of Moxxi. While Maya and me were trying to keep Axton and Salvador from stealing them when we weren't looking, Moxxi called, and said she wanted the pictures instead of Marcus. I mean, she wanted us to give them to her instead of Marcus. Marcus still wanted them too, for...obvious reasons.

GAIGE: Maya decided to give them to Moxxi, which I agreed with, which is why I am the one who got the awesome new shotgun instead of Axton. And—hey, do you hear that?

AXTON: Hear what?

GAIGE: From over by Marcus' place. [sound of footsteps] I can't quite...

ZERO: He's crying.

GAIGE: ...seriously?

AXTON: Well, you did refuse to give him the only thing in the world he values more than money.

GAIGE: ...okay, that's it, I'm calling it a night. It's dinnertime anyway, and Mordecai said he had some work for us in the Dust tomorrow.

MAYA: Gaige, did you wash your hands?

GAIGE: Yeah, yeah.

MAYA: No, I mean really wash them.

GAIGE: Uh, I guess. Why?

MAYA: Well, you were handling those pictures too, right?

GAIGE: ...yeah?

MAYA: Just...go wash your hands again.

GAIGE: Okay, sure. Good night, subscribers. Gaige, out.
GAIGE: Helloo, subscribers! Today, we had a good-old-fashioned treasure hunt!

GAIGE: But I should start from the start. The day didn't actually start that great. We got sent to Overlook, the town where we set up the Fast Travel station to link back to Sanctuary, to check on everyone. They were all dying of the skull shivers because some idiot stole the battery to the vending machine and hooked it up to the clocktower instead. Then we had to run around the Highlands to find the other machines with the medicine, because it was tagged as “Item of the Day,” which means the stupid auto-vends won't sell more than one per day. Ugh, these stupid things...I couldn't hack—I mean, I could have hacked it, uh, maybe, but it was easier to just buy the stuff from the other machines.

GAIGE: Anyway, we brought all that back, and everyone was real happy and grateful! Except for Dave. Jackass. Then Karima—that's the mayor, or town boss, or whatever you call it—had us help her build and test a shield, like Sanctuary’s, so that they could rebel against Hyperion too. We went to the nearby Hyperion base, shot at the coordinates she gave us...and killed Dave. Seriously, sent his house tumbling into the the ravine. But it's okay, because no one really cared! He spent all his time making fun of everyone, I don't know what he thought was gonna happen.

GAIGE: After that we had to find some ECHO logs of Tannis recording her time in Sanctuary—short version: She's crazy—and get the stalker notes an old boyfriend of Sir Hammerlock's wrote. Before he died. Uh, the boyfriend died, not Hammerlock. He's fine. Hammerlock, I mean. But yeah, that one got pretty dark at the end. The last log actually recorded him being eaten alive. Oh, and because apparently stalkers find ECHO recorders delicious, we had to dig through their...stuff...to find them. So, yeah. The day didn't start out so great.

GAIGE: But the other thing Sir Hammerlock wanted us to do was take his robotic arm—by the way, I was finally able to take a closer look at it, and I was right, it doesn't do anything interesting—and use it as bait to lure out “Old Slappy,” the thresher that maimed him in the first place.

GAIGE: It was laired or...burrowed, I dunno what you want to call it—Hammerlock sent us to the coast right next to the Hyperion dam where we got the lunar supply beacon, and the arm worked like a charm.

AXTON: Ugh.

GAIGE: What?

AXTON: We've had enough bad puns today.

GAIGE: Oh. Oh, sorry! Completely on accident.

GAIGE: Okay, right, so Old Slappy—horrible name, BTW—wasn’t just one of those little threshers that gives us so much trouble. [cynical laugh] This bastard was like, fifty feet tall or more! I think he
was bigger than the badass fire threshers, but I'm not sure. Really didn't feel like measuring it while it was trying to kill us.

GAIGE: Luckily, that fire shotgun I got from Moxxi yesterday worked pretty well, so that, uh...worked. Pretty well. Anyway, Sir Hammerlock said something deep and profound about revenge, but I wasn't really paying attention. And that was it for the Highlands—

SALVADOR: You skipped Zed's thing.

MAYA: I thought we agreed not to talk about that.

GAIGE: Yes. We did. [coughs] So, anyway, we finished everything we had in the Highlands, and moved on to the Dust. Oh, Tannis had us collect some ECHO logs scattered around Sanctuary, but that was just more of the same. Jack's evil, Tannis is insane, blah blah blah. I mean, seriously, she was in love with two chairs! Who would be in love with chairs when there are guns?

MAYA: ...that's your problem with being in love with chairs?

GAIGE: Moving on! Mordecai sent us to the Dust, to find an old weapons cache he won from some tournament Moxxi used to run. That's the treasure hunt part—I'll get back to that, I promise.

GAIGE: But when we spawned at Ellie's garage—did I mention that's where the Fast Travel station in the Dust is? Because it is—she mentioned she had a job for us. There are these two giant gangs, the Hodunks and the Zafords, who have been at war for...ever, apparently. You know how these things are. They apparently settled on a truce a few years back, but Ellie thought it would be funny to finish it once and for all.

GAIGE: She sent us out to the Hodunk Speedway, where we blew up...dammit, what'd was it?

SALVADOR: The third largest tire on Pandora. The fifth was in my village.

GAIGE: Right, that's it. So we blew that up and put the Zaford emblem on it, then headed back to the Highlands, right outside Overlook, to blow up the Zaford distillery and tag it with the Hodunk's. That's when we split up, Salvador and Zero handled the missions given by the Hodunks, and we took orders from the Zafords. Me, Maya, and Axton, I mean.

GAIGE: The Hodunks are these crazy, car-obsessed rednecks that are pretty much exactly like Scooter, but not as nice, and they shoot you more. The Zafords...are Irish. Very, very Irish. Lots of beer...or lager or whatever the frick it is Irish people drink, and lots of shooting.

GAIGE: So anyway, the three of us blew up the Hodunk racetrack—which was awesome, by the way, we put a bunch of bombs on this bridge they used as a jump, and blew the fireworks up at the right second so all the cars got caught in the explosion—then got sent back to the Hodunk trailer park at night to blow up all the gas tanks. Slightly less awesome, but still, not bad, not bad. Then both families had had enough, called for a showdown, whatever, they probably would have just stared at each other all day, so we helped things along by shooting the Hodunks. I dunno, it was kinda a disappointing end.

GAIGE: But back to the treasure. So first, Mordecai sent us to find Carson, up at that Buzzard training camp we were at before. We didn't find him, but we found his dead brother and an ECHO recorder. Carson's brother got killed by a Hyperion goon named Gettle, while Carson got dragged off to the Friendship Gulag, that prison Roland got taken to before.

GAIGE: So, we headed back to the Gulag—thank God Salvador still has those corrosive machine guns—and ground through fifty bajillion loaders to get to Carson's cell. He was dead—of course—
but we found another ECHO, because apparently everyone on Pandora has their ECHO recorder running at all times.

SALVADOR: ...this from you?

GAIGE: Anyway, Carson's cellmate, Mobley, managed to get the location of the stash out of him, and killed him before escaping. Turns out it's buried in an unmarked grave outside a church.

AXTON: Gotta say, Carson might have been an idiot, but he has a good eye for the old traditions.

GAIGE: No, if he had done it right, there would have been a treasure map, and pirates, and...ghosts, I guess?

AXTON: You need to watch the old classics. What was that one called—

GAIGE: So, we asked Ellie where this church was, and it turns out it's actually behind her garage. Well, I mean, not right behind her garage, it was a good long walk past some spiderant dens and a dingy little bandit town to find it, put the road definitely started behind her garage.

GAIGE: We got to the church, started looking around for an unmarked grave...THEY WERE ALL UNMARKED. Every one of them! So we had to spend three hours digging in the hot sun for the stupid chest!

GAIGE: I mean, normally, I wouldn't really care—well, I'd care, but I mean that's the price you have to pay when you go treasure hunting. The part that pissed me off is that the second we dug the stupid thing up, Mobley comes out of the church, and Gettle walks up the road! The jackoffs were just waiting for us to do all the work for them!

GAIGE: Anyway, the idiots tried to pull the whole Truxican standoff thing on us, even though there were five of us. You can guess how that ended. But, we got some good guns out of the deal, so I guess—

MICK: You arrogant, two-faced BASTARDS!

GAIGE: ...huh?

MICK: You Vault Hunters think you can blow up my distillery, kill my boy, and crash a wake for me other boy, and then TALK ABOUT IT ON AN ECHO-CAST, and still get away with it?!

AXTON: Oops.

GAIGE: Okay, Mick, uh...Maya?

MAYA: You're forgetting all the other stuff we did to the Hodunks. It kinda evens out when you—

MICK: You think we're even? You killed me boy! And me friends and family! No, I'm calling you out! ZAFORDS VERSUS THE VAULT HUNTERS!

ZERO: We're in a flying city.

MAYA: Uh, yeah, listen Mick—

ELLIE: Oh, you should know better than to try and reason with them by now! Just get your fine asses down to Overlook and settle this!

MAYA: ...fine. I guess we don't have a choice. Mick, we'll meet you by Blake Bridge. That work
for you?

MICK: We'll be seeing you, *Vault Hunters!*

MAYA: I'm just gonna take that as a yes. Okay, everyone ready.

SALVADOR: Si, si...

AXTON: Yeah, let me just grab my pistol, I left it over—

Chapter Summary

Wildlife Preservation

GAIGE: Greetings, loyal...[sniffle] Oh, God, I can't—

MAYA: It's okay, you can do this tomorrow.

GAIGE: No! I need to do it now, when it's fresh!

GAIGE: [sniff] Okay, so, today started about, about normal. We went to meet Mordecai in the Hyperion Wildlife Exploitation Preserve, because he said he had a chip to upgrade Claptrap to bypass that Hyperion competitor deterrence field thingy protecting Control Core Angel. Simple enough, right?

GAIGE: Well, when we got to him—after fighting through eight billion fricken' stalkers—Mordecai said that the chip was in his pet Bloodwing's collar, and she had been kidnapped by Hyperion. Cuz, you know, that's kinda Jack's MO. Saturday morning cartoon villains have more subtlety than him most times.

GAIGE: I guess...I need to explain a little bit better. [deep breath] Okay, so the Wildlife Exploitation Preserve is a Hyperion facility—so a buttload of loaders—where they capture Pandoran animals and inject them with Eridium. Pretty much just because they can.

AXTON: Don't forget to mention the ECHO's.

MAYA: Axton, not now.

GAIGE: No, it's okay, he's right. So, uh, yeah, Tannis sent us to collect some notes on slag experimentation while we were in the area. We found some from a doctor...uh, crap, what was her name...

SALVADOR: Sammy?

MAYA: No, that wasn't it.

ZERO: Samuel.

GAIGE: Right, Doctor Samuel. She was doing slag experimentation on humans, uh, I think they were actually co-workers of hers, I'm not sure...except for the last two. They were...

GAIGE: Well. I guess I should just say we figured out why Tiny Tina is so obsessed with explosives. [sniff]

AXTON: C'mon, you have to give them more than that.

GAIGE: No, I don't. I don't have to...look, this is hard enough for me as it is, okay!? I don't have to talk about how Tina's parents had her use a grenade to escape while they were getting tortured to
AXTON: Uh...okay. Sure. If that's what you want. I'm gonna...be over here. [footsteps walking away]

GAIGE: [sniffle] Axton means well, but...he likes big explosions too much to be helpful right now.

GAIGE: Okay, so outside the preserve, all we had to deal with was the crapton of loaders, but it was all good, I had a corrosive shotgun which paired well with my More Pep and Evil Enchantress techs, melting lots of poorly built robots into puddles of goo, but inside it was a different story. I mean, it was still open air and all that at first, but we were inside the main wall.

GAIGE: That's when we started running into stalkers again! Goddamned...anyway. I had a decent shock pistol, and Shock Storm worked too, so we did better against them than I thought we would. But still, really annoying. Invisible things are just agh!

ZERO: Ahem.

GAIGE: Uh...invisible enemies, I mean. Invisible enemies are just agh.

ZERO: Thank you.

GAIGE: So, yeah. We fought through the preserve, got to the testing areas and the holding cells, and the entire time, Handsome Jack kept popping in with stupid threats, and making vague references to slag use...and...yeah. I think we all figured out what he was talking about, but no one wanted to say it. We found Bloodwing's cage, but it was already empty, and that asshole chimed in to say he had taken her somewhere more dramatic.” Dickweed.

GAIGE: The rest was more of the same. Loaders, engineers screaming at us, a bunch of stalkers here and there...oh, and Jack opened up the cages on us at one point, which I think everyone saw coming, so that was...fun. It was all pretty standard until we found Bloodwing.

GAIGE: Bloodwing's species isn't native to Pandora. I'm not sure where they are, um, native, but she's a small bird-thing, maybe about the size of your average Terran hawk.

GAIGE: So when we walked out into the observation wing and saw a bird thirty feet tall and bursting with slag, we understandably freaked out.

GAIGE: I don't know if...if she was just in so much pain she didn't know what was going on, or if...I don't know, but she attacked without hesitation, all while Jack was crowing about how invincible she was, and Mordecai was trying to calm her down, and...

MAYA: If you need a minute—

GAIGE: I'm fine. [sniff] It wasn't too hard to dodge everything she threw at us, but every minute or so she switched elements—I have no idea how that works, and I'm not going to try and figure it out—and came at us again. She almost got us all with a shock divebomb, but anyway.

GAIGE: Eventually, we managed to put enough lead into her to slow her down, and Mordecai shot her with a tranq dart. We got the upgrade chip off her collar and then...and then...

[pause]

MAYA: Gaige, why don't you go help Zero in the kitchen, okay?
GAIGE: [sniffle] Uh, yeah. I...he must be working with onions. I'll go...help. [sound of footsteps walking off]

MAYA: I should probably finish this off, huh? Though I still don't know why she uploads these things live.

MAYA: So, like Gaige said, she pulled the Claptrap upgrade chip from Bloodwing's collar, which is when it started beeping, loudly. And then...it exploded. While Handsome Jack laughed. Gaige got covered in blood again, and Salvador had to sling her over his shoulder.

MAYA: As we were hiking back to the Fast Travel station, Jack decided to send a bunch of loaders at us. Apparently, Mordecai has more than one sniper rifle, because he used some kind of massive explosive round to kill them all, one hit each.

AXTON: Maybe it was a Torgue rifle.

MAYA: Maybe. Torgue's the one that yells all the time, right?

SALVADOR: Torgue doesn't make sniper rifles.

MAYA: Well, whatever. The point is, we're all upset over what happened, but Gaige is the worst off besides Mordecai. She's a sweet kid, but she's a bit too sheltered for this. I'm not sure I want to know how she's handling all the killing. Yesterday, she seemed pretty blase about throwing the Zafords off a bridge. I'd ask, but it would probably cause another breakdown.

AXTON: “Sheltered?” Aren't you technically a monk?

MAYA: And it turns out I was raised to be the living weapon of the religion that adopted me. Which puts a few things from my childhood in perspective, now that I think about it.

JACK: Alright, sweet, sweet. Found it!

MAYA: What is he doing now? ...oh, the violin.

JACK: Alright, this a song for Mordecai's stupid bird, in E. [clears throat]

[screechy violin sounds]

JACK: You know what screw you, it would have been hilarious if I'd found it earlier! SHUT UP!

MAYA: ...douchebag.
Chapter Summary

The Once and Future Slab

GAIGE: Welcome back, subscribers, to your daily dose of comedic sociopathy. Yesterday's pity party is like, ninety percent over.

GAIGE: Roland had a job for us when we got up. He thought if we could recruit a former Raider named the Slab King, he could use his bandits to bust through the bunker. I dunno, it sounded a little fishy to me, but the Crimson Raiders just don't have enough guys left to do it themselves. Mordecai sent us to do some other stuff first, though. He was still hurting over Bloodwing, which is...[deep breath] understandable.

GAIGE: First, we went back to the Animal Preservation Exploited whatever the hell its called to release a bunch of the wild animals and kill the handlers. It was very...crap, what's the word? It starts with a k...kith...kath...

ZERO: Cathartic.

GAIGE: Right, that's it.

MAYA: That's spelled with a c, though.

GAIGE: Well, whatever. A k sound. It was more fun than it should have been. Anyway, Zero got a cool sniper rifle out of it, so no complaints.

GAIGE: After that, he—Mordecai—sent us to the Dust, where he wanted us to steal from rakkahol from a booze runner. I'm not really sure what rakkahol is, exactly—

SALVADOR: Booze.

GAIGE: I—I know that. I mean I don't know what kind.

SALVADOR: Rakkahol.

GAIGE: Oh, now you're just doing it on purpose.

SALVADOR: Maybe.

GAIGE: Anyway, Mordecai needed a few drinks for obvious reasons, but halfway through, Moxxi called up to say that she wanted it, to get back at him for neglecting her when they were dating. And apparently she dumped him for freaking Handsome Jack. Yeah, seriously. Good thing I wasn't the one driving, because I probably would have crashed. So yeah, they sniped at each other for a while, and Moxxi actually ran out of innuendos, which [giggles] was pretty funny, but otherwise it was all pretty standard. Oh, did I mention? The mission itself was pretty badass too. We didn't just go to the rakkahol...manufacturing...what do you call the place where you make alcohol?

AXTON: Distillery.
GAIGE: Yeah, that. Mordecai didn't send us there to shoot bad guys and loot stuff like normal. He sent us after the truck that had the barrels of booze strapped to the top, and we had to shoot them off. Kinda fun, actually. Most fun I've had in a turret in a while, anyway.

GAIGE: With all that stuff done, we headed over to Thousand Cuts, which is this massive...the area's split into two camps, right, the Hyperion bunker on one side, and the Slab bandit camp on the other. They're both built on the mountain, so there's this big ravine running down the middle of the bandit camp. It would actually be pretty, if not for, you know, all the spikes and blood and corpses stapled to the walls.

GAIGE: Well, when we first got there, the Slab King thought we were Hyperion spies, so he sent his men to attack us, all the while ranting about how we killed his puppy and stuff. Standard Hyperion stuff, you know, but it seemed weird that the Slab King cared. I mean, bandits are...crazy. Just...there was this one time a psycho started reciting something at me, Zero said it was Hamlet, whatever that is, but it was really weird. My point is they usually don't care if you kill them, let alone their friends and family.

GAIGE: Anyway, while the others were fending off the bandits, I got on the ECHO and managed to get in touch with someone—hell if I know who—who told the Slab King that we weren't from Hyperion. He figured we were there to join up instead, so he...sent his men to attack us. Exactly like before. Apparently that's the initiation rite. Oh, and Roland called and mentioned that the Slab King would only talk to us after we joined his gang. Would have been nice to know that earlier, buddy!

GAIGE: So we got to the Slab King—

AXTON: You forgot Face McShooty!

MAYA: Oh, for the love of—

GAIGE: Can we not talk about that guy, please? He freaked me out.

AXTON: C'mon, he was awesome! There was this bandit, named Face McShooty—

GAIGE: SO WE GOT TO THE SLAB KING—

AXTON: Fine, sheesh...

GAIGE: Once we got there, the king sent all his best men against us...which really wasn't saying much, really. I mean, there were a few hardcore badasses mixed in, but mostly they tried to weigh us down with numbers. Although it was actually a lot harder than I thought it'd be. I mean, even with Axton tossing out MIRV grenades like candy, we still almost lost Zero. Part of the problem was there wasn't enough time for my Interspersed Outburst to finish stacking. I've been thinking about re-speccing again, but Little Big Trouble has been working for me so far...

GAIGE: I'm rambling. Point is, Maya managed to save Zero while Salvador covered them, and then we were able to take down the rest of the slabs without getting killed. At first, I thought the Slab King was going to kill us for, you know, slaughtering half his men, but he just thought it was awesome.

GAIGE: Turns out he's actually Brick, one of the old Vault Hunters. Uh...that's not supposed to be a secret, right?

AXTON: I don't think so.

GAIGE: Okay, yeah, so he's one of the old Vault Hunters, but he got kicked out of the Crimson
Raiders because he went kinda crazy when Hyperion killed his dog, and...what'd Roland say? Something about ripping Hyperion soldiers apart in front of their families. But, I mean, I think he was exaggerating. Brick's cool, he wouldn't do something like that.

GAIGE: I don't know if it was a coincidence or what—

SALVADOR: Coincidence. Brick said the attacks happen all the time.

GAIGE: Oh, all right. So, yeah. Hyperion started a mortar bombardment of the slab camp—which apparently is, you know, not too weird—so we ran out with the Slab King to destroy the mortar beacons that were guiding down the moonshots.

GAIGE: Brick had this giant sledgehammer thing, but see, here's the thing: I watched him punch a loader in the face so hard it exploded. How awesome is that? I think, that right there, is the second most awesome thing I have ever seen in my life.

AXTON: I can guess what the first is—

GAIGE: The first is a Torgue shotgun and Anarchy.

AXTON: Here we go again...

GAIGE: I'm telling you guys, if you just let me re-spec back to Ordered Chaos, I can use this awesome shotgun I found—

AXTON: —and you can blow me into lots of pretty little pieces. Unless you get it on tape, you're not allowed to shoot me, and we don't have any cameras. Besides, I still have a scar from last time, wanna see?

GAIGE: You...how do you have a scar? You had that Preparation tech, Maya healed you up, and Doctor Zed looked over you when we got back. You should have less scars than before I shot you.

MAYA: He made me leave it. Said it looked badass.

AXTON: Oh, come on. It got me right over the heart! You have to keep scars over the heart, it's like a law. I mean, if you survive.

GAIGE: Yeah, Close Enough is programmed to go for the critical hit spots—

MAYA: Maybe this is good time to get ready for dinner.

AXTON: What? But my scar—

MAYA: Axton, put your shirt back on.

GAIGE: Uh, yeah, so I guess that's it for tonight, folks! Tomorrow, we're off to Opportunity! Handsome Jack's little Hyperion company town.

MAYA: Actually, tomorrow we're off to Lynchwood. The Slab King said there was work there.

GAIGE: Oh, okay. So, I guess tomorrow is Lynchwood. Whatever that is. Mechromancer, signing off.
GAIGE: Hellooo, everyone! Today, we met the Sheriff of Lynchwood. And shot her in the face.

GAIGE: But I'm getting ahead of myself. We actually started out back in the Dust. Zero found an old ECHO recording somewhere in Sanctuary talking about something called “the Bane.” It said to go find Marcus, which, we did, and, well...he said it was a cursed gun.

GAIGE: I dunno, me and Salvador were kinda willing to just let this one lie, but everyone else was all gung-ho about it. Maya said something or other about conquering superstition, and Axton was all like “yeah, it'll be badass if we can get a cursed gun!” and then they started fighting again. And Zero was just...Zero.

GAIGE: Anyway, we got shouted down a little, so we followed Marcus' directions to the Dust, to find the guy he sold it to. The GPS led us to his ECHO near a bunch of spiderant warrens or nests or...what do you call the place where spiderants live?

AXTON: Uh...wait, I know this one...

SALVADOR: Araña-hormiguero.

MAYA: Pretty sure she meant in English.

SALVADOR: Oh. Spideranthill?

GAIGE: Whatever. We found Horace, the guy Marcus sold it to, but he was all betrayed and deadified from his partner, McNally. And, well...[click]

HORACE: McNally took the Bane...it worked like a charm against the spiderants, but the curse...[coughing up blood] if you're hearing this, find McNally. He may have left me for dead, but he doesn't deserve what the Bane will do to him...nobody does!

GAIGE: [click] So. Yeah. Not exactly what you'd call a...five star recommendation. But still, we had come this far, and McNally's ECHO GPS was just sitting there on Horace's, so we figured, why not?

GAIGE: We followed it to some little hut in the middle of the Dust, and the second we got there, McNally came out, screaming like a psycho. Not completely sure if he was a psycho before he got the Bane, but doesn't really matter now, because he's all dead and stuff. Anyway, we grabbed his ECHO, and his last journal entry was talking about how he had to get rid of it and all that, and he sold it to a guy in Lynchwood.

GAIGE: Lynchwood is a Hyperion mining town where Handsome Jack lets his girlfriend play cowboy sheriff as long as the Eridium keeps flowing from the mines. When I first heard about it, I'm like “holy crap, that's awesome!” but I guess it just goes to show you that Jack can ruin anything if he puts his mind to it.
GAIGE: Okay, I'm going a little out of order here, but lemme finish up the Bane before I get into all the awesome stuff the Slab King had us doing at the same time. And it was awesome! I mean, he sent us to the bank—

MAYA: Uh, Gaige?

GAIGE: What? That's not a secret, the Sheriff was laughing about the whole thing harder than we were!

MAYA: No, I just mean—

GAIGE: Oh, right, the Bane. Okay, so while we were getting food for Dukino—just gimme a second on that one—we found Gar, the last owner of the Bane. He didn't sell it, or give it away, or get it stolen or anything, he just buried it in the Lynchwood graveyard and died. Uh, of unrelated causes. Probably. But yeah, there was a map and stuff, so we were able to find the spot pretty easily.

GAIGE: First, the Bane is a submachine gun. Pretty damn good one, too. Except it has some weird...I don’t know what to call it. Some magnetic effect...thing? Anyone holding the gun gets slowed way down, they can't even run, and I have no idea what's causing it. Maybe it's interfering with the leg implants? I don't know...more tests.

GAIGE: But, uh...that's only part of the curse. See, the gun also talks. Well, when I say “talks,” I mean...

The BANE: SWAPPIN' WEAPONS!

GAIGE: ...that.

The BANE: [sound of gunfire] AIAIAIAIAIAIAIAIAIAIAI—

GAIGE: And that.

MARCUS: What the—I told you Vault Hunters, keep that thing out of my shop!

AXTON: Relax, we just need target practice.

MAYA: Right, Marcus, I've been meaning to ask...do you have any targets that aren't, um, alive?

TARGET: Please...help...

MARCUS: What, you don't like living targets? Why didn't you just say so? [gunshot]

GAIGE: [shriek]

MARCUS: See? No problem! Just make sure to tell me when you leave. I need to take him down before he starts to stink.

[sound of footsteps walking away]

MAYA: ...I hate this planet.

GAIGE: ...I think...I think I need to...

MAYA: Yeah, we're heading back. Marcus? We're done.

MARCUS: Come back soon!
[two minutes of silent walking]

GAIGE: Okay, I think I'm good. [sound of flopping onto a couch] Right, where was I? Lynchwood, yeah. Old West town. Pretty awesome, even considering how much of a bitch the Sheriff was.

GAIGE: So the first thing we learned upon stepping off the train is that the Sheriff really likes hanging people. That's where the name of the town came from. And she's pretty big on Handsome Jack's policy of “anyone who doesn't work for me is an evil bandit I can kill without remorse.” Brick isn't exactly her biggest fan. Also, for someone who hates bandits so much, her town is filled with them. I mean seriously, there were a hundred? More? I'm not sure, exactly. Salvador, how many did you get?

SALVADOR: Eighty-six.

AXTON: I got eighty-seven.

SALVADOR: Hey, you said eighty-five earlier!

GAIGE: Okay, so they got somewhere in the neighborhood of ninety each, and then the rest of us got like twenty or thirty...but we didn't start counting until halfway through...wait, were you guys counting the rats?

AXTON: Uh, yeah?

SALVADOR: Were we not supposed to?

GAIGE: So, yeah, lots of bandits. They're mostly dead now.

GAIGE: The Slab King gave us a couple jobs—rob the bank, and blow up the Eridium train from the mines. The bank was closer, so we started there. Turns out the entire thing was made out of poly-kryten. The only thing on Pandora that dissolves poly-kryten is skag bile—which tells you a lot about skag bile, right there—so Brick sent us to get a laxative, to coat on a bomb we got from this miner named Mad Dog, and get a skag to eat it. That was all kinda easy, actually. I dunno why, but I sorta expected that robbing a bank would be...hard, you know?

GAIGE: Anyway, we blew open the door and got into the vault—not a Vault vault, just a vault vault—and emptied it out. That's when things started getting hard. The Sheriff sent her posse on us, which was a bunch of those stupid marshal guys riding around on big badass skags. We had to hide the loot where Brick's Slabs could get it later.

GAIGE: The train—

ZERO: Dukino.

GAIGE: No, I didn't forget him, I'm just saving it for later, shush.

GAIGE: Okay, so the train was pretty easy. Get a bomb in a minecart, put it on the tracks, blow it up at the right second to send the train tumbling into the ravine. There were a lot of Hyperion lab rats running around that area, probably mutated from all the Eridium, so that was...fun.

GAIGE: The only thing is, this pissed off the Sheriff enough to go into a lot of messy detail about what she did to Brick's dog, and what he did to the guy who sold out New Haven. [sniff] I...really don't feel like talking about that.

AXTON: Sheriff killed the dog, Brick cracked open the informant's head like an eggshell.
GAIGE: Axton! What the hell!?

AXTON: What? You didn't want to say it, so I did. What's the big deal?

GAIGE: Ugh...okay, whatever, back to Dukino! While we were running around town, we found a little skag chained up. He was adorable, he tried to lick Axton—

AXTON: He was trying to eat me.

GAIGE: And yeah, he was really friendly, and Axton's stupid.

AXTON: Hey!

GAIGE: Scooter chimed in—I really wish he would stop watching us all the time—and sent us to get it some medicine, then some skag chews and skag tongues and stuff. So yeah, we were feeding a skag...skag parts. That was kinda weird. But we found him a new home in the old abandoned mine and everything, so it all turned out okay!

GAIGE: Now, we did Dukino and the Bane at the same time as the bank and the train, not, you know, before and after. Just easier to...okay. So when we finished off the bank job, the Sheriff was kinda pissed, but in a “hey, it's impressive that you actually managed to piss me off” kind of way. So she challenged us to a duel and everything.

SALVADOR: You forgot the Deputy—

GAIGE: I'm getting to that, jeez! Okay, so there are a bunch of loudspeakers throughout Lynchwood, right? Half of it is the Sheriff blaring out about how she wants fights to break out because they're more fun, don't steal from the mine, she's Handsome Jack's girlfriend and he's terrible at naming things, all that.

GAIGE: But the other half is Deputy Winger, this poor guy who got deputized at gunpoint, and is just trying to keep people from getting killed by the Sheriff. When we got to the duel, he was there, along with a bunch of other marshals. And the Sheriff herself, of course.

AXTON: You know, maybe it's just me, but I thought when she said “pistols at high noon,” she'd be the only one there.

GAIGE: So...if she had been the only one, would you have fought her one-on-one?

AXTON: Probably not.

GAIGE: Yeah, that's what I thought. Anyway, Maya insisted we not shoot Deputy Winger, which made the fight more annoying than it had to be.

MAYA: I thought you liked him.

GAIGE: I do. I'm just saying it made the fight annoying. I mean, he was shooting at us, which meant Deathtrap and Axton's turret wouldn't have been able to identify him as a friendly, so we couldn't use them. And then there were marshals shooting at us from the rooftops, and I don't even know where the Sheriff was for the first half of the fight, but I got shot, and went down, and then Axton shot her in the face.

GAIGE: But we all survived, and Deputy Winger became the new sheriff of Lynchwood! Uh, I think. Axton might be sheriff now, instead.
AXTON: What? Why would I be sheriff?

GAIGE: Isn't the old west where the whole “you keep what you kill” thing comes from?

AXTON: Definitely not.

GAIGE: Okay, whatever. Anyway, that's it for tonight, subscribers! *Tomorrow*, is Opportunity. Uh, right?

MAYA: Yeah, that's right.

GAIGE: Right, cool. Good night, everybody!
ECHO 19

Chapter Summary

The Man Who Would Be Jack

GAIGE: Hello, everyone! Today, we went to Opportunity. I'm sure you've heard of the place—Hyperion has been spamming everyone in the six galaxies with ads. If you've been paying attention the last few hours, you might even know what we did already. [giggles]

GAIGE: Okay, so we started the day by helping defend a Hyperion supply crate that the Slabs got their hands on, which was fun, but I still don't know what was in the stupid thing. After *that*, we headed off to Opportunity.

GAIGE: Angel had an idea—

JACK: Gaige...

GAIGE: No, no, I know! Just lemme...okay, so Opportunity is Hyperion's shiny new city, built in 21st-century future style. So you know, lots of [mocking tone] *elegant angles* and *economical* whatsoeverthefricks, plus mirrors, like, everywhere. But more than that, it's built like a freaking cult base, with statues of Handsome Jack *all* over the place. The place wasn't quite done, but pretty damn close, so there were lots of engineers and loaders. *So* many loaders.

GAIGE: Lilith sent us there with Moxxi's camera, to do some anti-propaganda. We already uploaded it all, so you can probably find it somewhere on the ECHO-net if you look hard enough. Hyperion can't get every copy. Anyway, it's a bunch of videos of Maya shooting people in the face. Oh, and I blew up a crane with a moonshot, so that was pretty cool.

AXTON: Don't forget that annoying old guy who sounds like my grandmother.

GAIGE: *...what are you—OH!* Right, oh, yeah. Speaking of propaganda, we got to watch the Hyperion-sponsored version of the opening of the first Vault. Ugh. I mean, there were elements of truth to it, but...yeah, just, no. But, we got paid for listening to that crap, which tells you something about where Jack's priorities are, so it wasn't a complete waste of time.

GAIGE: I'm missing a bunch of stuff, what is...oh, right. So, we're shooting our way through the city, right? Engineers yelling at us for interrupting their lunches, some Hyperion guy on the intercom telling them not to fight us, all that.

SALVADOR: What? I don't remember that.

GAIGE: Yeah, he said...crap, where...

AXTON: No, I think he's right. The guy went on about the statues, and “die less,” and all that, but nothing about us specific— [click]

ANNOUNCER: Vault Hunters have apparently been spotted in the vicinity, so don't be afraid to run away from them. We don't get paid enough for that crap. [click]
GAIGE: Uh, thanks Zero.

ZERO: You're welcome.

GAIGE: Anyway, so we're bouncing around the city, doing all this stuff for Angel, and the announcer guy mentions that Handsome Jack thinks the sculptors screwed up the jawline on the statues of him scattered around the city. I dunno, I thought they were pretty accurate—

JACK: Is that really important right now?

AXTON: Please stop talking.

JACK: Oh, right. Sorry.

GAIGE: The point is, the announcer talking about chisels and firing squads gave Claptrap—who was listening over the ECHO, because everyone does that and I can't figure out how to stop them—the idea to send us to destroy the “propagandtastic” statues. Which, I'm like 90% sure isn't actually a word, but whatever.

GAIGE: Turns out the statues are bullet-proof. Even a pair of triple-missile launchers Salvador had stowed away somewhere didn't scratch it. Somebody has too much disposable income.

SALVADOR: What?

GAIGE: What?

SALVADOR: Were you making fun of me? For having rocket launchers?

GAIGE: Wha—I...no! I meant Jack! Jack has too much disposable income, to make his statues out of starship armor or whatever.

SALVADOR: Oh. Okay.

GAIGE: So Claptrap found a deactivated Constructor bot over in Opportunity's landing zone, and I managed to get it working while he was all like “truuust the Vault Hunters, robot” as if that would actually help. So then we had a giant robot with a fifty or sixty terawatt laser.

ZERO: 63.9 terawatts.

GAIGE: Sure, why not. Anyway, so we're cutting down the statues—

AXTON: The robot was cutting them.

GAIGE: Well, yeah, that was implied.

JACK: No, he's right, you can cause misunderstandings—

GAIGE: Maya. Seriously.

JACK: Right, right.

GAIGE: So the robot was cutting down the statues for us, and loaders and engineers are crawling out of the woodwork and screaming about lunch breaks, and Handsome Jack rings us up. He, of course, seemed to think that his statues were beautiful works of art, and couldn't understand why anyone would want to cut them down. But, I mean, c'mon. They were just...yeah.
ZERO: The workmanship was terrible.

GAIGE: Yeah, I—wait, what?

ZERO: Clearly a copy/Frédéric Bartholdi's but/they did a poor job.

GAIGE: Who's Frédéric Bartholdi?

ZERO: French sculptor.

GAIGE: What's a French?

AXTON: Wait, I know this one, I think it's something about surrendering a lot, or—

GAIGE: Whatever, what I was trying to say was that the statues were all these ugly things with Jack like, standing on Crimson Raiders, or holding the Vault Key and a baby, and that one with the book —

AXTON: Oh yeah, you hated that one. What was wrong with it?

GAIGE/ZERO: Blatant plagiarism of “the Thinker.”

GAIGE: Oh, sorry, I didn't mean to—

ZERO: You know that one?

GAIGE: Ugh, yeah, one of my classmate's dads had a bunch of them scattered around their estate. I really hate that frickin' statue.

GAIGE: So we finished destroying the statues—

AXTON: The robot destroyed them.

GAIGE: And Jack was all like [mocking tone] “I'm gonna commission a statue of me kicking you in the junk” and whatever, he's a douche, and then Claptrap had the bright idea to make our suborned constructor bot—which I worked very hard to hack!—dance. And somebody decided it would be a good idea to push the big red button.

SALVADOR: Claptrap said it was okay!

GAIGE: Claptrap also said that he and Captain Flynt were best buddies.

GAIGE: Anyway, the bot exploded, which sucked, because we totally could have found a better use for it, but... [sighs] No use crying over spilled motor oil.

GAIGE: The last thing we had to do in Opportunity was Moxxi's little mission.

AXTON: What? No the last thing was—

GAIGE: Shush.

AXTON: Oh, right.

GAIGE: So, Moxxi used to have this thing called the Underdome, which was a giant tournament colosseum thingy where she let people fight all sorts of monsters and bandits and stuff. Not really sure where someone like her would get all sorts of monsters and bandits and stuff, but hey, whatever.
Well, after she broke up with Handsome Jack, he blew it up, and decided to build his own version in Opportunity. Moxxi sent us to kill the foreman.

GAIGE: It wasn't hard to find the guy, since he was in the area of town that was still like, ninety percent under construction. And, you know, there were all sorts of engineers and loaders and all that bouncing around, and I kinda almost fell off these catwalks into this giant pit thing, but other than that we were fine. It was actually kinda fun. I've never fought in a construction site before.

GAIGE: Now, this was all before the thing with the voice—

SALVADOR: I thought we weren't supposed to talk about that.

GAIGE: Oh, you're right, sorry! Okay, okay, so we killed the foreman, and he dropped a key, and Moxxi said something about keys and locks that I didn't really get. I mean, obviously, we had a key, we needed to find the matching lock, but she said it in her sexy voice, so I guess it was an innuendo? I, whatever, like half of what she says is innuendos. More, probably.

GAIGE: So we found the lock, inserted the key—OH! That's what she meant! [giggles] I—she—why is everyone looking at me like that?

AXTON: It really took you that long?

GAIGE: Anyway, so the key fit a shipping container in the construction site, which had explosives inside. That would have been a fitting reward all on its own, but Moxxi had the great idea to use them to blow up one of the exterior walls that was below sea level, which really pissed off Jack. It was hilarious! And then he made a stupid sexist remark, which was less hilarious.

GAIGE: Well, Angel was the one who sent us to Opportunity in the first place. She—

JACK: Gaige.

GAIGE: Gah!

JACK: Just wait until tomorrow.

GAIGE: Okay, I will! Just dear God, please stop talking.

[sound of footsteps leaving]

GAIGE: That's...a long story. Mechromancer, out!
Chapter Summary

Where Angels Fear to Tread

GAIGE: I...I...God, what do I even say?

MAYA: If you want me to—

GAIGE: No, I can... [sniffle] Just...give me a minute. [deep breath] I can do this.

[several minutes of silence]

GAIGE: ...okay, okay. Yesterday, the reason Maya sounded like Jack was because Angel [chokes]...

Angel got us a pocket watch voice modulator, which doubled as a device that would fool any bio-scanners into thinking the wearer is Handsome Jack. With a few voice samples, we were able to use it to get past a door designed to only open for him. Massive security hole there, Jacky boy. I can think of a dozen ways he could have made it so the watch wouldn't work. Starting with NOT GIVING YOUR BODY DOUBLES WATCHES THAT LET THEM PASS A BIO-SCAN AS YOU! Seriously. Just...wow.

AXTON: Didn't Angel say he wanted his doubles to do all his public handshaking for him? Any high-profile event will have bio-scanners at the entrance.

ZERO: Assassins will also scan before they strike.

GAIGE: Yeah, I know, but...c'mon! He could have set it so that the watch gives off a frequency that one security scanner could detect or something, so they'd know it wasn't him!

MAYA: Maybe he did? Angel didn't say what she did to the watch. Maybe she disabled stuff like that.

GAIGE: ...okay, yeah, I guess that makes sense. But, still! We had one person with this watch that alters your voice and bio-signature to match Handsome Jack's, and all five of us were able to get through the door! What's up with that?

MAYA: I guess Angel could have—

GAIGE: Wait, wait, I'm getting ahead of myself again. Okay, so, Angel Core is in Thousand Cuts, across the way from Brick's slabs. First we had to tell Claptrap we were ready, which was actually surprisingly easy, since the crazy little guy had somehow managed to convince himself that Jack was after him, specifically.

GAIGE: But anyway, we met him down in Thousand Cuts, after slaughtering our way through the slabs again. Brick wasn't kidding, those guys really are idiots. Seriously, they shot on sight. You'd think they could pass around a memo or something whenever they get new members...I dunno. I'm pretty sure they have a few New-U stations. Um, maybe.

GAIGE: So getting through the Competitor Deterrence Field was easy with the... [sniffle] upgrade
we got from Bloodwing. The CDF identified Claptrap as a legal Hyperion product—instead of, you
know, an obsolete and illegal model slated for termination—so he was able to just roll through and
shut it off from the other side.

AXTON: Then the little bastard disappeared.

GAIGE: Well, yeah. He's not a combat bot like my Deathtrap. Standard self-preservation protocol is
“run and hide.”

GAIGE: But yeah, so even though we were through the CDF, we still had to fight our way up a
mountain just covered in loaders. I mean seriously, we're talking about like when you step on an
anthill! Just a billion of the stupid things swarming around, coming out of supply crates, and literally
falling out of the sky...blargh, would have been the perfect time for Anarchy, but nooo...

AXTON: Give it a rest, we don't want to get shot.

GAIGE: As we were hiking up the road to the bunker, they started shooting mortars at us!
Seriously, who uses mortars!?

SALVADOR: Hyperion.

GAIGE: That's...thanks, Salvador. That's helpful.

SALVADOR: Well, it was fun.

MAYA: You think dodging mortars is fun?

AXTON: Well, that explains why he was laughing.

GAIGE: ...sure. Whatever makes you feel better.

GAIGE: The weird part was when we got to the gate—seriously, this giant gate thing, like a freaking
castle, except with stupid Hyperion turrets! So we blew up the turrets...and they opened the gate? I'm
really not sure if they even have a security adviser, really. I mean, just so many stupid design
decisions.

MAYA: Maybe Angel did it.

GAIGE: Maya, you can't blame everything on Angel! Especially not...I mean, she said she wired
through pretty much the entire planet, and I guess that makes sense here, but. Just...not. Let's not talk
about that any more.

GAIGE: After the gate—like, right after—there was this badass constructor on top of this tiered cliff
which kept shooting missiles at us and loaders and fricken nukes and we couldn't get a good shot at
and Salvador left his missile launchers at the base for some reason and AGGHHH! I think that stupid
thing, all on its own, took us an hour.

AXTON: It wasn't that bad. Fifteen, twenty minutes.

GAIGE: Who here has an internal chronometer accurate down to the millisecond, Axton, hm? Is it
you?

AXTON: Well, apparently it's not you, since you just said you weren't sure how long it took.

GAIGE: So after an hour or so we finally fought past the stupid badass, and from there it was mostly
easy sailing to the bunker. Ugh, except Handsome Jack decided that it would be a wonderful time to
call us up and brag about how he tortured Tannis to get the Vault Key from her, except he left her alive because [mocking tone] “That's what heroes do. They show mercy.” Seriously, what the frickety frick is wrong with that man's brain?

GAIGE: But we took the elevator up to the bunker, and we were suddenly in this...open air, garden thing, on top of this tower-shaped cliff face. Or, uh, it might have been an artificial tower covered in rock. In hindsight, that makes more sense. Anyway, it was all really pretty, actually, with green plants with names I couldn't pronounce if my life depended on it, and this big platform surrounded by a large ringed walkway. Normally the Hyperion aesthetic just comes off as pretentious, but I think they nailed it here.

GAIGE: Brick's Buzzards—

ZERO: Vultures.

GAIGE: No, they're called—OH! Right, okay everyone, I kinda accidentally called the bandit fliers Vultures instead of Buzzards last time. Really not sure where that came from, but anyway: They're called Buzzards.

GAIGE: So they tried to bomb the bunker to let us through—after Angel told us the only way to deactivate the final force field was to blow up the bunker—but AA turrets digistructed everywhere and started shooting them out of the sky!

GAIGE: After blowing up like, a bajillion turrets and dodging laser countermeasures that kept trying to chop our legs off, the turrets stopped respawning, and the Buzzards were able to get into place and start actually, you know dropping bombs and doing damage and all that good stuff. Then Handsome Jack called and...one sec, I think... [click]

JACK: Did you really think I'd protect Angel with a couple of bots and some flimsy turrets? Ya see, [laughs] you're not at the bunker right now. The bunker isn't a place. [click]

GAIGE: And that would be when a giant chunk of the fortifications started flying around and shooting at us. [click]

JACK: That's the bunker. Meet the BNK3R, the greatest defense bot ever built. Designed her myself! Now, do me a favor, and die. [click]

GAIGE: I'm gonna be honest: We really should have seen this coming. With Hyperion's obsession with robots and...yeah. We were idiots. But thankfully, despite being the “greatest defense bot ever” or whatever the crap, it was actually a pretty easy fight. A big giant target to shoot at that just sits there half the time? Psh, couldn't ask for better! Uh, except for all the loaders that were still trying to kill us.

SALVADOR: And the artillería cañón.

GAIGE: Yeah, that made the fight...okay, yeah, I don't know what that means.

SALVADOR: The really big gun.

GAIGE: Oh, that! C'mon, that wasn't that bad. I mean, sure, it almost killed...all of us...twice...anyway, the fight was long, but we won and stuff.

GAIGE: So then Angel directed us to the door that was behind a forcefield before. Actually, in hindsight, if the bunker was a bot, that means the forcefield couldn't have been a hardwired switch, which means we probably could have hacked through it without destroying the bunker, but,
whatever, it all worked out.

GAIGE: Then we're at the door. Maya stands on the pad, and you know, gets scanned, and speaks the code Angel provided: “I love you.” That...that is _about_ when we started to wonder what exactly was going on. The fact that Handsome Jack immediately called and threatened everyone we had ever met if we continued only made things, you know, more suspicious.

GAIGE: But then, then...

MAYA: ...do you want me to do it?

GAIGE: Yeah, I, uh, just [sniffle] need a minute to myself. M-my stomach still hurts.

[sound of footsteps walking off]

MAYA: All right, where were we...the elevator. Wait, Axton? Has Gaige gone into detail on the Warrior?

AXTON: Uh...maybe?

MAYA: I'll go over it again just in case. After we rescued Roland, he explained that he had discovered the Vault isn't a cache of alien weapons or anything like that, it's a living Eridian weapon called the Warrior, which Jack is planning to wake up and control using the Vault key, then destroy all resistance on Pandora. Now, I'm something of a living weapon myself, so maybe we'll get lucky and it will turn on him, but we have to assume the worst.

MAYA: To awaken the Warrior, Jack needs to recharge the Vault key from the first Vault. Angel said it recharges naturally over two hundred years, but Jack isn't willing to wait that long. That's why he's using the Eridium that appeared everywhere to accelerate the process.

MAYA: But as we were descending the elevator, she explained that Eridium on its own cannot charge the key. You need a catalyst, something to turn the Eridium into something useful. That means a Siren, one who can use Eridium to enhance her natural abilities.

MAYA: A Siren like Angel.

MAYA: It's still not clear what exactly is her story. The second we met her in person, it was obvious she was a Siren; she had the same wings I can sometimes get from my highest-tier abilities, and I could _feel_ her power with every beat. But she was still Jack's slave, and all she wanted was to be free. I...can certainly empathize with that, but she it turns out she actually wanted to _die_.

MAYA: The others freaked out—

AXTON: Hey, I didn't freak out!

MAYA: ...Axton, you _whimpered_. Like a little girl. I thought it was Gaige at first.

AXTON: Well, I mean...you were _crying_!

MAYA: Yes, I was.

AXTON: Uh...

MAYA: What? Did you expect me to be embarrassed about that?

AXTON: Kinda, yeah.
MAYA: Before we could try and talk Angel down from the suicide angle, or even get over the fact that our friendly “AI” was actually a Siren, she got dragged away by a gravity tether, while Handsome Jack screamed at us to get the hell away from his *daughter*. I'm not sure where that came from—

SALVADOR: She said he...ah, what's the word...

ZERO: Acquired.

SALVADOR: Yeah. She said Jack acquired her “years ago.”

AXTON: I didn't hear that.

SALVADOR: Weren't you paying attention?

AXTON: Look, I still figured the whole thing was a trap. I was keeping an eye on the perimeter.

MAYA: What I meant was, there was no hint of this before we got to the Angel Core.

SALVADOR: No, wait, in Opportunity, Gaige found some ECHO logs talking about—

MAYA: Salvador. The point is we didn't expect this.

SALVADOR: Oh. Okay.

MAYA: So Angel got snagged by a gravity tether and pulled into this giant, dark circular room. By the time we caught up to her, she was already inside a shield bubble in the middle of the room, which is apparently where Jack keeps her most of the time. She had some sort of energy harness connecting her to the machines in the ceiling, which I think was the Eridium, but I'm not sure. I can't feel Eridium the same way Lilith can so—

AXTON: Handsome Jack was yelling, wondering what she was doing.

MAYA: Oh, yeah. He's...clearly not good at people defying him. I think he honestly couldn't understand why she didn't see things his way.

MAYA: Like I said, there were machines in the ceiling, outside the shield, which Angel called Eridium injectors. I couldn't see any actual tubes connecting her to them, which is why I'm assuming that's what the energy tether was for. Angel told us to shoot them, but Jack managed to get some of those really high-quality reflector shields up, so our bullets just bounced off.

MAYA: Thankfully, Roland finally managed to show up.

AXTON: He had been climbing up the side of the mountain as a pincer attack.

MAYA: Hm? Didn't Gaige mention that?

ZERO: No.

MAYA: Well, yes, that's what Roland was up to. I assume he crawled in through a vent or something. And...wait one second, I know Gaige saved a voice clip somewhere...uh... [click]

BRICK: Get out to the ring if you need help, slabs! [click]

MAYA: Not that one. Maybe— [click]
JACK: Did you really think I'd protect Angel with— [click]

MAYA: Where the hell is the help menu on this stupid thing?

AXTON: It should be one of the most recent ones saved. No, not— [click]

SCOOTER: Plan “Turn this city— [click]

AXTON: That's the oldest one. Go in the other direction. [click]

ELLIE: Don't get many visitors— [click]

SALVADOR: I think she's doing it on purpose.

MAYA: You stay out of this.

AXTON: Uh, you all right? You look...frustrated.

MAYA: Yes, it's just... [sighs] Long day. And I never had to deal with this kind of thing at the abbey. Okay, wait—I've got it. [click]

ANGEL: Roland! I need you to lower the shields on my Eridium injectors!

ROLAND: ...uh, did I miss something, or is Angel a Siren?

ANGEL: I meant now, Roland! [click]

MAYA: He was up around the ceiling, and he managed to activate a light bridge—

SALVADOR: Gaige called it a maintenance bridge.

MAYA: ...oh. That explains a lot. So, yes, he used a force-field bridge to cross over to the Eridium injectors and disable the shields. Using the maintenance panels, I guess. And everything was going fine for the first two injectors—

AXTON: There were four injectors total.

MAYA: Please stop doing that.

AXTON: What? You keep skipping stuff. Like the crapton of loaders Jack was throwing at us.

SALVADOR: Those relámpago pillars. The shock things.

AXTON: At least those were easy to blow up.

SALVADOR: Eh, true.

MAYA: [clears throat] After the first two injectors, Jack managed to turn off the light bridges, and there was no obvious way to climb up to the injectors. That's when Lilith teleported in.

SALVADOR: That reminds me, I thought Angel told her to stay away?

AXTON: ...uh, yeah man. That's why Roland yelled at her when she showed up. Am I the only one who pays attention when people are talking?

MAYA: Then why are you always confused when we're doing missions for Moxxi?
AXTON: That's different. There are boobs involved, I can't spare any attention away from my eyes.

SALVADOR: He's got a point there.

MAYA: When Lilith teleported in, she was able to teleport Roland up to the last two injectors, take down the shields with us covering them from the loaders. With all the injectors destroyed, the bubble shield disappeared—I don't know why, maybe Gaige can explain when she gets back—and Angel started to die.

MAYA: You see, she had so much Eridium pumped into her over the last few years that her body didn't know how to survive without it any more. So she just sort of...floated down, her wings fading away, and I could feel her power dissipating...she thanked us, though. Quietly and earnestly thanked us. I...think that might have been worse than if she had cursed us.

MAYA: Jack was shouting something or other that I wasn't paying attention to, but I remember Angel's last words. And...okay, I know this is the right one. [click]

ANGEL: Dad, I have something to tell you...you're an asshole. [click]

MAYA: And then the last of her power was gone.

MAYA: We kindof all just...collapsed on the floor. I guess the others were just physically exhausted and needed a second to rest—

ZERO: Yes.

AXTON: Yeah, same here.

SALVADOR: I was trying not to throw up.

AXTON: You too? I think Gaige actually did—

MAYA: I was exhausted physically too, but something about being close to a dying Siren...I don't know how to describe it. I just felt powerless all of a sudden. I guess it was just some weird kind of shock, because Lilith seemed fine. Then she said something that summarized everyone's feelings. [click]

LILITH: What kind of person would do this to their own daughter?

ROLAND: The kind of guy who deserves to die. [click]

AXTON: Hey, you got it right!

MAYA: You're ruining the mood.

AXTON: Sorry.

MAYA: Roland knelt down to double-check that Angel was dead and make sure the Vault key was the real one, and declared that he was going after Jack.

MAYA: Then Handsome Jack shot him in the back.

MAYA: He had been using a personal cloaking device, and some pistol that punched through Roland's shields like they weren't even there—

SALVADOR: They weren't.
MAYA: Huh?

AXTON: All our shields went down when Angel's bubble-shield popped. Or maybe cutting her off from the Eridium busted every shield in the room.

MAYA: Oh. I guess that makes sense. I had been wondering what that pulse of energy was, but I hadn't really connected the dots.

MAYA: [sighs] Dammit you guys, you ruined an important moment.

AXTON: Sorry. Again.

MAYA: So Lilith screams bloody murder and charges at Jack in full Firehawk mode—wings and all—but he just slaps some kind of slave collar around her throat, and suddenly, she can't do anything.

MAYA: Remember, we were all on the ground, so we had barely managed to grab our guns before Jack had Lilith in front of him as a human shield. And worse, that collar was doing something to her, making her obey him no matter how hard she tried to resist. I don't know if it hadn't taken full control yet or what, but when he told her to kill us, she managed to teleport us back to Sanctuary instead. In Marcus' basement, actually.

MAYA: Gaige was collapsed again because of that teleportation sickness thing, so we had to carry her back to the base. Mordecai was understandably freaked out about losing two of his friends in about as many minutes, but he managed to keep calm enough to clear the couch for Gaige.

MAYA: And there you have it. It's...been a very long day, and tomorrow isn't looking much better. I really don't know what else to say. Guys, should I just turn it off now?

SALVADOR: Wait for Gaige, at least.

MAYA: But she's still recovering from everything. I don't want to—

JACK: People of Pandora...my daughter...is dead. Murdered...by the Vault Hunters. So, I've decided—I'm rescinding the bounty on the Vault Hunters. If you should kill those child-murdering sonofbitches before I do, I will find you. And you will regret denying me my vengeance.

MAYA: ...and that was Handsome Jack, on the planet-wide ECHO.

GAIGE: I hate that man so much.

MAYA: Oh, I didn't hear you come back.

GAIGE: Can we go kill him now? [sniffle] Please?

ZERO: Mordecai.

AXTON: Yeah, he said he had some ideas. So maybe tomorrow?

MAYA: But for tonight, you need sleep. And so do the rest of us. Why don't you sign off?

GAIGE: ...okay. [clears throat] This is Gaige, Mechromancer of the new Vault Hunters, signing off for the night.
Chapter Summary

before Toil and Trouble

GAIGE: Hey, everybody...sorry, just not really feeling it today. After everything that happened yesterday, and... [sigh]

GAIGE: But I said I'd do this, so...I'm doing it. Just need a second.

[deep breath]

GAIGE: Today was actually kinda fun, but it definitely didn't start out that way. Mordecai sent us out to give everyone the bad news, but Axton and I really weren't feeling up to it, and Salvador...kinda still makes people nervous.

SALVADOR: I just don't understand why everyone is frightened.

AXTON: Have you ever actually looked at your wanted poster? Or in a mirror?

GAIGE: Anyway, while Maya was handling that, the rest of just...kinda wandered around, I guess. Oh, we solved a crime! Yeah, these four guys—well, two guys and two girls—were in a Truxican standoff, and we had to figure out who stole the loot from the rest of them. While Salvador, Axton, and me were [clears throat] carefully examining the evidence and not bickering amongst ourselves, Zero shot the guy with the cash box on his back. Which, uh, makes a lot of sense in hindsight.

GAIGE: Then Mordecai called us back, and Maya too, and sent us off the the Eridium Blight through the Dust, which is like, the worst part of Hyperion's mining operations. Everything is all dark and purple with slag, there are bullymongs and rakks everywhere, and there are more Jack statues. But, hey, on the plus side, there are volcanoes!

MAYA: That's not really a good thing, ecologically speaking.

GAIGE: Psh, whatever, it's a volcano!

GAIGE: The point is, as we were going to the...I don't even know what it was called, I wasn't the one driving, but Hyperion pulled up the bridge before we could get over this ocean of whothehellknowswhat. Brick called and said he had an idea, and that we should head over to Sawtooth Cauldron.

GAIGE: The road to the Cauldron was in some distant corner of the Blight, but since we weren't in quite as much of a hurry as we were five minutes ago—we wanted to rescue Lilith right away, sure, but Brick said he needed a little bit of time to set things up—so we grabbed some quests from the local bounty board.

GAIGE: First off, Marcus apparently got drunk and developed a conscience, and sent out a bunch of refund checks for all his unsatisfied customers over the years. Or maybe only the recent ones. Who knows. Point is, he sent us around the Blight, grabbing up the checks. Or, more precisely, Salvador did it. That man just can't say no when someone gives him a mission, no matter how stupid it is.
AXTON: You got that right. Tell them about Lover's Leap.

GAIGE: Oh *God*...okay, in addition to Marcus' mission, there were also two from fricken' *Handsome Jack*. Yeah, like, addressed to us and everything. First one was so utterly ridiculous it barely bears mentioning: Jack sent us to check on his *grandma*. I mean, come *on* man, how stupid do you think we are? He was all serious, and his voice was quivering and stuff, but, I mean, if he really cared about this woman he wouldn't have built her a house in the Blight.

GAIGE: But, we were in the area because of Mal—I'll get to that in a sec—and Salvador was insistent. Also, as we were on the way up the house, Zero started picking flowers, and then Salvador started picking flowers, and it was just so...*random* that I was actually happy when people started shooting at us.

GAIGE: The house was all overrun with bandits and everything, and Jack was freaking out “is she okay is she okay” and all that...anyway, killed all the bandits, got inside, and found nothing but a puddle of blood and a psycho's buzz axe where “gran-gran” should have been. Jack started sobbing over the ECHO...until he started laughing instead, and mentioned that he had been afraid we'd killed the bandits before they got his grandmother. [click]

JACK: Oh, and you know what, now I don't even have to pay 'em! So [laughs] *thanks* losers! [click]

GAIGE: Yeeep. Kinda obvious from the start...except to Salvador, apparently. He *freaked out*. I mean frothing at the mouth, waving his gun around, yelling in Spanish...I didn't uh, catch most of it, but you can guess the gist. Apparently he was raised by his grandmother, or they were just very close, I'm not really sure, you know, what to make of all that.

GAIGE: But, anyway. Back to Mal.

AXTON: What about Lover's Leap?

GAIGE: That was after Mal. Or, uh, during, I guess.

AXTON: So was Jack's grandma!

GAIGE: Well, yeah...okay, fine. So, Jack also gave us a mission—at the same time as he was pretending he honestly wanted our help with his grandmother—to *kill ourselves*. Gave us a GPS for a nice big cliff overlooking the lava, and thought we'd just jump. It was near where we were doing Mal's stuff, but still, why would we jump? Why, you'd have to be a *complete* and utter *moron* to even *think* of doing something like that.

SALVADOR: *I said* I was sorry.

MAYA: You could have at least warned us. Gaige was crying before we realized you had respawned.

GAIGE: I wasn't crying!

MAYA: Sure you weren't, sweetheart.

AXTON: Not that I'm complaining—too much—

SALVADOR: Hey!

AXTON: —but why *are* we still in the system?
GAIGE: Huh? Angel mentioned it, back when...when I died. She did something or other to make it so Jack couldn't remove us.

AXTON: Oh, right, right. Forgot about that.

GAIGE: Anyway, the reason we were, you know, in the area to do the stupid quest was because we needed to do an awesome quest.

AXTON: No, it was stupid too.

GAIGE: Things can be stupid and awesome at the same time.

AXTON: Yeah, I don't think this was one of them.

GAIGE: In this little corner of the Blight, we found Mal, a malfunctioning loader bot. Kinda, uh, obvious where the name came from. I'm guessing some engineer got bored and tried to increase a loader's intelligence one day, for whatever reason.

GAIGE: Well, somewhere along the line he got it into his little metal head that it would be a great idea to become human. Remember what I said about the more advanced an AI is, the more cuckoo it gets? Yep. Mal's a textbook example of Doctor Halsey's essay on GLaDOS Syndrome.

GAIGE: But, the Slab King kept saying “just do your own thing, my boys are still looking,” though looking for what I dunno, so we figured there was no harm in helping the funny little robot. As you might expect, he wanted us to kill things—

SALVADOR: He just wanted clothes, though.

AXTON: Yeah, clothes the bandits were wearing. What were we supposed to just ask for them?

SALVADOR: ...yes?

GAIGE: When we brought the clothes back—thankfully, he didn't understand enough about humans to know why he wouldn't want a bunch of bloodstained spikes—he wanted human limbs. Uh, which we didn't have to kill anyone to get. It was weird. The bandits apparently just keep buckets of arms and faces around. I don't think I wanna know why.

GAIGE: After we brought the limbs back, though, Mal realized he still didn't feel human, and couldn't figure out why. I figured I could poke around in his brain a bit and maybe fix that, but he was like [click]

MAL: [cheerful tone] On Pandora, being human means killing other humans! So die! [click]

GAIGE: ...aaand he started shooting at us. Luckily, we just had to shoot him a few times, and he decided that since he felt pain, and humans feel pain, that means he was human. He gave us this weird—

AXTON: You skipped the part where you tried to convince him that since robots do feel pain, he wasn't human yet.

GAIGE: [cough] Anyway, we got this pistol from him with really weird listed stats, I'm still not sure what it does. I mean, it's an E-tech gun—one of the ones that shoots little exploding homing darts—but other than that it's hard to, you know, compare. Maya's gonna try it our tomorrow, see how that works.
GAIGE: Well, by this point it was too late to do anything, and Brick was still setting up whatever it was we were supposed to do in Sawtooth Cauldron, so we just went home. We were gonna stop by the Cauldron first, to get the Fast Travel networked up, but apparently it's four hours away. No time for that today.

GAIGE: Mechromancer of the new Vault Hunters, signing off.
Chapter Summary

Toil and Trouble

GAIGE: Hellooo, subscribers! Sawtooth Cauldron was *badass*. Or, rather, fighting through the Cauldron was badass.

GAIGE: So the place is home to the Sawteeth bandits, who have apparently been selling Vault Hunters to Jack for years. Brick gave us a couple missions which added up to “Kill them all, and smile while you do it.”

GAIGE: First off, the reason we were there was because the Slab King's bandits had finally found where the Sawteeth kept their explosives, a Buzzard landing area at the top of this big-ass tower. So we needed to get up there, get the explosives for the slabs, and then they could use it to blow up the bridge in the Eridium Blight. Blow up the lock on the bridge, I mean. *We need* the bridge, so that's not getting exploded.

GAIGE: But instead of just walking down the road to the tower, *somebody* decided to jump off the cliff, into the bandit-filled valley below!

SALVADOR: You have to admit, it was badass.

GAIGE: Yeah, it was, but couldn't you have told us before you did it? I swear, you're jumping off everything these days...

GAIGE: Anyway, we managed to survive, mostly because while me, Axton, and Maya followed slagbrain here, Zero stayed up top and sniped at the bad guys when they tried to overwhelm us. And, okay, yeah it was pretty awesome, just fighting waves of bandits, but still. Warning is nice.

GAIGE: So we found this little sniper's nest—

SALVADOR: That's why I jumped. I saw it from the cliff.

GAIGE: Oh! Okay, actually, that makes sense. So, there was an ECHO talking about *treasure* maps, which is always awesome. Brick chimed in and helped explain a bit. Apparently when the Crimson Lance disbanded, the ones who didn't join the Raiders fled to Old Haven, where they did the whole bandit thing for a while until Lilith and Roland burned them out. But they talked about some treasure as they were dying, which got the rumor mill churning and stuff.

AXTON: The point is, bandits had pieces of a treasure map.

GAIGE: Right! So, we found all the pieces and stuff, but it turns out to be somewhere in the Caustic Caverns, I'll get to that later.

GAIGE: The other thing we had to do, you know, while we were actually in the Cauldron—oh. Was that the actual Cauldron? That valley we were in?

MAYA: I don't think so. There were a couple valleys. I'm pretty sure it refers to the entire area,
ringed with mountains.

GAIGE: I guess. Right, well, Brick wanted us to pull down the Sawteeth flags and put up Slab ones, which was harder than it sounds, because we had to use this machine thing and...anyway. That wasn't too hard. The Slab King said it was a moral, uh, or morale, I can never remember which is which, but he said it was to break their fighting spirit and all that, but I'm pretty sure he just wanted to give us another excuse to kill a bunch of these guys.

AXTON: Don't forget about the guy Marcus gave change to.

GAIGE: I'm getting to it, I'm getting to it! So there was this guy, Kai, who Marcus sold a gun to, and apparently when he was handing out change he, uh, gave him a ten instead of a one. So...he sent us to hunt him down like a dog. Um...okay, now that I think about it, I guess I know how this sounds, but I swear we're still the good guys.

GAIGE: But, right. We found some of his ECHO's scattered around, which made it a bit more clear what was going on. Kai is apparently this famous ECHO-caster with a lisp and a bunch of subscribers—not as many as me, but still, more than you'd think—who came to Pandora for...I'm not sure why. Just kinda trying to seek his fortune on the borderworlds, I guess.

GAIGE: Well, Marcus managed to convince him he was some prophesied “Chosen One” or whatever, which wasn't working until he mentioned Kai would win Moxxi's hand in marriage. I have a feeling Marcus uses that one a lot.

GAIGE: We eventually found Kai, and the nine bucks—change from a two million dollar gun, by the way—and he was very, very dead. Not sure if it was the threshers or the bandits, but...yeah. Oh, that's another thing! In addition to all the bandits, there were threshers in a couple of the valleys. The ones closer to the ocean, for whatever reason.

ZERO: Not ocean.

SALVADOR: Yeah, definitely not ocean.

MAYA: More like a small pond, than anything.

GAIGE: Okay, whatever, water.

AXTON: Don't forget Inferno Tower.

GAIGE: I haven't forgotten. Why do you keep interrupting me?

AXTON: Because it always seems like you're skipping stuff.

GAIGE: I don't skip stuff!

AXTON: Face McShooty.

GAIGE: I—you—fine. Anyway, Inferno Tower, or the area around the tower or whatever, was this big hollowed out mountain, with basic metal catwalks everywhere, suspended over the lava. Oh yeah, there was lava. I don't think it was a volcano, though. Not really sure what the exact, you know, geological scientific distinction is, but it felt like there was a river of lava, under the mountain. Instead of it being a volcano.

GAIGE: Anyway, we tried to call the elevator, and that didn't work. The Sawtooth boss, what's his name, I forget—
ZERO: Mortar.

GAIGE: Yeah. Well, Mortar just laughed and called a bunch of stupid badass nomads with giant spiky shields to ambush us. Ugh, I hate those guys. But, with the tech I'm specialized in right now, I do pretty well with fire and lightning, and they burn nicely, so that worked.

GAIGE: But he still wasn't coming down, so Brick sent us to blow up his favorite Buzzard, which would make him angry enough to come down. Uh, Mortar's Buzzard, make Mortar angry enough to come down.

GAIGE: On the way to the hangers, we finally heard from Lilith! She's not doing so great. Not that I, you know, wasn't happy to hear from her, but how is it that every single person on the planet can call us up at any time? I mean, Lilith's buried in the middle of some Hyperion fortress, you'd think Jack would be more careful. Still, no complaints.

GAIGE: Also, Jack called, going on about how if he can kill Roland—the only member of the old Vault hunters who actually had training—he can easily kill Brick and Mordecai.

SALVADOR: The bandit king and the drunk sniper.

GAIGE: Well, yeah, that's what he said, but I wasn't going to bring that up. More importantly, he went on and on about how he was going to kill us and everyone we had ever met for killing his daughter. I don't know how much Maya touched on this—

MAYA: Touched on what?

GAIGE: I...what I'm about to talk about right now. So, um, just let me.

MAYA: Sorry, sorry.

GAIGE: I don't know if she mentioned it, but during the whole thing with Angel, Jack alternated between begging Angel not to let herself be killed and begging us not to kill her. And I do mean begging—I don't think I have...oh, wait, yes I do. [click]

JACK: Please. Okay, are you hearing me? Please...don't kill my baby girl. [click]

AXTON: He was just lying again.

MAYA: Yeah, Gaige, there's no need to bring it up every time Jack does something like that.

GAIGE: No, I think he's serious! Otherwise, why would he be insisting on killing us himself and all that? He even left us in the New-U system!

MAYA: That was Angel. She hacked us in, and now he can't hack us out.

GAIGE: Then why—

MAYA: Trust me, I know something about men pretending to be fathers to Sirens. The only thing you should worry about is which gun you're going to use when we find him.

AXTON: Actually, I think she's pretty much set. Jack's got a cloak, and she's already got all those extra shock techs.

MAYA: Oh, that's a good point.

GAIGE: No, look, listen, Maya, I don't mean to, uh, devalue your thing with the monks, but I know
overprotective dads. And to me, he felt like a dad who went way too far. Like keeping your daughter from going to the school dance by kidnapping her date, locking him in an underground cell, and interrogating him for three days straight.

AXTON: Uh...

MAYA: Let's just...agree to disagree on that one. Does this mean you don't want to be involved when we finally find him?

GAIGE: What? Hell no! I already called dibs on shooting him in the face!

SALVADOR: No se puede—

MAYA: Salvador.

SALVADOR: You can't just call shooting the big bad.

GAIGE: Yes I can, I already did.

SALVADOR: But you can't—

GAIGE: So we got to the Buzzard hangers, which was this outdoor...I'm not sure what. Some sort of ore refining platform, hanging off the cliff and over the lava. It doesn't really matter, because they were just using it to launch Buzzards at us. We blew up Boombringer—in the most badass way possible, I might add—

SALVADOR: We forgot to get a picture!

AXTON: Oh, crap, you're right!

MAYA: Is that really important—

GAIGE: Oh, God dammit, I knew we were missing something! How many chances do you get to do a “walking away from the explosion” picture? Aw, frick...

GAIGE: Well, no use crying over spilled milk. The point is that blowing up Boombringer scared Mortar enough to get him to take the elevator down. So we killed him, went up, and found a few crates of Y-94 Odomo charges scattered around the Buzzard's Nest. But the Slab King learned his lesson from the Bunker; he didn't send his boys in until we shot down all the enemy fliers. Then we tagged the crates, waited for pickup, and that was it!

AXTON: And Ulysses.

GAIGE: No.

AXTON: See? I told you you skip things!

GAIGE: Anyway, we ended the mission by actually jumping off the Buzzard's Nest, which was one of the most awesome things I have ever done. I know, you know, intellectually, that shields come with inertiics to cut falling damage to nearly nothing, but still! It was something like, five hundred feet or whatever! And Axton just patted me on the back, and was like “Who wants to live forever?” and jumped!

AXTON: I did not say that.

GAIGE: Uh, yes you did. You said it, then you winked at me, and then you—
AXTON: I said “Come on, you want to live forever?” Important difference.

GAIGE: ...sure. Anyway, the slabs will have taken down the bridge to the Arid Nexus by tomorrow, but for today we just took the Fast Travel station back to Sanctuary. Oh, after a quick treasure hunt in the Caustic Caverns. It wasn't all that interesting. I mean, the whole place was as annoying as I remembered, and we got to the top of the Dahl...whatever it was. Mining station? Anyway, that's where the treasure was, along with a buttload of spiderant...nests or hills or whatever. We got a couple nice guns.

ZERO: Here.

GAIGE: Uh...what's this?

ZERO: Your copy.

GAIGE: My... [sound of letter being torn open] Oh! You got a picture of us walking away from the explosion! How'd you manage that?

[silence]

GAIGE: You know, you can explain some things.

ZERO: No.

GAIGE: Okay, well, thanks anyway. I guess that's it for today. See you all tomorrow!
Chapter Summary

Data Mining

GAIGE: Wow. Today was...a day. Yes it was.

GAIGE: In the morning—well, morning on Pandora, which is technically still night half the time—we were all set to head off to the Arid Nexus, but there was a new mission on the Sanctuary bounty board. There was some giant skag in Lynchwood, eating everybody and stuff. The request was actually kind of funny, there was this guy demanding to know what a skag wanted as it was eating him. [snorting laugh]

MAYA: Gaige, be respectful.

GAIGE: Sorry! Well, we kinda had to go down there as a favor to Sheriff Winger and all that...aaand it turns out it was Dukino's mom, rampaging around looking for her son. Er, child. Not really sure about Dukino's gender. Do skags have genders? I haven't heard about all that.

AXTON: Pretty sure they do.

MAYA: Salvador?

SALVADOR: Don't look at me. My cousins were the skag-herders in the family.

GAIGE: Anyway, so we went back to that abandoned mine where we left him, to find this massive skag, like thirty feet tall or something, running around the cave killing the Lynchwood bandits who were shooting her. It. Whatever!

GAIGE: Scooter mentioned that skags eat their young—which Salvador confirmed—so we had to kill her. Which was a lot harder than you'd think. Skags get ridiculously thick armor as they get older, and we didn't have any corrosive guns any more. Plus, she shot this beam of energy out of her mouth that kept blowing up all the rocks we were hiding behind...yeah. But still, we did it. Dukino didn't seem to mind that we killed his mom. Scooter pointed out that we were kinda his parents now which is...one interpretation, but whatever.

GAIGE: Then we went to the Eridium Blight, over the bridge Brick's bandits brought down, and into the Arid Nexus. The Boneyard, specifically. Dry, dusty place, except for all the pools of slag runoff from the Eridium pipes. The plan was to just climb on top of one of the pipes and walk over to the Hyperion Info Stockade, but one of the earthquakes knocked the frickin' ladder off! Blame shoddy Hyperion workmanship.

GAIGE: But that gave Mordecai an idea. If we could go to the pumping stations and up the pressure, we might be able to bust the pipe open.

GAIGE: While we were going to each of the pumping stations—which were guarded by like a bazillion loaders and a bunch of Hyperion commandos, each—Handsome Jack called using Roland's ECHO and did a really bad impression of Roland...I don't even remember what it was. Something stupid. Anyway, Jack's a douche, more on that in a minute.
GAIGE: Well, overpumping worked like a charm, except we had to hit the pipe with a runner. And by hit it, I mean boost off a nearby ramp and ram into it! It was awesome!

AXTON: Don't forget This Just In.

GAIGE: Stop doing that! I'm getting to it!

AXTON: But you're already past it!

GAIGE: Ugh, fine. Mordecai called about the [mocking tone] “Hyperion Truth Broadcasting” network, which is Hyperion's little propaganda mill, and mentioned that the station was in the Boneyard. So we got in, killed Hunter Hellquist, and Pandora was safe from the ridiculous lies that no one believed anyway forever.

MAYA: Actually, Pandora wasn't the point. This Just In was the only source of information about what was happening on Pandora. Besides this ECHO-cast, I mean.

GAIGE: ...wait, seriously? I—I mean—

SALVADOR: Even I knew that.

GAIGE: Shut up! Okay, I mean, I didn't...I didn't really think my ECHO-cast was that important...

AXTON: I've seen your subscriber count. You didn't think that was important?

GAIGE: I...I just...ahem. [clears throat] Was there anything else in the Boneyard?

SALVADOR: The skrakks.

GAIGE: Oh, right! Due to someone's crazy experiments—someone who is totally not Doctor Zed—there were a bunch of mutant hybrid skag/rakk things called “skrakks” flying around the Boneyard. They were actually surprisingly hard to kill.

GAIGE: Anyway, back to the Hyperion Info Stockade, in the Badlands. It wasn't hard to find the place after we got out of that stupid smelly pipe—it was the one with the massive pillar of light shooting out of it. That, of course, would be the high-powered FTL communications laser, shooting the data off to...where is the Hyperion homeworld?

AXTON: Don't they have a space station?

GAIGE: I'm pretty sure it's a planet. Bah, whatever, it doesn't matter. Point is, giant white beams shooting off into space.

GAIGE: But the thing is, it turns out that the Badlands is where Fyrestone is. It's the town where the first Vault hunters first stopped off, where Doctor Zed was born, all that. Jack, being, you know, himself, decided to infest the place with dozens of weird loaders made out of junk, and to rename it. To Jackville! What the hell, man?

MAYA: After all the things he's done, you're getting mad about that one?

GAIGE: Well, I mean—anyway! There were a few other things to do around the Badlands, like help a girl prove Hyperion stole her uncle's gun designs, collect the pieces of a gun a bunch of skags ate—seriously, given the frequency with which skags tend to drop the damned things, one has to imagine firearms taste like filet mignon to them.

GAIGE: So as we were heading to the info stockade, this MASSIVE loader got dropped in front of
us with a moonshot. I don’t know where the hell that thing came from—

ZERO: The moon.

GAIGE: I...yes, thank you Zero.

ZERO: You're welcome.

GAIGE: It was a design I didn't recognize, just this giant robot with lasers and plasma projectors and frickin' drones...where was Jack hiding this thing?

ZERO: The moon.

GAIGE: ...okay, right, thanks.

ZERO: You're welcome.

GAIGE: Thankfully, it wasn't too hard to kill, one of those glass cannon types, high damage but not so good on the armor. Once we got up on top of the bridge to the stockade itself, stupid Jack called, claiming Angel killed her mother with her power, and that's why he had to trap her on her “throne” since she was a little girl. Maybe he's telling the truth, maybe he's not, but there's a line between “overprotective” and “exploitative.” Oh, and apparently he's been torturing Lilith, because Eridium gives Sirens a healing factor.

AXTON: [clears throat]

GAIGE: ...yes?

AXTON: I didn't say anything.

GAIGE: But you want to.

AXTON: No, no, you continue.

GAIGE: Thank you.

AXTON: Even though you're skipping stuff.

GAIGE: Axton!

AXTON: What, what? You can't go on about how Handsome Jack might not be a complete monster, and then skip all those ECHO logs we found about him murdering his way up the Hyperion ladder, treating his daughter like a piece of equipment, and acting like a petulant child!

MAYA: Axton, calm down.

AXTON: I...yeah. Sorry.

GAIGE: Well, thank you. And maybe you're right.

AXTON: Thank you.

GAIGE: But you covered pretty much everything important anyway. Oh, except that he used Angel getting the first Vault open as a springboard to take over Hyperion. Um, somehow. I'm not really clear on, you know, the details of his rise to power. All I ever heard back on Eden-5 was about how [mocking tone] “The Hyperion board was more than happy to step down in favor of the hero who
opened the Vault,” which is obviously crap.

GAIGE: Anyway, we got into the Hyperion Info Stockade, fought off a butt ton of loaders—including *three* constructors! Three! And managed to get the info we needed. The Warrior is buried in Hero's Pass, which is also where Jack, Lilith, and the Vault Key will be.

GAIGE: No matter what happens tomorrow, it's the *end*. Mechromancer, signing out.
Chapter Summary

The Talon of God

GAIGE: Oh, boy, okay—

MAYA: Make it quick. [sounds of weapons clicking] We're almost ready.

GAIGE: Right, we're outside the Vault of the Warrior right now, at the ammo vending machines Hyperion left behind. About to confront Handsome Jack, rescue Lilith, avenge Roland, save the planet, and end this.

[sound of Hyperion crate opening]

GAIGE: This morning, in Sanctuary, everyone gave us lots of encouragement and some nice loot for the final fight. Guns, shields, that kind of thing—

SALVADOR: Speed it up!

GAIGE: Right, right! Heartwarming and all that. Then we met Claptrap out in the Eridium Blight, and he started screaming about Jack and how he's going to get revenge for everything. He took us to the door leading to Hero's Pass. It was locked down, but he managed to hack it open eventually. Took like, twenty minutes, we had to kill soo many loaders...anyway! We had to go on without Claptrap, because [snicker] he still can't handle stairs.

ZERO: You have it?

GAIGE: What? Oh! Right, that sniper I was holding onto...here you go.

ZERO: Thank you.

GAIGE: So we fought through the Eridian ruins called Hero's Pass, which were covered in Hyperion bots and engineers and all that crap. Brick punched guys with us, while Mordecai piloted a Hyperion drop barge he had stolen—Brick had stolen, I mean—and gave us fire support from there, plus he disabled two more of those Hyperion deathwalls. It was the most badass fight ever—nothing like storming the castle.

GAIGE: Except about halfway through the pass, Hyperion got wise and threw Jet loaders at the barge. Brick tried to help, and...I...you know...[sniff] I'm not sure they made it.

MAYA: Wrap it up, wrap it up. I can feel Lilith's power reaching a crescendo.

GAIGE: Okay, uh...lots of badass loaders, a badass constructor that just shot missiles at us, I almost fell into a ravine and died again...and now we're outside the Vault of the Warrior. Okay, I'm caught up! Let's go!

AXTON: Not yet. Need some more ammo.
AMMO DUMP: You won't find better merchandise anywhere else! *I made sure of that.*

GAIGE: What? You guys were just yelling at me to hurry!

MAYA: Well, I thought it would take you another minute or so to finish.

AXTON: God damn...anybody got a few bucks to spare? Seriously, you'd think Marcus could at least give us credit on ammo...

GAIGE: How do you not have money for *ammo*? I've got over half a million dollars from selling loot and all that.

AXTON: Moxxi is a horrible woman who takes advantage of lonely drunk men with loose wallets, that's how.

MAYA: Flashing her cleavage and offering you credit on the slot machines does not make her some dark seductress.

JACK: *This* is where it *all* ends. Once Lilith here charges the Key, I'll control the Warrior and wipe you bandits off my planet! [low voice] *When ya get to Hell, tell your Vault Hunter friends I said “Hey.”*

ZERO: It's time.

MAYA: Yeah, I think we need to go. Everyone ready?

GAIGE: Ready!

AXTON: Ready.

SALVADOR: Listo.

MAYA: All right. Let's move out.

[moment of walking noise]

MAYA: Wait, Gaige, is your ECHO still on?

GAIGE: Yeah, because, uh... [sniffle] I'm not sure we'll be coming back this time.

MAYA: ...ah.

ZERO: Jump.

AXTON: It's just a small drop. Don't freak out.

MAYA: I didn't say anything.

GAIGE: Is no one going to point out the *lava-filled alien ruins*?

SALVADOR: We talked about it earlier, right?

GAIGE: Yeah, I guess so.

[sound of five pairs of boots landing on stone]

MAYA: That beam of light is Lilith. I think I see the Key, too.
ZERO: Move.
[moment of running]

JACK: Hey, you're right on time. Key's nearly ready. But before I cleanse this planet for good, I'm gonna avenge my daughter. [digital sound]

AXTON: Oh, *come on!* Clones?
[gunfire]

SALVADOR: They go down easy!

GAIGE: They're just digital holograms, like Zero's!
[gunfire]

MAYA: The real one's invisible! Gaige, shock him!
[electricity sound]

GAIGE: Got him!
[sound of blood splashing to the ground]

JACK: That it? HUH?

GAIGE: ...well, that was easy.

AXTON: Disappointing, really. I think the loaders were harder.

SALVADOR: Didn't even get a chance to really get into it.
[more dripping noises, sound of someone stumbling around]

GAIGE: Should I finish him off?

MAYA: Eh, he's not worth it. He'll bleed out in a minute. Take a look at that console over there. Maybe there's a way to get Lilith down.

GAIGE: Okay...Axton, Salvador, put your guns down and help me.

AXTON: Sure. With what?

GAIGE: Press that button over there while—Salvador, you get that one—and I need to press this one.

AXTON: ...this is a stupid design.

GAIGE: Blame Hyperion. Okay, we might be able to short out the slave collar if—
[sound of stone clicking against stone]

LILITH: NO! The Key's charged!

JACK: I'm not dyin' yet!
MAYA: Zero! Shoot him!

ZERO: Why?

MAYA: WHAT!?

[energy pulse]

JACK: You're too late, bandits! I WIN! [laughing] The greatest alien power Pandora has ever seen...and it's MINE to control!

[massive roar that whites out the ECHO for a second]

JACK: WARRIOR!

MAYA: Oh, frack.

JACK: Kill.

[roar of rage and rush of fire]

MAYA: SCATTER!

GAIGE: Scattering!

AXTON: Why isn't it turning on him!? YOU SAID IT WOULD TURN ON HIM!

MAYA: I said it might! [gunfire] I can't get through that energy shield the Key put up!

JACK: Give it up, Vault Hunters! There's no way you can stop my Warrior!

AXTON: May as well try. Have you met the missus?

[sound of something digistructing, then turret fire]

GAIGE: Salvador! [gunfire] Tell me you brought them!

SALVADOR: [laughter] Of course I did! TIME TO OVERCOMPENSATE!

[sound of two rocket launchers firing and impacting]

[roar of rage]

SALVADOR: ...that didn't work as well as I well as I would have liked.

AXTON: Get down, you idiot!

[gunfire]

[loud smash]

GAIGE: Salvador, you're obviously supposed to shoot the BIG GLOWY THING ON ITS CHEST!

SALVADOR: Oh. Oops.

JACK: Fire breath! NOW!
MAYA: Scatter, you idiots!
[rush of fire]
MAYA: Where the hell is Zero?
[sound of a sniper rifle]
[roar of pain]
AXTON: That was him, from...somewhere.
JACK: Don't let them hit you there! Protect your chest!
GAIGE: It's bleeding! [gunfire] I think that means—wait, why is it diving into the lava?
LILITH: The lava's rising! Get to high ground!
GAIGE: What does she mean by that?
MAYA: She means move!
[sound of rushing liquid]
[roar of rage]
GAIGE: Okay, it's out again! [gunfire] Salvador—hey! Why is its chest repaired?
AXTON: Not important!
MAYA: Salvador! Shoot it in the chest! [gunfire]
SALVADOR: I...it's moving too much! I'll just waste ammo!
MAYA: Goddammit...everybody, spread out! Try and hold its attention!
[sound of something digistructing]
GAIGE: Deathtrap should be able to help!
AXTON: Turret's ready too!
[sound of something digistructing, then turret fire]
SALVADOR: ONE-LINEEER!
[sound of two rocket launchers firing and impacting]
[massive roar of pain]
MAYA: Got it!
JACK: NOOOOO! This can't be happening. THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING!
[roars of pain, sound of something massive falling to the ground]
LILITH: Holy badass...I think you killed it. Never hurts to make sure, though. Hit the button on the
moonshot console.

MAYA: Okay, just give me a second to...catch my breath.

[maniacal giggling]

AXTON: Uh, Gaige?

[more giggling]

AXTON: You're kinda creeping me out.

GAIGE: We just killed a god! I can frickin' giggle if I want!

ZERO: Not dead yet.

SALVADOR: Yeah, hit the botón...button thing.

MAYA: Which one? There are like a billion buttons.

AXTON: The big red one.

MAYA: Are you sure?

AXTON: It's *labeled* “moonshot.”

GAIGE: [still giggling] Let me do it.

[beeping]

GAIGE: Aaaand...

[crash, and a wet squelch]

GAIGE: *Squish.* [giggles]

[rising thrum of energy]

AXTON: C'mon, let's get to cover. I think the Key is about to explode.

MAYA: No...no, I don't think that's it.

[energy reaches a crescendo, before cutting out suddenly]

MAYA: Just as I thought. With the Warrior dead, the shield came down.

JACK: Nonono, I can't die like this...not when I'm so close. And not at the hands...of filthy bandits!

ZERO: Stop talking, asshole.

[gunshot]

GAIGE: *Squish.* [giggles]

AXTON: Uh...I think Gaige might be in shock again.

LILITH: It's over...it's finally over. Good going, Vault Hunters. You guys...are badasses. Now, we
just gotta get rid of that Key.

MAYA: As good a plan as any.

LILITH: Wait a sec—let me. You don't want to touch this thing right now, trust me.

MAYA: Fair enough. I think it's only fair that you get the honors.

MORDECAI: Slow down, man! I nearly bought it back there! Hey, Lilith!

GAIGE: Hey, you guys are okay!

LILITH: Where the hell were you guys five minutes ago? If it weren't for the Vault Hunters, we'd all be dead!

BRICK: I think...that's her way of saying we won.

MORDECAI: I figured that.

AXTON: How'd you two survive, anyway? I thought the barge got shot down.

BRICK: By being badasses, that's how!

GAIGE: I don't think that really answers anything.

SALVADOR: It's good enough for me.

LILITH: If I never see this Key again, it'll be too soon.

[hum of energy]

LILITH: It's been fun, you alien piece of sh—

[sound of hologram starting up]

LILITH: Huh?

MAYA: Why am I not surprised there's a map of the universe in the Key?

BRICK: What the—are those Vaults?

AXTON: [whistles] Lots of 'em.

MORDECAI: [laughs] You know what that means...

LILITH: Heh, yeah. No rest for the wicked.

MAYA: Let's get back to Sanctuary, then we can figure out what to do.

LILITH: Sure, sounds like a plan. [sound of stone sliding against stone] I've got the Key. I think Tannis has some force-field container for this thing.

MORDECAI: But the drop barge is destroyed, and I wouldn't trust that Fast Travel station by the vending machines. It looks...glitchy.

SALVADOR: Isn't that a way out over there?
LILITH: I've got an idea. Everybody, gather close.

[sound of footsteps on dirt]

[minute of silence]

AXTON: So...what are—

[rising thrum of energy]

MAYA: No, wait!

[energy reaches a crescendo, before cutting off suddenly]

LILITH: Aaand we're back in Sanctuary! I just teleported eight people with pinpoint accuracy, easy enough. And you were worried.

MAYA: It's not that I didn't think you could do it—

[sound of vomiting]

MAYA: ...it's that.

GAIGE: Ugh...

TANNIS: You are getting cyborg waste all over my experiments!

LILITH: I've told you before, stop putting experiments in the middle of the floor, and people will stop walking all over them!

MAYA: You feeling better?

GAIGE: Uhn...

LILITH: What's wrong with her, anyway?

MAYA: Something about her implants. She's gotten teleportation sickness every time you moved us more than a few feet. Salvador, help me carry her upstairs.

SALVADOR: Si.

AXTON: Hey, Gaige, you dropped your ECHO.

GAIGE: Uh...turn it off, would you?

AXTON: Sure.

[two hours of static]

GAIGE: Hello sub—Axton! You turned off my ECHO wrong!

AXTON: What?

GAIGE: You didn't turn it off all the way! It's been broadcasting dead air for the past two hours!

AXTON: Oh. Uh, sorry about that.
GAIGE: Ugh, okay, okay. So...we defeated Handsome Jack! And the Warrior! Which was this giant griffin thing made of rock and magma, but we still killed it! Saved the planet, and were just absolute 
badasses all around. When we got back to Sanctuary, we decided to have a party. Well, everyone else decided to have a party, I decided to lie down while waiting for my stomach to settle.

GAIGE: But the point is, I overheard the old Vault Hunters talking. Brick was pretty gung-ho about going after the new Vaults, but Lilith and Mordecai figured that Sanctuary needs rebuilding first. Get a new shield for the city, finish off Hyperion, all that.

GAIGE: So...I guess that's it, subscribers! My last ECHO is done. I mean, maybe I'll do more later, but this is enough for now. Not every day you get to save a planet, right? Besides, I'm not sure roadbuilding and funerals would interest any of you. Well, for the last time, this is the Mechromancer of the new Vault Hunters, signing—

MARCUS: Hey, any of you Vault Hunters up for some treasure hunting?

AXTON: Did he say treasure?

MARCUS: Yeah, I found an old pirate map I got from Captain Blade a while back.

GAIGE: Did he say pirates?

MARCUS: Hear there's been commotion over there, so I can give you the Fast-Travel coordinates for Oasis.

GAIGE: Ohmygod ohmygod he totally said pirates didn't he?

MAYA: I guess that's a yes. What's the price?

MARCUS: No price! Just consider it a gift, from a grateful resident of the planet you saved.

MAYA: What's the price?

MARCUS: Blade owes me money.

GAIGE: Canwe go canwe go canwe—

MAYA: Tomorrow, Gaige. Tomorrow. Enough excitement for one day, I think.

GAIGE: Ohgod ohgod ohgod we're gonna fight pirates or be pirates or—

AXTON: To Gaige's subscribers: I think that means you'll be hearing from us soon.
A Warm Welcome/My Life For a Sandskiff

GAIGE: PIIIRAAATES!!!

MAYA: Breathe, Gaige.

GAIGE: Okay, ooh-kaay. [deep breath] I'm good. I'm good.

GAIGE: So today, we came to Oasis! Which is, uh, an inaccurately named town on the edge of the sandsea. When we got there, the town was under attack by sand pirates looking for water, led by this brute-type named No-Beard. He...didn't have a beard. Yes.

GAIGE: Anyway, after we saved the town, we...found out the town consists of one guy, Shade. Because when the ocean dried up, so did the water supply, and everyone died of thirst. Except Shade. Except he's gone insane from isolation and probably more than a little dehydration, so he propped up a bunch of corpses with ECHO recorders so he could pretend they were still alive.

GAIGE: But we also heard from Captain Scarlett! Who is this awesome pirate captain girl boss lady who is going to help us track down Captain Blade's Lost Treasure of the Sands! And, you know, betray us the second she thinks she's got a good shot, because she's a PIRATE! That's just all part of the experience! She's waiting for us in Wurmwater.

GAIGE: Before that, we still had to deal with Shade. He confirmed that Scarlett's the best person to ask about Blade's treasure, so he lent us his sandskiff so we could zip off.

SALVADOR: Except it exploded when Axton tried to start it.

GAIGE: [sighs] Yes, I was getting to that! Thank you, Salvador.

GAIGE: But yeah, it went all explody. Well, not all explody, just a few important parts. The engine capacitor, magnetic overthruster, stuff like that. You know how those stupid things are.

AXTON: I thought Shade rigged it to blow up on purpose so we'd have to hang out with him more.

GAIGE: He did? Well, whatever, it's not important! The point is, he sent us to the mummified townsfolk to get the spare parts he “lent” to them.

AXTON: Is it bad that I had fun playing with the corpses?

MAYA: Yes.

GAIGE: Most of the parts took two seconds to find, but the one left with Lionel was a problem because everything on Pandora eats anything!

SALVADOR: She means a sand worm ate it.

GAIGE: Yes, thank you Salvador, a sand worm ate it. A queen, according to the ECHO, but I
dunno if that's like an insect queen or just a name or what. Anyway, we had to march out onto the sands, fighting a bunch of sand grubs—each one was like eight feet tall—until we found the queen, killed her, and cut the engine capacitor out of her gut. Ugh, so gross.

GAIGE: Anyway, we went back to the sandskiff, I installed everything—which took a few hours because the stupid pressure regulator had a non-standard port connector, so I had to cobble together an adapter out of gun parts—but we got it to work, then we digiscanned the skiff into the system and digistructed a new one.

ZERO: Stalkers.

GAIGE: Oh yeah, there was apparently a frickin' stalker nest right under the docks. So annoying. Oh, and now some of them can fly! WHAT THE HELL. But we survived that, and Shade was like [click]

SHADE: Before you go off to meet Captain Scarlett, though, you must return to me! [click]

GAIGE: And we thought it was something, you know, important and stuff, but no, he just wanted to hang out more. We were all ready to leave, but Shade had a couple jobs for us—more playing pretend with the poor citizens of Oasis—

AXTON: He had us propose to a chick for him.

MAYA: Propose and get shot down. He voiced her rejection himself. There's crazy, and then there's just sad.

GAIGE: Yeah, but also, the bounty board got updated. This girl named Aubrey—she kinda acted like she lived in Oasis, but I guess she's somewhere else—sent us to blow up her Grandma's pirate ship, you know, so she could put all that behind her and stuff. Salvador was kinda pissed, but we did it anyway. Besides, she was child-trafficking cannibal, so who cares what happens to her ship? Uh, the grandma, not Aubrey.

GAIGE: The point is, we found the ship, planted the explosives, and found the detonator in a nearby PIRATE camp! Which wasn't too interesting, I guess. There were only like ten guys. But still, they were PIRATES with cutlasses and hats and peg legs and—

MAYA: Breathe, Gaige.

GAIGE: [deep breath] After that, Aubrey asked us to go kill her grandma's pet stalker, which she inherited from Captain Blade, and then Aubrey inherited from her grandma. And apparently fed orphans to. The grandma fed it orphans, I mean. She was clearly not a good person—so stop glaring at me, Salvador!

SALVADOR: Yo no dije nada!

GAIGE: I'm just gonna assume that's an insult and move on.

GAIGE: All that was...kinda boring, you know? Okay, it was fun, but it wasn't pirate fun. Shooting pirates is close, but not quite what I was hoping for, you know what I mean? But then Zero—

ZERO: Arr.

GAIGE: ...did you just say “arr?”

ZERO: No.
GAIGE: But...you—anyway! Zero found a message in a bottle! You know, like the kind you'd cast out to sea if you're stranded on a desert island with no hope of rescue, but then just when you've given up hope and the dinosaurs are closing in, your ex-girlfriend shows up with the National Guard!

AXTON: That's not pirates, though.

GAIGE: So there was a treasure map in the bottle. It led us to a garage in Oasis, where we found a treasure chest left by Captain Blade! And one of his ECHO recorders. [click]

BLADE: Blade's log. [sigh] Had to stage another fake execution today. One of the cooks was caught stealing form the treasure hold, so I had to...pretend to kill him to keep the rest of the crew in line. Gave him enough cash to disappear, shot him overboard with a blank... [long sigh] Keepin' up this “fearsome Captain Blade” routine's a hell of a lot of work. [click]

GAIGE: And, I mean, that paints a very different picture from, you know, the common understanding of Blade. He's kind of a folk hero type...thing on Pandora. Like what the bandits aspire to be, I guess? Cool, respected, feared, and super dangerous, known for executing his own crew at the drop of a hat. Or faking it, I guess.

GAIGE: Inside the chest was a weird shotgun that hurts you every time you fire it, but whatever, Marcus is probably going to want it, so we have to keep it for now.

GAIGE: Anyway, that's it for today—fixing the sandskiff took up way too much time—but tomorrow, we're off to Wurmwater, and we're meeting Captain Scarlett, and she's going to help us find the Lost Treasure! Unless she shoots us on sight. But she probably won't! Mechromancer, signing off.
Chapter Summary

A Study in Scarlett

GAIGE: Captain Scarlett is the most awesome pirate alive.

MAYA: We watched her kill a man in cold blood, and that's your response?

GAIGE: Well, yeah. That's what pirates are supposed to do!

MAYA: That's a terrible ethic.

AXTON: Actually, I'm with her on this one.

MAYA: Why is everybody on this planet okay with murdering random people?

SALVADOR: Hey, you shoot people too.

MAYA: Only when they're already shooting at us.

GAIGE: Anyway! We took a sandskiff out to Wurmwater and found Captain Scarlett's ship, which was this big sand barge she commandeered—commandeered! Love it!—from some merchant caravan or whatever. She was under attack by some other sand pirates, don't know where they're from—

AXTON: I think they said something about Sandman.

GAIGE: Isn't that just slang for sand pirate?

SALVADOR: Uh...no? That's a guy.

GAIGE: Oh, okay. I guess that explains some stuff. But yeah, they were under attack by raider skiffs, and we fought them off, and it was awesome! Nothing like shooting while standing on the deck of a speeding ship!

AXTON: Is the sandskiff really big enough to have a 'deck'?

GAIGE: I dunno, it has a flat empty spot for people to stand, what else would you call it?

AXTON: I'm not sure, but 'deck' implies more than five or ten square feet of space.

GAIGE: The point is, we saved Captain Scarlett—

AXTON: We helped Scarlett. She probably would have been fine, we just helped her out.

GAIGE: Whatever! She told us to go find...some pirate...who'd she say again?

ZERO: Sandman.
GAIGE: Oh! Yeah. Okay, she told us to go find Sandman, because he has one piece of this mystical compass thingy that will lead us to the Lost Treasure of the Sands. Captain Scarlett has one too, and there are two more. We're doing all that tomorrow.

GAIGE: Today, we had our plates full with some other stuff. One of Captain Scarlett's pirates sent us to get fruit so his friend who got shot wouldn't get scurvy, then we fought off some union treasure hunters who were annoyed we were muscling in on their turf, that kind of thing.

SALVADOR: We also helped fed a pirate to the sand grubs!

GAIGE: I wasn't going to mention that! We're the heroes, we shouldn't be doing stuff like that! Seriously, if someone didn't insist on accepting every single mission we're offered, maybe we wouldn't have had to watch a man get eaten alive by giant worms!

SALVADOR: But it was funny!

GAIGE: Well—I mean...yeah, okay, it was kinda hilarious, what with Shiv-spike screaming about feeding us our own intestines as he was being eaten and all that, but still! We shouldn't be, you know, killing random people.

AXTON: Stop parroting Maya. It wasn't a random guy, it was a pirate. A really, really, really smelly pirate. The grubs wouldn't even eat him at first.

GAIGE: Anyway, we found another message in a bottle! Near this tiny little pirate town at the edge of Wurmwater, I'm not sure what the place is called. The map led us to a little hole in the wall—filled with more pirates—around the corner from Captain Scarlett's ship. We fought off a couple sand worms and found the second treasure chest, which had—

SALVADOR: A shield that makes my punches explode!

GAIGE: [laugh] Yeah, it's pretty awesome! It also makes him weaker to elemental effects, but whatever, small price to pay. There was also another ECHO in there, though. [click]

BLADE: After two years, three hundred looted sand barges and zero casualties...I think the men are starting to unravel. They wanna kill stuff. They wanna...split the loot and head their separate ways. They don't seem to get the fact that our whole operation isn't about greed or bloodlust, it's about survival! We stop robbing ships, we starve. We split up, we die. I won't let that happen. [click]

GAIGE: I'm still not exactly clear what happened, but it's obvious things didn't go, you know, as planned. Since I'm pretty sure that loot he's talking about is the treasure we're hunting right now. I have a feeling we'll get more of the story soon.

GAIGE: ...is that everything we did today? I mean, there was a lot of travel time, but it still feels like it wasn't everything.

AXTON: There's the part where Zero disappeared for like three hours. Again.

GAIGE: Oh, yeah! We were riding around on the sandskiff, and I noticed that Zero wasn't sniping sand worms any more, and I turned around and he was gone! No one had even noticed!

AXTON: Hey, I was busy piloting a sandskiff, I wasn't paying attention to you guys.

MAYA: I was...indisposed.

SALVADOR: Puking over the side, you mean.
GAIGE: Yeah, I meant to ask—how do you get seasick on a sandsea?

MAYA: Look, I've only been on a boat—

AXTON: A sandskiff is *not* a boat.

MAYA: If it upsets my stomach, it's a boat. Anyway, the only other time I was on one was this giant luxury yacht thing on Athenas. It didn't rock as much.

GAIGE: But you're fine now...


GAIGE: The nautical term is “at anchor.”

AXTON: It's not an ocean. You don't use nautical terms here.

GAIGE: It *used* to be an ocean. Besides, it's a sandsea, it's basically still an ocean.

MAYA: It is nothing like an ocean. There are no fish, and you can't drown.

GAIGE: But there are pirates!

MAYA: There are pirates in space too, does that mean space is an ocean?

GAIGE: ...yes?

MAYA: You took a ship here, right? You have to know something about space.

GAIGE: Uhm...that's not really...my thing...

MAYA: [sigh] I'm not really interested in debating this.

GAIGE: Fine, whatever. I guess that is everything for today—oh! I almost forgot! We sleeping on a pirate ship!

AXTON: Wasn't that already clear?

GAIGE: But it's a pirate ship! There are nets and harpoons and a little dock and PIRATES!

AXTON: ...you done?

GAIGE: Yeah, I guess so. See you tomorrow, subscribers!
Chapter Summary

Two Easy Pieces

GAIGE: I hate Sandman. And his stupid giant anchor guy too.

MAYA: Maybe you should start at the beginning?

GAIGE: Right, so when we woke up we were still in Wurmwater, because the ship hadn't moved at all during the night, and Captain Scarlett sent us to Hayter's Folly to kill Sandman, an old ally of hers who has one of the other pieces of the compass we need.

AXTON: I've been meaning to ask, so I'm just gonna come out and say it. Someone needs to explain this to me.

GAIGE: What?

AXTON: Why do we need this mystical compass thing anyway? Blade only went all William Kidd on us like, ten years ago. Couldn't he have just left behind an ECHO code with the coordinates?

SALVADOR: Yeah, I thought that's what those bottles were leading to.

AXTON: And another thing—what's up with this whole mystical compass in the first place? It's definitely not E-tech, but it's still all weird and...mystical. And stuff.

GAIGE: That's easy! Sure, ECHO recorders have been around for a while, but there's no guarantee they'll stay for too much longer, and even if they do and the software stays compatible, maps shift over time. That's actually the biggest trouble people have with following pirate maps, you know. Something that made perfect sense the day it was written is completely impossible when all the landmarks are gone. Throw in a GPS coordinate that might end up pointing to the wrong continent, and you can see why most pirates prefer to still go the traditional route.

MAYA: How do you know all that?

GAIGE: Discovery channel!

AXTON: ...and the compass?

GAIGE: Oh. Right. That. Um...well—

ZERO: It's a very common trick on borderworlds that can't rely on a stable satellite network. Find a high spot, put a durable and powerful geological density scanner up there, and use that to find a few unique metal veins that aren't likely to be mined out to use as a landmark. Then you remove the key—which often takes the shape of a compass, either to give it multiple uses or just as a hint as to its true purpose. Without the exact key, the scanner is useless, and since the precise veins you've scanned are stored in the shape of the key itself—which only the scanner can read—even if someone does manage to Jerry-rig the scanner, it won't help find the landmark at all. Even better, due to the way geological density scanners work, once the key is placed and the scanner switched on, the
device will actually shine a visible light at the target location, leading you right to it.

[full minute of silence]

GAIGE: Wha—

[another full minute of silence]

AXTON: Guys, stay away from the grog. I just had a really realistic hallucination.

MAYA: Zero, you—what?

GAIGE: What did you just say?

ZERO: It's a very common trick on borderworlds—

GAIGE: No, you—you don't have to...do the, you know, whole thing again. Just...where did that come from?

[silence]

GAIGE: ...right. One day I'm gonna wait until you're sleeping and rip off the frickin' mask, you know. Well, probably not me. Salvador, maybe.

SALVADOR: But he doesn't sleep.

GAIGE: What?

SALVADOR: He doesn't sleep. Every time I get up in the middle of the night, he's already awake.

[short pause]

GAIGE: Um...maybe I'm, you know, missing something...

AXTON: Why are you getting up in the middle of the night?

SALVADOR: To keep an eye on everyone.

GAIGE: You watch us sleep?

SALVADOR: Yeah, so?

MAYA: And you wonder why people are scared of you.

SALVADOR: What? I'm just keeping watch!

GAIGE: Anyway! We got sent back towards Oasis, and into this cave system under the town. Which was, um, full of fresh water. Like, rivers of it. And it was there the entire time, while all the other water sources were drying up and everyone was dying of thirst.

SALVADOR: Shade was crying.

GAIGE: Oh, which reminds me—how is it that everyone on this fricken' planet can see through our private ECHO recorders whenever they damn well please!? Angel, that made sense, but Shade!?

AXTON: Does it matter?
GAIGE: No, not really... [coughs] So, we were in a series of underground caverns, with water everywhere, and this little pirate shanty town where I almost died like five times because of these jackass powder monkey pirates with grenades or whatever you call them. Oh, and more crystalisks. I thought they were only in the Caustic Caverns, but I guess not.

GAIGE: I almost forgot: We found another of Captain Blade's messages, and found the chest hidden behind a false rock wall! So awesome! Plus, there was this really badass assault rifle with a giant bayonet attached. Axton's been using it, and it is awesome! The ECHO was...less awesome. [click]

BLADE: The crew are gonna mutiny. The cook I pretended to kill? They found him sittin' around in Oasis while I guarded the boat. [sigh] After they strung him up, they got to talkin'. Found out I'd never killed a soul in my life! My guess is, they'll raid the treasure room for guns, and shoot me while my back's turned.

[long pause]

BLADE: Might as well let 'em do it. I'd rather be killed than have to wipe out my own men. [click]

GAIGE: So, uh... [sniffle] I guess we know what happened to Captain Blade. [sniff]

GAIGE: After fighting through that pirate town and a couple skag warrens or dens or whatever, we came to a big open area. Sandman had his base there, a boat of some kind that was becalmed when the ocean dried up.

MAYA: Becalmed is when there's no wind for a sailboat, I think. This is just stranded.

SALVADOR: Shipwrecked?

MAYA: It wasn't really wrecked, though...

GAIGE: Well, so, we're not clear on the exact nautical term, but the point is there was a big ship just kinda sitting there, with pirates crawling all over it. Then Sandman came out with his anchorman, Big Sleep.

GAIGE: Anchormen are these like, ten-foot tall armored brutes who throw ship's anchors on chains as weapons. And they can deflect bullets and stuff with them too, so that's loads of fun. But it turns out Sandman was just another midget! What is up with Pandora and midgets!?

SALVADOR: Si, they're everywhere. So annoying.

GAIGE: I...don't know how to respond to that.

GAIGE: Moving on. After I almost got my skull crushed by Big Sleep about a dozen times, we finally managed to blow him up with Axton's turret providing cover while Salvador hit him in the back with double shotguns. Big Sleep, I mean, not Axton. After that, Sandman took like three seconds.

GAIGE: Captain Scarlett called up to tell us that she had no idea where the third compass piece was, but thankfully Sandman left his ECHO in the same chest as his piece, and he mentioned that Hyperion had another one. Left a GPS coordinate and everything. As the good captain said: [click]

SCARLETT: Well that was lucky. [click]

GAIGE: Anyway, the Hyperion caravan was chugging away back in Wurmwater, just a bunch of loaders guarding a couple floatpads. It didn't take long, but they blew up our sandskiff! Luckily we
weren't you know, on it at the time—Scooter's vehicles make a pretty big boom—but still! We had to walk all the way back to the ship. It took three hours. Stupid Sandman.

AXTON: What does Sandman have to do with that?

GAIGE: If he had raided the caravan before we got there, we could have just taken them both from him.

AXTON: Point.

GAIGE: That's it for today, subscribers. Other than Captain Scarlett telling us over Zero's dinner that she knows where the fourth piece is, anyway. We'll get that tomorrow. Right now, I need to sleep.

SALVADOR: Big sleep?

GAIGE: Not funny!

SALVADOR: Sorry.
Chapter Summary

The Hermit/Crazy About You

GAIGE: Hello, subscribers. Today we went to the Rustyards, and met...Herbert.

GAIGE: Okay, we actually started by going back to Hayter's Folly. Sir Hammerlock found out about some monster bullymong thing called Grendel, that had attacked one of his friends and cut his face off. The friend's face, I mean. Hammerlock is fine. Hammerlock sent us to get the face back so it could be stapled back on. Which, uh, I hope was just a figure of speech.

GAIGE: Anyway, we fought Grendel, in this cave full of junk, and he was wearing the guy's face, and I think it was the grossest thing I've ever seen. Thankfully, he was kinda a pushover, so the others did fine even with me puking in the corner. But, um, well... [click]

HAMMERLOCK: Good news! You don't have to help me staple Jesse's face back on, because he's...dead. Hemophilia, ho... [click]

GAIGE: So...that's some kind of good, right? Hehe...

MAYA: Gaige, it's all right. There was nothing you could do.

ZERO: Arr.

GAIGE: ...Zero, did you just—

ZERO: No.

GAIGE: ...right. [cough] Anyway. So Captain Scarlett sent us to the Rustyards, through this old, run-down port town in Wyrmwater. Filled with so many pirates, it was awesome. We were blasting our way through left right and center, pirate ninjas were coming out of the woodwork, more of those stupid anchormen, and there were beached ships, and—

MAYA: Breathe, Gaige.

GAIGE: [deep breath] So we fought through all them and crossed this rickety bridge over a massive chasm thing that probably used to be an underwater trench or whatever, and spotted Herbert's house just kinda sitting on top of this tall skinny rock, I don't know what you call it. But once we got up there—

AXTON: Using an elevator.

GAIGE: Well, yeah—

AXTON: You just weren't clear if we climbed up there or what.

GAIGE: Why would we climb up when there's an elevator?

AXTON: I meant—
MAYA: Let's skip the back and forth this time, okay?

GAIGE: Right! The point is, we got to this cabin thingy just kinda sitting precariously on the edge of the cliff or whatever, knocked on the door, and...um...out came Herbert.

GAIGE: Herbert is...a character. He's...how should I put this...okay! You know that nerdy kid in your class—you know what I'm talking about, every class has one—who was blatantly in love with the cutest girl in class, and he tried to hide it, but it was really obvious, and he tried to help her with her homework and stuff so that she'd like him? Well, that's Herbert. Except he's like fifty years older than Captain Scarlett, smells like a sewer, and doesn't even both trying to hide his obsession. I mean, the cabin is just covered in pictures of her, I don't really want to know where he got them. Oh, and these absolutely adorable little Captain Scarlett plushies, which I think he made himself, and they squeak when you squeeze them and it's the cutest thing ever!

MAYA: Breathe, Gaige.

GAIGE: Anyway, Herbert sent us to get some love poem things he wrote for Captain Scarlett before he'd give us the compass piece, because he's crazy and thinks she wants stuff like that. Which was stupid, but the thing is Herbert's the biggest expert on the compass around. He's been studying the legend for months, poring over half-forgetten clues and piecing together the puzzle. So, you know, we had to humor him.

GAIGE: The ECHO's were kept on this ship that was suspended over a ravine for some reason.

SALVADOR: And then it exploded!

GAIGE: Haha, yeah! I love it when that happens! When things explode when we're not on them, I mean. But it also threw the ECHO's all over the Rustyards, so we had to go find them all.

MAYA: Why did it explode, anyway?

AXTON: Mines. Didn't you notice?

MAYA: No, Zero usually mentions—oh, come on!

GAIGE: Huh? What's wrong?

SALVADOR: The ghost disappeared again.

MAYA: One of these days, I'm gonna nail his feet to the ground.

AXTON: What the hell could he be doing? We're in the middle of a desert.

SALVADOR: I dunno, treasure hunting?

MAYA: Or just hunting. Maybe he spotted some pirate he thought looked challenging.

GAIGE: Anyway! So to get most of the lost ECHO's—which were a combination of bad poetry and recordings of Captain Scarlett snoring—

SCARLETT: Ah, just wanted to pop in real quick and clarify: I do not snore. And you should toss any evidence to the contrary into the ravine first chance you get. Sound good?

GAIGE: [sighs] I swear, everyone on the planet...

SCARLETT: What was that?
GAIGE: Nothing! Right, no snoring, got it! ECHO's in ravine, first chance we get, got it!

AXTON: Actually, we gave them back to Herbert.

SCARLETT: Eh, that's fine then. He won't cause too much trouble with them.

GAIGE: Okay, if you say so. Uh...where was I?

ZERO: Collecting ECHO's.

GAIGE: HOLY—what—where did you come from?

[silence]


GAIGE: But as I was saying, a couple of the ECHO's got blasted onto this giant beached ship wedged between a few rocks, so we had to fight our way through it and all the pirates squatting there. More importantly, we found another message in a bottle! And the next treasure chest was in this junkyard thing, next to a bunch of spiderant dens. Anyway, there was another log in the chest:

[click]

BLADE: [breathing heavily] They're all dead. They attacked just after daybreak. I promised myself I'd just let 'em kill me, but I couldn't let—I—I fought back. The deck is sticky with their blood. Today...they finally met...the fearsome Captain Blade. [click]

GAIGE: [sniff] Sorry, I just... [sniff] Nothing, I'm fine. But, um, you know...I guess not all of Captain Blade's reputation was false after all.

GAIGE: Ahem. [sniffle] We got all of Herbert's tapes—why do they call them tapes, anyway?

AXTON: It's an old metaphor, based on the normal, sticky kind of tape. People “tape” things, as in they just kinda crudely plaster the recording onto the device. Get it?

GAIGE: Ohh...

MAYA: Axton, if you don't know, just say so. Don't make something up.

AXTON: Heh, sorry.


AXTON: Hey!

GAIGE: So we got all the ECHO logs, and Herbert revealed he had the stupid piece the entire time, just sitting out in a treasure chest on his deck. The lock was rusted, but before we could saw it open or something, someone decided to shoot it.

SALVADOR: Herbert said it was okay!

MAYA: Herbert said it was okay.

SALVADOR: ...that sounded like a better excuse in my head.

GAIGE: Anyway, the shot shattered the compass piece. Luckily, Herbert says he can fix it, so that's what we're doing tomorrow.
GAIGE: I guess that's it for today. Mechromancer, signing—

MAYA: You forgot one thing.

GAIGE: Oh, yeah! Yeah, Herbert offered to let us stay at his place for the night, but we... [coughs] decided against it, so we're sleeping next to this giant trench thing, next to a gondola that leads back to that pirate port town I mentioned earlier. It's the only shelter in the area, other than the shack, and...yeah, we're not sleeping there.

GAIGE: Now that's it for today. See you tomorrow, subscribers!
ECHO 29

Chapter Summary

Whoops

MAYA: —hold her down!
GAIGE: [wordless scream]
SCARLETT: Whoops! I forgot to mention you were carrying around a rather large bomb. Sorry about that! Er...what's all that racket on your end?
GAIGE: GETITOFFGETITOFF—
[cuts off suddenly]
MAYA: Zero, what did you—
ZERO: Vulcan nerve pinch. She'll wake up in a few hours.
SCARLETT: You lot all right over there?
MAYA: Yes, yes, we're...fine. Thank you, Gaige just got some...Herbert on her. And had a reaction.
SCARLETT: Ooh...yes. He has that effect on people. Well, not any more, right? Ha!
MAYA: Whatever. We'll be back with the compass piece soon.
SCARLETT: Excellent! See you soon!
AXTON: Salvador, I think you accidentally turned Gaige's ECHO on when you tackled her.
SALVADOR: Oh, sorry.
MAYA: It's fine. It was better than letting her jump into the chasm. Just turn it off.
[three hours of silence]
GAIGE: Okay, who turned off my ECHO?
AXTON: Me, why?
GAIGE: You did the exact same thing as last time, broadcasting dead air!
AXTON: No, I didn't, I did what you told me to do!
GAIGE: Well, clearly, you didn't!
GAIGE: [sighs] Sorry, subscribers! I hope there weren't too many people just sitting there listening the entire time.
GAIGE: Anyway, I'll get to, you know, what happened with Herbert in a second. The day started with him sending us to Washburne Refinery, to collect some poly-kryten to repair his piece of the compass.

GAIGE: What he didn't tell us that it was a Hyperion refinery, so there were flippin' loaders everywhere! And none of us had corrosive guns anymore! But Salvador still has the shield that makes his punches explode, so that was fun.

AXTON: Would have been more fun if he let someone else use the shield.

MAYA: [sighs] Don't start this again, I'm begging—

AXTON: I'm not starting anything! I'm just saying, it would be nice if he shared.

GAIGE: You got that cool rifle with the giant knife-thing—

ZERO: Bayonet.

GAIGE: —that thing on it, why are you complaining?

AXTON: What do you mean, why? He has a shield that makes his punches explode!

GAIGE: Point.

MAYA: Gaige...

GAIGE: I know, I know, don't start anything, I wasn't gonna! Just lemme get back to my...thing. [coughs] Okay, so Washburne Refinery itself wasn't, you know, a big deal. We just had to find a few good chunks of poly-kryten laying around, which didn't take too long, while dodging the loaders and trying to not to fall into pools of molten...I'm not sure what. Slag, maybe? Yeah, it was kinda fun, but nothing really to write home—oh! I almost forgot! There were loaders built like pirates!

ZERO: Arr.

GAIGE: Yeah, ARR Loaders, they were called! They were the coolest thing ever! Would have been cooler if they had piratey voices too, but I guess whatever bored engineer built them didn't have time to program that bit.

GAIGE: Speaking of bored engineers, there was this one loader that wasn't shooting at us, so we went over to see what was up. It called itself the “C3n50r807.” I don't know if it was some abandoned project of Handsome Jack's, or just some engineer playing a prank, but the stupid thing was obsessed with censorship and “moral values” and all that stuff. Sounded just like my mom.

AXTON: Your mom tried to have you killed for having porn?

GAIGE: I'm pretty sure she wouldn't actually have killed me. She was probably joking. Hell, the gun probably wasn't even loaded!

MAYA: Uh...

GAIGE: Anyway, Censorbot sent us to destroy another custom loader, a little guy called P3RV-E, who was imperiling Pandora's youth with all the porn or whatever. After we brought back the porn for its “examination,” it sent us to a pirate base in Oasis—we went after we had grabbed all the poly-kryten, of course—to kill a bunch of hackers who were copying ECHO movies or something. I dunno. We probably wouldn't have gone for something like that, but someone just cannot say no to a
SALVADOR: What? We got that cool sniper rifle for Zero!

GAIGE: I'm not sure he's even using the stupid thing. It's a weird gun and—aand he's disappeared again.

MAYA: He was here a minute ago.

AXTON: This is getting ridiculous. Is he doing this on purpose just to piss us off?

GAIGE: Who knows?

SALVADOR: Ten bucks says he turns out to be evil.

AXTON: Twenty.

MAYA: You can't bet on our teammates.

AXTON: Sure we can. I still got fifty that says you start your own Siren-cult.

MAYA: No thanks. Already went through that once.

AXTON: C'mon, think about it! You can do it right this time, no power-grubbing priests...

SALVADOR: Hey! It doesn't count if you're the one who convinces her to start the cult!

AXTON: We didn't agree to that! She starts a cult, you owe me fifty bucks, that was the deal!

SALVADOR: So if I turn Zero evil, I win?

AXTON: No, we bet that he'd turn out to be evil. Meaning he's evil now. Doesn't count if you turn him later.

SALVADOR: Bah. Abogado.

AXTON: Hey!

GAIGE: [sighs] Anyway, while we were grabbing all the poly-kryten, Herbert kept chipping in over the radio, proving over and over again how much of a crazy stalker he is and why Captain Scarlett was perfectly justified in kicking him off her ship. Blargh.

GAIGE: We finally marched all the way back to Herbert's stupid hut—and I do mean alll the way back, the fricken' jackhole wouldn't send the gondola thing to pick us up, so we had to fight all the way through town again, through eighty-seven bazillion respawned pirates. And why do all the bandits on this stupid planet have their own personal New-U networks!?

MAYA: I'm still not sure they actually do. Have you ever seen a bandit New-U station?

GAIGE: Where else are they all coming from?

MAYA: I don't know...

GAIGE: So we gave Herbert the poly-kryten, and he fixed up the broken compass piece. Then we gave him the package Captain Scarlett asked us to give to him, and it...exploded. As did Herbert. Um...yeah. I was standing kinda close to him at the time, and got...everything...all over me, which
[deep breath] kind of reminded me of the Marcy and all that but I'm fine now, and it's fine, and nothing's wrong.

GAIGE: Anyway, we're back at the ship now, and tomorrow we're off to Magnys Lighthouse. Blade's notes said he built that to help people find the treasure—probably that geological survey thing Zero mentioned.

AXTON: Didn't Blade's notes also rant about how society is secretly run by sentient tacos?

SALVADOR: That's what Scarlett said.

GAIGE: Look, I dunno. I guess he went crazy at the end, with all the [sniff] killing his crew and stuff.

GAIGE: I'm going to bed. Mechromancer, out.
Chapter Summary

Let There Be Light/X Marks the Spot

GAIGE: Hello, subscribers! Magnys Lighthouse is the most horrible place on Pandora.
MAYA: Not this again...
AXTON: I'm with her on this one. I died!
GAIGE: I was actually talking about how it took us four hours to find the last of Captain Blade's treasure chests.
AXTON: Well, yeah, that was annoying, but nothing compared to dying.
GAIGE: Please, we've all died! Get over it.
SALVADOR: Says the girl who was bawling like a baby.
GAIGE: You swore you wouldn't tell!
AXTON: Maya hasn't died yet.
[thrum of power]
MAYA: You stay away from me.
AXTON: Just pointing it out...
[power fades]
GAIGE: Anyway, we actually put off the lighthouse for a little while. Scooter called to ask us to grab some parts from the Rustyards—would have been easier if we had known about it the first time we had to run through that stupid junk yard—which took most of the morning.
GAIGE: Then when we got back to the ship, Captain Scarlett sent us to kill a bunch of deserters who...deserted. Yeah. It was just these three guys hiding out with a bunch of other pirates, no big deal. One was a poisoner, I think one stole sandskiffs or whatever, and...I don't remember what she said about Toothless Terry.
AXTON: She made a bad joke about fat guys.
GAIGE: Yeah, that was kinda awkward. What else...oh! After we finished the Rustyards but before we did the deserters thing, Zero disappeared again! He hasn't come back since! We did the whole lighthouse without him! What the hell.
ZERO: Freedom of Speech.
GAIGE: Gah!
AXTON: How the frack did you get here?

ZERO: I was on Captain Scarlett's skiff.

MAYA: ...and that's where you were the entire time?

ZERO: No. There was a problem with a DJ Tanner. I dealt with him.

GAIGE: ...that name mean anything to anyone else?

MAYA: No idea.

SALVADOR: I don't really listen to the radio.

AXTON: Sounds familiar, but I'm not really sure from where...

GAIGE: Anyway, let's get back to the main quest. After we finished off Captain Scarlett's deserters, we finally went to the lighthouse Captain Blade built to point the way to the lost treasure. Magnys Lighthouse sits on top of this island...mountain...thing, it's really hard to describe, but think like a giant table made of rock, with one support in the middle. The lighthouse is on the top part, and the bottom is another dried-up pirate port.

GAIGE: So we fought through the port, and like eighty of those stupid anchorman guys who can deflect bullets, and ran into a stalker nest in the...cliff. Mountain? I dunno. But it was just sitting there, right between two pirate camps! How the hell do they travel between the camps?

MAYA: They probably just go around.

GAIGE: But—they—fine, whatever! Point is, lots of stalkers. So we fought through them—oh, that's where Captain Blade's map was—circled around the mountain rock thingy through the second camp we mentioned, and got to the elevator up to the lighthouse itself.

GAIGE: The elevator was this rickety old platform suspended from one rope, and it took forever for the thing to come down. So while we were waiting, we were ambushed! Again. This is where Axton died, by the way.

AXTON: That stupid turret...

GAIGE: Huh? I thought an anchorman got you?

AXTON: Yeah. While I was dodging the turret.

GAIGE: Oh, okay. Anyway, we fought off the ambush, waited for Axton to respawn—

SALVADOR: And for you to finish crying.

GAIGE: I wasn't crying! I mean, not by the time Axton got back.

SALVADOR: I'll give you that.

GAIGE: Got on the elevator, winched up to the top part of the table rock whatever, and I nearly lost my lunch when I made the mistake of looking over the side. But whatever, we got to the lighthouse, and no one was around, so we decided to take a couple minutes to see if we could find the spot Captain Blade's map pointed to. Not the big treasure, you understand, just the little ones we've been grabbing up the whole time—
MAYA: I think they get it.

GAIGE: Anyway, that took FOUR HOURS. The chest was buried on top of this stupid rock formation thing, that we all kept walking right by! I didn't even know it could be buried in solid rock. Seriously, area waypoints are the devil. I have half a mind to call in and complain.

MAYA: ...to Blade?

GAIGE: No, to the ECHO companies! [coughs] The point is, we found one more ECHO in the chest. [click]

BLADE: I'm hiding the blasted treasure. It got my entire crew killed. But if you wanna die looking for it...have...fun. This is Captain Blade, signing off, for good. [click]

GAIGE: I...guess that's right before he built the lighthouse and all that. [sniffle] Uh, Maya? Can you take over for a second? I, uh, need to go to the bathroom.

MAYA: Sure, whatever you need.

[sound of footsteps walking off on some soft surface]

MAYA: She did cry at Blade's ECHO. She cried at a couple, actually.

AXTON: Well, she wasn't like, bawling. Just kinda weeping a little.

MAYA: Well, after we found the last chest and everything, we finally went up the lighthouse. It was strangely unfinished. Just the bare framework with some white paneling on the outside. I'm not sure if the weather stripped it off over the years, or it was just never finished in the first place.

MAYA: Once we got to the top, we placed the compass, and it shone a big light down into Wurmwater, just like Zero said. Scarlett called, said she'd meet us down there, and promised that since she still needed us, she wouldn't backstab us until we reached the treasure chamber.

MAYA: Yeah, she was lying.

MAYA: There were...a dozen? Maybe more?

AXTON: Two dozen sounds about right.

SALVADOR: Plus the badass.

MAYA: Two dozen of Scarlett's pirates ambushed us at the base of the lighthouse, led by two of her lieutenants. They were actually surprisingly hard to put down. Maybe because they're not as suicidally overconfident as the bandits.

SALVADOR: Then Shade called, which I thought was nice.

MAYA: Yeah, he called to see if we were still alive and told us where Scarlett was headed. Gaige has a voice clip...you know, I'm not even gonna try. The point is, we went back to Wurmwater, using the Fast Travel station on Scarlett's ship. Seems like she really took all her guys, since there was no one left on the ship.

AXTON: And guess who called to gloat.

MAYA: Look, if you want to do this, you can. Just stop talking over me.
AXTON: But you were skipping—

MAYA: No, I wasn't. Next time just wait ten more seconds.

AXTON: Okay, okay, sheesh. Go right ahead.

MAYA: Thank you.

[pause]

MAYA: And guess who called to gloat.

AXTON: [sighs]

MAYA: Scarlett was going on about how she had totally won, and she was already at the spot the lighthouse had marked with her men, when the call suddenly got cut off. Everyone agreed that was a little suspicious, but we didn't really have much other choice at that point than to hop on a sand skiff and follow.

MAYA: We got to the spot—not really hard to find with the lighthouse shining a big beam of light on the sand—and the everything started...rumbling.

MAYA: And then the Leviathan jumped out of the sand and ate us.

MAYA: It was huge, maybe a fifty or hundred feet tall, and looked like one of those sand worms, but...[coughs] giant. That worked in our favor, actually, since it was so incredibly huge it swallowed us whole, and our shields saved us from the worst of it as we went down its throat.

MAYA: So...that's where we've been the last hour or so. Just kinda sitting in the Leviathan's stomach. We looked around a bit but couldn't find Scarlett. Though now that Zero's back, maybe he can tell us where—

GAIGE: Guys, guys, over here!

AXTON: What's up?

GAIGE: I think I found a door!

SALVADOR: Inside the Leviathan?

GAIGE: Well, it's not a door door, it's this big circular muscle thing that opens as it breathes, and I can see light on the other side!

MAYA: ...a sphincter?

AXTON: You want us to go through a sphincter.

GAIGE: Yeah! What's a sphincter?

MAYA: It's, well...did you ever take anatomy class?

GAIGE: Sure, I passed with a C-, why?

MAYA: [sighs] Well, if it's the only way...

ZERO: It is.
MAYA: Then let's go.

GAIGE: Ooh, lemme just sign off real quick, okay?

MAYA: Sure.

GAIGE: Good night, subscribers! I'll be back on in a few hours, after we've defeated Captain Scarlett and recovered the lost treasure of the sands!

[hour of silence]

GAIGE: Hello—oh, for crying out loud! Axton, you did it again!

AXTON: Did what?

GAIGE: Shut my ECHO off wrong!

AXTON: What? I didn't touch it!

GAIGE: ...oh, wait, that was me.

AXTON: HA!

[smacking sound]

MAYA: Don't be an ass.

GAIGE: So while we were in the Leviathan, we found Captain Scarlett again! And...wait, I've got it right... [click]

SCARLETT: So, the bad news is, the Leviathan swallowed us. The good news is, it's taking us to the treasure chamber! But you know what the best news is? You remember my pet Roscoe?

[earth-shaking roar]

SCARLETT: I found him! [click]

GAIGE: So the good captain's “adorable little pet” turned out to be a freaking full-grown rakk hive. I mentioned rakks, they're these giant bat...flying lizard things, but it turns out their hives aren't just nests or whatever built into the hillside, they're actually living creatures, these giant four-legged things the size of a house, and the rakks pop out of these...things on their backs. Oh, and did anyone else think its mouth looked like a—

MAYA: No.

SALVADOR: Wait, what's she talking about?

AXTON: Now that you mention it, it did resemble—

MAYA: NO!

AXTON: Okay, sheesh, no need to get so worked up.

GAIGE: So we're fighting this giant lumbering...thing, while rakks are divebombing us, and we're dodging pools of acid—because we were still in the Leviathan's stomach, remember—and Captain Scarlett was shooting at us, and it was BAD. ASS.
MAYA: You say that every time someone almost dies.

GAIGE: Hey, no one died!

MAYA: I said *almost*.

GAIGE: The point is, we managed to kill Roscoe—mostly by shooting him in his like fifty eyes—and Captain Scarlett escaped! Best pirate *ever*! Oh, but she left behind a modded Jakobs pistol that Maya’s having fun with, so that’s good too!

GAIGE: Sometime after that the, um, the Leviathan kindof…puked us out. Yeah. Not the highest moment of my, you know, career or whatever. Oh, but you know how I said the Leviathan was this giant sandworm thing? Turns out that's actually its *tongue*! Or something. The actual beastie is like, a thousand feet tall, with these giant scythe-arm things and fighting it was *awesome*.

AXTON: How was it awesome? We just fought mini-worms while Salvador shot those pustule things.

GAIGE: But…we fighting an enemy the size of skyscraper! And I had a gun that shoots *lightning* and—

AXTON: So? It didn't do anything interesting, and you know shock isn't good against flesh. I don't know why you were using that stupid thing.

GAIGE: Excuse me, I *love* that gun—

MAYA: Maybe we should move on, okay?

GAIGE: Right, right. So, we killed the Leviathan—which was *awesome*, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise—and found the treasure chamber, which was this underground pyramid ruin thing, that Maya thought was Eridian. And at the top of the pyramid was the lost treasure!

SALVADOR: Was anyone else...underwhelmed?

GAIGE: What do you mean *underwhelmed*? There were like a dozen big treasure chests! More? It might have been about two dozen, actually...

SALVADOR: Yeah, but I mean...did we actually get any good guns? Anything to make it all worthwhile?

MAYA: Marcus certainly thinks it was. He managed to con me out of sixty percent.

AXTON: Even so, we still got a million bucks or so.

SALVADOR: So? We already *had* money.

AXTON: You can always have more!

MAYA: Just because you have the financial management abilities of a drunk squirrel doesn't mean the rest of us have the same problems.

GAIGE: *Anyway*...uh...is that it? Is that really...all? Seems...

SALVADOR: Underwhelming?

GAIGE: Yeah, I mean...where the hell did Captain Scarlett run off to? Shouldn't we get some, I
dunno, closure or whatever on that?

MAYA: Real life doesn't always get wrapped up in a neat little bow.

GAIGE: [grumbles] I know... [sighs] I guess that's it, subscribers. I might post a few more ECHO’s, but don't get your hopes up. Until we get to the Vaults on the other planets, I don't think anything interesting is going to be happening.

SALVADOR: Besides, Brick already called dibs on those.

AXTON: Only if he can get to them first!

GAIGE: [sighs] This is the Mechromancer of the new Vault Hunters, signing—

ZERO: Tannis has a job.

GAIGE: Wah! Where did you—

ZERO: I was with Tannis.

GAIGE: Oh. Okay. Why were—

ZERO: She has a job.

MAYA: Well, let's go. Hopefully it will be something interesting this time, instead of another ECHO wild goose chase.

AXTON: Or like that time her “job” was to get another sample from you?

MAYA: We agreed not to talk about that.

AXTON: Actually, you just pointed a gun at my face and told me not to talk about it.

MAYA: Like I said, we agreed.

GAIGE: Well, I guess this might turn out to be something worth posting about, subscribers, but I wouldn't hold my breath if I were you. Signing off.
Chapter Summary

Highway to Hell/Welcome to the Jungle

SALVADOR: TORGUE!
GAIGE: Hey—give that back!
SALVADOR: No, wait, I'm gonna do it! I know you have it somewhere— [click]
Mr. TORGUE: IF YOU'RE STILL ALIVE, GRAB SOME AMMO! IF YOU'RE NOT, THEN THIS STATEMENT IS IRRELEVANT! [click]
SALVADOR: No, that's not it...
GAIGE: Give me— [sound of scuffle] —that. Okay. Phew. Helloo, subscribers! As, uh, I'm sure some of you are already aware, my account got hacked a little bit. That's what I get for sleeping through my Advanced Software Security class, but luckily I managed to get Mr. Torgue to give me back access! He just wanted to promote this tournament a little, so he doesn't have a problem with me doing it instead.

GAIGE: It turns out Tannis did have something interesting for us after all! She...okay, she did a planet-wide ECHO-cast, I'm not sure why, we were right there, but I have it somewhere on here. [click]
TANNIS: Listen carefully, mouth-breathers of the world. This is Patricia Tannis, and I have found another Vault! As you may know, the opening of the first Vault five years ago triggered a chain reaction that revealed—
[static]
Mr. TORGUE: BOORING! You don't wanna hear about that, Vault Hunters! You wanna hear about loot, and pacs, and explosions! I'm Torgue, and I'm here to ask you one question, and one question only: EXPLOSIONS?
[explosion]
TANNIS: Get off this ECHO frequency, you protein-guzzling buffoon! I'm trying to convey—
Mr. TORGUE: THAT SENTENCE HAD TOO MANY SYLLABLES! APOLOGIZE!

TANNIS: As I was saying, I've discovered that this new Vault is buried in the center of a large crater, and will only open—and I quote—“Once the champion of Pandora feeds it the blood of the ultimate coward.”

Mr. TORGUE: We at the Torgue Corporation sincerely believe this is F*CKING AWESOME! It's so awesome that we're gonna set up a tournament to find this number one badass! If you want in, come to where the Vault is buried, in the Badass Crater of Badassitude!
TANNIS: That's not what the area is called!

Mr. TORGUE: BADASS CRATER OF BADASSITUDE!

TANNIS: [sighs]

[click]

GAIGE: That tells you pretty much everything you need to know. Badass tournament, we're in it, and we're gonna win it!

SALVADOR: TORGUE!

GAIGE: And Salvador's really excited for some reason.

MAYA: I've been meaning to ask...we're not going to have to fight each other at the end of this thing, right?

GAIGE: I don't think so. I feel like Mr. Torgue—

SALVADOR: TORGUE!

GAIGE: Uh, I think he, you know, would have mentioned—Salvador, what the hell are you doing?

SALVADOR: Practicing my victory pose!

AXTON: You gotta spread your legs more, man. Distribute your weight better for when they hand you the big-ass trophy. Don't wanna fall over.

SALVADOR: Oh, okay.

GAIGE: ...what is wrong with you two?

MAYA: I have a list, if you're interested.

GAIGE: No, it's... [coughs] Okay, so we got to the Crater, and Mr. Torgue called us up and told us to sign the waiver form or whatever. Except when we got to the sign-in terminal, it exploded! He thinks stuff like paperwork is stupid, which is totally true. We were ranked—you know, he can say it better. [click]

Mr. TORGUE: Right now, you're ranked fifty on the badass leaderboards, which puts you behind my grandma, but ahead of some guy she gummed to death! IT TOOK SEVERAL HOURS! If you wanna open that Vault, you gotta rise in the leaderboards! Also, you need a sponsor, for MOTHERF*CKING LEGAL REASONS!

[click]

GAIGE: The company was supposed to set us up with one beforehand, but Mr. Torgue was...um...busy.

GAIGE: So we headed towards the arena to get set up with our sponsor, right? Except all the Torgue guys started shooting at us! And you know, we were doing our thing, killing people and looking awesome, when Mr. Torgue called back. [click]

Mr. TORGUE: You may have noticed that everyone here is trying to kill you, Torgue personnel included! You're WELCOME! I didn't want you to get bored, so I was like “F*CK it, give
everybody guns!” We've lost half of our work force in three days, but who gives a F*CK?

[click]

GAIGE: Anyway, after killing some of “Pete's Burners”—whoever they are—psychos, and some other guys, we finally got to meet our sponsor, Piston. He's the current champ, but he's got these giant plasma cannons instead of hands, so I'm not really sure how he does...anything, really. But yeah, he offered to sponsor us, and promised to open the Vault with us.

[click]

Mr. TORGUE: IS IT JUST ME, OR DOES IT SEEM LIKE HE'S GONNA BETRAY THE F*CK OUTTA YOU? [click]

GAIGE: Oh, hey Zero, didn't see you there. Where've you been?

ZERO: Sniping bikers.

GAIGE: Yeah, I shouldn't have expected an...hey, you answered that time!

[silence]

GAIGE: Well, now you're just being mean.

GAIGE: The point is, Piston had a fight set up—

AXTON: Torgue set up so that we were entered as a group, and could advance together.

MAYA: He did? When did he mention that?

AXTON: When we were leaving the arena.

GAIGE: —a fight against the “Horde of Horrors” or whatever. It was this huge arena, with shipping crates and stuff scattered everywhere for cover, and we fought four waves of, I dunno, a billion guys each. It was pretty awesome! Except Piston kept calling over the ECHO with [mocking tone] “Oh, you're still fighting these guys?” and stuff like that. But Mr. Torgue was surprisingly supportive.

[click]

Mr. TORGUE: IF YOU'RE STILL ALIVE, GRAB SOME AMMO! IF YOU'RE NOT, THEN THIS STATEMENT IS IRRELEVANT!

[click]

GAIGE: Salvador, you already did that quote! You can't do the same quote more than once, you have to do something new!

SALVADOR: I don't have anything new.

GAIGE: Then don't do anything! Sheesh.

GAIGE: Anyway, we beat them all pretty easily, not really worth going into too much detail on how awesome an intangible flying death robot is in this situation, but once we had, you know, won, a gun chest rose out of the center of the arena. Piston said it was a present.

GAIGE: Except it turned out it was rigged with gas! Piston knocked out the cameras and had us
dragged out of the arena! We got out, and then heard him over the ECHO declaring we had run away! WHAT THE HELL.

AXTON: Torgue had to declare us cowards, but luckily he knows better.

GAIGE: Axton, we've talked about this.

AXTON: You were skipping stuff.

GAIGE: I was not! If you had just waited—

MAYA: Do we have to go through this every time?

GAIGE: [coughs] Anyway, Torgue said he thought he knew where a new sponsor was, and that he'd tell us in the morning. For now, we're camped out in a garage next to one of Scooter's Catch-a-Ride stations. Slept in worse places. Uh...did I miss anything?

AXTON: How about the fact that it took twenty minutes to get the stupid machine to stop shouting Scooter's catch phrases every thirty seconds?

GAIGE: Oh, yeah, that! Well subscribers, it was a feat of impressive engineering, but I—

SALVADOR: You just had me rip the speaker out.

GAIGE: Shush! Uh...hehe. Yeah. We...did that. Scooter, if you're listening, don't worry—we'll fix it in the morning. For now, this is Gaige, signing off.
Chapter Summary

Burn, Baby, Burn/ChopSuey

SALVADOR: TORGUE!

GAIGE: Stop doing that!

SALVADOR: But it's fun!

GAIGE: [coughs] Ahem. So! This morning, Mr. Torgue called to tell us that a nearby badass named Pyro Pete had kidnapped a sponsor, who would...um...sponsor us if we rescued her. We had to fight through the Beatdown to get to his bar.

GAIGE: The Beatdown is this collection of back-alleys and side streets between a few apartment buildings and shops and all that. It's mostly abandoned right now, since Pete's gangs control the streets, but it's only been a few days, so hopefully they'll be able to come back after the tournament is over and all the thugs have moved on or whatever.

AXTON: Are you sure there was anyone?

GAIGE: What do you mean? What, you think those big apartment blocks are just for decoration?

AXTON: No, I mean maybe that's where all the gang guys live. Lived.

MAYA: I'm sure some of them survived.

GAIGE: I still say they've got a New-U station somewhere.

MAYA: If they were in the system, wouldn't they respawn at the stations we use?

GAIGE: Hyperion isn't the only New-U manufacturer in the universe, Maya! Well, technically they are, since, you know, that's their brand, and everyone just calls all respawn stations New-U, but you get my point. They could have hacked some, bought some from Torgue—

SALVADOR: Pretty sure Torgue doesn't do those.

AXTON: Pangolin, maybe? Or do they just do shields?

MAYA: I think they do transfusion grenades too, if nothing else.

GAIGE: That's Anshin.

SALVADOR: I've never seen an Anshin grenade. They're just shields.

GAIGE: No, my mom had an Anshin transfusion mod. Plus a shield with a really good recharge rate.

AXTON: ...why did your mom have a transfusion mod?
GAIGE: ...for her grenades? What else?

MAYA: Remind me again what your mom does for a living.

GAIGE: Dad's the one with the job. Mom does do his paperwork and all that, though.

ZERO: Anshin does not make grenade mods on Pandora anymore.

GAIGE: Oh. Why?

ZERO: Market fluctuations have made it unprofitable for them.

GAIGE: Huh. Anyway! So we fought through like a billion of these burner guys, and a bunch of bikers too, until we finally got to the bar. And Pete called us a couple times to rant about fire—

[click]

PETE: It's the cowards! Oooh, I'm burning up inside! You want a sponsor, yes? I have a warm one. But you must daance, first. Start some trouble here in the Beatdown, and then I will give her to you! Get to the battle board! Go, now, BEFORE THE FLAMES RISE!

Mr. TORGUE: HIS GIMMICK IS THAT HE REALLY LIKES FIRE!

[click]

GAIGE: ...thanks, Salvador.

SALVADOR: Hehe.

GAIGE: But once we actually got into, you know, the bar, we got to have a BAR BRAWL! I had never been in a bar fight before! It was awesome!

AXTON: Hands down, third best bar fight I've ever been in.

GAIGE: How many bar fights have you been in?

AXTON: Not too many, a dozen or so—wait. You're just talking about bar fights on Pandora, right?

GAIGE: Uh...

AXTON: Give me a second, this might take a while. [mumbling] Tantalus, Hieronymous, Demophon, Hestias, Thrace, Themis...

SALVADOR: Eh, the rats kinda ruined it for me.

AXTON: What? What was wrong with the rats?

SALVADOR: What's ever wrong with rats?

AXTON: Well, yeah, but we killed them all before they robbed us, right? I mean, c'mon! I was tossing grenades left, right and center, you had those full-auto machine guns, that stupid little robot was floating around—

GAIGE: Hey!

MAYA: If you loved it so much, why did you only rank it third?
GAIGE: Can we get back on track, people!? Sheesh.

GAIGE: So the point of the fight was to kill all of the badasses in under five minutes, which was awesome, and surprisingly easy, actually, because it was a small bar and we had lots of guns and grenades and everything. But anyway, we did all that, and impressed Pete, and he said he'd give us the sponsor, but, uh... [click]

Mr. TORGUE: You finished Pyro Pete's bullsh*t! Now go talk to him, and he'll probably tell you he's gonna give you a sponsor, but then he'll betray you, and he'll try and kill you, and you'll have to kill him, and it will be AWESOME! Anything you wanna add, Pete?

PETE: No...you, uh...covered it. Thanks. For that.

Mr. TORGUE: YOU ARE WELCOME!

[click]

GAIGE: We went down the elevator, which Pyro Pete kinda mumbling half-heartedly about how it totally wasn't a trap. I almost felt bad for the guy, really.

AXTON: He went down like a sack of wet noodles.

GAIGE: Yeah, he was way too easy! I thought he blew up a planet!

MAYA: There was something about reducing an entire planet to ash.

GAIGE: Whatever. He was way too easy for the number four badass on Pandora, that's for sure. I mean, I don't think I even got a shot off! Axton, you dropped a turret, Zero backstabbed him...was that it?

MAYA: It took us half an hour to get out of that stupid arena, does that count as being hard?

AXTON: Hey, that wasn't my fault! He fell on the stupid switch to the elevator when he died!

GAIGE: SO! We found the elevator control, climbed around in this sewer thing or whatever it is, and guess who we found in a makeshift prison thingy?

AXTON: Makeshift prison thingy?

GAIGE: Oh, shush. [click]

Mr. TORGUE: Now introducing the barbaric, the beautiful, the most buxom sponsor in the history of Pandora: MAAAAD MOXXI!

MOXXI: Miss me, sugar?

[click]

GAIGE: So it turns out our new sponsor is Moxxi! Which is awesome!

AXTON: So awesome.

SALVADOR: Gazongas.

GAIGE: Moxxi said she was gonna set us up with a trainer, which is kinda unnecessary for the guys who killed Handsome Jack, defeated an Eridian superweapon, and saved the planet, but you know
how the crowd loves a good training montage. We're bedding down in our little garage outside the Beatdown right now—we'll do Moxxi's thing in the morning.

MAYA: You forgot—wait. Did you forget anything?

AXTON: The beer.

GAIGE: Oh, yeah! Yeah, so Mr. Torgue gave us this mission, and we weren't really paying attention to the mission description, because Salvador was really gung-ho about doing a mission for Mr. Torgue, but anyway, we were sent back to the bar to kill anyone holding a bottle of beer. Which was, you know...weird.

GAIGE: Turns out, a midget fell into the still a while back—seriously, what is with this planet and midgets?—and now all the beer was poisoned. So, uh, that's why he sent us there. To shoot them.

Mr. TORGUE: Keep killing those bandits with bullets so they won't be killed by poison beer! [click]

MAYA: At least he figured it out eventually.

GAIGE: I guess better late than never. [click]

Mr. TORGUE: Thanks for killing those bandits so the poisoned beer couldn't kill them—OH SH*T, I JUST REALIZED THAT MADE NO SENSE! GOD DAMNIT! [click]

GAIGE: Sooo...yeah. I'm going to bed now. Good night everybody!
GAIGE: *Hello*, subscribers! Guess who we saw today! Go on, guess!

AXTON: They can't answer.

GAIGE: [sighs] It's called audience participation, Axton! Moxxi told me about it.

AXTON: You've been getting tips from Moxxi?

GAIGE: Yeah, why?

AXTON: I dunno, I don't think you have the...talent to make the most of her advice.

GAIGE: What are—*not that kind of advice*!

AXTON: Well, you should make it more clear, sheesh.

GAIGE: *I* think it was pretty clear.

AXTON: Obviously not, if we're having this conversation.

GAIGE: You just have your mind in the gutter!

AXTON: Or you're just a prude.

GAIGE: *Hey,* I'll have you know—

SALVADOR: Weren't you gonna talk about our trainer?

GAIGE: Right! Yes, so, like I said last time, Moxxi arranged for a trainer, to make us look better for the crowds and everything. She sent us to a little hut off in a corner of the Crater, and... [click]

Mr. TORGUE: Ladies and gentlemen, give it up for the wild child, the queen of obscene, that girl who'll make you hurl—

[explosion]

TINA: Ta-daaa!

Mr. TORGUE: TINY TIIINA!

[click]

GAIGE: I didn't even know she was in the Crater! Did anyone else know?

AXTON: Definitely not.
SALVADOR: Wasn't really paying attention.

MAYA: I thought she was still in Tundra Express.

ZERO: Yes.

MAYA: She's obviously not in Tundra—wait, you mean you knew? How?

ZERO: I follow her ECHO-cast.

MAYA: What?

[click]

TINA: *Heey*, I'm gonna be outta contact for like, a day, cuz I'm movin' to that badass crater that just explody-doded! We good? We good. Fo' sho.

[click]

MAYA: Well, that explains a lot.

GAIGE: Okay, so, Tina is our trainer! And she sent us back to the arena—you know, the one we're banned from because of Piston's whole thing?—and we broke into the ring where all the backstage stuff goes on, and we had to fight through all the security bots—

AXTON: Which were just funny Hyperion knock-offs.

GAIGE: Yeah, I was—I was gonna say that!

MAYA: But he said it for you, so let's just move on, okay?

GAIGE: Okay, okay...so Tina sent us to the arena to get some food out of the vending machines. Vending machines which only sold cookies, actually. [click]

TINA: Step one in my training regimen is *food*. You *gotsta* get those carbs, son! The back of the arena's got tons of noms for the workers. Get some cookies, so you can eat 'em and grow up big and strong and kick Piston in the butt-butt.

[click]

GAIGE: So Axton was all going on about how that's like, the worst food ever for strength training or whatever—

AXTON: It is!

GAIGE: And Salvador thought they were laced with, I dunno, steroids or something—

SALVADOR: They might be! It's Torgue!

GAIGE: But the point is we were running around, grabbing cookies while blowing up robots and throwing down turrets and phase-locking guys and it was *awesome*! I got a Torgue shotgun! Explosive gyrojet pellets *for the win*!

GAIGE: So everything was going all awesome and great and everything, but, uh, Tiny Tina was talking about how awesome chocolate chip cookies are, and um, someone—
AXTON: You.

GAIGE: Someone, we don't know who, it could've been anyone, pointed out that the cookies were actually...raisin. Yeah, she freaked.

SALVADOR: Until she started crying, I had forgotten she was only ten years old.

GAIGE: Yeah, she was bawling. Like, I don't know, like a little kid who accidentally broke grandma's favorite shotgun. Just “the world is gonna end” crying her eyes out bawling. And then she screamed for us to destroy...wait, no, what did she say? [click]

TINA: Shorty! Wipe the raisin abomination off the map!

[click]

GAIGE: And then Salvador immediately blew up the nearest vending machine. Some warning would have been nice!

SALVADOR: Bah. You can't give the enemy warning, you know that.

GAIGE: It was a vending machine!

GAIGE: Ahem. [coughs] Point is, now we were...are...we ran around the ring, blowing up cookie crates and vending machines and everything, and Mr. Torgue thought it was awesome even though we were exploding all his stuff, and that was about it.

AXTON: That was quick.

GAIGE: Shush. After the arena, Moxxi sent us to do a good old-fashioned death race around the crater. You know how it goes—race while everyone is trying to kill you—so I don't need to explain it.

AXTON: You just did explain it!

GAIGE: Shush! Okay so, you know, Axton was obviously our driver, because I'm pretty sure he's the only one with a driver's license—

MAYA: I have a license.

GAIGE: I guess that makes sense. Anyway! Axton drove, Salvador manned the turret, and they drove around the Crater. I swear I could hear Salvador laughing from where we were waiting at the finish line, but the point is, they won.

AXTON: Okay, this time I know you're skipping stuff.

GAIGE: We're not hearing another blow-by-blow of a boring race!

AXTON: It wasn't boring! See, when we were coming up on the first garage, the road went to the right, but there was a dirt path to the left—

GAIGE: Oh will you look at that we're out of time! Good night!
AXTON: Hey, don't just shut it off when I'm—
Chapter Summary

Get Your Motor Running

GAIGE: One day, the denizens of Pandora will get over their childish obsession with puns. Today is not that day.

MAYA: What are you talking—oh. Right, that.

GAIGE: Yes, let's just...skip that. Okay, so what else is there?

AXTON: You haven't done anything yet.

GAIGE: Right! Okay, so, the goal for today was to find Motor Mamma, the number three badass on the leaderboards! But there was a bunch of other stuff to do too, so we did that first.

GAIGE: Tina actually called to say that her number three favorite murderer, Sully the Stabber, was in the Crater, and sent us to the Beatdown to get his autograph.

GAIGE: Well, while were there, we got a call from Scooter to kill this guy who had harassed Moxxi and stuff. Except before we could do our thing—murder and mayhem, that is—Moxxi called up to say that it was all a big misunderstanding. It was apparently “Four to five bases” of “mostly consensual.” Which is way more than I ever wanted to know.

SALVADOR: I could stand to hear a little bit more.

GAIGE: Anyway! We decided to help Moxxi because—

SALVADOR: Gazongas.

GAIGE: Because Scooter is well-meaning, but stupid. That's why.

AXTON: Maybe that's why you decided to help her.

GAIGE: The point is, Scooter hired a bunch of other guys to take out...uh, what was his name again?

MAYA: Ham...something?

SALVADOR: ...Hammerlock?

GAIGE: Scooter did not try and get us to kill Hammerlock!

AXTON: I dunno, that kinda sounds right...

MAYA: Hamhock! That was it!

GAIGE: Are you sure? That sounds kinda, I dunno...stupid.
MAYA: We got this mission from a man named Scooter, in regards to his mother, Mad Moxxi. Pandorans have weird names.

GAIGE: Yeah, but those names mean something! What does Hamhock mean?

AXTON: Maybe the “ham” is his—

MAYA: So! We killed the bounty hunters, right Gaige?

GAIGE: What? Uh, yeah! And Scooter got mad and everything, but Moxxi talked to him, so it was all right. Oh, and the guys we killed were just a few of Pete’s Burners, so, you know, no tears there.

GAIGE: But back to the reason we were, you know, there in the first place. We found Sully the Stabber! He was in this little corner of the Beatdown, next to this like, pond sewage runoff thing or whatever, and had this really weird mask. I dunno what was up with that.

AXTON: It was probably some religious thing. Something you recognized, Maya?

MAYA: Since when am I the religious expert? I have experience with one religion, remember, and it's probably not the best example.

SALVADOR: I think it mighta been an Agran mask? I dunno, my grandma had one, it looked kinda like that...


SALVADOR: It's a continent—wait, no, what's the English...

AXTON: Continent?

SALVADOR: Sounds right.

MAYA: So it's a Pandoran continent. What's it like?

SALVADOR: How should I know? My grandma had a mask from there, that's it.

AXTON: So like the Mardi Gras planet, but smaller?

MAYA: There is not a Mardi Gras planet.

AXTON: Hey, who here has been to over a dozen planets, and who's the sheltered little goddess with the cargo cult?

MAYA: We had a library on Athenas. It would have mentioned a Mardi Gras planet.

SALVADOR: Somebody gonna tell me what Marty Graw is?

GAIGE: Okay, so, found murderer, he had a weird mask! And like Tina told us to, we asked him for his autograph. Told him it was for the world's deadliest thirteen year-old, the whole thing.

SALVADOR: Wait, isn't she ten?

GAIGE: ...no. Definitely thirteen. Uh, I think.

ZERO: Thirteen.

GAIGE: See? Anyway, Sully laughed and told us to piss off. [click]
TINA: [on the verge of tears] He said...no? Well...there's only one thing to do. Look him in the eye, nod politely...AND KILL THE LIVING CRAP OUTTA HIM! [click]

GAIGE: Which, we did. Well, Zero did. The rest of us were still getting ready and suddenly Sully's head was rolling around on the ground and all his buddies were shooting at us.

GAIGE: So, you know, we took care of his friends—do bandits have friends? Whatever—and brought the head back to Tina because...uh, well, it made sense at the time!

AXTON: What do you mean, it made sense at the time? It still makes sense! Tina loves the stupid thing!

MAYA: Maybe she just means we shouldn't have handed a little girl a severed head.

AXTON: What's wrong with giving a kid a severed head? It wasn't bleeding at the time.

SALVADOR: Maybe it's about, uh...what's the word? Sanity? No, it's longer...

AXTON: Oh, sanitation reasons!

GAIGE: So, what, you think we should have mummified the head before giving it to her?

AXTON: Pretty sure that's harder than it sounds—

MAYA: Can we please focus?

GAIGE: Okay, okay, where was I...oh, right! Tina gave us a new mission, to go walk her new puppy for her! His name is Enrique, and he is an absolutely adorable little skag!

AXTON: It's a badass fire skag the size of a car that tried to kill us all.

GAIGE: You're not a dog person, are you?

AXTON: It almost ate me!

GAIGE: Anyway, we finished that up with no trouble, even with Axton being a big baby, and got this awesome Torgue grenade rifle from Tina for it. After all that, we moved to the Southern Raceway, which is Motor Mamma's base or fortress or whatever. And she's, uh, well... [click]

MOTOR MAMMA: Oh, hi! I'm Motor Mamma, and I see that you've been trying to get my attention. If ya like, we could fight each other, and see which of us is the best! Sound fun? I'll be waiting for ya! [click]

GAIGE: Sounds nice, right? Um, yeah, no. [click]

MOTOR MAMMA: Oh! I nearly forgot to mention—If you would like me to not eat you until after you are dead, I understand and respect your wishes. I will also completely ignore them. [click]

GAIGE: Soo...yeah. That's Motor Mamma. She's a fat cannibal biker who eats her own children. She also used to date Moxxi, apparently, before she ate one of her girlfriends. Uh, Motor Mamma ate one of Moxxi's girlfriends. Not...yeah.

GAIGE: Anyway, we also had to kill some rakks that were drinking fuel or whatever, and bring the gas sacs back to Hammerlock. Scooter thought he wanted them for genetic experimentation and stuff, but...that's like, not what Hammerlock does. At all. I don't mean morally, I mean he's not an experimental geneticist. Zed, sure, but I don't know why Scooter was all paranoid over Hammerlock.
AXTON: I think I know. [click]

HAMMERLOCK: If you return the sacs to me, I shan’t be engaging in any Frankensteinian genetic manipulation—such hobbies lay exclusively within the purview of Doctor Zed.

SCOOTER: Quit talkin' like a douche!

HAMMERLOCK: Touche.
[click]

GAIGE: So, what, Scooter thinks using big words makes you a mad scientist?

AXTON: Looks like it.

GAIGE: Right! Well, then we headed towards Motor Mamma—

SALVADOR: No! You're not allowed to skip it!

GAIGE: I already said, I'm not mentioning that stupid truck!

SALVADOR: No, not that! Buff Gamer!

GAIGE: Who?

ZERO: The one who gave the poor review to Diamond Mercenaries 2.

GAIGE: Oh! Right right right, thanks for reminding me!

AXTON: Oh, you thank him...

GAIGE: That's because I actually forgot. Unlike when some other people do it.

GAIGE: But the point is, Mr. Torgue sent us to kill a bunch of douchebag game reviewers, which, you know, I was a little hesitant on, but then Zero gave me a couple of their reviews to listen to, and then I was all in.

GAIGE: So we fought our way through this little corner of the raceway, just your standard bandit lair with lots of sharp things and bad smells, and killed Buff Gamer, and agreed to leave everyone else alone, which Mr. Torgue was okay with too. But as we were leaving... [click]

CRITIC: All this violence was more pointless than the stealth sections of Triangle Quest 9.

Mr. TORGUE: I TAKE IT BACK! KILL THEM ALL! [click]

GAIGE: And so we did. Nothing really to write home about, though. I think Zero decapitated half of them before we even got back within shooting range.

ZERO: Triangle Quest 9 was a masterpiece.

GAIGE: O...kay...anyway! Then we headed towards Motor Mamma! We had to turn on the power to the gate, then fight through like a billion of her boys, but we eventually got to her arena, which was basically just this giant circle where she could ride around on a giant motorcycle, because it was the only thing big enough to support her weight.

GAIGE: Well, we didn't have any cars, which made the fight more interesting than it needed to be,
and none of us had any corrosive weapons, I don't know how the frick *that* happened... [coughs]
Point is, we had to blow up her motorcycle while she and her boys were shooting at us. Salvador finally managed to hit it with a rocket, but it took like, six tries. Then Zero sniped her in the head while she was running around. [click]

Mr. TORGUE: THE VAULT HUNTERS WIN!

MOXXI: What'd I tell ya?

Mr. TORGUE: Ladies and gents, the Vault Hunters are now the number THREE badass on Pandora! THIS IS ONE NUMBER HIGHER THAN FOUR!

MOXXI: Well, uh...well said.

Mr. TORGUE: YOUR KIND WORDS ARE APPRECIATED! [click]

GAIGE: That's it for today, folks! We're sleeping in the garage outside Moxxi's right now, but she said she knows where the next badass is for tomorrow. I didn't, uh, miss anything, right?

MAYA: Think that's everything.

GAIGE: All right, then see everyone tomorrow!
Chapter Summary

Breaking and Entering/Knocking on Heaven's Door

GAIGE: —kinda like this place.

MAYA: It's got volcanoes everywhere, what's to like about it?

GAIGE: Uh, volcanoes?

SALVADOR: Um, I think I might have accidentally turned on your—

GAIGE: Oh! Thanks, Salvador! Right, hello, subscribers! Today we got to see the Forge, Flyboy's lair!

AXTON: Lair?

GAIGE: Quiet, lemme just start at the beginning! Moxxi had us put up a bunch of our wanted posters around Southern Raceway, you know, to scare the other gladiators and stuff. She didn't have mine on hand though, which, I guess I was insulted about? Don't really know how to feel about that. Anyway, we got everyone else's, and the other gladiators started freaking out, so that's still cool. After that, it was time to head to Flyboy, the second biggest badass on Pandora. [click]

Mr. TORGUE: Watch in SUSPENSE as the Vault Hunters head to the Forge, destined to battle FLYBOY! Nothing can stop our Vault Hunters from achieving their goal! NOTHING!

ROBOT: Door, locked.

Mr. TORGUE: PLOT TWIST!

[click]

GAIGE: So we had to go back to the arena—again—to get the keys from Torgue security. Not really sure why Mr. Torgue couldn't, you know, just give us the keys...

AXTON:Makes for a better show this way.

GAIGE: I guess...anyway! We went back, and Piston was all like [mocking voice] “I'm the one who locked the forge because...” I don't really remember, it was something stupid and insulting, but the point is he's still the bad guy. Oh, and Mr. Torgue had stuff to say too. [click]

Mr. TORGUE: What's this? The Vault Hunters are breaking into Torgue security! What a bunch of RENEGADES! A RENEGADE COP WHO DON'T PLAY BY NOBODY’S RULES UNTIL THE COMMISSIONER ASSIGNS HIM A TALKING ROBOT DOG FOR A PARTNER WHO HELPS HIM TRACK DOWN THE CRIME SYNDICATE THAT MURDERED HIS FAMILY ALL THE WHILE TEACHING HIM A LITTLE SOMETHING ABOUT LIFE IN THE PROCESS THURSDAYS AT NINE! [click]
MAYA: That was kinda weird, even for him. He forgot we were a group halfway through.

GAIGE: I think I saw the show he was quoting. Not sure, though.

GAIGE: Anyway, yeah, the keys were just like, ten feet to the left of the entrance, but there was a big wall there, so we had to go aalllllll the way around. I still think we could have climbed up it.

SALVADOR: Or blown it up.

GAIGE: See, that would've worked too.

AXTON: Probably would have made Torgue mad, though.

GAIGE: And blowing up his bots didn't?

AXTON: All part of the show, remember? Blowing up bots is fun to watch.

GAIGE: Blowing up walls is fun to watch!

MAYA: Someone's missing the point.

GAIGE: Yeah, Axton!

AXTON: She was talking about you.

GAIGE: Hmph. So! We got the keys, got out of the arena again, and got an ECHO from Flyboy. [click]

FLYBOY: This is Flyboy, with a message for those Vault Hunting nubsauces. I. Am. The Future. You Vault Hunters are old news. I'm the new hotness. Don't be jelly, you rook—I'm just gonna K your A so hard, you'll beg me to S-Y-I-T-F.

Mr. TORGUE: What do you think, fans: Can the Vault Hunters' experience prove stronger than Flyboy's youthful arrogance and weird-ass slang? ALMOST CERTAINLY! But I'm going to pretend otherwise in order TO MAINTAIN DRAMATIC TENSION! [click]

GAIGE: Douche.

SALVADOR: Hey!

GAIGE: What—no, not Mr. Torgue! Flyboy! The stupid sixteen year-old that thinks the people who saved the planet and killed Handsome Jack are jealous of him!

MAYA: I don't think he thinks we're jealous, he just thinks he's the greatest thing since sliced bread.

GAIGE: What? He said we're jealous. Were you even paying attention?

AXTON: Wait, you can understand him?

GAIGE: He's a Jenova-damned idiot. A flippin' Kadaj who thinks he's Sephiroth.

AXTON: What?

GAIGE: So we got to the Forge, right? Which is this giant volcano industrial plant thingy with pipes and machinery and smoke and loaders and all that everywhere. But Flyboy—in an act of unparalleled bravery that would make Cloud jealous—locked his tower down to keep us from

...
getting to him. So we had to fight through eighty gajillion loaders to switch on these stupid...switches
—

ZERO: Clever use of synonyms.

MAYA: Oh, now you talk.

GAIGE: We had to flip the switches to turn on the battle board near Flyboy's base because...um...why did we need to do that, again?

MAYA: Because of the Buzzards.

GAIGE: Well, yeah, but why did we have to go all the way to the battle board?

SALVADOR: Because Torgue said so!

GAIGE: I know, I mean, why didn't he say so earlier?

SALVADOR: Uh...

[click]

Mr. TORGUE: Flyboy's so arrogant, he thinks his Buzzard army will protect him, but once you wipe them all out, he'll learn that pride goeth before a fall! ICARUS SYMBOLISM! [click]

GAIGE: Thanks Zero, but I mean why didn't he—

MAYA: Because that's where the Buzzards were.

GAIGE: I know that, I just, I dunno—

AXTON: Why are you being so picky about this all of a sudden?

GAIGE: Anyway! Flyboy has a bunch of cargo Buzzards flying around with whatever it is that sixteen year old boys play with, and Mr. Torgue told us to shoot them down to, you know, piss him off and stuff.

GAIGE: That wasn't too hard, even though we still don't have any corrosive weapons. Axton and Salvador took out the escort Buzzards while the rest of us shot the slow cargo guys.

GAIGE: So we did that, and as everybody expected, Flyboy got pissed enough to invite us to his tower so he could kill us. I'd say something about how insulting it is that people are still underestimating us, but Flyboy's an idiot, so you know, established character trait.

GAIGE: It was getting pretty late at this point, so we decided to call it a night—though it only took so long because someone raced around the Crater like a dozen times in the morning—

AXTON: It was Salvador's idea!

SALVADOR: [innocent whistling]

GAIGE: Anyway, we took the troll's house. Hut? Not really big enough to be a house. So, at least something good came out of that.

AXTON: Wait, you skipped the troll!
GAIGE: No I—oh, wait, you're right. Oops.

AXTON: HA!

GAIGE: Okay, okay, when we first got to the Forge, there was a mission on the board. [click]

ANONYMOUS TROLL: Hey, Vault Hunters, I've got a job for you! Why don't you...kiss my ass and get the hell outta this crater!? Seriously numbnuts, just quit now! [laughter]

Mr. TORGUE: That was some bush-league smack-talk! Why don't you pay these idiots a visit and shut them up for good! I MEAN KILL EM! [click]

GAIGE: So, yeah, we found that guy right before Flyboy's tower. Killed him and his friends and stuff, and now we have a place to sleep for the night, so...yeah. [coughs] Murder. Disturbingly helpful.

[click]

Mr. TORGUE: You put your bullets where the smack-talker's mouth was! [click]

GAIGE: ...thanks, Zero.

ZERO: You're welcome.

GAIGE: Anyway, I'm going to bed.

MAYA: No, you have first watch tonight.

GAIGE: What, oh, right. Yeah, okay, got it. Uh, lemme just...later, subscribers! Tomorrow, we'll be the number two badasses on the leaderboard!
Chapter Summary

Kickstart My Heart/Long Way to the Top

GAIGE: GUESS WHO IS THE NUMBER ONE BADASS ON PANDORA!? WOOO! [gunfire]
MAYA: Isn't it “are?”
GAIGE: Huh?
MAYA: Well, all four of us, together, have the title of number one badass, so...
GAIGE: You sure? Guess who are the number one badass?
SALVADOR: WE ARE! [gunfire]
AXTON: That wasn't a question, man.
GAIGE: Anyway, this morning we woke up and headed up Inferno Tower—
ZERO: That was the Sawtooth tower.
GAIGE: Well, whatever! We headed up Flyboy's tower, with Mr. Torgue providing encouragement. [click]
Mr. TORGUE: Get on your feet, fight fans! Thanks to the Vault Hunters' badassery, NOTHING stands between him-slash-her and the number two ranked gladiator! This is gonna be SICK!
[click]
GAIGE: So that was, um, some interesting word choice on his part, but whatever. So yeah, we fought our way up this tower, with Buzzards shooting at us and Flyboy yelling at us—
AXTON: And Moxxi narrating.
GAIGE: Oh yeah, you're right! [click]
MOXXI: Ladies and gents, we're nearly ready for Flyboy and the Vault Hunters to face off!
Mr. TORGUE: HEY! GET OFF MY ECHO, LADY! I ONLY LET YOU CO-HOST AS A ONE-TIME DEAL!
MOXXI: Sorry Torgue, but I'm much better at doing the...blow-by-blow commentaries for these fights.
Mr. TORGUE: BIG DEAL, I CAN USE INNUENDO TOO! TONIGHT'S FIGHT IS BETWEEN FLYBOY AND THE VAULT HUNTERS! ...BLOWJOBS!
[click]
GAIGE: Ahem. So! We, uh...where was I...right! We took an elevator to the top, and saw Flyboy himself, in his personal Buzzard. [click]

FLYBOY: This is where it ends, you TPA! I'm gonna DT my Buzzard with your goddamn SPINES!

Mr. TORGUE: Weee're ready to start! Flyboy versus the Vault Hunters! FIGHT!

[explosion, scream]

Mr. TORGUE: HOLY F*CKSH*T! SOME HUGE GODDAMN AIRSHIP JUST MURDERED FLYBOY!

MOXXI: That is completely against the rules! I demand to know where the ref is!

Mr. TORGUE: WHAT THE F*CK IS A REF!?

[click]

GAIGE: Piston's biggass blimp—which has been flying over the crater since we got here—blasted Flyboy before we could even get a shot off, then started shooting at us!

GAIGE: But there were a bunch of turrets scattered around—I guess Flyboy never got around to taking them out, or maybe he just liked turrets, whatever—that me and Maya used to distract the blimp while Salvador did the dual-wielded rocket launchers thing. And that went totally well, and none of us fell off the stage because of missiles. Four times.

AXTON: Don't give me that look, that was your fault.

GAIGE: Just be thankful we didn't land in the lava.

GAIGE: Right! But, obviously, we won! It took a while to whittle it down—still no corrosives—but, we did it! We took down Piston's blimp and earned the second-highest ranking on the leaderboard! Kindof, um, by default. But still!

AXTON: Don't forget the skag and the—

GAIGE: Axton, I swear, if you do that again, I'm gonna slap the bitch outta you—

MAYA: Maybe I can handle the sidequests while you two go take a walk. In opposite directions.

AXTON: No skin off my back.

GAIGE: Fiïine.

[sound of footsteps walking away]

MAYA: Right, where were we? Ah, yes, still in the Forge. As we were returning to Moxxi, we found a new mission on the board. Some guy said his husband was turned into a skag, and he wanted us to go find him. We went to the skag warrens—

SALVADOR: Aren't you gonna do the quote?

MAYA: I can't figure out how to work this stupid thing, so no.

MAYA: [coughs] Ahem. The man said we'd be able to identify his husband by his red scarf. There
weren't any skags with a red scarf, so he told us to kill them all. Which we did, while he screamed about how his husband cheated on him and that's why he had him turned into a skag.

MAYA: After all that was done, the actual—still human—husband showed up, and gave us his scarf to take back as proof. I'm still not sure what to say to all that.

[sound of footsteps]

GAIGE: You didn't get to the fight yet, did you?

MAYA: No, I was just about to mention the interview tapes.

GAIGE: Oh, that's no big deal. Mr. Torgue interviewed Moxxi about us, then Piston stole the tapes and scattered them around the crater, then we collected them and she broadcasted them to freak out the other gladiators!

MAYA: That works.

GAIGE: That's when we headed back to the arena to fight Piston for the top gladiator spot! Through the front door, this time. Again, I mean. Or, um...anyway. [click]

MOXXI: Say, what are you planning to do with the arena once the tournament is over?

Mr. TORGUE: Oh, probably get a construction team in here, to carefully disassemble it and WHAT THE F*CK DO YOU THINK!? WE'RE GONNA BLOW IT UP!

MOXXI: Oh, sugar, I've got a much better idea.

[click]

AXTON: What did that have to do with anything?

GAIGE: So when we got inside the arena—

AXTON: You're just gonna ignore me outright now?

GAIGE: It looked empty at first. All the shipping crates and stuff that made the cool battlefield the first time were all gone. So we assembled on the center, uh, in the center of the ring, and Mr. Torgue started his whole cool fight announcer thing. [click]

Mr. TORGUE: THIS IS WHERE IT ALL ENDS, FIGHT FANS! ARE! YOU! READY!? 

PISTON: I told you to stay away, Vault Hunters. But now it's time I fought you in single combat. Gladiator, versus gladiator, versus—

[roar]

PISTON: GIANT GOD-DAMNED METAL T-REX!

[click]

GAIGE: Piston was in this giant frickin' t-rex robot! Which was cheap as hell, but also, where did it come from!?

SALVADOR: It was badass, though.
AXTON: Hell yeah! Torgue said—

GAIGE: Getting to that in a second, boys. [click]

MOXXI: Piston, you cheating bastard!

PISTON: I'M NOT A CHEATER!

Mr. TORGUE: THAT BADASSASURUS IS THE GREATEST MECHANICAL MARVEL I'VE EVER SEEN! IT IS THE HENRY IV OF ROBOTIC DINOSAURS!

[click]

GAIGE: But that fricken' dinosaur...okay, so, first off, it was bulletproof, right? Or, you know, close enough that it didn't matter. Torgue guns got through the armor pretty well, but Axton and I were the only ones that had any! And that's just the defense! It had turrets, and fire breath—

SALVADOR: The fire breath was awesome, though.

MAYA: It almost killed me and Zero when it did that spinny thing.

SALVADOR: Still awesome.

GAIGE: And NUKES! It had actual, small-scale, nukes! Who the frick puts nukes on a giant mechanical t-rex!?

[pause]

AXTON: Well, actually...

GAIGE: Okay, yeah, that was a stupid question, I would have put nukes on it too. But anyway, we managed to destroy it without anyone dying, even though someone shot it with rockets that bounced off and exploded three feet away from me!

SALVADOR: C'mon, that wasn't my fault! When have the double rocket launchers not worked?

GAIGE: Well. Despite that... [click]

MOXXI: The Badassasaurus has been destroyed!

Mr. TORGUE: IT WILL ALWAYS LIVE ON IN MY HEART!

[explosion]

PISTON: NOOOOOOOOO!

PISTON: FINE! You wanted it, you got it! Prepare to face the champ!

[crowd chants “cheater” in the background]

PISTON: Shut up. All of you! SHUT UP! [click]

GAIGE: So then Piston came out, and we had to fight him. He was pretty easy. I mean, he shot these giant plasma ball thingies that we had to dodge, but other than that, easy. Zero ghosted behind him and snickety-slice. [click]

Mr. TORGUE: THAT'S IT, FIGHT FANS! THE BLOOD OF A COWARD HAS BEEN
SPILLED BY PANDORA’S NUMBER ONE BADASS! THE VAULT IS GONNA OPEN!

MOXXI: Ladies and gentlemen! Let’s hear it for the Vault Hunters!

Mr. TORGUE: THE VAULT'S OPENING! IT'S TIME FOR A LOOT-SPLOSION!

[explosion]

[click]

GAIGE: And that was how we won Mr. Torgue's tournament and became the number one badasses on Pandora!

AXTON: Wait, you skipped—

MAYA: I asked her to skip the...guitar solo.

AXTON: I meant Moxxi.

GAIGE: What about Moxxi?

AXTON: She had a...thing. A stinger, or whatever. She narrated the end of the tournament.

GAIGE: I don't remember that.

SALVADOR: That's because you were having a thingy, an...incautación, over the loot-splosion. You know, where you were on the ground twitching and drooling?

ZERO: That was not a seizure.

SALVADOR: Huh? What was it?

GAIGE: Anyway! Anybody have a clip of Moxxi's speech or whatever?

[click]

MOXXI: And that, boys and girls, is the story of how the Vault Hunters became the Champions of Pandora.

TINA: You forgot the part where the Vault Hunters kicked Piston in the balls so hard he exploded!

MOXXI: ...because that never happened, Tina.

Mr. TORGUE: IRRELEVANT!

MOXXI: Calm down, Torgue! You've got other things to worry about—like giving me your arena so I don't tell your stockholders about this little tournament.

Mr. TORGUE: HOW THE F*CK AM I SUPPOSED TO KNOW THAT ILLEGAL OFFWORLD DEATHMATCHES ARE ILLEGAL!?

MOXXI: Sugar, I think this is going to be the start of a beautiful relationship.

[click]

GAIGE: Thanks, Zero.
ZERO: You're welcome.

GAIGE: Anyway, I guess that's it for now, subscribers! I mean, Hammerlock mentioned he had some monster hunt for us or something, so I might upload tomorrow, but it will probably just be something short. We'll just have to see. Later!
Chapter Summary

Savage Lands

GAIGE: I hate this place so much.

SALVADOR: What's wrong with Aegrus?

GAIGE: What's not wrong with it!? The entire place is a frickin' swamp so I've got stinking water everywhere, there are giant spore pods that rain down elemental death, these insect spider things—

SALVADOR: Drifters.

GAIGE: —that are like thirty feet tall and spit acid, billions of savages with weird tech who worship Handsome Jack, that crazy guy who we've never heard of, fan boats, AND ZERO HAS DISAPPEARED AGAIN!

[pause]

AXTON: Huh, you know, I really expected him to pop up from behind you just then.

GAIGE: Me too. I think I'm actually a little worried about him now...

MAYA: I'm sure he's fine. Why don't you just start over at the beginning?

GAIGE: Okay, okay, let's see...right! So, Hammerlock called us, said he wanted to go on a hunting expedition to Aegrus, which is off to the south of the Highlands. He gave us the Fast Travel coordinates, so at least we didn't have to hike all the way through...through I don't know what. I've got no idea how we would have gotten here otherwise. I think we might be in the middle of the ocean? I think?

MAYA: Salvador?

SALVADOR: I dunno.

GAIGE: We got there, right? And we're on this clifftop thing, at the top of a pretty waterfall. So, you know, I was kinda lulled into a false sense of security. I thought this would be a nice, pleasant little expedition, with like, I dunno, birds and stuff, and all that.

GAIGE: But no! Get off the mountain bluff whatever, we're in the middle of a swamp! With giant insect spider things—

SALVADOR: Drifters.

GAIGE: —spitting acid at us, and they nearly killed Maya by trampling her, and we had to run halfway around the mountain to find the old Dahl cave Hammerlock had holed up in. [click]

HAMMERLOCK: I'm nearby. Come find me and we'll fight our way to the lodge together! Then it'll be nothing but a carefree weekend of hunting, companionship, and bawdy jokes about social
GAIGE: *Where's my carefree weekend, Hammerlock!*?

HAMMERLOCK: Is she always like this?

MAYA: Not usually, no. I did tell you not to give her sugar.

HAMMERLOCK: She was covered in blood and crying! Any gentleman knows that you always give crying children candy, especially when they're covered in blood! Er, the children, not the candy.

GAIGE: Gah, whatever! The point is, we followed him out of the cave and up to the lodge, and these weird-ass bandits with wooden shields and machetes and I don't know what just...popped up out of nowhere! Literally nowhere! Invisibility, I guess? I dunno...

AXTON: Maybe the witchdoctors had something to do with it.

GAIGE: Do not get me started on the witchdoctors, please. But you know, we handled all them, and then got a weird ECHO.

NAKAYAMA: [Low, dangerous voice] I see you in my swamp, little moths. I know why you're here. You want what's in my ship—you want my power.

HAMMERLOCK: Uhm, pardon. We came here to hunt. 'Fraid we've never heard of you before.

MAYA: Well, maybe Salvador knows—

SALVADOR: Never heard of him.


HAMMERLOCK: Oh, that's nice! Good for...good for you.

NAKAYAMA: [Sputtering] People are terrified of me! How do you not know—you guys are assholes.

[Click]

GAIGE: Then Hammerlock made me turn on the lodge power—

HAMMERLOCK: I let you do the honors of turning on the power! Good god, make it sound sound like I'm some horrific taskmaster, why don't you?

GAIGE: I was told *nothing* about the swamp, or the driders—

SALVADOR: Drifters.

GAIGE: —or the savages with the witchdoctors who can buff up their buddies and turn into elemental tornadoes!

HAMMERLOCK: Point of order: I was as unaware of the savages as you. Had I known—

GAIGE: I have swampwater in my underwear!

HAMMERLOCK: Humph. Well if that's your attitude, see if I ever give you candy again.
GAIGE: But I—you—fine. Anyway, once the lodge was all powered up, we headed down to the [sighs] Catch-a-Boat station to see if Hammerlock could repair it, get a dinghy—

HAMMERLOCK: [chuckle]

GAIGE: —and explore the continent, or island, or whatever it is.

SALVADOR: Pretty sure it's a continent.

HAMMERLOCK: That was my impression as well, but I will admit it seems a bit on the small side.

AXTON: Sometimes continents are kinda small.

ZERO: Australia.

HAMMERLOCK: Gah!

AXTON: Isn't that a planet?

HAMMERLOCK: Where in blazes did you come from?

GAIGE: Oh, he does that. You get used to it. What's up, Zero?

ZERO: Dinner's ready.

GAIGE: Ooh. It smells good, what is it?

MAYA: I'm pretty sure you don't want to ask that question.

HAMMERLOCK: Is everyone simply going to ignore the bloody ninja that appeared out of nowhere?

SALVADOR: I think I found some extra stools, if we need them. No table, though.

MAYA: Oh well. We can just eat at the bar.

HAMMERLOCK: Seriously! Ninja!

AXTON: Back on Australia—

MAYA: The name sounds familiar, but I don't think it's a planet.

GAIGE: Hammerlock, aren't you gonna eat?

HAMMERLOCK: But—I—yes. [muttering] Bloody Vault Hunters...

GAIGE: Ooh, what's that? Pass me—

MAYA: Gaige, your ECHO is still on.

GAIGE: Oh, right! That's it for tonight, subscribers! Tomorrow we're off to...where was it?

HAMMERLOCK: [sighs] Scylla's Grove.

GAIGE: Right, there! See you tomorrow!
Chapter Summary

Professor Nakayama, I Presume

GAIGE: Hello, subscribers! Thought of the day: What is wrong with this continent?
MAYA: Come on, it's not the continent's fault that—
GAIGE: I don't mean that, I mean the Sun Swamps!
MAYA: Oh. Carry on, then.
GAIGE: Okay, so, Hammerlock sent us to the Grove place to find the weird thing, right? A monster thingy to hunt, I mean, while he fiddled with binoculars or whatever because he's afraid of threshers.
AXTON: Um, I was there, and I don't know what you just said.
GAIGE: [deep breath] Hammerlock sent us to Scylla's Grove to hunt a strange and exotic creature, while he stayed at the lodge and played mission control.
AXTON: That works.
GAIGE: So, the Sun Swamps. We spent two hours trekking through this dank and dark and smelly cave and two of those words are synonyms but the point is IT WAS NOT A FUN CAVE. Ugh, so we got to the other side, right? Finally got to see sunlight again. Which is when we found out where the Sun Swamps got their name! They are swamps. With waaay too much sunlight. Where was all the light even coming from?
MAYA: I think it was reflecting off the water. It just seemed really bright because Hunter's Grotto is a giant cave.
GAIGE: Wait, it's what?
SALVADOR: Is cave the right word?
MAYA: Cavern, I guess.
SALVADOR: Doesn't that mean the same thing? But no, I meant that there is a really really big opening between the ceiling and the floor. It isn't a cave, it just...has a ceiling.
GAIGE: What ceiling?
AXTON: The couple hundred thousand tons of rock above our heads. Didn't you ever look up?
GAIGE: ...one sec.
[sound of footsteps leaving, then a door opening]
GAIGE: [distantly] Where the hell did that come from!!?
MAYA: Stop yelling, Gaige, you're going to attract monsters.

[sound of door closing, footsteps returning]

GAIGE: Seriously, that has not been there the entire time!

AXTON: Uh, yeah it has. Why did you think it was so dark?

GAIGE: I—just—I don't know! Maybe it was night, or something? Overcast skies?

SALVADOR: That doesn't make sense.

GAIGE: Whatever! Right, so, we popped out of the cave in the Sun Swamps, hopped on one of those stupid fan boats, and found another cave, filled with scorpion thingies.

HAMMERLOCK: Scalyions.

GAIGE: No thanks, I'm full.

HAMMERLOCK: Beg your pardon?

GAIGE: So we were fighting through the cave, and these guys are armored like a truck with a poison stinger, and there were like a bazillion of them, so we had to be careful. And we still don't have any corrosive weapons. [sighs] Anyway, lots of fighting, and then we got to the queen we had been hunting. What did you call her, again?

HAMMERLOCK: Thermitage, named after—

GAIGE: Hey, they're not idiots! It's obvious what you named her after.

MAYA: It...is?

GAIGE: So after we killed the queen of the scorpion thingies—

HAMMERLOCK: Scalyions.

GAIGE: Sorry, I'm just not in the mood for potatoes right now.

HAMMERLOCK: But—

GAIGE: That Nakayama guy called us up again. [click]

NAKAYAMA: Wait—you guys are just gonna do your hunting thing? [exasperated] A-aren't you even curious as to why I can order these savages around?

HAMMERLOCK: We shall deal with you in good time, sir! I promised my companions a pleasurable weekend of hunting, and a gentleman always keeps his word.

NAKAYAMA: Whaaaaaat? Come on! Will you guys fight me already!? Heh, [joking tone] please?

HAMMERLOCK: [sighs] Vault Hunters, it appears we shan't get a moment's peace as long as this Nakayama fellow keeps hassling us to go fight him. I've heard some bizarre radio chatter from the other side of Scylia's Grove. I'm afraid you'll have to head there, stop whatever horrible plans Nakayama has conceived, and save the world. [long sigh] Again.

NAKAYAMA: Uh, great! Yeah! Good! That's what I wanted! You, uh, you won't regret it! [click]
GAIGE: So, clearly, this guy was a few fruit loops short of a Happy Meal.

MAYA: Pretty sure that's not how the saying goes, sweetie.

GAIGE: Well, it is now! But the point is we went back to that cave we popped out of, and climbed up the fort I mentioned earlier—

SALVADOR: You mentioned it earlier?

GAIGE: Oh, you're right, I didn't! Thanks! Right, so, right outside the cave to Hunter's Grotto was this big wooden fort thing, built into the mountainside and stuff. It was awesome! Okay, okay, so...picture the best tree fort—no, picture the top ten best tree forts ever, and then just smash them all together! That's what it was! I mean, kinda.

GAIGE: Point is, I think it was the main base for the bandit guys, but I'm not sure. There were definitely enough of them. Like, more bandits than I've ever seen in one place. Except maaaybe Bloodshot Ramparts. Anyway, Nakayama called again. [click]

NAKAYAMA: Can I just say—super-pumped we're arch-nemeses now. You and Jack were nemeses, and n-now that we're fighting, it's like I—like I'm as cool as Handsome Jack! Oh, it's, like a dream!

AXTON: Your dream is to get shot in the face by a ninja with an emoticon for a head?

GAIGE: Yeah, he already hung up.

AXTON: Rude.

[click]

MAYA: Did you skip something?

GAIGE: No, not you too...

MAYA: No, I mean, I thought Nakayama had more to say.

GAIGE: Uh, no. Don't think so.

SALVADOR: Well, he did call us again. Like, five minutes later.

GAIGE: Oh, well yeah, there's that. [click]

NAKAYAMA: [low, dangerous voice] After you killed Jack, I filled my ship, the H.S.S. Terminus, with Eridium and research equipment, determined to carry on his will. [normal voice] Until I...crashed here, anyway. And, uh, locked myself out of my own ship. But I will prevail I will clone Handsome Jack, and he will crush the life out of you.

[pause]

NAKAYAMA: [cough]

[click]

AXTON: I'm confused how Handsome Jack is supposed to kill us. He wasn't exactly the hard part about the boss fight the first time.
MAYA: Eh, he's just crazy. Don't worry about the logic too much.

GAIGE: The point is, we were just grinding our way up the fort, through a bunch of Jack-loving tribals armed with wooden shields and like, a dozen guns between them.

AXTON: And the witchdoctors.

GAIGE: We're not talking about the witchdoctors!

MAYA: You have to talk about them at least a little.

GAIGE: [sighs] Okay, fine. There were these tribals with these like, staffs with elemental crystals on top, and they shot fire or lightning or slag or whatever at us. I guess they were some kind of Eridian tech, but nothing any of us recognized. Oh! And they could buff the other tribals! And heal themselves! And turn into bulletproof elemental tornadoes! Where the frick did that come from!?

MAYA: Maybe they got them from the ship? Gaige, what did you say the crystals looked like?

GAIGE: Twenty-carat brilliant-cut synthetic Eridium power crystals. Not sure about the clarity—the empowering process tends to cloud the gem—but they probably started as VS-grade at worst. I wouldn't be surprised if they were IF-grade or even FL-grade.

MAYA: ...right.

AXTON: Didn't the ship only crash like, a week ago? Would they have had time to figure out how to use them?

MAYA: Maybe that's how Nakayama's controlling them. He told them how to use the crystals, so now they obey him.

GAIGE: That's still kinda a leap.

SALVATOR: Plus, he made it sound like he's actually controlling them. With like, magic, or something.

AXTON: Shh, the adults are talking now.

GAIGE: Yeah!

AXTON: The adults and Gaige.

GAIGE: Anyway, as we neared the top of the fort, we started to hear chanting and groaning and stuff from up above. [click]

HAMMERLOCK: What in the devil is that chanting all about? Steady on, Vault Hunters. If these savages are worshiping something, that means two things: It'll be Hyperion, and it'll be deadly.

[click]

GAIGE: Fought through more tribals, took an elevator up, came to this really pretty primitive mountaintop village type thing, and then... [click]

HAMMERLOCK: You've made it! But what the devil are they worshiping? A deadly creature? Some Hyperion murderbot?

[steady chanting slowly comes to a stop]
CLAPTRAP: Hello traveler!

HAMMERLOCK: Oh bloody HELL.

MAYA: No.

SALVADOR: Hey, that kinda looks like that robot from Sanctuary.

MAYA: No!

SALVADOR: It's not? It sure looks like him...

CLAPTRAP: Minions! Who told you I was vacationing out here?

GAIGE: Well, there goes any hope that this was a different CL4P-TRP.

CLAPTRAP: I stowed myself on the H.S.S. Terminus to get away from danger! Look, I know I'm your best friend, but sometimes I just need to sit back, relax, and get worshiped by a bunch of dudes who look kinda like that douchebag you killed.

SAVAGE: WHAT YOU SAY?

AXTON: Well, this should be fun.

MAYA: Everybody, get ready.

[sounds of guns being checked and loaded]

HAMMERLOCK: Claptrap, what are you doing? Shut up!

CLAPTRAP: What? I'm just saying that if you could measure a human being in douchealocities, Handsome Jack would be off the scale!

SAVAGE: HE SAID BAD THING! GET HIM!

CLAPTRAP: Whaa! Help!

[click]

GAIGE: Sooo...then we saved Claptrap from the worshipers he managed to piss off. Twice.

MAYA: What the hell came over us?

AXTON: He has information we need. Operational necessity and whatever.

GAIGE: [sighs] And that's it for today, subscribers. At least Claptrap's little village had a Fast Travel station, so we were able to jump back to the lodge. [dully] Loving this continent, by the way.

SALVADOR: Welcome to Aegrus! Now kill some stuff!

GAIGE: Basically. See everyone tomorrow.
GAIGE: Today was kindof a breather. We're pretty sure Nakayama isn't gonna start his master plan right away, so we figured we could handle a bunch of the sidequests from the bounty board and so on.

GAIGE: The day started about normal—Zero was gone when we all woke up, but he had left breakfast—and then we got a couple weird quests from the board.

GAIGE: First was one from Hammerlock, to find a borok named Bulstoss that eats people. Ate. Whatever. Anyway, it was annoyingly hard to find him, cuz we had to go all the way through the caves, through a tribal village, and find his lair. Then, we had to feed him someone to get him to come out! Thankfully, we were able to throw a bandit at him, so no one had to do something mind-bogglingly stupid like put himself in a crusher so that the scent of blood would lure it out!

SALVADOR: Why was the crusher there if we weren't supposed to use it?

GAIGE: So! Boroks are these...big quadruped things, maybe the size of a horse? I guess? They're kinda hard to describe, but they usually hunt in packs and their front legs are really big for some reason, and they've sometimes got armor plating...

GAIGE: Point is, Bulstoss was hard to kill! He called other boroks, and then the nearby tribals tried to steal our kill, and that stupid witchdoctor nearly— [coughs] That's not important! We killed the boroks, and the savages, and everyone was happy.

AXTON: Except for the savages and the boroks.

GAIGE: The second quest was where things started getting weird. This guy, Dietmar von Henrich-german-something-or-other, wanted us to find another borok—a specific one—and lure it into a cage he had set up. Of course, the Jack-hole didn't give us any ECHO tags for the stupid thing, so I had to manually recalibrate our HUD’s to identify [mocking tone] "A creature with a hide as black as its heart."

GAIGE: Anyway, we found the borok he called Der Monstrositat, which I think is a type of food—

AXTON: Oh, yeah! That one with the pig's feet and the—

MAYA: Are you sure? It sounds like a sandwich.

AXTON: How does it sound like a sandwich?

MAYA: I don't know, it just does.

AXTON: Have you ever even had a sandwich? I thought you ate caviar and stuff while you were being worshiped.
MAYA: [long sigh] I told you, my childhood was not like that—

GAIGE: So! We found the borok! Maya shot it, and it followed her into the cage. She almost got eaten, actually, because we were busy fighting the rest of its pack, but luckily Zero appeared out of nowhere and got her out.

ZERO: You're welcome.

MAYA: Yipe!

AXTON: Did you just—

MAYA: Shut up! [coughs delicately] Thanks again for the rescue, Zero.

AXTON: Whatever. Gaige, you skipped the thing about the cage.


AXTON: No, no, I mean, agh...you know, when what's-his-face-long-name narrated after the cage closed.

GAIGE: Huh? I don't remember that. I was busy fighting boroks.

[click]

DIETMAR: Ze caged beast rages against his restraints, cursing not only ze Vault Hunters who trapped him there, but fate itself, ze cruel mistress she is. But mostly ze Vault Hunters.

[click]

GAIGE: Thanks, Zero.

ZERO: You're welcome.

AXTON: No, that's not the one I was thinking of. Earlier, I guess, the staring—

GAIGE: Oh, that! [click]

DIETMAR: Der Monstrositat stares at ze Vault Hunters, and the Vault Hunters stare back. But who is ze real monster? [click]

AXTON: Right, that was it. My point is that Dietmar is gonna make us look bad.

MAYA: Probably.

AXTON: You're not worried?

MAYA: Why should I be? More people are paying attention to Gaige than him.

AXTON: Point.

GAIGE: Now, while all this was going on, we had another quest from Dietmar to collect eggs from the strifters—

SALVADOR: Drifters.

GAIGE: —because his target audience really likes eggs. [pause] Yeah.
AXTON: I'm still confused on that. What is his target audience?

SALVADOR: Zooloons?

GAIGE: You mean zoologists?

SALVADOR: Animal scientists?

GAIGE: Yeah.

SALVADOR: Then yeah, them.

MAYA: I don't think they really care about eggs either.

GAIGE: Well, whatever! He's weird, and kept saying weird stuff while we were collecting the eggs. [click]

NAKAYAMA: [low, dangerous voice] After you killed Jack— [click]

GAIGE: Sorry, wrong one, gimme a second here...crap, I know I recorded him, but we were doing that quest in the middle of a bunch of other stuff, so I'm just having a hard time...

AXTON: The point is he was weird, and acted like we just randomly decided to collect eggs.

GAIGE: Hey! That—that was my—

AXTON: You were skipping it.

GAIGE: I was not! I was just trying to—

MAYA: Why don't we just move on, okay?

GAIGE: But—he— [grumbles] Fine. We found a bunch of eggs, and then we had to fight the broodmother Arizona, the end.

AXTON: Oh come on, that was totally skipping—

GAIGE: Like what? What did I skip?

AXTON: Well, the fact that Deetwhatever made us out to be murdering poachers again in his director's commentary.

SALVADOR: And that the broodmother was in a cave at the bottom of a pit that we had to use the elevator to get to, after fighting past another village of savages.

AXTON: See, there's that too.

ZERO: And she nearly killed everyone.

GAIGE: Okay, fine! Maybe I skipped some stuff! Whatever! We just killed some mother who was protecting her eggs while the guy who told us to do it called us horrible people! Not the best of days!

AXTON: Could've been worse.

GAIGE: How?

AXTON: She could have actually killed us.
MAYA: At least we wouldn't have been covered in slime when we respawned.

GAIGE: [sighs] Yeah, I guess. Anyway—

[ding]

ZERO: Dinner's ready.

GAIGE: Oh! Okay, I guess that's it for tonight, subscribers! Gotta go eat, uh—

ZERO: Drifter fillet and spore pod souffle.

GAIGE: ...I keep forgetting not to ask you things.
Chapter Summary

A-Hunting We Will Go

GAIGE: You know, all things considered, I think I might actually feel a little bad for Nakayama. How a guy like that started worshiping Handsome Jack, I'll never know.

AXTON: Well, apparently he's also some kind of assassin or whatever. He killed Atlas' CEO or CFO or something like that.

MAYA: I thought the CEO was nine? Nepotism, or something.


GAIGE: Well, whatever. The point is, when we got up in the morning, we had nothing better to do, so we decided to follow up on the lead Claptrap gave us. [click]

CLAPTRAP: Before you ganked them, the savages let me in on the professor's plan. He's got a temporary lab set up in Ardorton Station that he's using to create Eridium-engineered Jack clones! You gotta destroy his samples of Jack's DNA and shut down that lab!


SALVADOR: Maybe he'll be more dangerous this time around, eh?

AXTON: Sounds like fun. [click]

GAIGE: So we went to Ardorton Station—which took forever to find, by the way, because Claptrap's stupid waypoint didn't make it clear that we were looking for an underground cave, so we're all bumbling around in a different cave and he keeps calling us up wondering why we haven't found the place and—

MAYA: Gaige, breathe.

GAIGE: [several deep breaths] Right! So, we got to the lab, fought through a bunch of tribals living in this...I dunno? Fungus-lab thing? I don't know what it was supposed to be, but there were giant glowing blue mushrooms everywhere.

GAIGE: After we got past that, we came to this outdoor area again and found the DNA sample in a safe—just right out in the open, by the way, even though it was guarded by those scorpion things—and smashed it. [click]

NAKAYAMA: [low, dangerous voice] Ah, yes—that's one of my mysterious DNA samples. The life force of my incredibly secret plan that you will never, ever uncover!

HAMMERLOCK: Claptrap already told us you're planning to clone Handsome Jack.

MAYA: Actually, didn't you tell us that?

[click]

GAIGE: The backup sample was guarded by a bunch of tribals on the other side of station, past the...crap, what was that lab? The little one?

MAYA: I think it was just a morgue.

GAIGE: No, definitely not...

AXTON: Well, it was cold in there. Some sort of cryo thing?

GAIGE: Well, whatever! Point is, past some tiny lab, there was a little tribal outpost village thing with another dozen of those stupid witchdoctors, and we fought through them all and destroyed the second sample. [click]

NAKAYAMA: Waitwaitwait! Have you considered...not ruining my plan to clone Handsome Jack? J-just think of all the upsides! Ah, firstly, you'd, um...uhh...

[pause]

NAKAYAMA: ...yeah. Yeah, I got nothin'. [click]

GAIGE: Does he think there are any upsides for him? I mean, seriously, his plan seems to be "clone Handsome Jack, then everything will be perfect!"

MAYA: I told you, he's crazy. Most of the time, crazies are just...crazy.

[pause]

AXTON: Hey, you still here?

MAYA: What? Yes, I'm here, of course I'm here. Why?

AXTON: You were kinda zoning out on us.

MAYA: Sorry, just remembering someone.

GAIGE: O...kay...so, we went deeper into the station, into another big indoor area with blue glowy things everywhere, and a bigger village of tribals. And someone thought it would be a good idea to toss a rubberized MIRV grenade at this witchdoctor standing NOT FIVE FEET FROM ME!

AXTON: I said I was sorry.

GAIGE: My arm got blown off!

AXTON: C'mon, it literally took you five minutes to reattach it.

GAIGE: [angry muttering] Shove you into a glass jar...

AXTON: What was that?

GAIGE: Nothing! [click]

CLAPTRAP: Great! The DNA samples have been destroyed! Now you've just gotta shut down the lab's power grid by flipping a teensy little switch! It won't be hard—so long as you didn't lose any
fingers during today's festivities, you'll be well-equipped for the task at hand!

[pause]

AXTON: That was worse than the "chill out" pun.

GAIGE: Um, Claptrap, maybe you shouldn't—

CLAPTRAP: Fine, whatever! Last time I try to make a "flip the switch" objective entertaining.
[click]

GAIGE: We got out of the glowy lab, and into this...preserve, I guess? It reminded me of Hyperion's Wildlife Exploitation thingy, so I think that's what it was. Lots of scorpion guys everywhere, and the lab with the power switch was a good ten or fifteen walk away.

MAYA: It was a beautiful preserve, though.

AXTON: Except for the monsters trying to kill us.

SALVADOR: I thought they helped underline the stark purity of the natural landscape.

MAYA: ...that's way too many big words for you. Zero, have you been talking to Salvador about art or whatever?

AXTON: He's gone again.

MAYA: [sighs] Of course he is.

GAIGE: Anyway! We got to the lab, this big underground thing—I mean big as in like, three rooms, not like a sprawling secret underground lair—and, you know...flipped the switch.

[pause]

GAIGE: Okay, I think Claptrap has a point. That just does not sound like part of an epic tale of heroism. [click]

NAKAYAMA: [angry, screechy] I just lost all the power to my experiments! That's it, Vault Hunters! It's time to face my wrath! Woundspike! KIIIIIILL!

[screech of anger]

MAYA: Please tell me that's not a giant scalyion with Handsome Jack's mask stapled onto its face.

GAIGE: Don't forget the Hyperion turret on its back!

MAYA: Yes, I saw that. [sighs] Let's get this over with. Start with the turret.

[explosion]

AXTON: Nice shot.

ZERO: Thank you.

NAKAYAMA: Seriously, can you just—stop? I-I put a lot of effort into t-this plan to make a Jack-creature and you're friggin' ruining it and it's making me friggin'—fraggin'—AHH I AM SO ANGRY AT YOU! [quietly] Ah...please don't kill me. [click]
GAIGE: And then, of course, we killed the giant scorpion-shaped abomination of science. [click]

NAKAYAMA: Oh my god you killed him so easily. Ohhhkay, that's...bad. Wow, that's disheartening. *Crap.*

HAMMERERLOCK: *Exceedingly* well done, Vault Hunters! Come on back to me and we'll see about taking down Nakayama himself.

AXTON: Woo! Yeah! High-five!

[pause]

AXTON: Anyone?

GAIGE: We're all covered in slime! Give us towels, then we can talk!

AXTON: Why would I have towels?

NAKAYAMA: Okay...I'm honestly scared out of my mind right now but [nervous giggle] you stiiill haven't totally stopped me! [heavy breathing] [low, dangerous voice] I've got a backup lab on my ship, complete with *one* last sample of Jack's DNA and the most *dangerous* genetic monstrosity Pandora's *ever* seen. [breathless laugh] The only way to truly stop me...is to come to my ship and kill me!

[pause]

NAKAYAMA: Wait, **WHY DID I TELL YOU THAT!?**

HAMMERERLOCK: What a *rubbish* evil genius you are! Good god man, show some backbone! Throw some sarcastic taunts at us or something!

NAKAYAMA: What!? No! T-the the Vault Hunters just killed a bunch of my guys and now they're gonna ruin my plan— [wordless sputtering] I'm scared out of my MIND!

AXTON: That'll go away when your brains are scattered over the floor.

MAYA: Axton, you're not helping. [click]

GAIGE: And then we just...went back to the lodge. Found a back door out of Ardorton Station, so it didn't take as long. I guess tomorrow, we're off to fight Nakayama!

SALVADOR: Claptrap has some missions for us first.

[collective groan]

SALVADOR: What?

MAYA: You don't have to take *every* mission someone offers you. You *do* know that, right?

SALVADOR: Uh...

GAIGE: [sighs] Good night, subscribers. *Something* is going to happen tomorrow, though it might not be worth logging.
GAIGE: I hate Claptrap. And Salvador.

SALVADOR: What'd I do?

GAIGE: You agreed to take these stupid missions! Those. Past tense.

SALVADOR: Claptrap paid us!

GAIGE: Not enough!

AXTON: Yeah, I don't think we even got any loot worth mentioning.

GAIGE: [sighs] Well, I guess I may as well do the whole spiel anyway...so, right, the day started—and by day, I mean when we woke up; it was still Pandoran night, that will become important in a moment—the day started with Claptrap sending us to clean up the skag urine around one of his boltholes in the Sun Swamps. The problem is, it's only visible at night. We were just lucky we got the timing right.

GAIGE: So we did that, while killing all the skags that were attracted—

SALVADOR: They weren't attracted. They were...uh...what's the word? Re-something. Removed? No, what was it...

ZERO: Repulsed.

SALVADOR: Ah! Yes! They were repulsed by the skag's territorial markings. They came back when we were cleaning it up because there was nothing keeping them away any more.

GAIGE: Yeah, well, whatever! The point is, I don't think I've ever seen so many skags in one place in my entire life. But we fought them off anyway, because we're awesome like that, and after I shot the last badass in the face—

AXTON: Hey hey, tell it right! I shot the last badass in the face.

MAYA: Oh, here we go...

GAIGE: You were on the other side of the cave, behind that mountain...thing! How could you have shot it?

AXTON: My turret shot it!

GAIGE: Your turret does not count!

SALVADOR: I thought we agreed it did.
MAYA: Yeah, sorry Gaige, we established waaaay back at Southpaw Steam and Power: If you can get a Second Wind with it, it counts as you for getting a kill.

GAIGE: You're siding with him!?

MAYA: I wasn't anywhere close to this whole thing. I didn't see anything. I'm just saying, if the turret shot it, it counts as his.

GAIGE: [grumbling] Whatever, I don't care any more...the point is, Claptrap called us back, and sent us to find the skag that had done all the marking of all the territory and stuff, and kill it. It was back in Ardorton Station. [click]

CLAPTRAP: There he is! While you fight him, I'll come up with a HILARIOUS urine-based pun that I'll say once he's dead! [click]

GAIGE: So, yeah, fought it, killed it, that was it. Harder than I thought it would be, though. Why did he have like five badass skags guarding him?

SALVADOR: Skags tend to follow big skags.

GAIGE: Whatever. [click]

CLAPTRAP: I, uh...I couldn't come up with a hilarious urine-based pun. Still, 'least he's dead! Go ahead and get back here! [click]

GAIGE: So that went a little better than expected. I mean, after that hand pun yesterday I was kinda dreading what he'd come up with, but!

[pause]

GAIGE: ...I've completely lost my train of thought. Did we do anything else in Ardorton Station today?

MAYA: No, everything else was in Scyllia Grove and the Sun Swamps.

AXTON: Aren't the Sun Swamps in Scyllia Grove?

MAYA: What? No, they're...next to it. Surrounding it, and everything.

SALVADOR: No, I think he's right. The grove is the entire cave, not just the fort thingy with Claptrap's village on top.

GAIGE: Scyllia's Grove is not a cave! I checked, it does not have a ceiling.

SALVADOR: Well, it's surrounded by rock walls. What do you call that?

GAIGE: I dunno. Maybe...a basin? You know, like a valley?

AXTON: That doesn't sound right.

MAYA: Maybe this isn't important right now.

GAIGE: You're right! So...what was next? Was the rakk first, or—

AXTON: No, that was last. Next was the skag with the—
GAIGE: Right-right-right! So, um...

AXTON: There was a skag—

GAIGE: You *shush*! I'm just looking for the right...there! [click]

CLAPTRAP: Minions! Minions! My receiver just picked up a blip from another Claptrap unit! I might not be the last of my kind! You've gotta find him! [click]

GAIGE: Now, I know what you're thinking, and *most* of us weren't exactly thrilled at the idea of having another Claptrap around. But little mister "do anything anyone asks of him ever" ran off before we could stop him, so we all had to follow to keep him from getting himself killed again! How many times have you died by now, anyway?

SALVADOR: Not too many...

GAIGE: Well, anyway, we followed the waypoint to a tribal village, and then a few skag dens behind. It. Behind the tribal village. [click]

CLAPTRAP: It *sounds* like you're near the blip, but I don't see—oh, wait! That skag swallowed the Claptrap unit! You've gotta protect that skag until he vomits the Claptrap up! [click]

GAIGE: So, yeah. Ol' Pukey—never let Claptrap name anything, by the way—randomly decided to wander into the tribal village, so we had to protect him. And for some reason, there were suddenly like a billion tribals attacking him, even though we killed everyone when we passed through the first time! I guess they respawned faster than usual.

MAYA: We still haven't proven that they have any New-U stations.

GAIGE: Fine, then they were hiding in their huts for whatever reason, whatever, it doesn't matter! The point is, we were just protecting the skag, while Claptrap—our Claptrap, I mean—kept saying things like [click]

CLAPTRAP: I wonder how that Claptrap got all the way out here. He must have run from Jack's soldiers just like me! [click]

GAIGE: And [click]

CLAPTRAP: Man, that Claptrap and I are gonna have so much fun together! We'll be able to swap stories about survival, loneliness, and the crushing, existential pressures of being the last of your kind! Oh, and our favorite dance moves! [click]

GAIGE: So, yeah. Not...exactly making us happy about Salvador's decision to help. But anyway! We killed off all the tribals, and the stupid skag finally realized he couldn't digest what was in his stomach.

AXTON: Does he have more than one?

GAIGE: More than one Claptrap?

AXTON: No, more than one stomach. I kinda remember hearing something about that.

GAIGE: Uh...I dunno. Salvador?

SALVADOR: I keep telling you, I wasn't the skag herder in the family!
GAIGE: Well, fine, not important. [click]

CLAPTRAP: You protected Pukey, minions! Woo-hoo! He's finally going to barf up my fellow Claptrap unit!

[wet sound of something hitting the dirt]

CLAPTRAP: I finally found another Claptrap unit! Yaaaa—aw, he's dead.

[explosion]

CLAPTRAP: And he exploded. Oh well. Now to slip back into the warm, comfy Christmas sweater that is my depression. Ahhhhhhh. Come on back whenever you're ready, minions. [click]

GAIGE: So we kinda...had mixed feelings, I guess? I mean, on the one hand, nobody has to deal with a second Claptrap unit, so that's good. On the other hand, we felt bad for the little guy!

AXTON: You felt bad. Don't drag the rest of us into it.

GAIGE: C'mon Maya, help me out here.

MAYA: Uh, I...

GAIGE: [grumbling] Never mind. Uh, there was other stuff too—

SALVADOR: The rakk.

GAIGE: Oh, yeah! That was it! Giant rakk we had to attract with a...fireworks? Firework? Is firework a word?

SALVADOR: Well—

MAYA: I'm sorry, but I don't think she was asking you. And to answer your question, Gaige, I'm not sure.

GAIGE: Well, we shot off a rocket, a big-ass rakk came, and we killed it. Not very interesting.

GAIGE: The really interesting thing that happened today was we found a bunch of Nakayama's ECHO logs! Just, scattered around the Sun Swamps! Why do people keep leaving those everywhere? Anyway, they told us a lot about him, you know how it goes, some of his reactions to meeting Handsome Jack, Jack's death, all that. I guess the only relevant one was the most recent one. [click]

NAKAYAMA: I AM THE MOST— [click]

GAIGE: Wait wait wait. On second thought, you need the two most recent ones for it to make sense. One sec, I know I have it bookmarked here somewhere...

AXTON: We still have the ECHO's we found. We can just—

GAIGE: Shush! [click]

NAKAYAMA: I AM THE SMARTEST MAN ALIIIIIVE! I'm gonna clone Jack using a fearsome beast, then use that beast to kill the Vault Hunters! The Terminus is about to touch down in Aegrus, and—
COMPUTER: Alert. Autopilot disengaged.

NAKAYAMA: Are we crashing? *Why are we crashing!?*

CLAPTRAP: My bad! [click]

GAIGE: So that's, you know, the *setup*. This is the last one. [click]

NAKAYAMA: I AM THE MOST AMBIVALENT MAN ALIVE! [calmer] ...we've just crashed on Aegrus, my plan is set in motion, and the Vault Hunters just arrived. *Un-friggin-fortunately* however, the Vault Hunters survived every attempt I've made to kill them, which, uh, which [very quietly] kinda makes me kinda nervous. [normal voice] But just keep it together—just think like Jack. What would Jack do? What...would Jack do? [click]

GAIGE: ...so. Yeah. All Claptrap's fault.

AXTON: We probably could've guessed that before we even got here.

GAIGE: Yeah, and then we could've skipped all the stupid swamps. [sighs] But we're here, and we gotta get our murder on. Uh, tomorrow?

MAYA: Tomorrow.

GAIGE: Tomorrow! Tomorrow, we hunt down Professor Nakayama, and end his reign of terror! For a certain definition of...terror, anyway. And reign, I guess. Does this whole thing count as a reign?

SALVADOR: I think when religion is involved, it's a crusade.

GAIGE: No, that's a religious *war*. What's a religious reign?

[pause]

MAYA: Why are you all looking at me?

AXTON: Well, you're the one with the most experience here.

MAYA: That was a *theocracy*, a religious *government*. This is just a bunch of crazy guys following another crazy guy.

SALVADOR: That's what's my grandma always said government was.

GAIGE: Well! Goodnight, subscribers! Gonna turn this off before the swearing starts.
Chapter Summary

The Fall of Nakayama

MAYA: —doing a log now?
GAIGE: Sure. We have time, right?
[sounds of weapons clicking]
MAYA: Sure, why not.

AXTON: Salvador, hand me some grenades.

GAIGE: Okay! So, today is the day! We headed out to Candlerock Crag, the site of the crashed H.S.S. Terminus, to defeat Professor Nakayama! It's hard to describe the terrain. Think, like...hm...

SALVADOR: A mesa with lots of little mountains dotted around.

GAIGE: Ehhh...I mean...yeah, kinda, but does that really give an accurate picture?

SALVADOR: You got something better?

GAIGE: Just...okay, he got the mesa part right, but...it was a plateau with a bunch of other plateaus of different heights, and we had to fight up and down through tribal villages to get to the ship. Oh, and it was really high up. Maybe above the clouds!

AXTON: We weren't that high.

GAIGE: You shush. When we got there—uh, to Candlerock, I mean, not the ship yet—he called again. [click]

NAKAYAMA: Vault Hunters! Quick suggestion: Um...just stop chasing me! I-I've already found my secret weapon, and I-I'm activating it now, so, you know...you're already too late. No need to head to the Terminus and kill me! [sing-song voice] No reason whatsoever... [click]

GAIGE: So we ignored him, and fought through a bunch of tribal villages, in this weird, like, tiered terrain—

AXTON: You already talked about the terrain.

GAIGE: But—I was setting the mood! And you ruined it!

AXTON: You already set the mood!

MAYA: Guys...

GAIGE: [coughs] So when we were fighting through one of the last villages on the first plateau, Hammerlock called. [click]
HAMMERLOCK: You're nearly there, Vault Hunters. You must find the professor and wipe him out before he unleashes his secret weapon! Quite ironic, in a sense; we came here to hunt creatures, and now you're tracking the most dangerous game of all!

CLAPTRAP: [whispering] Man is the most dangerous game, minions. Just FYI. [click]

AXTON: Was that really necessary? You could have just said—

GAIGE: Shut up, this is important! I wanted to, uh, note that Hammerlock got it wrong. This isn't really quite hunting the most dangerous game.

AXTON: Hammerlock said tracking.

GAIGE: Well, that's another thing he got wrong! It's supposed to be hunting!

MAYA: Gaige, calm down. Do you need any ammo?

GAIGE: I don't—don't...shotgun ammo, and some SMG would be nice.

MAYA: All right, one second...

AMMO DUMP: A fantastic day for capitalism!

GAIGE: Anyway, hunting the most dangerous game is supposed to be like, when you capture somebody, then let them loose with a gun, and then hunt them down like a dog.

MAYA: That sounds barbaric. Here.

GAIGE: Thanks. And, yeah, it's not, you know, exactly a normal sport. Only crazy cannibal tribes and CEO's do it.

MAYA: So you don't want anyone to think we're doing that?

GAIGE: I just want Hammerlock to get it right!

GAIGE: Ugh, anyway, we went over this tiny little rope bridge over a giant chasm to another mesa or plateau or whatever, and had to fight like eighty badass tribals in Jack masks. Killed them all without too much trouble—

SALVADOR: Those big wooden shields were annoying.

AXTON: That's the truth.

MAYA: How do they make wood bulletproof?

GAIGE: Oh! That's easy! You start with your basic seed—

MAYA: Rhetorical question, sweetie.

GAIGE: Oh. Okay. Um, anyway, we got a call after we beat the badasses. [click]

NAKAYAMA: WHAT THE HELL!?! Those were literally my best guys! Oh, I am so screwed, crapcrapCRAP. [click]

GAIGE: Another couple villages or camps or whatever-the-fricks later, we reached the Terminus! I guess the damage was worse than it looked, because the primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary
security override systems were all down! We had to turn little wheels to key in the combo! Which was just one three four, by the way. How'd Nakayama lock himself out?

AXTON: Maybe he didn't even know about the emergency emergency emergency backup system. Or is it emergency backup backup backup system?

MAYA: Or he's just an idiot.

SALVADOR: I think he got in eventually though, right? I mean, that's why we're here.

GAIGE: Well, yeah! I mean, we're in the crashed ship right now, uh, next to some vending machines, and once we're ready, there's a maintenance shaft nearby that—

AMMO DUMP: Goodbye, friend! If you shop anywhere else I'll have you killed!

GAIGE: Oh. You guys are done?

MAYA: Yeah. You gonna leave your ECHO on during the fight?

GAIGE: Sure, why...naah. It's always distracting.

[click]

[click]

CLAPTRAP: Woo-hoo! Weee DID IT! In your CLONED FACE!

AXTON: You didn't do anything.

MAYA: I...guess that's it? Where's Nakayama?

AXTON: Here, this is an elevator pad. Take us up there, we can get deeper into the ship.

GAIGE: Hello, again, subscribers! We just finished fighting a giant bullymong with a force-field barrier and two giant power generators cybernetically affixed to its back! Those weren't covered by the force-field. Thank God for the inability for high-tension force-fields to be projected to cover the projecting generator, amirite? Amirite? I'm right.

GAIGE: So, yeah, Jackenstein—the bullymong—was big enough to chuck shipping containers at us, and the bulletproof thing really didn't help, but me, Axton, and Maya distracted it while Salvador and Zero shot the generators.

AXTON: Oh yeah, I meant to ask, but we were, you know, busy: Why'd he jump out of the arena when one of the generators blew, then jump back in and let us destroy the other?

GAIGE: Probably had to recalibrate the shield for one generator.

MAYA: It was smart enough to do that?

GAIGE: I dunno. I guess Nakayama was helping him?

MAYA: That would explain where the fifty million loaders came from...

GAIGE: What? We saw where the loaders came from. There were digistruct stations scattered around the cargo bay.
MAYA: No, I mean Nakayama must have activated them after a while.

GAIGE: Oh, okay, I guess that—

AXTON: Can we get on the elevator pad now?

GAIGE: Right! Sorry!

[sound of elevator]

MAYA: Now what? There's nowhere to go!

GAIGE: That looks like a force-field stair deployment unit. Maybe Nakayama—

[sound of footsteps]

GAIGE: Ooh, found him!

AXTON: Quiet, he's gonna monologue.

NAKAYAMA: Okay, I'm totally terrified right now. [rising, dangerous voice] But I think I've still got a chance to stop you, Vault Hunters! You may be a walking apocalypse, but I've got my brains, and my guns, and THIS SHIP! I may just have a chance aga—ah, whoa, ahah—

[sound of falling down stairs, intercut with cries of pain]

NAKAYAMA: Ohgodwhy.

HAMMERLOCK: Exemplary, Vault Hunters! Now, go collect the fruits of your labors from the Terminus!

[pause]

MAYA: Soo...he's really dead?

GAIGE: The ECHO showed his health dropping...

MAYA: But he just...fell down some stairs!

AXTON: Maybe it's a trick? Yeah, he'll turn into some superhuman monstrosity, and we'll have to fight it, and it'll be awesome, and—

SALVADOR: No, he's definitely dead.

MAYA: Stop—stop poking him.

GAIGE: Oh, I know! Zero went up behind him, invisible, and pushed him—

ZERO: No.

AXTON: Yeah, he was right here the entire time.

MAYA: ...so he really did just fall down some stairs and die, and that was the end of it.

SALVADOR: Looks like.

AXTON: This is literally the most disappointing boss fight of my entire life.
GAIGE: Well, let's go loot the Terminus!

MAYA: *Maybe* it's best if you wait here.

GAIGE: What? Why?!

MAYA: I remember what happened last time you saw a whole bunch of loot.

GAIGE: That...was... [coughs] ...a one-time thing.

MAYA: Uh-huh. Just wait right here. We're not carrying a bunch of loot and you out of here.

GAIGE: *Fiiine.* [sighs] But I get first dibs on the good stuff!

MAYA: Fair enough.

GAIGE: I think that's it for today, subscribers! Might be it for Aegrus, actually!

ZERO: No.

GAIGE: Oh, yeah, Hammerlock said something about stalkers and pheromones and bullymongs and stuff like that. I guess we'll still be here for tomorrow's log!
GAIGE: *Heeey* everybody! Today’s the last day of our hunting expedition! We just had a few things to take care of, you know how it is. Also: Aegrus still sucks.

SALVADOR: Huh? What's the problem now?

GAIGE: Thirstblood and his stupid rare monsters.

AXTON: *Please* don't bring that up again, I'm getting a headache just thinking about it.

GAIGE: Sorry, but I have to! For my subscribers, you know?

AXTON: Fine, whatever, I'm gonna go see if Hammerlock is ready to leave tomorrow.

[sound of footsteps leaving]

GAIGE: So, we went to the bounty board and found this quest from Thirstblood, one of the tribal bandits. He wanted us to run around basically the entire continent, killing rare monsters. What was it? Two-legged strifters—

SALVADOR: Drifters.

GAIGE: —slag versions of those elemental spore guys that drop fire or acid on our heads, albino skags, pink boroks, and...something else. What was it? Tailless...something. Anyway. Where was I? Oh, right.

GAIGE: *IT WAS THE MOST ANNOYING QUEST EVER!* We had to run around the entire frikken' continent looking for these stupid guys! With no way to know where they were or if we’d even find them, and we had to kill like, half a dozen of each, and it was stupid AND I HATE IT.

MAYA: Gaige...

GAIGE: [deep breath] I'm fine. I'm fine. This is Thirsblood, by the way. [click]

THIRSTBLOOD: Hey, have you considered *not* fighting my bandit brothers, and just letting us kill you and loot your corpses? Anyway, think it over. [click]

GAIGE: So, yeah, that's what we were doing *all day today*. But in between running around like chickens with our heads cut off, Hammerlock had some margarine—

MAYA: What? Are you sure—

GAIGE: ...that's not the word. Margin? *Marginally* less annoying missions for us. First was a weird bullymong, off the coast of Hunter's Grotto.

ZERO: On the coast.
GAIGE: Huh?

ZERO: Off the coast implies an island, oil derrick, or other offshore—

GAIGE: Oh, okay, got it. On the coast of Hunter's Grotto. [click]

HAMMERLOCK: What ho! I hear rumors of a bulletproof bullymong hiding in Hunter's Grotto. Why not go out and kill it, chums? Is it all right if I call you that? I'm trying out various forms of endearment, seeing what works, what doesn't... [click]

GAIGE: Note the conspicuous lack of an actual LOCATION of any kind. Spent two hours wandering around the stupid swamp...

GAIGE: [coughs] But we found the lair off the—on the coast. And then—

[click]

HAMMERLOCK: You're at the bullymong's lair, comrades! Keep an eye out for him!

[click]

GAIGE: Salvador, we didn't need that. I just said we were at the lair!

SALVADOR: It was, uh...necessary because...he kept using different words for friends?

GAIGE: That was already established earlier, from the clip from when he gave us the mission!

MAYA: Well, it's not like it hurts anything.

GAIGE: [sighs] Yeah, I guess. Anyway anyway, there were a bunch of normal rockwall bullymongs in this little lair made of some giant thing's ribcage, but there was also this weird thing that looked like a rock at first, but turned out to be the bulletproof bullymong we were looking for.

GAIGE: It had like...armor, rocks and stuff, on its arms and body, and turtled up when we got too close. Took us a while to figure that out though. Someone kept trying to melee the stupid thing.

ZERO: Apologies.

MAYA: Accepted.

GAIGE: Anyway, once we figured out we just needed to stay away from it, it came out of its shell thing and started throwing rocks at us, so we shot it and then it died. [click]

HAMMERLOCK: Ha-ha! Nicely obliterated, pals! No, that's rubbish. Esteemed colleagues? Ffriend-os? Oh, no idea what I'm saying. Come on back whenever you're done. [click]

GAIGE: Once we got back to the lodge—

[click]

HAMMERLOCK: Compatriots? Mates? Good lord social interaction is difficult.

[click]

GAIGE: ...thank you, Zero.

ZERO: You're welcome.
GAIGE: Anyway, next two missions were both in Candlerock Crag again. First one, we had to track down something leaving really big footprints across the area—

AXTON: I was wondering what they were when we spotted them yesterday.

MAYA: To be fair, Zero spotted them, not you. Us, I mean.

AXTON: I meant we as in the group. When the party's tracker tracks something, that counts as "us."

MAYA: ...okay, sure.

AXTON: You have that look on your face.

MAYA: What look?

AXTON: The "He's saying something stupid again, I should just vaguely agree with him so he shuts up" look.

MAYA: Okay.

AXTON: There it is again!

GAIGE: The point is, it turned out we were tracking another crystalisk, like that big blue one in Caustic Caverns. This was the only one we've seen in Aegrus though. I think.

SALVADOR: I don't remember any.

GAIGE: Oh, and it was purple, or fuchsia or whatever that color is. The crystals, I mean, not the rock parts. That one probably would have been really hard in an enclosed space, but we were on this big open mesa, so we were fine. It went down in like, five minutes.

GAIGE: But back at the lodge when we were getting that quest, Hammerlock gave us another one in the same area. Uh, in Candlerock Crag, that is. Not sure if that was clear.

[pause]

GAIGE: [coughs] Right. [click]

HAMMERLOCK: This hunt shall be a bit tricky, I fear. You'll need pheromones to attract a fearsome stalker known as Bloodtail. I've got some pheromone vials nearby—grab one, would you?

ZERO: Got it.

HAMMERLOCK: Oh lord, I can smell it from here! Oof.

GAIGE: Gah, what is this stuff, three week-old barf mixed with slag?

MAYA: Oh god, that mental image is not helping.

HAMMERLOCK: Don't open that vial until you're near Bloodtail's lair—the pheromones will only last a little while. If they wear off before you kill Bloodtail, you'll need to grab some more. [click]

GAIGE: For those who don't remember, stalkers are those invisible assholes with organic shields and biological cloaking. Bloodtail was a big one, maybe...ten feet long? That sound right?

SALVADOR: It was the size of a badass skag, that's all I know.
GAIGE: Yeah, that works. So we got to it, right, and broke the pheromone vial, and Bloodtail appeared. He was hard. I mean really hard. Not just that he was hard-hitting and everything, though he was—I got downed what, twice?

MAYA: Three times.

GAIGE: Right, I forgot when I got bitten. But yeah, he was strong, but he was also smart, and kept retreating to let his shield recharge! And we didn't have any shock weapons! I knew I should have respecced back in the lodge the second I heard "stalker," but whatever. We survived.

SALVADOR: I saved everyone!

AXTON: You nearly killed us all.

SALVADOR: I de-cloaked the stalker, didn't I?

AXTON: I don't think shooting two rocket launchers at it to kill its shields—while it was standing right next to me and Gaige—counts.

SALVADOR: It worked!

AXTON: But nearly killed—

GAIGE: You know you're not going to get anywhere arguing with him.

AXTON: Gah...

MAYA: ...was that everything for today? It definitely felt like more.

GAIGE: Running around after all those stupid rare monsters padded out the clock.

MAYA: Ah, yes, that. How could I forget.

GAIGE: Well, Maya's right, that's it for today. We'll be back in Sanctuary tomorrow. Hopefully we'll get at least a few days to rest before some new planetary apocalypse or whatever comes rolling around.

MAYA: I talked to Lilith about an hour ago. She didn't mention anything. Apparently they're just cleaning up the Hyperion resistance and stuff like that.

GAIGE: Right, so, there shouldn't be any more interesting stuff to log after this, subscribers, but you know how these things always end up. See everyone later!
Chapter Summary

Tiny Tina's Assault On Dragon Keep

AXTON: [deep voice] *In a world* of magic and monsters, four *bad-ass* adventurers and an insane necromancer—

GAIGE: Axton! Give back my ECHO!

AXTON: No, c'mon, I haven't even gotten started! Lemme see, lemme see—"the six brave adventurers sauntered into the perfidious tavern of the lovely lady Moxxi!" [laughs] Where'd you get this stuff? I don't even know what half those words mean!

GAIGE: What, you—wait, *how'd you get my notes*!?

AXTON: You just left them out on your cot—

GAIGE: Give that back!

MAYA: What's going on?

GAIGE: Axton! He—um...my—

AXTON: I think she was writing a book or something based on that *B&B* campaign Tina was running while we were interrogating the Hyperion guy last night. [laughs] This stuff is hilarious! Seriously, come take a look.

GAIGE: Axton stole my notes, *and* my ECHO!

MAYA: [sighs] Axton, give her back her stuff.

AXTON: It's just a stupid joke—

MAYA: Give her back her stuff, or I'll let her shoot you.

TINA: Ooh, use your sword gun! Use your sword gun!

GAIGE: Ugh, don't remind me about that, please.

TINA: *Excuse me*? Just *what is wrong* with a *gun* that shoots *swords*?

GAIGE: Nothing! But I don't actually have one!

TINA: Oh no, it's cool, it's cool, Mistah Torgue said he'd make one!

GAIGE: *Ohgodthatwouldbethebestthingever.*

MAYA: Axton...
AXTON: But—fine, whatever. I'm gonna go clean my guns.

[sound of footsteps walking away]

GAIGE: Aw, crap, Axton turned my ECHO on. It's already broadcasting!

MAYA: So? Just turn it off and come back later.

GAIGE: I can't do that! Everyone who got the broadcast notification will be disappointed!

MAYA: Then just do it now.

GAIGE: But I'm not prepared!

MAYA: You never prepare!

TINA: Wut are we talkin' about? Ooooooh...you're doing an ECHO-thingy? I do a teeny one. [false modesty] Just a couple k subscribers, no big deal.

GAIGE: This is my subscriber count.

[long pause]

TINA: DAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA—

MAYA: [Tina continues in the background] Don't look at me like that. You brought this on yourself, you know.

GAIGE: [Tina continues in the background] I'm sorry! Can you please just...do something?

MAYA: [Tina continues in the background] Okay, fine. Tina? TINA!

TINA: AAAAAAA—yes?

MAYA: I think...Professor Tannis might need your help. With studying things.

TINA: Sounds booo-ring.

MAYA: She needs help studying explosions.

TINA: GottagosomebodyneedsHELP!

[sound of running]

MAYA: Wait, don't jump off the—

[distant sound of something hitting the ground]

MAYA: ...balcony.

TINA: 'mokay!

MAYA: What did she just say?

GAIGE: "I'm okay."

MAYA: Oh, all right. I was afraid she'd smashed her face or bit her tongue or something.
GAIGE: Professor Tannis is gonna be mad, you know.

MAYA: Well maybe if she stopped taking "samples" from me without my permission, I'd actually care.

GAIGE: Okay, okay, lemme do my ECHO thing, okay?

MAYA: Sure, great. I'll just be over here. I need to rearrange some stuff in the bank.

GAIGE: Soooo...hello, subscribers! Turns out yesterday was actually a very important day! Started out simple enough. We left Aegrus in the morning, got back to Sanctuary, and helped the Slab King lead a raid on a Hyperion outpost thingy. It was in the Arid Badlands, but across this little slag river thing I hadn't seen before...

GAIGE: Anyway. So, we're raiding this Hyperion outpost, right? Everything's about normal. Axton's driving around shooting anything that moves, Mordecai is playing sniper support, Lilith is phaseblasting bandits into barbecue—

MAYA: Wait, barbecue? I think I missed your metaphor.

GAIGE: Yeah, barbecue! You know, charred chunks of meat?

MAYA: ...you're spending too much time with Brick.

GAIGE: What? No, I...well, maybe a little. But, whatever! That's not the point! So everything was exploding everywhere, right? And I was focusing on headshotting Hyperion soldiers and loaders to proc my Shock Storm tech, Salvador was off screaming, and Zero had decided to respec into melee when we weren't paying attention, so no one noticed when Maya got shot in the face by one of those rocket jetpack jackasses.

MAYA: Hyperion raptors.

GAIGE: Yeah, that's right, raptors. With the jetpacks and the rocket launchers and the stupid jetpacks that blow up when they die so you can't salvage them and build your own own.

MAYA: Um, did you want one—

GAIGE: So! Maya's down, none of us are nearby, and guess what happens? A mutant badass psycho comes out of nowhere and helps her up! Well, first he carved through a bunch of Hyperion guys, but still!

SALVADOR: That's kinda an understatement, you know?

MAYA: Oh, hey, didn't hear you come up.

SALVADOR: Yeah, was talking to the new guy. He seems, you know...

MAYA: Funny?

SALVADOR: ...sure.

GAIGE: I actually thought he was just another random psycho before I realized my ECHO had tagged him as friendly! At least he didn't really mind. Maybe I wouldn't have shot him if someone had mentioned that there was a friendly buzz-axe wielding psycho following us around the entire time.
ZERO: I said I was sorry.

GAIGE: Gah! Stop sneaking up on me like that!

ZERO: …

GAIGE: Anyway, sorry's not good enough! I mean, we kept asking why you were disappearing for hours on end, and maybe you could of just, I dunno, said [mocking tone] "Well, there's this badass psycho following us, but I've been talking with him and he seems nice, and he kills bad guys, what's new with you?"

ZERO: I assumed you knew.

GAIGE: How would we know that!?

ZERO: Maya.

MAYA: Whoa, hey, I thought he died way back when the train exploded. I mean, last I checked he was riding on the outside of the thing.

GAIGE: Oh, is that why you were searching around the crash site?

MAYA: Yeah, he must've landed somewhere else.

AXTON: Nobody's curious as to why he was riding on the outside of the train?

GAIGE: Not really.

SALVADOR: Yeah, if you could do that, wouldn't you?

AXTON: Fair enough.

GAIGE: Anyway! Yes, his name is Krieg, and he's a lot of fun, but I'm not gonna go into too much detail, 'cuz he said he wanted to try to do his own ECHO, so you know, that's his story and all that.

MAYA: He what?

AXTON: How would he...how would he even do that?

GAIGE: He's not an idiot, Axton! He knows how to use an ECHO!

MAYA: I think he meant how would...Krieg has a, you know, unique way of speaking, I'm not sure if—

AXTON: Wait wait. How do you even know this?

GAIGE: He told me.

AXTON: He what?

[click]

KRIEG: ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE, AND ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN MERELY PLAYERS: THEY HAVE THEIR EXITS AND THEIR ENTRANCES; AND ONE MAN IN HIS TIME PLAYS MANY PARTS, HIS ACTS BEING SEVEN AGES!

[click]
GAIGE: See? He's gonna do an ECHO.

MAYA: But...he didn't mention...

GAIGE: What else would he be talking about?

AXTON: I need to go lie down. Massive headache.

MAYA: You're supposed to be helping with the preparations.

AXTON: Hey, I helped prepare for the memorial party or wake or whatever it was. I think I deserve a little rest.

MAYA: We all helped with that.

AXTON: Then we all deserve a little rest! Also, we've saved the planet like, four times.

SALVADOR: Does Nakayama count?

MAYA: Honestly, I was wondering if Torgue's tournament counted.

SALVADOR: Hey! What's wrong with Torgue?

MAYA: Nothing, it just wasn't really a planetary threat.

Mr. TORGUE: SORRY BUDDY, I HAVE TO GO WITH THE LADY ON THIS ONE!

GAIGE: [sighs] I swear everyone on the planet can hack our damn ECHO's...

Mr. TORGUE: HEY! You don't get to get mad at ME! I'm having trouble with my shareholders because you broadcast your recordings of my tournament!

GAIGE: That's not my fault! How the frick was I supposed to know illegal offworld deathmatches were illegal?

Mr. TORGUE: THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT I SAID!

GAIGE: Can we just forget about all that for now? I'm kinda in the middle of something here.

MAYA: Right. Boys, why don't we go downstairs and talk about what we need to pack?

AXTON: Guns.

SALVADOR: Lots of guns.

MAYA: Yeah, we can talk about it, you know, downstairs.

[sound of footsteps leaving]

GAIGE: Okay, after Krieg showed up and—wait. Torgue, you still listening?

Mr. TORGUE: YES!

GAIGE: Can you uh...not? Um, Tina's bored maybe go talk to her?

Mr. TORGUE: Good idea! I need to talk to her about the SWORDSPLOSION!
GAIGE: I don't know—okay, I can guess what that is. Hopefully that works out, but I don't know how they'd do it.

Mr. TORGUE: WHAT THE F*CK IS THE POINT OF ALL THIS E-TECH BULLSH*T IF YOU CAN'T EVEN MAKE A GUN THAT FIRES SWORDS WHICH EXPLODE INTO SMALLER SWORDS, WHICH ALSO EXPLODE!?

GAIGE: I...I'm not sure. Is that why you don't have any e-tech guns?

Mr. TORGUE: YES! Now I'm gonna go fix that!

GAIGE: Okay, more power to you! Honestly, I really hope that all works out!

Mr. TORGUE: YOUR KIND WORDS ARE MOST WELCOME!

GAIGE: Anyway! Yes, Krieg showed up, and Maya was able to explain that he was a friend before everyone shot him. And then Zero was all like [mocking tone] "Rose in the—" wait, no, he said flowers, not...anyway, it was some haiku greeting thing that involved flowers, and I think there was a metaphor for blood in there somewhere, but whatever, I dunno, I didn't manage to record it.

GAIGE: Thing is, a lot of the Hyperion loaders and engineers and so on were still alive while we were having this little chat, and they rallied for a second attack—Axton called it a "follow-up defensive push"—so we had to deal with that.

GAIGE: But after all the murder and destruction and stuff, everyone was fine, and we actually had a prisoner! A Hyperion engineer who—

MAYA: Gaige.

GAIGE: What? And what are you doing back up here?

MAYA: I forgot my ECHO. The point is, don't mention where he works.

GAIGE: ...oh, right, because of the—gotcha!

MAYA: Good.

[sound of footsteps walking away]

GAIGE: But, yeah! We captured a Hyperion guy! That's like, never happened before! Not because they have suicide pills or anything, we just...I mean...they're shooting at us, we're shooting at them, and then everything's over and they're all dead and we're like "Maybe we should have taken some prisoners?"

GAIGE: Anyway, this guy surrendered, he was the last one alive, stuff like that. He had some minor injuries, but whatever, he was just being a baby about it, Zed managed to stitch his arm back on just fine.

GAIGE: So here's the interesting part! While we downstairs tortured—interrogating him, Tiny Tina started a Bunkers & Badasses campaign with Lilith, Brick, and Mordecai! I really wanted to play, but Maya was all about how we needed to present a unified front to Hyperion or something something, I dunno, I wasn't really paying attention, I just know I was stuck downstairs.

GAIGE: Tina did a mostly standard shotguns and sorcery setting, with a few interesting—

AXTON: Are you really going to go over that whole game as if it actually happened?
GAIGE: Where did you—no, I mean, not really! Just, you know? A bit of detail here and there! She made an interesting campaign, and I think—

AXTON: [sighs] I thought you were just gonna talk about her problems and stuff.

GAIGE: What, you mean like starting the game off with a hopeless boss fight? It's a beginner's mistake, but she is a beginner—

AXTON: No, you crazy little—I meant that stuff with Roland.

GAIGE: Oh. Yeah, all that. Yeaaah...I'm just gonna...Lilith let me copy some files over from her ECHO, lemme see if I... [click]

LILITH: Tina...why don't we just start now, and figure all that out later?

TINA: Come on girl, you know we gotta wait for Roland before we start.

[long pause]

LILITH: Tina, Roland's...you know Roland's not coming, right? He's not...here. Anymore.

TINA: Yeeeah, he's probbo runnin' late or something. We'll just start now.

[click]

GAIGE: Roland was kinda like a father-slash-older brother to Tina, and she's only thirteen, so...yep. She didn't really know how to deal with his death. Sooo...she didn't. Just kinda ignored it after Jack died. I mean, I hadn't seen her too much since that party, but Lilith said she'd been like that the whole time.

GAIGE: Like I said, Tina wasn't super-prepared, so not all the combat and stuff was balanced, but it was still pretty good for her first run and everything. Oh, and the reason Mr. Torgue is around is because he called her up and demanded to be put in the game. Apparently she mentioned it on her ECHO, so he thought it would be fun.

AXTON: I was talking to him earlier, he mentioned something about Lilith being all angry and hostile.

GAIGE: What are you still doing up here?

AXTON: What? I'm bored and tired, I can be up here if I want!

GAIGE: Fine, whatever. But yeah, Mr. Torgue was doing some stupid things—something about destroying scouting balloons, I must have missed the part where that was explained—so Lilith got mad and made him jump through a bunch of hoops to be part of the game. He failed the test...which he didn't take too well. [click]

Mr. TORGUE: [inelegant blubbering]

LILITH: Wow... now I kinda feel like a dick.

TINA: Yeeeeehmetoo.

[click]

GAIGE: So then they let him play, but he was too busy to really, you know, play, so he just handed
AXTON: You can't do the whole campaign like this.

GAIGE: Why not?

AXTON: Because it didn't happen! Nobody cares!

GAIGE: C'mon, I can at least do the part where we got Ellie some less horrifically sexist armor—

AXTON: We didn't actually do anything. We were downstairs beating up a Hyperion informant.

GAIGE: Fine! Fine, I'll skip past all the extremely interesting stuff that it was very impressive a thirteen year-old girl came up with, so we can focus on psychomological problems!

GAIGE: Ahem. So. After Mr. Torgue got included in the game, the group fought through a couple forest zones—which included pixies that looked suspiciously like Maya, from the way Tina described them—and at the end of the second forest zone, I think it was the Immortal Forest or something, Tina insisted they wait for Roland to arrive.

GAIGE: Well, uh, yeah, so Roland wasn't coming any time soon, so...Tina created an NPC version of him. In the game. And he was like, an invincible uber-badass paladin class. Which is a little bit cute, but mostly...not.

[click]

BRICK: This cannot be healthy.

[click]

GAIGE: Oh, uh, thanks. You know, I wanted a recording of that line, but I hadn't gotten around to it.

AXTON: Well, I was here, so—

GAIGE: No I get it—

AXTON: Didn't really mean anything—

GAIGE: It's cool, I understand. Better than your normal interruptions, anyway!

AXTON: Oh, that makes me feel better.

GAIGE: And just like that, the magic is gone.

AXTON: What?

GAIGE: Nothing!

GAIGE: So the others helped the White Knight—Roland—fight off a bunch of dragons or something, somewhat reluctantly, and then he opened the way for them. Which, again: Lots of not so fun psychological subtext.

AXTON: What happened to psychomological?

GAIGE: Shut up! Oh, and speaking of psychological subtext, the guy Tina had set up as the guide
randomly turned into Handsome Jack. [sarcastic voice] I wonder what *that* could possibly represent.

GAIGE: And then there was a bunch of other stuff too, like the old Vault Hunters complaining about Tina's eating habits for no good reason.

LILITH: She's been eating nothing but crumpets for years. That's...I don't even know what to say to that. She should be dead from horrific malnutrition.

GAIGE: How does everyone keep sneaking up on me?

AXTON: Cuz you don't really pay attention to your surroundings when you're doing your ECHO.

LILITH: Well, at least she's agreed to eat salad now. Should be able to get her started on some other stuff too.

GAIGE: I...wouldn't be so sure about that.

LILITH: What? Why not?

GAIGE: She got sick this morning. Doctor Zed says her body isn't used to eating anything but crumpets, so...it kinda freaked out when you forced her to eat the salad.

LILITH: Oh, for the love of—

GAIGE: That's why she wasn't eating at the memorial party.

LILITH: [sighs] I think I need to kill Zed.

MORDECAI: Didn't you promise Roland you wouldn't?

GAIGE: Gah! Where'd you come from?!

MORDECAI: Fixin' the banner.

LILITH: That promise was five years ago, back in Fyrestone!

MORDECAI: Hey, I'm not gonna stop you. Just reminding you.

[long pause]

LILITH: God dammit. I'm gonna go help with the assault prep.

[stomps off]

GAIGE: Now where was I...

MORDECAI: Tina's crumpets or whatever.

GAIGE: Ah, right! [sing-song voice] Thank you, Mordecai!

MORDECAI: Uh, sure.

GAIGE: So after that there were a bunch of references to games I've never played, and I don't think anyone else really got them either, because I didn't hear them comment on them, but ANYWAY, the important part was when everyone was fighting the dragon on the bridge—

AXTON: Did you seriously skip the dwarves?
GAIGE: *You* were the one who said not to go into too much detail!

AXTON: I know, but I think it's funny enough to mention.

GAIGE: Okay, okay. So, Tina sent the party down into the mines, where the dwarves were enslaved to mine for...something. Tina never said. Mining, I guess. They met with the king, who was also the rebel leader, whatever. Everyone knows how this goes. Lots of inspiring speeches about friendship and loyalty and freedom and all that awesome stuff that is great in real life but just kinda trite in games.

AXTON: You're doing that rambling thing again.

GAIGE: Right! They met the king! Aaaand...Brick won the roll to talk to him. [click]

BRICK: I PUNCH HIM.

MORDECAI: Brick, don't. If you just talk to him, we can—

BRICK: I PUNCH HIM.

LILITH: [sighs]

[sound of a die rolling]

BRICK: Twenty!

TINA: Critical hit! The dwarf king explodes!

[click]

GAIGE: But you gotta give credit to Tina, she just went with it, instead of turning around and saying it didn't happen. Of course, that meant all the dwarves were fighting the party for killing their king slash rebel leader. Oh, and all the dwarves looked exactly like Salvador, for some reason. [click]

LILITH: That seems kind of, uh—

TINA: Yeah, *I know*, Free Lilly. You think it's racist or somethin? I'll ask Sal downstairs if he thinks it's racist! HEY SALVADOR! IS IT OKAY IF ALL OF THE DWARVES IN MY CAMPAIGN LOOK LIKE YOU?

SALVADOR: [distantly] That is awesome!

TINA: BOOYAH! Not racist.

[click]

GAIGE: That's when I really got interested in the campaign even though, you know, Maya wouldn't let me go up and play because [mocking tone] "*Your floating death robot is an important intimidation tool.*" Which, you know, it is! But I wanted to plaaay.

GAIGE: Anyway, Tina put Claptrap in the game as a wizard, he helped open a door using a bunch of dwarven runes and a childish passcode, and we're back to where we were before, when I was talking about them fighting the dragon!

AXTON: You're skipping—
GAIGE: Hush! [coughs] Dragon fight was, you know, basically normal, except for the teeny tiny detail of Tina summoning Roland again to help them fight. So. Yeah. Not good. By this point, Lilith was clearly started to get a bit fed up, but she just sighed and let it go this time.

GAIGE: They got into the castle, and activated an elevator which turned out to be a trapdoor dropping them into the dungeon. They weren't allowed to roll to notice the trap or anything, they just fell into an inescapable prison. Apparently Tina starts railroading when she doesn't have any other ideas.

AXTON: Uh...

GAIGE: What.

AXTON: Sorry. Just, honest question here, what's railroading?

GAIGE: What?

AXTON: What's—

GAIGE: No, I heard you, I just...how could you not know that?

AXTON: Some of us spent our formative years doing important things, like shooting guns or going on dates.

GAIGE: You do realize that Lilith is geekier than I'll ever be, right?

AXTON: Fine, keep your stupid secret knowledge or whatever, I don't care.

GAIGE: No! It's—okay, railroading is just when the game master starts forcing the players to conform to their plot, by, like, just saying someone they don't want killed is invincible, or—

AXTON: Having the floor drop out from under them when they pull a lever?

GAIGE: Exactly!

GAIGE: Anyway, Lilith pointed out that they couldn't really do anything if they were just trapped forever, so Tina gave them an escape route through the dungeons slash catacombs, provided by a floaty ball of light with a female voice.

GAIGE: The catacomb thing was pretty standard—lots of skeleton enemies, I think Tina had that Libris Mortis splatbook, because there were a lot of different types—until they got to the end, and they found Roland again.

GAIGE: They also found the source of the floaty light, Angel, AKA the Sorcerer's Daughter. Brick won the roll to talk to her again, but everyone else convinced him to talk to her instead of punching her. They released her...and she turned into a drider and tried to kill them. [click]

BRICK: I TOLD YOU WE SHOULD'VE PUNCHED HER!

[click]

GAIGE: Anyway, boss fight, and everyone was really depressed during it, because, you know Tina had Angel spouting off cliché villain lines and... [sniffle] Angel wasn't really...like that. You know? But Tina blamed her for Roland's death. Which, I mean, yeah, it was kinda her fault, but c'mon, not really.
GAIGE: [coughs] Ahem. So everyone ascended the evil tower which I think was the Dragon Keep Tina kept mentioning, with the Handsome Sorcerer—voiced by Tiny Tina, of course, who can imitate Jack's voice surprisingly well—saying he's gonna kill the queen before they even get there and stuff. I guess Tina thought they were taking too long.

AXTON: So, wait. Is *that* railroading?

GAIGE: If she had actually killed the queen no matter what they did? Probably. A good GM could make it work, but Tina's not really there yet.

AXTON: Okay, I guess that makes sense.

GAIGE: Anyway, they fought the Handsome Sorcerer at the top of Dragon Keep—

ZERO: Teleport pad.

AXTON: Gah!

GAIGE: Yes, they used a teleport pad to get there, thank you Zero. Anyway, Tina gave him...lemme check...three forms. The Handsome Sorcerer, the Necrotic Sorcerer after they killed him the first time, then the Demonic Sorcerer. Halfway through the fight with the Demonic Sorcerer, Tina summoned Roland again, which was when everyone else decided that was enough. [click]

TINA: You've done it! The Handsome Sorcerer is dead. And guess who showed up to celebrate? Everyone's favorite invincible knight... ROLAND!

MORDECAI: That's—that's enough, Tina.

TINA: And Roland showed up and he was really happy, and everyone lived forever and it was great. The end.

LILITH: Enough! You can't just deny what Jack did to Roland.

TINA: Can't hear youuuuu.

BRICK: She's right, Tina.

TINA: So, do you guys wanna do some sidequests, or—

MORDECAI: You need to accept it. Roland is dea—

TINA: I KNOW!... I know... But it's my story, and— [Tina starts crying]

[click]

GAIGE: I'll...skip over most of the crying. I don't think— [sniffle] I don't think we need to go into that. But everyone talked it over, and convinced Tina to finish the story the right way. Not with Roland dead, I mean...

GAIGE: Bloodwing swooped in and saved Roland. Which is a total cop-out, but it was adorable, and it made Mordecai happy, and it helped Tina work through her issues. Which, is really the point of RPG’s, when you get past all the dice and monsters.

MAYA: Gaige! You almost done up here? …what's everyone else doing up here?

AXTON: I, uh...
ZERO: I wanted to hear how it ended.

GAIGE: Well, it's not quite over. Just one more thing left: Saving the queen. [click]

TINA: As you step over the corpses of the unfortunate knights who tried to murder their queen, you know you've come to the right place. For who else could possibly bring the light back to the world? WHO ELSE, but the most beautiful, most glamorous, and most GRACEFUL queen in history...BUTT STALLION!

LILITH: That's...wow.

MORDECAI: I...don't know why I'm surprised.


TINA: With the queen safe, she can finally cast her magic spell and bring light back to the world.
[click]

GAIGE: Butt Stallion was that horse Handsome Jack mentioned waaaay back in the Southern Shelf, when we were first going after Captain Flynt and Boom and Bewm. In case you guys forgot, apparently she's this living pony made out of diamonds. I have no idea how Tina heard about her.

AXTON: Didn't you mention it in the ECHO at the time?

GAIGE: I'd have to check, but I think just, like, in passing.

MAYA: Salvador told everyone.

GAIGE: Of course he did. But, yeah, everyone had clearly forgotten about her, but Tina...did not. So and then they fed the queen some eridium and reversed the curse, bringing light back to the world.

MAYA: Okay, boys? Let's go back downstairs. You guys left a bunch of stuff unfinished.

AXTON: Yeah, I was—

MAYA: That's nice. Gaige? Be sure to come on down when you're done.

[sound of footsteps walking away]

GAIGE: Well, I mean, I'm basically already, you know...done.

GAIGE: [coughs] ...aaaand that's all, subscribers! The game finished at about the same time as our interrogation, so that synched up nicely. I guess that's all for Tiny Tina's Assault on Dragon Keep! Huh, I managed to fit it all into one ECHO. Didn't even notice.

GAIGE: We're hoping to do something very important that I can't talk about on my ECHO soon, but that might take a few weeks to set up. This'll be my last ECHO for a while. Laters!

Author's Note

Hello everyone, and thank you for reading all the way to the end! This is going to be the last of Gaige's ECHO logs for the foreseeable future. Gearbox has implied they're doing another four DLC's, but until those come out, this fic will be tagged as completed.
This is the first time I've done an author's note for Gaige, but I felt it was appropriate. I've been trying to keep everything "in-universe," but there's some stuff I need to say that I couldn't fit into the fic itself, and wouldn't work in the summary.

First off, you'll notice that I did the entire DLC in one long update, instead of splitting it up by major quest. This is because, no matter how hard I tried, I just could not come up with a good reason for Gaige to do a scene-by-scene retelling, which is the only way it could have conceivably lasted multiple nights. I rewrote the log four times, trying to do as much as I could, but every time there was this little voice in the back of my head saying "Why are you doing this? None of Gaige's subscribers would care!" Then I realized that the voice was Axton's, and suddenly the story started falling into place. One of my ideas was to re-write the DLC as if it were completely real, a standard fantasy novel except with guns. That didn't work out, but I still kinda want to do that later.

Second, I was originally planning not to have Krieg involved at all, but he's mentioned explicitly more than once in the DLC, so it was obvious that his presence was canon. Thankfully, I was able to bring him in without too much difficulty. His side of things will be in his log, which I am still working on. I'm having a bit of trouble with that one, though, so I don't know when it will be published. Just keep an eye out for a "Krieg's Log" one-shot.

Finally, I just want to thank everyone again for reading and enjoying the fic. The response I've received is absolutely incredible. I still remember nearly a year ago, when I finished listening to Gaige's logs on youtube. I thought "It would be cool if this kept going," wrote up a fic, published it using an old account I had nearly forgotten about, and went to bed. Got up in the morning to find twenty favorites and everyone clamoring for more.

So thank you, everyone, for all the support.
Chapter Summary

TK Baha's Bloody Harvest

GAIGE: —second, just need to adjust it a little bit.

AXTON: The red light is on, you just need to push the button to—

GAIGE: It's recording right now, I know that, I just need to make it live.

AXTON: Isn't that the same thing?

GAIGE: [sighs] No, it's not—oh, wait, it is live.

AXTON: HA!

GAIGE: You—shut up! Go bug Maya!

AXTON: [footsteps walking away] Hey, Maya! Guess who knows more about ECHO's than the cyborg?

GAIGE: [quietly] Asshat. [louder] Hellooo, subscribers! Things were, uh, pretty hectic there for a while with...things and...plans falling through. The coolest raid on Hyperion EVER didn't even happen because of freakin' scheduling conflicts or whatever. Ugh. I mean, I guess we still might be able to make it happen eventually, but UGH.

GAIGE: And, yeah! Been a bit busy with the boring rebuilding the city slash planet stuff. You know, running around fighting bullymongs that keep trying to eat the road crews, that kind of thing. Last time we raided a Hyperion base, I couldn't even go, because someone teleported me like ten times, and I was in a little mini-coma.
SALVADOR: Uh, you talking to Lilith? She's not here.

GAIGE: What? I know that. I mean, I guess I, uh, forgot, or something, but she's—that's not really important. I was in the middle of stuff.

ZERO: What's the hold up? / Is someone in the bathroom? / Are you on the phone?

GAIGE: You be quiet. And stop doing your ninja thing! Just appearing places is annoying!

SALVADOR: Didn't you turn that thing on for a reason?

GAIGE: Huh? Oh, yeah! Yes, thank you.

SALVADOR: Es insignificante.

GAIGE: So, even though everything's been all boringly actiony for the last couple months or weeks or whatever, but the other day stuff started happening again. Uh, I mean, stuff was already happening, you know, but I mean enough stuff that I was willing to get off my butt and actually record stuff with my ECHO. Instead of just narrating it after, which is boring.

AXTON: [distantly] You said boring like five times!

GAIGE: SHUT UP, AXTON! Ahem. Anyway, we got a tip from...I don't even know who, I think it was Tannis, I don't know, we were running through Digistruct Peak, which is this awesome training ground for the Crimson Raiders that Tannis set up, and it has solid-state persistent holograms of pretty much every mook you care to name, and even has rudimentary AI for each of them, and can actually—

SALVADOR: Focus, girl.

GAIGE: Oh, you shush. The POINT is, we met a zombie!
ZERO: Post-mortality necro-organism.

GAIGE: Well, yeah. Anyway, he was your standard flesh dripping off your bones zombie. Not sure where he came from, though. Nano-plague, maybe? I dunno, that not really my thing. There are like a billion ways to make zombies.

AXTON: You're skipping stuff again.

GAIGE: And you're bugging me again. But yeah, as I was saying, we were in Digistruct Peak, and we—well, Maya—got a call from someone about a thing going on in Hallowed Hollow, this tiny little town with like, three houses and a graveyard. And zombies.

AXTON: And skeletons.

GAIGE: [sighs] Yes, and skeletons.

SALVADOR: And pumpkins!

GAIGE: And pumpkins. A whole bunch of stuff was running around trying to kill us. That's why I think it was a nano-plague. Animated skeletons are really hard to make, and there's only a couple of ways to do it. Like I said, that's not my thing, but it involves micro-scale levitation and stuff like that.

AXTON: Who would bother to do all that?

GAIGE: I dunno, sometimes you get bored and start playing with nano-plagues, maybe decide to stick with your standard theme...

AXTON: Wait—did you cause this?


AXTON: Oh for crying out loud—
GAIGE: ANYWAY! There was a nice zombie at the entrance to the Hollow, named TK Baha! Apparently the old Vault Hunters knew him before he was all deadified and stuff. He kept his brain, or most of it anyway, and was able to have a pleasant little chat with us.

T.K. BAHA: Welcome, to Hallowed Hollow! The *only* community for Pandora's exiled and retired undead. I'm the town's lookout, TK Baha.

GAIGE: Soo...that was TK Baha. That...obviously. Anyway. And he sent us out on a quest, which is always fun and awesome and in no way a crime against nature. The, uh, precise details aren't important—

MAYA: Oh, there you are. Axton, Mordecai needs you downstairs. [sound of footsteps leaving] Gaige, what are you doing?

GAIGE: Nothing! Just talking about the Hollow!

MAYA: No, I mean the part about the mission from Baha. All he wanted us to do was assemble a key. Why are you acting like it was something weird?

GAIGE: Nothing! No reason!

MAYA: ...all right, why don't you just continue?

GAIGE: Oh. *Oh.* Right. Yeah. That's good. Um, okay, anyway, I was just talking about the nano-plague skeletons and everything—

MAYA: I don't think the contagion was nanological in nature. Doctor Ned's original plague was biological, though that doesn't explain the skeletons. Hm...maybe it's a number of different diseases,
mixing together unexpectedly...

GAIGE: ...sure. It's just, uh, how do you know this stuff? I thought you weren't really scientific, I guess.

MAYA: What? Oh, when I realized healing was part of my Siren powerset, I took the time to study medical sciences. You'd be surprised how much zombie plagues come up. Every time somebody tries to invent immortality, we get a new strain.

GAIGE: Yeah, I heard about that. It's kinda weird, actually, and there are a bunch of theories as to why that happens—

SALVADOR: Ah, chica? You're still recording.

GAIGE: I'm—OH! Thank you, Salvador!

SALVADOR: Es insignificante.

GAIGE: Sooo sorry about that, subscribers. The point of all this is that TK Baha gave us a quest to free the town from this mutated pumpkin thing. It looked alive, so probably not a zombie, but sometimes plants are affected in weird ways.

GAIGE: But to do that, we needed to get this key, which had been split into three pieces for, you know, reasons. I wasn't really paying attention to that part. But we had to hunt through the graveyards and find three “enchanted” skeletons who had the pieces. I dunno, the enchantment seemed pretty similar to a high-level electrical elemental effect, but whatever. We found the pieces. Which were bones, but, who cares.

[click]

T.K. Baha: Allll right! Now that you got all the enchanted bones, why don't you head to the blacksmith's and forge yourselves a skeleton key?

[click]
GAIGE: [snorting laugh] Oh God, I just got that.

SALVADOR: Got what?

GAIGE: You be quiet. Anyway, Baha was talking about wizard bones and stuff, which was weird, but whatever, the point is we took the bones and took them to the blacksmith's, which was this giant forge thing infested with spiderant nests. Guarded, of course. But oddly, not by spiderants. Well, not entirely by spiderants. There were a few, but the “queen,” so to speak, wasn't really a queen—

MAYA: You're getting off topic again.

GAIGE: Right!

[click]

T.K. BAHA: You're gonna need the blacksmith's hammer to make the key. Now, where could he be? SULLY? HEY SULLY! You got a customer over here! Heehee!

[click]

GAIGE: He does that weird laugh thing a lot. Anyway, that would be when the horrific spiderant/man fusion chimera thing screamed over the wall. One of Zed's experiments escaped again, I think. Ugh, I feel dirty just thinking about it.

[click]

T.K. BAHA: Oh, there he is! Why don't you ask him for his hammer, would you? I'm sure he'll hand it over if you ask him nicely.
GAIGE: Well, he didn't. Krieg killed him pretty much by himself.

KRIEG: THE WINNER WOULD DECIDE THE OUTCOME OF THE ENTIRE WAR!

GAIGE: Nobody likes a braggart, Krieg.

MAYA: Everyone loves a braggart. Why do you think they all love us?

KRIEG: I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A HUGE ADMIRER OF MY OWN WORK! I'M ONE OF THE FUNNIEST AND MOST ENTERTAINING WRITERS I KNOW!

GAIGE: He's got a point.

SALVADOR: You sure?

GAINE: Aaanyway, back to Sully. Like I said, Krieg killed him, then Baha called back.

[click]

T.K. BAHA: Sounds like you two are done talking, huh?

AXTON: Does he not know there are six of us?

MAYA: Shush.

T.K. BAHA: I was sure he'd come around! Nevertheless, you'd better get that hammer from him!

SALVADOR: Got it!
T.K. Baha: Alright! Now, smack those bones together and forge yourself a skeleton key!

[click]

Gaige: So we did. Um, forge the key, that is. It was easier than expected, actually. Either it had some sort of nano-assemblers hidden in the hammer, or Axton secretly spends his spare time playing a blacksmith at ren faires.

Axton: Or maybe it was just super-easy.

Gaige: Or maybe you're just a jerk.

[click]

T.K. Baha: Now that you've got the key, you can find the Pumpkin Kingpin's lair, and make the rivers run orange with pumpkin guts!

[click]

Gaige: So, yes. After lots more jumping and running back to the start and fighting off spiderants and minimal crimes against nature—there was only one, teeny one, and it wasn't even a crime, just like, disrespectful or whatever—

Maya: ...what are you even talking about?

Gaige: We finally came to the gate! Which was, as I mentioned, like five feet from Baha's front door.


Gaige: It's a metaphorical five feet Sal. Gawd.
SALVADOR: Meta what?

KRIEG: BEFORE YOU JUDGE A MAN, WALK A MILE IN HIS SHOES! AFTER THAT, WHO CARES? HE'S A MILE AWAY AND YOU'VE GOT HIS SHOES!

GAIGE: Thank you.

MAYA: One of these days we're going to find out that you can't actually understand him, and have just been bullshitting us this entire time.

KRIEG: I SHOULD GO!

MAYA: What? No, you don't—

GAIGE: He was agreeing with you. Sarcastically.

MAYA: ...dammit Gaige.

GAIGE: Anyway! Key! Door! Used it! The lock went all glowy and exploded for some reason, it looked mystical enough, but I think it was one of those stock hologram effects you get from the trial version of Holoshop.

GAIGE: We got to the other side and little pumpkin head things immediately started spawning and attacking us. Not too hard to handle, thankfully, since they were like, pumpkins, but still. Annoying. The point is, we found the pumpkin patch, but no dice.

[click]

T.K. BAHA: ...huh. This is definitely where the Pumpkin Kingpin lives. But he ain't here. Must be...sleeping underground, or something. Oh! I bet if you flood the area, he'd probably have to come up for air!

AXTON: What, like an earthworm?
T.K. BAHA: Head to the windmill!

[click]

GAIGE: The windmill wasn't working.

[click]

T.K. BAHA: Windmill ain't working, is it? Aw, great hornytoads! Must be the skrakk nesting up there in the blades!

MAYA: Wait...skrakk? As in those skag/rakk hybrids Zed made?

AXTON: I knew we hadn't seen the last of them.

T.K. BAHA: Better clear them all out. I'm sorry. I forgot those abominations there were made by good old Doctor Zed! Speaking of which, have you seen Zed, or Ned lately?

MAYA: Okay, fine. Zero, shoot—Zero? Where'd you go?

GAIGE: He disappeared again.

MAYA: [sighs] Let's just smash these nests.

T.K. BAHA: What about Ted? Oh, wait, I'm so sorry, we ain't supposed to talk about the forbidden brother. My bad!

[click]
GAIGE: So, yeah, we smashed nests, fought off hordes of angry flying things that would have been much *easier* to fight if our sniper hadn't run off again. What were you even doing, anyway?

ZERO: Critical killing / Is an art unto itself / And I am Rembrandt.

GAIGE: [sighs] Fine, yeah, whatever. Oh, and we found out why the skrakk hated us so much.

[click]

T.K. BAH: The spychos and skrakk tell legends of the creature who kicked them out of the Eridium Blight! Said there was a real big, small, or normal sized man or woman. And that there was one...to four of them. Legends are pretty vague.

GAIGE: Five. There were *five*.

AXTON: How did they get legends in like, a month?

SALVADOR: I dunno, maybe it's like gossiping old ladies? Takes less than a day for everything to get all muddled.

GAIGE: Those are rumors, not legends.

KRIEG: I WORRY ABOUT THE WAY INFORMATION CIRCULATES AT THIS SCHOOL!

MAYA: Is anyone going to bring up the fact that spychos and skrakk are apparently *intelligent*?

[click]

SALVADOR: I still don't see what the big deal was.

MAYA: If they were intelligent, then that puts everything in a different perspective!
SALVADOR: How? We kill intelligent stuff all the time.

GAIGE: Anyway! Killed all the skrakk, smashed all the nests, got the windmills turning again. Yay.

(click)

T.K. BAHA: Windmills' going! So the blood's pumping—

MAYA: Wait, the what?

T.K. BAHA: —and everything's ready for a final showdown with the Pumpkin Kingpin! When you're ready, just head back to the Kingpin's domicile! Heehee!

MAYA: Back up. What was that about blood?

T.K. BAHA: That windmill powers our hemoglobin pumps! Got a few vampires in town, and, well, they make milkshakes out of blood. I had one once! It was all right.

(click)

AXTON: At least we didn't have to fight vampires.

GAIGE: Yeah, I mean—wait, when did you get back?

AXTON: About a minute ago. Finished helping Mordecai.

GAIGE: Oh. Well, that's good. I'm just getting to the part where we go up against the Pumpkin Kingpin. The second time. You know, when we actually fight him. Since we didn't the first time.
AXTON: Yeah, I got it.

GAIGE: Anyway subscribers, we got back to the pumpkin patch, and saw the...blood being pumped into the area. Yeah. Ugh. I think we were all more than a little queasy on that one. Except for Zero, maybe, who had appeared out of nowhere again. Well, we didn't just see the blood, we had to turn on the pumps ourselves, but you get the point.

GAIGE: I don't know if it drowned him out like an earthworm or if he was just pissed about his garden being desecrated, but the Pumpkin Kingpin woke up, and he was pissed. Which I said. But yes, big giant pumpkin with vines for limbs and could summon little pumpkin things and there were a million of them. But we won, because we're awesome.

T.K. BAHA: Aaaall right! Hallowed Hollow is safe, once again! Heehee! Come on back for your reward whenever you want, old pal!

AXTON: ...that's it?

GAIGE: What do you mean? You were there, you know what happened.

AXTON: Well, yeah, but it was a little more complicated than “we fought, we won.”

GAIGE: Did you want a blow by blow recap? Cuz it's not that interesting.

KRIEG: HEMOPHILIA!

MAYA: [sound of gunfire] Gaige, flank it!
GAIGE: [sound of digistration] Get 'em, boy!

AXTON: *Turret out!*

SALVADOR: *AHAHAAAAH!*

[click]

GAIGE: See? Boring. We fought, we won, nobody died or anything. And at the end of it all, we were covered in blood, pumpkin guts, and I maybe threw up a couple times, but I'm not sure if that was the blood or the candy.

AXTON: God, that candy...I think my teeth are still chattering.

GAIGE: Oh, right, the candy! Yeah, there were these candy-themed um, nanological stimulant packages that gave us buffs. And they worked great, but made us feel sick afterwards.

MAYA: I told you not to eat them.

GAIGE: I know...let that be a lesson to you, kids: Don't do drugs.

GAIGE: Then we returned to Baha and that was it!

[click]

T.K. BAHA: Thanks for coming on by, stranger. Don't see too many new folks these days. Or ever.

[click]
MAYA: I think Axton's right. That ending wasn't as strong as it could be.

GAIGE: You gotta save something for the sequel, Maya! So to speak. Subscribers: We're not done yet. Tomorrow, tune in to hear about what happened today, with The Horrible Hunger of the Ravenous Wattle Gobbler!

AXTON: I'm pretty sure it's illegal for us to talk about that one.

GAIGE: Probably.

AXTON: You're gonna do it anyway, aren't you?

GAIGE: Of course!
Chapter Summary

The Horrible Hunger of the Ravenous Wattle Gobbler

GAIGE: Hellooo, subscribers! Yesterday we had some fun with Torgue! We're still a little bit behind here because I forgot to do an ECHO the day of Hallowed Hallow, but we'll make it work.

GAIGE: But yeah, we got a call and went to Gluttony Gulch, that pastoral wilderness slash gladiator arena slash kitchen way to the west...or east...or maybe north...of Sanctuary!

MAYA: This is what happens when we're just given Fast Travel codes with no context.

GAIGE: Yeah, yeah...anyway, Mr. Torgue called us up the second we got there.

AXTON: It was at least five seconds.

GAIGE: I'm gonna smack you.

[click]

Mr. TORGUE: WELCOME to the Torgue Corporation's HUNGER FOR VIOLENCE Extravaganza! Tonight, we're gonna watch the Vault Hunters take on the RAVENOUS WATTLE GOBBLER!

[click]

GAIGE: So I guess he kinda patched us into his PA system or whatever, it was sorta directed at everyone. But anyway. We were walking through the halls of this...arena, thing, it was kinda like a concert hall I guess, and heard Torgue talking about the “Invincible Ravenous Wattle Gobbler.” Which sounded...fun.

ZERO: It was.

GAIGE: Don't give away the ending!

AXTON: We're still alive, doesn't that already give away the ending?

[smacking sound]

AXTON: Ow, what the hell?

GAIGE: Ahem. Moving on. We found a stage thing with a big audience, and Torgue on the stage. And there was a, um, bandit tied up there, apparently he was the only survivor of the Gobbler. Like, ever. Torgue interviewed him, and then he...exploded.

MAYA: The bandit.

GAIGE: Yes! Thank you, Maya, the bandit exploded, not Mr. Torgue. Yeah, that was...not at all horrifying and random! Heh. Yes. Right.
Mr. TORGUE: HEY! GET OVER HERE SO I CAN WHISPER SOME THINGS TO YOU IN SECRET!

MAYA: Torgue, if you yell in my ear, I'm going to toss you into a random dimension.

Mr. TORGUE: Real talk. The Gobbler fight is rigged. The Torgue Board of Directors made the Gobbler unbeatable so it would eat all the contestants and get us a bunch of hits on the ECHO-net!

GAIGE: Dios mio!

SALVADOR: ...did you just—

Mr. TORGUE: But I don't want you to die, 'cuz YOU'RE COOL, AND OH CRAP I'M NOT WHISPERING ANY MORE MY BAD!

MAYA: It's...okay Torgue. [sound of patting him on shoulder]

Mr. TORGUE: You gotta get into the kitchen. Kill everybody, and poison the Gobbler's food. Once the poison takes effect, you can kill him! Also, I want him dead so I can EAT HIM! HE LOOKS DELICIOUS!

AXTON: Just to be clear...the Gobbler's a turkey, right? Not a person?

SALVADOR: Does it matter?

AXTON: Yes.

GAIGE: Well, we got into the kitchen, and Maya was a little worried about killing a bunch of random guys who were just doing their jobs or whatever, I dunno, I kinda tune her out when she does that—

MAYA: Gaige!

GAIGE: But the second they saw us, the cooks and chefs and everything pulled out guns and started shooting, so you know, self-defense and junk. Also, Torgue did an announcement again.

Mr. TORGUE: Aaand WE'RE BACK! The Vault Hunters are in the kitchen! But tonight, there's a new item on the menu: MURDER! Vault Hunters: KILL THE CHEFS!

MAYA: That was when they started shooting us.

GAIGE: Yeah, so?

MAYA: So they were fighting in self-defense.

GAIGE: We self-defensed them first!
MAYA: [sighs]

GAIGE: Anyway, the kitchen was this big sprawling metal thingy that kinda looked like a re-purposed factory, what with the glowing hot metal and the conveyor belts everywhere, but who knows. Oh yeah, and there was lots of raw meat just kinda...around. Eugh, that put me off meat for a while.

KRIEG: I GOT YOUR FOUR BASIC FOOD GROUPS, RIGHT HERE: BEANS, BACON, WHISKEY, AND LARD!

GAIGE: Ooh, dinner's ready!

MAYA: How does that—never mind, I don't want to know.

[sounds of eating]

GAIGE: Nenywhey—

MAYA: Don't talk with your mouth full.

[pause]

GAIGE: Ooh! That's good. And sorry about that, Maya.

MAYA: It's all right. Just eat your food.

AXTON: I wonder what it is?

MAYA: We agreed to never ask that question again.

GAIGE: Sorry about that subscribers! I got started a little late tonight, so I guess I'm gonna have to do this in the middle of dinner! Anyway, we had to find the head chef, Gouda Remsay I think was his name. Lemme check...yeah, that was it. He wasn't really anything special, other than the big shield. Then we got a call.

[click]

President SMITH: This is Anton Smith, president of the Torgue Corporation. You'd do well to ignore Torgue's instructions. If you want to stay alive.

Mr. TORGUE: With the chefs dead, we can prepare our own meal for the Gobbler! Get to the freezer!

MAYA: Was it really necessary to kill them all for that?

SALVADOR: I don't understand the question.

AXTON: Yeah, it was awesome, who cares?

MAYA: You people are giving me a headache.

GAIGE: That might be all the loud machines.

MAYA: ...maybe. Thank you, Gaige.

GAIGE: No problem! Now let's go kill more kitchen staff!
MAYA: [sighs]
[click]
GAIGE: I still don't see what the big deal was.
MAYA: Nothing, it's...nothing. I'm on the wrong planet to complain about this stuff.
GAIGE: Okay, you know, whatever. So there was all sorts of murder and bloodshed and stuff, with most of us shooting, Krieg carving through the bad guys while cackling like a madman—
AXTON: Like a madman?
KRIEG: THE MOMENT THEIR ARMS SPUN FREELY IN OUR AIR, THEY WERE DOOMED—FOR MAN HAS EARNED HIS RIGHT TO HOLD THIS PLANET AGAINST ALL COMERS, BY VIRTUE OF OCCASIONALLY PRODUCING SOMEONE TOTALLY BATSHIT INSANE!
AXTON: See?
GAIGE: What? He's right, he was useful.
AXTON: Stop pretending you understand him!
GAIGE: Anyway, Zero had disappeared again, but we kept finding corpses we didn't make, so I guess that was him. Eventually, we managed to fight our way over to the freezer, which was...locked. Of course. Have we ever had a mission where the door wasn't locked?
AXTON: I don't think so.
MAYA: There was that...um...
SALVADOR: Does it count if we shoot through it really easily?
KRIEG: A HAMMER IS JUST A REALLY HEAVY SET OF LOCKPICKS!
GAIGE: That hardly counts. But, anyway.
[click]
Mr. TORGUE: Damn! That door's locked! Let me activate my remote lockpicking program!
[beeping noise]
[explosion]
Mr. TORGUE: LOCKPIICK! Meedly-meedly-mow!
SALVADOR: Saw that coming.
[click]
GAIGE: So then we were in the freezer, and it was...cold. And frozen and stuff. Yeah. Oh, and big! It wasn't like some tiny little freezer, it was a bunch of big rooms. There were more chefs or whatever you want to call them inside, ready to fight us. Which they did.
AXTON: Tell them about the thing with my turret.
GAIGE: No, we already got enough meat grinder puns the first time. Oh! But I almost forgot! When we were first going into the Fridge—

SALVADOR: Freezer.

GAIGE: —right. The president dude started yelling at us again. For the first time? Did the first time count as yelling?

[click]

President SMITH: We do not allow contestants in the meat locker. Leave at once!

AXTON: So, wait, we're not allowed in the freezer, but you don't care about us killing your guys?

MAYA: That's actually a good question.

GAIGE: I'm telling you, they must have their own New-U network set up somewhere!

MAYA: Why would they have a separate system when they already have the Hyperion one scattered around?

GAIGE: I dunno, redundancy?

[click]

GAIGE: Then Torgue came back on.

SALVADOR: Is that right?

GAIGE: What do you mean is that right? You were right there, you know it's right.

SALVADOR: I mean your grammar. It sounded wrong.

MAYA: It was an odd choice of words.

GAIGE: [sighs] Fiiine, Torgue called us. Happy now?

MAYA: Very.

[click]

Mr. TORGUE: We gotta choose some meat for the Gobbler's meal! Tug on the tastiest looking skag corpses! This is totally gonna get me fired, AND I DON'T CARE!

[click]

GAIGE: Of course it would be skag meat. What else is there to eat on this stupid planet?

SALVADOR: Well, actually—

GAIGE: Please stop talking.

SALVADOR: What? What'd I do wrong?

GAIGE: Interesting way of putting it.

SALVADOR: Huh?
AXTON: Seriously man, you need to take a look at your wanted poster one of these days. ...you can read, right?

SALVADOR: As long as its not Comic Sans.

AXTON: ...is that a language?

GAIGE/ZERO: It's a font.

GAIGE: Ahem, right! So, tugging on skag corpses hanging from hooks, that activated the mechanisms, and we followed them deeper into the freezer. All while under attack from bandits, of course.

MAYA: Torgue employees who were defending their place of business, you mean.

AXTON: Don't take the high ground, lady. You lit them on fire.

MAYA: The irony was too good to pass up.

AXTON: Heh heh, you're right, that was pretty funny. Burning to death in a freezer.

GAIGE: The point is, everything was going smooth enough until we got to the third corpse, and Mister Presidential interfered.

[click]

President SMITH: I don't know what your plan is, but I don't like it. Tributes! Get the Vault Hunters out of my kitchen!

[click]

GAIGE: He moved the meat out of reach, and these tributes came out of the floor. You know, gladiator tributes? Anyway, we had to deal with Glasspool, a pirate guy from Wurmwater who was actually kinda deadly with those swords—

KRIEG: NO MATTER HOW GOOD YOU ARE AT SOMETHING, THERE'S ALWAYS ABOUT A MILLION PEOPLE BETTER THAN YOU!

GAIGE: Ha, yes, but he still lost to Krieg's buzz-axe. And the second guy was a midget with a small hex shield and sword, William. Also from Wurmwater. I guess each province or whatever sends two? Salvador handled him pretty quick.

[click]

Mr. TORGUE: HOT DIGGITY [bleep]! Those dudes didn't stand a chance! You almost feel bad for them but then you start laughing because you were technically acting in self-defense, so SCREW THEM! VIOLENCE DOESN'T SOLVE ANYTHING, EXCEPT FOR ALL THE THINGS IT DOES!

[click]

GAIGE: I think that sums up the legal argument quite well, don't you?

MAYA: If there were any lawyers left on this planet, I would have shot them for trying to serve us a court order.
GAIGE: Whatever. So we ran up and around the freezer thingy and got the third skag corpse for the Gobbler's food meal poison. Then we had to grind up the meat in the kitchen.

GAIGE: That went about as you'd expect, all things considered. People tried to kill us, we killed them first, and somebody almost fell in the damn mulcher...conveyer belt thing and almost died!

SALVADOR: I said I was sorry.

GAIGE: Oh, and the president yelled at Torgue some more. Torgue made a pun, Smith insulted him, and Torgue cried a little. Oh, wait, was I not supposed to mention that last part?

Mr. TORGUE: I AM COMFORTABLE ENOUGH IN MY MASCULINITY TO CRY IN FRONT OF PEOPLE!

GAIGE: So, we're good! And everyone still has our stupid ECHO codes.

MAYA: Torgue has had them for a while now, though. At least since the tournament.

AXTON: She changed them after we found Krieg, when we were planning to go on that secret mission.

GAIGE: Proper password protection is the key to good security!

MAYA: But...Gaige, these aren't passwords. They're identification codes. It would be like legally changing your name just so you can go undercover.

GAIGE: Oh! That reminds me! Technically, you're supposed to be calling me Luci.

MAYA: [sighs]

GAIGE: Why do you keep doing that?

AXTON: Just...continue.

GAIGE: And why is your forehead all red?

AXTON: Please continue.

GAIGE: Whatever. So, yes, we got back to the beginning of the kitchen or wherever it is we entered it from, ground the meat, I almost got killed by a crazy midget who walks like a drunken walrus—

SALVADOR: I'm not a midget!

GAIGE: —and got all the sorted out. Torgue called to congratulate us on pushing a button a few times, and then sent us to the Stabberjabber nests to get the poison. You know, for the meat. For the murder. Anyway.

[click]

Mr. TORGUE: I ran out of explosives, so I'm actually going to open this door remotely WITHOUT BLOWING IT UP!

[pause]
Mr. TORGUE: PSYCH!

[explosion]

[click]

GAIGE: Let that be a lesson, kids: Torgue always has explosives. Always.

SALVADOR: Even when he doesn't?

GAIGE: Especially when he doesn't. [snorting laugh]

AXTON: That's a reference to something, isn't it? Not everybody watches your weird ECHO-net shows.

GAIGE: You think every show that isn't forty-five minutes of wall-to-wall action plus commercials is weird.

AXTON: Yes.

[pause]

GAIGE: O-kay! Right, so Torgue blew the door to the outside, and then we were outside, with the Stabberjabbers, which are these giant flying insect guys that stab you. And jab you too, probably. Anyway, you know who called again because SOMEONE is a sore loser!

MAYA: He hadn't lost yet.

GAIGE: But he was gonna.

[click]

President SMITH: You know you're following an idiot, yes?

AXTON/MAYA: Yes.

President SMITH: Torgue created his explosive gun tech, then sold it to us for twelve dollars and a high-five.

GAIGE: C'mon Torgue, I literally find more money in the trash.

President SMITH: We kept him on purely for PR reasons. But you've all outlived your usefulness. TRIBUTE! Kill!

[click]

GAIGE: And then more tributes popped up. Axel and Rese, Tributes of Opportunity. I didn't realize Opportunity had any people in it yet. Maybe the engineers moved in officially after we massacred the place and killed their boss and all that? Anyway, one had a jetpack—

AXTON: Why don't we have jetpacks?

GAIGE: Blame Pandora's gravity. Makes it annoying. Anyway, jetpack dude was annoying, but not-jetpack dude was easy enough.

GAIGE: So then we proceeded to the nests things—
Mr. TORGUE: WHEN GOD CLOSES A DOOR, I BLOW IT THE F*CK UP!

GAIGE: Was that really necessary?

SALVADOR: Yes.

GAIGE: [sighs] Yeah, so Torgue blew up a wall in our way. Anyway, nests. They looked a lot like varkids—both the nests and the actual stabberjabbers—so I think they're a near cousin or whatever. We had to slag one of the fliers before taking it down because...something. Reasons. Yeah.

MAYA: Slag has some very interesting effects on any biological organism, so it's only to be expected that it might do something to their poison. Considering our goal, slagging them actually made sense.

GAIGE: Uh-huh, like I said, reasons. But yeah, they were fliers, so they were annoying, but eventually we managed to slag and bag enough of them without anyone important falling off the cliff and needing to respawn.

SALVADOR: That wasn't my fault! Who put a cliff where I was gunzerking? And you were crying when I came back! You always do!

GAIGE: You think? Maybe I can kill you now and we can see if I start crying, huh?

MAYA: Gaige...

GAIGE: Ugh...sorry, Maya.

MAYA: Ahem.

GAIGE: ...and Salvador.

SALVADOR: Hmph.

GAIGE: Where was I?

ZERO: Slagged.

GAIGE: Yes, thank you. So we got all the slagged poison glands, presidential dude called to threaten Torgue more, and we went back to the kitchen to toss the poison in the soup slash gravy slash whatever it is we made. Which we did. Kinda used it as a marinade. And then we used the conveyer belt to move it into the oven, or “cookery,” as Torgue called it. Ridiculous name for an oven.

AXTON: Glass houses, girl.

GAIGE: When have I ever referred to an oven as anything but an oven?

AXTON: Never, but you keep calling the vault back at HQ the “hidey hidey safe place.”

GAIGE: That's just to avoid confusion with the Vault.
AXTON: Uh-huh.

GAIGE: Anyway, I keep getting interrupted, but the point is that we cooked the meal. Oh, and fought off the hordes of chefs the president guy sent to stop us. Lots of yelling all around. I think Zero specced back into Bloodshed at some point, because he was running around with Krieg killing everything in melee rather than sniping like usual.

GAIGE: So, yeah, no surprises there, we just waited for the food to be done while murdering everyone who came after us and listening to Torgue's ramblings.

(click)

Mr. TORGUE: By the prickling of my buns, something tasty this way comes! SHAKESPEAR!

(click)

GAIGE: And then the food was done. It came out as a pie, oddly, because I don't remember putting any dough in there...

(click)

Mr. TORGUE: My taste buds are aflame with the power of a thousand NUCLEAR BOMBS! My mouth is watering so much, you can drown a small village in my cheeks! THE TASTE-POCALYPSE IS UPON US!

(click)

AXTON: Was anyone else worried that he was going to try and eat the poisoned pie?

GAIGE: No, yeah, I thought that too, but no, he meant he was gonna eat the Gobbler after it ate the pie. He wasn't going to eat the poison he made us make. He's not that stupid...probably.

GAIGE: So we took the elevators up while the giant pie was getting carried out by the crane, and ended up in this big open field, with some sort of weird giant cornucopia filled with food in front of us. Very odd. Anyway, turns out we weren't the only ones using the elevators, so the tributes attacked and tried to kill us.

AXTON: You—

GAIGE: Oh, you're right, I forgot Smithy calling when we were in the elevator!

(click)

President SMITH: You know why we made the Gobbler invincible, Torgue? So you could kill it. After dozens of failed attempts by other contestants, you were supposed to finally kill it, on camera, while wielding our most expensive guns. You would have looked like a hero!

Mr. TORGUE: WHY BE A HERO WHEN YOU CAN EAT ONE!?

President SMITH: You are the dumbest person in the world.

MAYA: Do you know what planet you're on? I once watched a cannibal rat eat his own foot.

(click)

AXTON: More glory for us this way. But what I was gonna say is that you skipped the part where
Smith set the tributes on us.

GAIGE: Oh, yeah! Uh, the president set the other tributes on us.

[pause]

AXTON: That's it?

GAIGE: What else needs to be said?

AXTON: Eh.

GAIGE: The point is, the Gobbler gobbled up his meal while the elevator shields were still up, and we had to survive until it took effect. The poison, I mean. So yeah, we were fighting tributes outside the Cornucopia while a twenty-foot tall turkey killed people. I love Torgue so much.

GAIGE: There were like a million tributes there—

MAYA: There were ten. That's the traditional number.

GAIGE: Yeah, that's what I said. Let's see, there was a pair from Frostburn, a pair from the Southern Shelf, Lynchwood, Sawtooth Cauldron, and...somewhere else. It was all kinda a blur, you know...

ZERO: Sanctuary.

GAIGE: You sure?

ZERO: Yes.

GAIGE: Okay, I guess the last pair was from Sanctuary. Weird. Anyway, we were doing our awesome murderizing and all that when suddenly—

[pause]

GAIGE: Crap, what's wrong with this thing, the button is sticking—

[click]

Mr. TORGUE: THE POISON'S WORKING! IT'S WORKING! The Gobbler is killable! LET THE TASTE-POCALYSE BEGIN!

President SMITH: This is your last chance, Torgue. Call this off, or you're out of the company!

Mr. TORGUE: Whatever! I'll just work for Moxxi! Blow things up PRO-BONER!

[click]

MAYA: I think that pun actually hurt.

GAIGE: Needless to say, we didn't stop. Because that would be stupid. We did kill off all the other tributes before finishing off the Gobbler, though. When it wasn't invincible, it was actually pretty...vincible. I mean, it's a giant turkey. What did you expect it to do? It had these weird egg bomb things, but they were easy to dodge.

AXTON: And a ground-pound.

MAYA: And those little mini-gobblers.
GAIGE: Yes, yes, it's not like it just sat there and took it. But it was still easy! And then it was dead.

[click]

Mr. TORGUE: I'm gonna eat the F*CK outta this thing! NAPKINS MAY OR MAY NOT BE INVOLVED!

[click]

GAIGE: And that was that, I suppose. I mean, prezzy officially kicked Torgue out and maybe threatened his life a little bit, and there was the afterparty and we listened to Torgue's grandma's rambling stories and only Salvador managed to stay awake, but other than that, nothing big.

MAYA: Krieg killed a dozen Torgue Corporation assassins.

GAIGE: What? When did that happen?

KRIEG: I'M PROUD THAT I WROTE A COMIC WHERE A LOVECRAFTIAN HORROR IS STOPPED IN ITS TENDRILLY TRACKS BY A STUFFED ANIMAL!

GAIGE: Well, still, I would have liked to know at the time.

AXTON: [sighs] Stop pretending you can understand him.

MAYA: Just let it go.

GAIGE: And that, subscribers, is the full tale of the Horrible Hunger of the Ravenous Wattle Gobbler! Tomorrow, I'll go over what we did for that most special of all holidays, Mercenary Day! See you all then!

AXTON: You can't actually see them. And they can't even see you.

GAIGE: It's just an expression Axton, gawd. Why are you only literal when it pisses me off?

AXTON: You just answered your own question.
Chapter Summary

How Marcus Saved Mercenary Day

GAIGE: Happy Mercenary Day, everyone! It's that magical time of the year when everyone puts aside their differences and spends lots of money to buy each other things! Unless you're one of those weirdos who tries to make stuff instead. Way to miss the point.

AXTON: It was also yesterday.

GAIGE: I don't care! The point is that we went to this place called Frost Bottom to help Marcus with something. It's about as snowy and icy and whatnot as you'd expect from that name. Which, uh, means very. Lots of snow and ice. Yeah.

GAIGE: I guess I should mention that Frost Bottom doesn't have a Fast Travel node, for some reason. We had to go to Marcus' shop in the Dust, and then go through a non-dematerlizing subspace portal...which he kept in his closet, for some reason.

MAYA: Pretty sure it was a wardrobe.

GAIGE: Okay, sure. It was pretty weird, but portals always are. Ironically, non-demat portals were actually intended to ease the transition, but the cognitive dissonance cause by taking one step and being in a completely different area is actually worse in most respects.

KRIEG: WE CAME THROUGH THAT BIG ROUND THING!

GAIGE: True, there are other advantages. But anyway, snow, ice, and frost-flavored bullymongs. Yum. I mean, they were listed in the HUD as yetis, but c'mon, they were bullymongs. There was a big badass one guarding the town with like a dozen others, but he died like the rest.

GAIGE: The town was the fun part! It's called Gingerton, and it was all decked out for Mercenary Day, with a traditional big-ass Mercenary Tree in the town square and everything. Well, it was more like a circle.

MAYA: It's still called a square. I think.

GAIGE: What? Why? If it's not a square, then why call it a square?

AXTON: It goes all the way back to ancient—

MAYA: Stop making stuff up.

AXTON: Yes ma'am.

GAIGE: Anyway, when we got there the town was frozen. Like, completely covered in ice, everything boarded up and stuff. I guess that explains why Marcus didn't hear about his gun shipment. Oh, and that's why we were there, by the way. He sent them some guns.
MARCUS: The town's frozen? Well, at least those slapsicles aren't singing any Mercenary Day songs now. Still, frozen customers ain't repeat customers. Check out the town furnace, see if something's wrong with it.

GAIGE: Although the town was pretty, it was also pretty creepy with everyone all stiff and frozen and covered in ice and whatnot. And some of their ECHO's were still working, so every once in a while I'd look at a lump of ice and “Singing Psycho” would pop up. Or whatever. Their real names only show up if they're on your VIP list—

AXTON: Everyone knows how ECHO's work, you don't need to do the whole thing.

GAIGE: Not everyone knows, Axton! God!

SALVADOR: I know.

KRIEG: THE FACT SPHERE IS NOT DEFECTIVE. ITS FACTS ARE WHOLLY ACCURATE AND VERY INTERESTING!

GAIGE: Ugh, whatever. Point is, creepy town, tried to fix. We found the furnace pretty quick. Oh! But Marcus did give us some background on Pandora's take on the holiday, which is slightly different from back home.

MARCUS: Dahl created Mercenary Day as a promotional thing. For one day, every year all mercenary operations were free. Then the idiots of Pandora adopted it as a day of charity, and giving, and eurgh. Just vomited in my mouth a little.

GAIGE: So there were more bullymongs on the way to the furnace—now there are just a bunch of corpses. [snorting laugh]

SALVADOR: Speaking of, shouldn't we have done something about that?

MAYA: No.

SALVADOR: I just meant—

AXTON: No.

SALVADOR: But—

MAYA: You're not allowed to cook.

SALVADOR: [grumbles] Just trying to be friendly.

GAIGE: Killed bullymongs that were filling the town roads—you gotta keep them out constantly, like rats—got to the furnace. Turned out it was out of coal, because someone stole it all. Very odd. Some might even call it...mysterious.

MAYA: Gaige...
GAIGE: Sorry! Moving on. We followed the trail of coal mostly down the train tracks, and then things got a little bit...odd.

[click]

ABOMINABLE MISTER TINDER SNOWFLAKE: Gingerton is now my domain, warmbloods! CHILDREN! Get frosty.

MARCUS: Trap! Tiny snowmen!

[click]

GAIGE: Yeah, a giant snowman called to threaten us—because the entire fricken' world has our ECHO codes, for some reason—and then all the littler ones animated to attack us. I'm guessing a variant nano-plague, maybe some sort of hydro-kinetic technology, or even that cryo-elemental stuff you hear rumors about all the time. Anyway, yes, we fought small and angry animated snowmen.

AXTON: Eh. It's been that kinda week. The day before was a giant turkey, and before that a pumpkin commanding an army of skeletons.

[click]

MARCUS: I thought snowmen were just a myth, like happy people. They must have frozen the town and ambushed my train full of guns! Get to the tracks and check out the train, would you?

ABOMINABLE MISTER TINDER SNOWFLAKE: I feel a cold wind coming on! Don't you, children?

[click]

GAIGE: And then more snowmen animated to attack us. But they were made out of the snow or snow-colored nano-particles or whatever that had been blocking our way, so that saved us a few hours work. Oh, and we killed all the snowmen. Or de-animated them or whatever. We followed the tracks to a bridge across the gorge that was up, Marcus yelled some more—

[click]

MARCUS: The idiots of Gingerton bought a bunch of guns from me so they could just give them to each other. As presents. Whatever! If they're so nice, how come they're frozen? Checkmate.

MAYA: Marcus, those two things have nothing—

GAIGE: He's already gone.

MAYA: Of course he is.

[click]

GAIGE: Uh, thank you, Zero, but I was going to skip that.

ZERO: You're welcome.

GAIGE: Anyway. It was this tiny little two or three building train station and a bridge over a gorge or ravine or really small canyon or whatever you want to call it. And we found unfrozen people! But they were bandits, so they tried to kill us. We won, of course, because we're like a billion times more awesome than them, but it was still annoying. Why is it always the bad guys who survive this kind of
thing?

GAIGE: Well, we crossed the ravine canyon thing on foot, got another rambling call from Marcus—

[click]

MARCUS: You know, I tried to be charitable once. I gave Moxxi everything when we were married. You know she's why I'm fat, right? She said, “Marcus, make your enemies underestimate you. If you're ruthless, look fat. If you're smart, look sexy.” Bright girl. I miss her sometimes.

[click]

GAIGE: I seriously think he might have been drunk.

AXTON: During his entire marriage?

GAIGE: No, just when he was sending us around Gingerton.

AXTON: Oh. That makes more sense.

GAIGE: Once we killed all the bandits on the other side of the gorge, we went up this short little mountain road and found Tinsel Waystation, where the train was waiting. More bandits, of course, because for some reason the evil snowmen left them alone.

SALVADOR: Well, they did have guns and snow hats.

GAIGE: Good point. They had also enslaved a badass bullymong to pull the train into a cave. Have no idea how they managed to tame one of those things.

[click]

MARCUS: Those bandits are stealing my guns! Take 'em out!

[click]

GAIGE: Uh, thanks Zero. Don't think that was completely necessary, but still, thanks.

ZERO: You're welcome.

GAIGE: Yes, the train had all the guns on it—which of course, explains why the bandits wanted it. Maya took out the bullymong while the rest of us handled the actual bandits, so that all went pretty smoothly. I mean, I got shot in my good arm a little when my shields failed, but that's what insta-health is for.

GAIGE: After all that, we had to lower the bridge, which was slightly harder than it sounds because the gears were frozen, but we made it work with judicious application of extreme firepower.

MAYA: Axton, have you been leaving those action magazines around for Gaige to read?


MAYA: Because she just quoted one of them.

AXTON: Which one?

MAYA: The one you keep under your mattress.
AXTON: …oh.

GAIGE: You guys know I can hear you!

MAYA: Right, sorry, not important. For now. Please continue.

GAIGE: [sighs] Lowered the bridge, which started an escort mission to protect the train as it rolled towards town. Marcus said—

MAYA: A-HEM.

GAIGE: What? OH! Right! Marcus said...nothing! Nothing at all! Um, no, actually he told us to signal the conductor to get the train moving, which we did. She sounded like a little old lady, and she insisted on keeping us nearby to keep her safe.

GAIGE: Which was a good idea, as you can probably expect, because anything and everything that can go wrong will go wrong on Pandora. The train got attacked, because that's just what happens on this planet. And we killed all the snowmen and bandits Snowflake sent after us, because that is also what happens on this planet. Ha!

GAIGE: So as the town was unfreezing—

MAYA: The coal.

GAIGE: Oh, right! So the reason the town unfreezed was because the train also had coal, in addition to the guns. We dumped that into the furnace, and turned the furnace back on. Boom, town's back in business. We got a call from Smaller-than-average Timothy, thanking us for bringing the guns back and saving the town, and Marcus had a change of heart—

MAYA: Gaige...

GAIGE: —heee changed his mind about sending us home, and decided we should have some fun in the village first. So we went down to the village. To have fun.

GAIGE: Well, Timothy seemed to be the only one awake by the time we got down there, and he pointed out that Snowflake [affects British accent] wouldn't take kindly to us saving the town. [normal voice] Specifically, he asked Marcus for help. After pointing out that they had no money to pay with, by the way.

[click]

MARCUS: [sighs] Vault Hunters, track down the giant snowman and kill him. It will be...a Mercenary Day gift to Gingerton.

[click]

GAIGE: You know how he is about giving stuff away for free. He doesn't. But I guess he had no choice this time.

GAIGE: Everyone was pretty much awake by the time we left, singing and dancing and all sorts of other town stuff. I have no idea how the townspeople survived frozen for so long without even getting frostbite—

MAYA: Extra glucose in the blood helps with that, and of course the regenerative nanites contained in some medicines or even foods would repair any damage they did take.
AXTON: …are you telling me these people all survived because they were eating special cookies?

MAYA: Remember in Hallowed Hollow, when you ate that candy and ran at like twice your normal speed? It's like that. Except hopefully with less throwing up after.

GAIGE: Anyway, we had to go to this giant frozen lake in the middle of nowhere to “summon” the snowman. What is he, a demon? Actually, that would explain a lot.

MAYA: Gaige, there's no such thing as demons. Obviously, that hat of his was infused with raw elemental power which animated the snow.

GAIGE: I know, but let me pretend it's something weird and supernatural, okay?

MAYA: [sighs]

GAIGE: Point is, we got to the lake.

[click]

ABOMINABLE MISTER TINDER SNOWFLAKE: What are you doing!? Get away from the lake! I just want to be left alone so that I can kill everybody after you leave!

[click]

GAIGE: So, clearly, we were on the right track. We got to the edge of the lake and saw this giant hat at the bottom of the mountain, and Timothy called to explain how we needed to piss him off to wake him up. Uh, piss of the snowman, not Timothy. Right.

[click]

SMALLER-THAN-AVERAGE TIMOTHY: Oh, I know! Use those bells to play the Gingerton anthem! Our people will sing their hearts out with joy! Mister Snowflake hates the sound of joyful singing.

[click]

AXTON: I wasn't exactly fond of it either.

MAYA: I think it was so sweet it gave me diabetes.

GAIGE: Well, as you can probably guess, it worked. He woke up screaming for it to stop, then burrowed under the ice and up into the the frozen lake we were standing on.

GAIGE: This guy was huge. Fifty feet tall, maybe more, and probably twenty wide.

SALVADOR: You sure? Think it was twenty and ten.

GAIGE: Whatever, close enough! And yes, he was a snowman. With a hat. It's been that kinda day.

AXTON: It's been that kinda week.

GAIGE: Yeah. Well, the point is, we shot him until he died. The end.

AXTON: That is not the end, you have to give at least some detail on the fight.

GAIGE: What? He kept dodging back underground, he almost killed me by knocking me off the
mountain but Maya saved me, he kept summoning little snowmen and used his giant candy cane like a sword and threw snowballs the size of cars at us and—

MAYA: Breathe.

GAIGE: [gasping breath]

MAYA: The point she's trying to make is that we had fire weapons, and he was made of snow. He went down pretty quickly. Now where is that bookmark...

[click]

SMALLER-THAN-AVERAGE TIMOTHY: He's weakened! Now, quickly, take his magic hat! It's the source of his power!

[click]

GAIGE: See? Magic!

MAYA: Just because someone says something is magic doesn't mean it is. Unless you're saying my Siren powers are magic?

GAIGE: Yes.

AXTON: Yeah, I'm with the cyborg on this one.

SALVADOR: Eres una bruja buena.

KRIEG: MAJOKKO!

MAYA: [sighs] Maybe that wasn't the best example. Let's just move on, okay?

GAIGE: Sure! So we took Snowflake's hat, he melted, and Timothy called to say that we had saved the town from tyranny and all that.

[click]

MARCUS: It's a Mercenary Day miracle! Well, I think we've all learned a little something today. Come on back and I'll give you something out of the gun shipment! On the house.

[click]

GAIGE: When we got back to town—

AXTON: Back up a second there. I'm still confused as to what lesson we were supposed to learn here.

MAYA: Innocent children can melt even the coldest hearts?

GAIGE: Or don't play with magic hats.

SALVADOR: Unless you're well-armed!

AXTON: I like that one better.

MAYA: [sighs] Okay, yeah, that probably makes more sense.
GAIGE: So, yeah. When we got back to town, we opened up the train, and Marcus gave us two full chests of loot. Big chests, too, not the little white ones. After that, we just had to help deliver the guns to the villagers, and it was Mercenary carols and eggnog all around!

AXTON: That was a pretty good party.

GAIGE: You drank so much, do you even remember it?

AXTON: That's how you know it's a good party.

GAIGE: Whatever you say. Tomorrow is Mad Moxxi and the Wedding Day Massacre!

SALVADOR: What? But we already did that.

GAIGE: I mean the story will be tomorrow.

SALVADOR: Oh, okay.

GAIGE: See you later, subscribers!
Chapter Summary

Mad Moxxi and the Wedding Day Massacre

GAIGE: Hello, subscribers! Today is the story of Mad Moxxi and the Wedding Day Massacre [sarcastically] a thrilling tale of the triumph of true love.

AXTON: Oh god...

GAIGE: What?

AXTON: It's...nothing, just do whatever you want.

GAIGE: Okay, whatever. We Fast-Traveled to Rotgut Distillery at Moxxi's request. It's a hilly area overlooking the ocean or whatever, which apparently is good for alcohol? Somehow? Hell if I know. Grapes. Anyway, we found Moxxi easy enough.

AXTON: You forgot the lovebirds in front of the mission board.

GAIGE: Sure, okay.

[click]

MAD MOXXI: Oh, how sweet! Love is in the air.

KRIEG: I DO LOVE NOTHING IN THE WORLD SO WELL AS YOU! IS NOT THAT STRANGE!?

[explosion]

MAD MOXXI: Oh! T-that's uh...probably not an omen or anything.

GAIGE: Psh, yeah. Lightning explodes happy couples all the time.

MAYA: I think she meant that lightning wouldn't be exploding any other couples.

[click]

GAIGE: Anyway, we passed the smoking remains of the lovebirds, and found the church where Moxxi had holed up, in the middle of Bad Omen Basin, which was in the middle of a thunderstorm. Which, uh, might have already been obvious from context?

AXTON: Who names a place “Bad Omen Basin”?

MAYA: Bandits.

AXTON: Point.

[click]
MAD MOXXI: Ellie and I have waged war on the Zaford and Hodunk bandit clans for years now, but it's time for peace. Let's go talk to the preacher I hired.

MAYA: Wait, we're here for a wedding?

AXTON: I love weddings!

SALVADOR: Seriously?

AXTON: Do you have any idea how loose chicks get at weddings? I met my ex-wife at one.

GAIGE: Maya, why are you covering my ears?

MAYA: No reason.

[sound of door opening]

MAD MOXXI: Where is he?

[sound of rocket, and a crash]

MAD MOXXI: Oh. There he is.

INUENDBOT 5000: What a rough landing! Thankfully. I like it rough!

MAYA: This is your preacher.

MAD MOXXI: Tell 'em my plan, Innuendobot.

INUENDBOT 5000: Two. Star-crossed lovers. One from each. Clan. Wish to be. Married. We will ensure their. Pairing. And bring peace to both clans. My hat looks like a. Penis.

AXTON: I think that's a stretch.

KRIEG: MR. FREUD WOULD HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT YOUR OBSESSION WITH LONG, POINTY OBJECTS!

MAD MOXXI: Uh, noted. Anyway Vaulters, the lovers are nearby. Follow me. I need you to protect the bride and groom so this wedding goes off without a hitch. If we do this right, we'll end the clan war for good.

ELLIE: Hey Moxxi! I heard you're trying to get the clans to team up! You're making a mistake! If the clans unite, they'll just get even more powerful and TAKE US ALL OUT! You gotta kill 'em!

MAD MOXXI: Violence won't solve this, El. We tried your explosive climax, but now it's time for my gentler touch.

[sound of gate opening]

MAD MOXXI: Oh, the storm stopped. How 'bout that. Maybe love really is in the air.

GAIGE: Do you hear gunfire?

[click]

AXTON: I'm still a little confused there. I thought we killed all the Hodunks at that train station, and then all the Zafords when they called us out because little miss robot couldn't keep her tongue from
SALVADOR: A clan is more than a couple dozen people. Those were just the leaders and their honor guards. They've probably got new bosses by now.

GAIGE: Anyway, moving on, yes, that was gunfire in the distance. Of course it was. Thankfully it was just the Hodunks fishing for threshers, but still, it was kinda disturbing, all things considered. Who fishes for threshers, anyway?

SALVADOR: We did.

GAIGE: It was supposed to be subtle foreshadowing, Sal! You ruined it!

SALVADOR: Sorry.

GAIGE: You should be. [sighs] Where was I? Right, Hodunk Holler. No, not Hollow, Holler. Anyway, we found the happy couple at their half-finished house. They were a couple of goliaths, actually. Smarter than your average goliath, I guess, maybe.

[click]

BRIDGET HODUNK: Don't call me a dumbass, dumbass!

COLIN ZAFORD: You bought us a house with only two walls!

BRIDGET HODUNK: It's a fixer-upper, you shriv!

COLIN ZAFORD: I'll fix you up, you stupid [unintelligible muttering]

BRIDGET HODUNK: Hey! Watch your language! If you hadn't lost the baby a day ago, he would have heard that!

COLIN ZAFORD: I can barely hear anything over the sound of gunfire!

AXTON: Should we talk to them, or...run away screaming?

MAYA: Uh, excuse me—

BRIDGET HODUNK: Piss off, chump! I hate Vault Hunters, but I’m conserving my energy to knock THE TAR OUTTA COLIN!

MAD MOXXI: Oh, great. I guess there's trouble in paradise, but we still need them to get married if the clans are gonna end the war.

ELLIE: You can always just kill 'em.

MAD MOXXI: Thankfully, I know an old love potion recipe.

MAYA: Maybe killing them would be more merciful.

MAD MOXXI: We'll need something new, something old, something borrowed, and something gold.

AXTON: I'm not sure that's right.

GAIGE: Who's the love expert here, Axton?
ELLIE: Ooh! I just found something that will take care of half of them ingredients! Vault Hunters, head to...these coordinates. Boo-yah.

[click]

GAIGE: Needless to say, we got the coordinates. We left the goliaths as they were arguing more.

GAIGE: Ellie sent us to the Moedown Motel, which was a Hodunk area across the river or stream or muddy rut in the ground or whatever you want to call it. Point is, it was on the opposite side of the gorge.

MAYA: I'm not sure it's really a gorge so much as a break in the ground.

GAIGE: Maya, I love you, but I have enough linguistical issues at the moment. It's a gorge.

MAYA: Fair enough. Gorge.

SALVADOR: Heh heh, it sounds like you guys are saying “George.”

GAIGE: [sighs]

MAYA: Joke could've been worse.

AXTON: So we were at the motel...

GAIGE: Yes, thank you Axton. And none of the Hodunks were attacking us, which was kinda weird, but there weren't too many of them around, so I guess they just didn't recognize us. The whole area had clusters of balloons everywhere, probably in celebration of the wedding that they didn't realize we were there to save.

SALVADOR: Maybe we should have explained?

KRIEG: WHAT WE'VE GOT HERE IS A FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE!

GAIGE: Anyway, before that all went sideways, we found our...something new and borrowed.

[click]

MAD MOXXI: Um...is that a baby?

ELLIE: Alright, realtalk. Babies are new, right? And he's not yours, so if you take him for a little while, he's borrowed. Heh? Eh?

MAD MOXXI: You're suggesting we throw a stolen baby into a potion.

ELLIE: What!?! No, we ain't gonna hurt him! Just kidnap him.

MAYA: We are not doing this.


SALVADOR: No, I'm with the bruja. Kidnapping—

MAYA: Stop calling me that.

SALVADOR: Kidnapping babies is bad luck.
GAIGE: Hey guys, the baby fits in the storage deck! I didn't know you could do that.

MAYA: Oh god...

HODUNK: THEM THERE VAULT TAMENS'RE TAKING SWEET BABY CHARLES! GET 'EM!

[gunfire]

ELLIE: Whoops! Sounds like those Hodunks got annngry! Better take 'em out.

KRIEG: OPEN YOUR VEINS!

AXTON: Hey, stand in front of this!

MAD MOXXI: [dry voice] Yes. Kill the Hodunk villagers who are trying to protect the baby you just stole.


[click]

GAIGE: So. Yeah. That happened. We had to fight off the entire motel. But hey, it's nobody's fault, could have happened to anyone, the important thing to do is just move on.

MAYA: You realize it's illegal to put babies in storage decks, right?

GAIGE: They have a law for that?

AXTON: They have a law for everything. Life's easier if you kinda just tune them all out.

MAYA: [sighs]

GAIGE: So, after the Hodunks were all dead through no fault of our own, Ellie called again, and we got pointed towards the distillery for some old whiskey. You know, for the something old.

GAIGE: The distillery was locked, uh, Moxxi used a colorful metaphor, but the point is it was locked. But it was also staffed by stolen—

AXTON: They might've been bought.

GAIGE: Or bought, thank you Axton, stolen Hyperion loaders, mostly of the junkbot variant. And, as per the usual, a couple of them were going a little bit cuckoo.

[click]

Junkbot ED: Woe is me. My beloved girlfriend-bot slaves away inside the distillery, and I cannot save her due to my pre-programmed self-esteem issues.

MAD MOXXI: That loader should be strong enough to bust open the doors...why don't you give him some words of encouragement?

GAIGE: Ooh, let me! Uh—

ZERO: If your love awaits / why are you standing out here? / Let's save her, stupid.

Junkbot ED: You know what? You're right! Let's go save my girlfriend!
MAYA: Surprised that worked.

[click]

GAIGE: So Ed broke down the gate, and the Zafords—it was a Zaford distillery, because why wouldn't it be—started shooting at us for some reason.

AXTON: Well, we did just break into their distillery.

GAIGE: You shush. Point is we had to protect Eddy while he kinda just walked around looking for his girlbot. And we had to stay close to him because of his stupid self-esteem programming. Eventually, he smashed through the wall and into the barrel storage area or whatever you call it, and we found his girlbot, Stella. It was a truly beautiful moment.

AXTON: She was just an ION Loader with a wig.

GAIGE: Why do we let you talk? The point is, we were in. Moxxi recommended we test a few barrels to find the right one, the old one, and the boys were enthusiastic about that. It didn't take too long, but Axton and Salvador were pretty wasted by the end.

AXTON: That was some good whiskey.

GAIGE: So we bottled it up and moved on to the next ingredient.

[click]

MAD MOXXI: Right, we've got new, old, and borrowed...you'll need to find some gold. There's gotta be some around here—the Zafords are as greedy as they come.

SALVADOR: Maybe this way?

GAIGE: That's a reinforced cargo shutter, Sal. Basically indestructible. We don't have anything that can punch through it.

MAD MOXXI: Huh. Dead end. You'll have to find a way through.

GAIGE: What did I just say? It's impossible, unless you have a way to exploit very specific weaknesses in the metal, which would require the ability to emit a class G-special hypersonic wavelength, which is just a bit outside our means—

Junkbot ED: Allow me, Vault Hunters! It's the least I can do to repay you.

[crash]

GAIGE: Oh, right, some junk loaders have emitters installed. Forgot.

MAD MOXXI: There—you're near a stash of gold coins. Grab a few and we'll have everything we need for the potion!

[click]

GAIGE: Of course, what Moxxi failed to mention was the Zafords and loaders guarding the gold coins. I mean, we dealt with them easy because we're awesome, but still. Ambushes are never fun.

AXTON: Ambushes are awesome.
GAIGE: I meant when you're getting ambushed.

AXTON: Those can be kinda fun too.

GAIGE: What?

SALVADOR: Ellie warned us.

GAIGE: Yeah, when we were already under attack.

GAIGE: Anyway, we fought a bunch of bots and guys, had to circle around half the stupid distillery, and there were some drunk threshers in a little pond of spilled booze, that was weird, and then we found the something gold. There was this big shaking pot thing—

AXTON: Which someone decided to mess with without asking first.

GAIGE: What? It was fine, it's fine. I don't know why you're making such a big deal out of it.

AXTON: My shields were down, and it almost killed me with the first shot.

GAIGE: What? I didn't know that.

AXTON: Because you were too distracted by the gold robot.

GAIGE: Psh...anyway subscribers, yes, a big gold loader popped out of the pot. It looked like a heavily customized badass loader to me. But, yeah. Gold.

[click]

ELLIE: Well, that's new.

MAD MOXXI: That thing's made outta solid gold!

[click]

GAIGE: And then it ran away, for some reason, through the walls of the distillery, or the shutters at least. And we had to chase it while fighting the Zafords and their loaders. Why did that stupid bot run, anyway?

AXTON: I think it's a reference to something.

GAIGE: To what?

AXTON: I dunno.

MAYA: Maybe it's a metaphor for greed?

AXTON: You're overthinking it.

GAIGE: Maybe. But we caught up to the thing past some more of those drunk threshers—why haven't the Zafords cleared them out? Anyway, drunk threshers, cornered the bot in the “Sparging Haus,” which, honestly, I have no idea what it was. I think it's where stuff gets mixed? Maybe? The point is Goldie stopped running.

SALVADOR: And started exploding!

GAIGE: That makes it sound like he just started randomly exploding.
SALVADOR: ...didn't he?

MAYA: ...you shot him with a pair of rocket launchers.

SALVADOR: Really? Are you sure?

MAYA: How drunk were you?

GAIGE: Well! Not to change the subject, but...we killed it. And grabbed the head for our “something gold.”

[click]

MAD MOXXI: We've got what we need. You should be able to mix the love potion right there.

GAIGE: Where?

MAYA: Here.

GAIGE: Oh.

MAD MOXXI: First, add the gold.

GAIGE: So, just drop it in the mixer, or...

MAYA: Just drop it in the mixer.

GAIGE: Dropped.

MAD MOXXI: Looking good. Now, the whiskey for something old.

GAIGE: Okay, done.

MAYA: I think you were supposed to pour it in, not toss in the bottle.

GAIGE:Oops.

ELLIE: Now toss in the baby!

MAD MOXXI: Ellie!

ELLIE: Ha, I'm kidding. Don't toss the baby, just hold it over the mixer and make it cry.

GAIGE: So, what, we should slap it, or say something mean, or—

MAYA: Everyone will tell you small lies, except the people you love, who will tell you large ones.

[sound of crying baby]

GAIGE: That worked.

ELLIE: Awesome! The baby's crying.

MAD MOXXI: ...seriously? This right here? This is not something good guys do.

GAIGE: Um, well, yeah, but—
ELLIE: YOLO!

MAD MOXXI: Never say that again.

[click]

GAIGE: Ahem. I would just like to point out that the baby is fine, and was returned to the church completely unharmed. So that's kinda heroic, right?

MAYA: I don't think it counts when you're the one who kidnapped it in the first place.

GAIGE: Anyway! We had the love potion—after a slightly personal love discussion with Moxxi—so we left the distillery to go find the wedding to save the marriage and give the baby back and all that. Though there was a small snag. Tiny.

[click]

ELLIE: Wait—what's the whole recipe again?

MAD MOXXI: Something new, something old, something borrowed, and something gold. I'm pretty sure that's it.

ELLIE: You sure? Ain't it “something blue?”

MAD MOXXI: What? Blue doesn't rhyme with gold.

[click]

GAIGE: That miiiight explain what happened next. Maybe. Either way, totally not our fault, we just followed instructions.

GAIGE: Well, the couple weren't—wasn't? I dunno—they were not at their half-home, so we went to the church instead, and gave Moxxi back the baby. She told us where the wedding would be, and we were off.

AXTON: Open air weddings are nice. Less stuffy.

GAIGE: Sure. Anyway, we had to go through this ratty old cave, but eventually found ourselves on this beautiful cliff with a spectacular view of the ocean. Absolutely wonderful location. Two thumbs up to whoever chose it, though the Hodunk trailers undermined the effect a bit.

SALVADOR: Too bad about what happened next.

AXTON: Those can be fun, too.

GAIGE: You're a horrible person and you're going straight to hell.

AXTON: Excuse me, which of us here exploded a little girl?

GAIGE: It's not like she was like, five.

AXTON: But she was still small, and now...everywhere.

GAIGE: Why do I keep telling you things?

GAIGE: The point is, subscribers, that the wedding actually seemed to be going all right. I mean,
yeah, the bride and groom were yelling at each other and stuff, but it was that kinda love slash hate yelling, you know? I guess. It's kinda hard to explain, I dunno.

AXTON: You didn't record it?

GAIGE: Yeah, but the sound quality is terrible. We were too far away.

AXTON: Oh.

GAIGE: The point is, we got there. Oh! And the bride and groom were both goliaths. I said that before, right? Well, it bears repeating.

[click]

INNUENDOBOT 5000: You came. How wonderful. The bride and groom quiver with anticipation.

MAD MOXXI: Uhhm...

INNUENDOBOT 5000: Dearly be-loved. We are gathered here to—

COLIN ZAFORD: Screw ALL of ya!

BRIDGET HODUNK: You matchmakin' scrubs can all go RIGHT to hell, especially that traitorous, dumbass bag-o-boobs Moxxi!

SALVADOR: Ooh...

MAD MOXXI: You sonuva— [deep breath] No. We're here for peace. Just—put the potion into the ceremonial punch bowl.

BRIDGET HODUNK: I ain't gonna drink that!

COLIN ZAFORD: Course you wouldn't, you coward!

GAIGE: Course you wouldn't, you coward!

MAYA: Shh, it's fine. Wait a second.

BRIDGET HODUNK: The hell I am! [sound of chugging drink] Ha! Who's yella now?

COLIN ZAFORD: I ain't lettin' no Hodunk princess outdrink me, hell no! [sound of chugging drink]

BRIDGET HODUNK: Wuhghh...say, you look pretty good all of a sudden.

COLIN ZAFORD: Uhrghh...yeah, I'm all...flustered. [laughs happily]

GAIGE: It worked? It worked!

AXTON: Yeah, it [sniffs] it worked great...

GAIGE: ...are you cry—

AXTON: SHUT UP! YOU DON'T KNOW ME!

[click]

GAIGE: So, you know, that was working all pretty and pink and wonderful and stuff. And then
things went...sideways. Again, I want to emphasize: Goliaths.

[click]

COLIN ZAFORD: Aw, we can't kiss with these helmets on.
BRIDGET HODUNK: Yeah, let's take 'em off. Love ain't no fun with protection.
MAYA: Gaige, ignore that last part.
GAIGE: What?
SALVADOR: Wait, isn't this a bad—
[metal clang as helmets are tossed aside]
AXTON: Crap. Turret out!
GAIGE: But what about the wedding—
MAYA: Forget the wedding! Drop your robot, we'll keep the bride occupied! KRIEG! Get the groom!
KRIEG: HERE COMES THE BAD TIMES!
[click]

GAIGE: I don't think we need to go through the blow-by-blow there, but, yeah. It was...not a normal wedding. But, hey, they seemed pretty happy, even as they were killing their family members and ripping their guts out with their bare hands and stuff, so I'm gonna call that a win. A win for love.

AXTON: We killed the happy couple, does that count as a win for love?
GAIGE: Sure, why not. Maybe they respawned. They'd respawn with helmets on, right?
MAYA: Probably, but I'm still not sure anyone else is actually hooked up to any New-U network. Who owns this area? Torgue?
AXTON: Might be Dahl, actually. They used to have New-U stations, but Hyperion muscled them out.
MAYA: I think Moxxi, at least, is assuming they're staying dead.
GAIGE: Oh, right!
[click]
MAD MOXXI: Well, I couldn't have messed that up worse.
SALVADOR: [quietly] Does that mean she's not blaming us?
MAD MOXXI: The bride and groom are dead, the clans are still at war, and I kinda shot our whole “let's start acting like good guys” plan in the foot.
ELLIE: Told you the recipe called for “something blue!”
GAIGE: Well, the potion worked fine, the problem was—

PAPPY HODUNK: You killed the newlyweds! You MONSTERS!

PA ZAFORD: Yer bleedin' right! From here on out, the Zaford clan declares a blood war on Moxxi and the Vault Hunters!

PAPPY HODUNK: And the Hodunks are with ya!

MAD MOXXI: Oh, hey, I guess we did sorta unite the clans, even if it's just so they can kill us. I, uh...I'll call that a win.

ELLIE: ...hey. Remember that time we stole a baby?

[click]

AXTON: I'm confused. Weren't we already in a blood feud with the Zafords? And the Hodunks, for that matter?

SALVADOR: I guess Mick forgot to tell everyone else?

GAIGE: Anyway, that's it, subscribers! Other than some thresher fishing and this stupid crap with Innuendobot trying to seduce us—yes, all of us, individually—there wasn't much left. We checked in with Moxxi—

[click]

MAD MOXXI: Trying really hard to find a moral to this story other than “violence is good,” but, uh, it's not—it's not coming.

[click]

GAIGE: Uh, thanks Krieg. That wasn't really necessary, though.

KRIEG: IF I WANTED ALL THE GLORY I WOULDN'T WEAR A MASK!

GAIGE: Sure.

GAIGE: So that's it! Good night subscribers! We didn't do anything today, so I guess there won't be an ECHO tomorrow. Maybe? Hammerlock was saying something about something...I dunno, I was a little distracted. So maybe we're going to a resort island for a vacation, or maybe Hyperion nuked a resort island. One of those two. I'll keep you updated.
Chapter Summary

Sir Hammerlock and the Son of Crawmerax

GAIGE: Helloooo, subscribers! Turns out we had something today after all! Today, we went to Wam Bam Island, a little tropical resorty thingy off to the northeast of Sanctuary!

AXTON: I thought someone said something about it being south.

GAIGE: No, definitely north. I checked the map this time.

AXTON: This planet's climate makes no sense.

GAIGE: Blame the Vault. The first one.

SALVADOR: Does that actually make sense?

GAIGE: Eridium is magic.

MAYA: Eridium is *not* magic.

GAIGE: Whatever! Point is, Hammerlock called us to the resort island for resort island stuff. Vacation. That's the word.

[click]

Sir HAMMERLOCK: Salutations once again! Welcome to Wam Bam Island, Pandora's number one vacation resort.
GAIGE: Is there a number two?

ZERO: No.

Sir HAMMERLOCK: After Lilith and the others arrive, our Fertility Day festival can begin! Come find me, will you?

MAYA: Wait, it's Fertility Day?

GAIGE: Yeah, you didn't know?

MAYA: I was...in the library.

GAIGE: Sanctuary has a library?

AXTON: Wait, how did you miss Fertility Day? Why else would we be doing this?

SALVADOR: Well, Hammerlock did invite us to the Aegrus hunt for no reason.

AXTON: Point.

MAYA: Look, I just lost track of time—

LILITH: Heya, killers. Go ahead and get the Fertility Fest started without us. Brick's still packing and Mordecai's trying to shove his bird back into its cage.

GAIGE: That sounds dirty.

MAYA: Gaige.
GAIGE: What? It does!

TALON: [stubborn squawk]

MORDECAI: Talon—Talon! If ya get in the cage, I'll feed you a skag head, eh?

AXTON: Pretty sure the skag head is bigger than the bird.

SALVADOR: Well, it depends on the breed. Your average wild skag's gonna be pretty big, since they eat the little ones, but domesticated ones are more of a mixed bag. Now, if he's buying the heads rather than hunting them himself—

BRICK: Where's my tuxedo t-shirt? It's a t-shirt, but it looks like a tuxedo? I wear it for slow dancing.

LILITH: Vault Hunters, I'll...get back to you.

[click]

GAIGE: So other than that minor delay, it seemed like everything was going hunky-dory. Wam Bam is a beautiful island, with lots of mountains and beaches and volcanoes and all that. Absolutely beautiful.

AXTON: The hordes of savage tribals out for our blood really helped enhance the atmosphere.

GAIGE: Not everyone enjoys killing hundreds of people!

AXTON: This from you? The girl who cackles as she kills people?

GAIGE: Th-that's totally different! I had like, four hundred Anarchy stacks!
AXTON: Uh-huh.

GAIGE: [sighs] Anyway, yes, there were of course dangerous savages on the island. I don't know if they were invaders, or restless natives, or if the resort staff just decided it would be fun to put on masks and start with the murdering.

SALVADOR: Some were pirates!

GAIGE: True, some were pirates, and they were probably actual, you know, invaders. I think. They had boats and ships, at least. They were mostly fighting craboids on the beaches. What kind of invading army can't handle the indigenous wildlife?

AXTON: Maybe they were cosplayers?

GAIGE: You think?

AXTON: Why else would they have wooden sailing ships?

GAIGE: Well, whatever. It actually took us a while to notice the pirates, because Zero had run off and was sniping them from a distance before we even got to them. He does that sometimes. But yeah, beautiful resort island infested with pirates and crab-things and savage-things. Fun times!

GAIGE: We found Hammerlock at the top of a little village built into the mountainside, next to the waterwheel. This was before the savages showed up, come to think. Odd. Anyway, he wasn't really concerned with all the guys trying to kill us.

[click]

Sir HAMMERLOCK: Well met! I've distilled some homemade *liqueur*. We shall party until the break of dawn, as they say.

GAIGE: Woo!
AXTON: Don’t do that.

GAIGE: Shut up.

Sir HAMMERLOCK: Let me get the door for you.

MAYA: We’ll catch up. We’re waiting for Zero.

[sound of footsteps]

[sound of large door opening]

Sir HAMMERLOCK: I initially came to the Hedonic Isles to find some rare beasties using Varkid tracking. Say, did you know that this island is said to house a former enemy of Brick, Mordecai, and Lilith’s? It’s enough to—

[sound of burrowing]

Sir HAMMERLOCK: Oh dear.

MAYA: *Crap.*

GAIGE: No, *crabs.*

LILITH: Uh, guys? Something just took Hammerlock.

MAYA: I know! [gunfire] That’s what I was trying to stop! What was that thing?

SALVADOR: I think she was talking to the others.
BRICK: So...I can stop packing, then?

LILITH: Mordecai? Any ideas?

MORDECAI: Uh, maybe—look around. Did Hammerlock leave anything behind? Anything with his scent on it?

ZERO: Here.

GAIGE: GAH! ...what's that?

ZERO: Whiskey.

GAIGE: Where'd you find it?

ZERO: The tribal-themed lockers conveniently provided for guests.

GAIGE: I think I like you better when you speak only in haiku. At least then I know I'm not supposed to understand you.

ZERO: Can we start moving? / I grow tired of this spot / I long to explore.

GAIGE: Well, okay. [louder] Buncha Hammerlock's booze is here.

MORDECAI: Perfect. Alright, you gotta get that booze to a Varkid egg. First, find an injector.

GAIGE: Ooh, a hundred bucks says this turns out to be a horrible crime against nature!

AXTON: No bet.
SALVADOR: [distantly] Lo encontré!

MORDECAI: Good. Now inject Hammerlock's booze into a Varkid pod, and it'll track the scent for you.

BRICK: Usin' a Varkid to track smells? You sure that'll work?

GAIGE: Science!

MORDECAI: No question. Blood did it, and I'm teachin' Talon now. In a couple weeks, he'll be able to track you and Lil anywhere.

LILITH: ...wait, you're teaching Talon to track us?

MORDECAI: Yeah. Borrow some of your old shirts you don't use anymore, tear 'em up, give 'em to Talon so he can track the scent. Like Brick's weird tuxedo t-shirt thing.

BRICK: THAT WAS MY DRESSY CLOTHES!

[click]

GAIGE: So, we found a pod a bit past where Hammerlock was grabbed—there were other closer pods, but no, those wouldn't work because reasons— injected it, and watched a very drunk Varkid hatch.

AXTON: That was the funniest part of the whole damn trip. Watching a Varkid stumble around like a drunken idiot. And then explode. Uh, that last part usually doesn't happen to drunken idiots.

GAIGE: Spoilers!

AXTON: What? It's not a spoiler to say that drunken idiots normally don't explode.
MAYA: [sighs] How drunk are you right now?

AXTON: Maybe...a three.

GAIGE: Anyway, we were right in the middle of Varkid country, following a drunk bug stumbling around like—

AXTON: Like a drunken idiot!

GAIGE: Like Axton.

AXTON: Hey!

GAIGE: We had to fight off all the others—because of course we did—and there were a few close calls like when we thought the stupid thing was gonna jump off a waterfall, but overall there were no problems. But then—

[click]

LILITH: Aw, I haven't seen Talon since his feathers grew in! Oh my god, he is so cute!

MORDECAI: He's not cute, he's a badass! But yeah. Be gentle.

TALON: [threatening warble]

MORDECAI: Heh, I think he likes you.

LILITH: Aww. Are you sure? Because heeee is biting pretty hard ow owowowowow ooh he's drawing blood.

MORDECAI: Aw crap, I'll get him off—
LILITH: Noo, he's too cute ow ow ha HA! I love him.

BRICK: Damn, girl. You weird as hell.

AXTON: Preach it.

MAYA: Axton! Gaige needs support!

AXTON: Whoops.

[click]

GAIGE: Uh, okay. Axton, what was that for?

AXTON: You were skipping stuff! Like my super awesome rescue scene.

GAIGE: That wasn't really super important and...are you drunker than you were ten seconds ago? We don't even have any alcohol in the house!

AXTON: Hey. It's a headquarters.

GAIGE: Maya! Axton—

MAYA: I'm right here.

GAIGE: Oh! Sorry! Do you know what's up with Axton?

MAYA: Zero's been slipping him booze. I have no idea why.
AXTON: [slurred] I'm seventy-eight percent sure that it's actually paint thinner. Er.

GAIGE: Okay. Well. We got a call from Hammerlock as we were following the bloodhound Varkid thing.

[click]

Sir HAMMERLOCK: It appears that I'm being dragged through a series of tunnels by some monstrously large beast. A rescue would be appreciated, but certainly isn't mandatory—circle of life, all that.

GAIGE: Ohmygod, he's gone suicidal. DON'T WORRY HAMMERLOCK, WE'RE COMING TO GET YOU!

MAYA: He can't hear you, sweetie.

GAIGE: DON'T WORRY—

MAYA: Calm down.

[click]

GAIGE: We fought through more Varkids, and came out into the sun—we were in this sort of not-cave system, with lots of open walls but stone ceilings—and then the Varkid exploded.

AXTON: Boom! Hee. [sound of body hitting the floor]

GAIGE: Yeah, I'm just gonna leave him there. Anyway, Mordecai called again when the bug exploded.

[click]
MORDECAI: I think you injected him with too much Hammerlock juice—probably why he went crazy. Might wanna go a little easier on the dosage next time.

GAIGE: So...we have to do it again?

AXTON: Do you see Hammerlock?

GAIGE: Shush.

[click]

GAIGE: So we had to go find more Varkids...despite the fact that we had just murdered the entire colony. Luckily, we found a couple, injected the pod, and out popped a drunken bloodhound.

[click]

GAIGE: Let's hurry it up, Varkid dude. My man's waiting on me.

MAYA: Wait, your what?

GAIGE: ...did I say that out loud?

[click]

GAIGE: Axton—wait, he's still unconscious. Where'd that come from?

SALVADOR: Hee hee.

GAIGE: [sighs] Well, thanks for that. So, yeah, we followed the drunk Varkid. The drunk flying
Varkid, actually. That might be illegal. But whatever. There were more pirates, and big-ass bones, and so on and so forth, and he led us down to the beach. The beach we had started at, I mean. I hate it when that happens. It's like, why'd I even bother? I missed where it went, but the others didn't.

GAIGE: It crawled into this maintenance tunnel thing for this underwater tunnel thing...you know, one of those force-field tunnels so you can observe the wildlife in their natural environment or whatever without interference?

MAYA: Brick called it a transit tunnel.

GAIGE: Right, just forgot the name. Well, it was powered down, so we had to go back up to the village—again—to turn on the waterwheel to get it up and running again. And...is that when the savages showed up? I can't remember?

MAYA: No, I think it was a little later—

LILITH: Hey guys, where's Morcedai's rakk ale? I can't find—

MORDECAI: I threw 'em out.

BRICK: Heh heh, what? You quit drinkin'? [laughs]

MORDECAI: Yeah. Can't raise Talon while I'm half in the bag, y'know?

LILITH: Aww, that is so cute! You put the needs of little Talon before your—OW! He's biting me again. Ow ow OW!

MORDECAI: Talon! Bad!

[click]
GAIGE: Sal, what was the point of that?

SALVADOR: I didn't do it.

GAIGE: You didn't?

KRIEG: IN THESE SITUATIONS, WE MUST EMULATE THE PRIME MINISTER!

GAIGE: [sighs] I'm just...I'm just gonna...

GAIGE: Anyway! We got to the waterwheel—without any savages, I'm sure of it now—and it turned out Crazy Earl was in charge of the gate, for some reason. No idea how that happened. But yeah, he wanted us to kill a bunch of pirates because they insulted his mustache and stuff.

[click]

CRAZY EARL: Them pirates started talkin' smack after I tried to cuddle with one. But whatever—Crazy Earl's all about cuddling!

AXTON: Crazy Earl also all about talking annoyingly in third person?

[click]

GAIGE: So we had to go back to the beach, again, because no one can make up their fracking mind on where we're supposed to be.

MAYA: Language.

GAIGE: Sorry! So, that was basically the end of that story. Went down to the beach and killed a bunch of pirates, then Crazy Earl called and said it was enough. Waste of time and ammo.
AXTON: You're just mad because you didn't get to blow up the boat.

GAIGE: Well, *duh*, how many opportunities do you have to—how are you sober?

AXTON: Zero's hangover cure. We were testing it out. Why did you think I was drinking so much?

GAIGE: I dunno, I just thought you were trying to drink through Mordecai's stores.

AXTON: He threw it all out.

GAIGE: I thought that might be a euphemism for “gave it to Axton.”

AXTON: It wasn't.

GAIGE: You sure?

AXTON: [annoyed] Yes.

GAIGE: Okay. [whispering] *He totally got all of Mordecai's ale.*

AXTON: I can hear you.

GAIGE: We turned on the waterwheel! Lots of levers! Very complex and difficult work, I assure you. The waterwheel moved into a surprisingly small stream, and the transit tunnel powered up so we could walk across the ocean floor to the other island to our drunk Varkid friend. I was afraid he'd be sober by the time we got there, but—

[click]
LILITH: I just realized! You ever watch those, like, animated ECHO series about dudes with swords? They always eventually do an episode where they just go to the beach and hang out. This is like our beach party episode! Isn't that—isn't that cool?

MORDECAI: No. No it is not.

MAYA: Pretty sure there's supposed to be less shooting in those episodes, too.

GAIGE: Eh. Depends on the series.

[click]

GAIGE: Axton, what was the point of—

AXTON: Hey, don't look at me.

GAIGE: Sal—

SALVADOR: No fui yo.

GAIGE: Um, Krieg?

KRIEG: I HAD NO INTENTION OF COMMITTING ANY CRIMES! ...TODAY!

GAIGE: Then who...

MAYA: ...sorry. It felt relevant.

AXTON: Ha!
GAIGE: But—you—

MAYA: Let's just move on, okay?

GAIGE: Okay, that—okay. Ahem. So we got into the transit tunnel, took the elevator underwater and walked through the force-field tunnels under the water. It was really pretty, in a “hope somebody doesn't turn off the waterwheel and kill us all when the shields drop” sort of way. Oh! And we have a relevant clip this time.

[click]

BRICK: Oooh! Pretty! [coughs awkwardly] I mean. You know.

[click]

GAIGE: Oops, not that one...

[click]

Sir HAMMERLOCK: Quick update: I'm being tied up by the psycho villagers of the isles. You won't believe it, but I'm to be sacrificed to the SON OF CRAWMERAX!

GAIGE: Son of a whatawhat?

BRICK: Oh, right, you never met Crawmerax. He was a big-ass crabworm we fought after ganking General Knoxx.

LILITH: Man, we killed him so many times. Ahh, the memories.

[click]
GAIGE: Yeah, I don't know either. But anyway, Hammerlock was in trouble, relatively speaking anyway, and we had to walk through the pretty little deathtrap to find that stupid Varkid. Why couldn't Hammerlock just tell us where he was from the start?

SALVADOR: He was underground at the start. As someone who's been kidnapped by wild skags once or twice, trust me, it's hard to get your bearings until they stop dragging you around.

GAIGE: Ugh, fine. Walked across the ocean bottom, fought more crab things including a bunch of giant ones. Oh, and pirates got down there somehow. Elevator on the other side, I guess. Hammerlock called back, too.

[click]

Sir HAMMERLOCK: If you wouldn't mind hurrying, Vault Hunters, I believe these savages are attempting to summon the Son of Crawmerax as I speak.

SAVAGE: Hey man! Don't call me a savage!

Sir HAMMERLOCK: Oh, you speak English? I thought—

SAVAGE: I graduated from Eden-4 Megaversity with honors! Check you privilege, dick!

AXTON: Isn't that where you're from?

GAIGE: Eden-5.

AXTON: Ah.

[click]

GAIGE: So we got up the elevator and to a new village thing. The Varkid opened the door for us which was nice, but...weird. Oh, and then he tried to kill us.
MORDECAI: Looks like your dosage mighta still been too high. I dunno. Honestly just making up this part as I go.

GAIGE: So we had to find another Varkid nest—because that's Mordecai's solution to everything today, it seems—and passed through the tribal village. Which had the savages and everything everywhere. They pulled up the bridge, so we had to go the long way around. Dicks.

MAYA: Gaige.

GAIGE: What? How are they not dicks?

AXTON: She's got a point.

MAYA: Both of you just...

GAIGE: Sorry! Anyway, we fought through the village, which wasn't too hard except for the stupid witch doctors. It was just annoying and took a while. And we found a nice-sized Varkid pod at the worst possible moment. I was wrestling this tribal with a gun...ugh, I don't want to talk about it. They have horrific breath. But yeah. Pod, injected, hatched, followed Varkid. A badass Varkid, too. Hammerlock called back, though. He has pretty good timing, actually.

Sir HAMMERLOCK: Bizarrely, the Son of Crawmerax hasn't harmed me. Mayhaps it merely wants vengeance on the Vault Hunters who killed its father.

LILITH: Well, the resort owners just quarantined the island, so he'll have to settle for dying at the hands of a totally new group of Vault Hunters.
MAYA: Are you two dancing?

GAIGE: Yes.

AXTON: I prefer to think of it more as a victory strut.

SALVADOR: But we haven't won yet.

GAIGE: You be quiet.

GAIGE: The Varkid was hard to follow, cuz he was drunk and kinda heading in random directions, but he went the right way eventually. I mean, just standing next to the guy I was getting a little tipsy, but it worked out okay. Yeah, sure, the second it led us out of the village it turned on us and we had to kill it, but other than that it was cool.

KRIEG: A BLADE IN THE BACK IS A WISER INVESTMENT THAN A COIN IN A MAN’S HAND!

GAIGE: True enough. Honestly, we didn't really need a bloodhound this time anyway. There was only one exit from the village, and it was kinda obvious where to go from there. Oh well. Hindsight is thirty forty or whatever. But then—

LILITH: Hey, guys, remember that ledge in Crawmerax's lair?

MORDECAI: Aw man, the ledge. [laughs]
LILITH: Yeah, we could shoot him from there and he couldn't hit us? Ah, so good. So good.

BRICK: Ahhh...pearlescents.

[click]

GAIGE: How was that at all relevant?

SALVADOR: It was funny!

GAIGE: Your face is funny.

MAYA: Gaige...

GAIGE: Anyway! We walked down the path, to this giant arena thing, with an altar in the front. You know, like how raid bosses always have altars you need to put Eridium in to fight them? Well, this one already had Eridium in it, for some reason, so the gate just opened. Another on the list of “weird but nice” for today. Yeah.

GAIGE: We found Hammerlock, strung up above a giant pit surrounded by waterfalls like...something. I don't know what.

MAYA: A sacrifice to appease an angry god.

GAIGE: Yeah, I guess. Uh, you kinda have an angry look on your—

MAYA: [curtly] I'm fine.

GAIGE: Okay, yeah, sure!
Sir HAMMERLOCK: Hi ho! Seems I'm to be sacrificed to this beast. Could you look down below for some sort of crank, mayhaps? Something to lower me to the ground?

GAIGE: Sure.

AXTON: I'm not seeing anything mechanical here. Do you really think we can lower you—

GAIGE: C'mon, you big baby! No one lives forever!

[click]

GAIGE: So we jumped like a million miles down—

AXTON: Two hundred feet.

GAIGE: Whatever, all personal shields have an inertiic generator by default, so, you know, no fall damage. And then we found the crank wheel—

AXTON: Despite my objections.

GAIGE: Yeah yeah, someone didn't want to spring the super-obvious trap in order to summon the boss. *Baby.* But before we even had a chance to turn the crank, this MASSIVE—I mean like, two hundred feet long or longer—crabworm jumped out of the ocean and into the arena.

[click]

Sir HAMMERLOCK: Oh, how gorgeous! Look upon the majesty of the SON OF CRAWMERAX!
[roaring, followed by the sound of burrowing]

Sir HAMMERLOCK: Ah, perhaps you should deal with this beastie before you tend to me!

AXTON: [sighs] Frackin' knew it.

MAYA: Krieg! Keep it distracted! Zero, find a weakspot!

KRIEG: Somebody delivered a FEAST!

ZERO: Greetings, badass.

MAYA: Sal, keep those rocket launchers ready! Gaige, Axton, flank it!

AXTON: TURRET OUT!

GAIGE: Blood and metal, my favorite things!

[click]

GAIGE: That stupid giant crab took ten minutes to kill, even with six guys and a bunch of rocket launchers. And it kept spawning little mini-giant crabworms...ugh. I mean, it was fun enough, and stuff, I guess...okay, fine it was awesome! The beautiful arena, the giant kaiju, the roar of gunfire...umf. Just thinking about it again, I think I need a cigarette.

MAYA: No.

GAIGE: Spoilsport. Anyway, I don't remember exactly who landed the killing blow—things were just a teensy bit uber-chaotic at that point—but we did it! It was a team effort and all that.

KRIEG: IF THIS IS TO END IN FIRE, THEN WE SHALL ALL BURN TOGETHER!
GAIGE: Aw, that's sweet.

AXTON: But you—screw it.

GAIGE: Screw what?

AXTON: Screw nothing. Play your stupid clip.

GAIGE: Fine, whatever.

[click]

LILITH: Nice!

BRICK: That's my slab!

MORDECAI: That was awesome! Wasn't that awesome, Talon?

TALON: [affirmative screech]

MORDECAI: Yeah, thassa good boy.

Sir HAMMERLOCK: It appears the sins of the crablike father were quite viciously visited upon his crablike son. Please save me when you're ready.

[click]

GAIGE: So we went to cut Hammerlock down.
AXTON: Not right away, though.

GAIGE: No, not quite right away. We had to grab all the loot first!

[click]

Sir HAMMERLOCK: Still, ah—still restrained. Up here. Actually beginning to hurt a bit! And not in the fun way...

[click]

GAIGE: Well, eventually we did get him down. Turned out that the wheel-thing did lower him, despite somebody being a Paranoid Pete. It kinda...swung the whole thing he was tied to down like a giant arm and left him in the middle of the arena. Kinda weird, actually.

MAYA: It was for the sacrifice.

GAIGE: Oh! Well then that makes sense!

[click]

Sir HAMMERLOCK: Lovely! Thanks for that bit of life-savesmanship. Though I must admit, being restrained in that particular way was not entirely outside the scope of things I find enjoyable.

GAIGE: HOT.

Sir HAMMERLOCK: What was that?

MAYA: Nothing. She's...glitching. She's a cyborg, and she's glitching.
Sir HAMMERLOCK: Oh. Well, yes, happens to the best of us.

AXTON: Can we turn in the quest and go home now? We're surrounded by...remains.

KRIEG: MEAT!

Sir HAMMERLOCK: [coughs] There's nothing quite like witnessing a majestic miracle of nature be blown into tiny bits by ones such as yourselves.

AXTON: That's great.

[click]

GAIGE: So other than a distinct and disappointing lack of Hammerlock changing teams when confronted with a beautiful young cyborg, that went pretty well. We were heading back to the Fast Travel station when suddenly—

[click]

Sir HAMMERLOCK: Hi ho! For your next quest, I require—

SPARKY FLYNT: SHADDAP! This is Sparky Flynt, son of CAPTAIN FLYNT, and I have summoned SIX people you Vault Hunters have wronged. Together, we will HAVE OUR REVENGE! Now, please find the first assassin somewhere on the island so we may have our revenge.

GAIGE: Captain Flynt was from the whole thing with Scarlet, right?

MAYA: No, he was...um...that guy Hyperion killed when we were rescuing Roland? The one with the gross metaphors?

AXTON: That was Incinerator Clayton.
MAYA: No, that was one of Lilith's cultists.

LILITH: Don't call them that, it makes it sound like I'm in charge of them.

SALVADOR: Do we really have to go find them? Assassins are supposed to come to us.

AXTON: Yeah, this sounds like a really annoying variant of a fetch quest.

[click]

GAIGE: Could've been worse. At least he gave us coordinates instead of just sending us running around the whole island.

AXTON: Would've been smarter to do it that way, though. Tire us out.

GAIGE: True. Anyway, Hammerlock led us through these cave systems and out of the Son of Crawmerax's lair, and then we were back where we started and heading towards the savage village where the first assassin would be waiting for us.

[click]

SPARKY FLYNT: Mister Axton...do you remember Sergeant Jarter? Because he remembers you. How you deserted your post and went AWOL. He's ready to face all you Vault Hunters—don't keep him waiting!

GAIGE: I thought you ran away because they were gonna kill you?

AXTON: Yeah, they call that desertion.

GAIGE: So, what, now they want to kill you twice?
AXTON: Probably.

[click]

GAIGE: After fighting through the tribal village—again—we managed to find Jarter. Kinda.

[click]

SALVADOR: Heh. He blew up.

GAIGE: Guhhh...at ease, soldier.

AXTON: Oh, good, I hated that guy. Kinda weird that he just randomly exploded, though. Don't remember that happening in basic.

KRIEG: CONFETTI MAN CAME FOR THE PARTY!

SPARKY FLYNT: What the hell? He's been blown up by a remote bomb!

ZERO: Remote charges have / A very long broadcast range / His death came from space.

MAYA: And that's why you never take orders. If I'm gonna get blown up, I wanna get blown up for my own reasons.

AXTON: You give us orders all the time.

MAYA: That's different.

SPARKY FLYNT: Look, whatever, I've got five more people here looking forward to killing you
jackasses. My support group—Victims of Vault Hunters—booked a conference here the same weekend you did.

Sir HAMMERLOCK: ...I did see something like that on the guest list. Apologies! Consider it...exercise?

AXTON: C'mon, man. Pay attention!

SPARKY FLYNT: —and we're all just ACHING to get back at you jerkwads. Just do me a favor and find the next guy who's gonna kill you, because he's not responding to my messages.

Sir HAMMERLOCK: The natives are muttering something about a warrior from the sky near their village—you should investigate.

[click]

GAIGE: So that was just on the other side of the village. I seriously thought we were actually gonna have to fight him this time, was looking forward to it and everything, but I'm getting ahead of myself. This guy was actually after me, as it turned out, because of that...minor incident on Eden-5.

AXTON: Lady, you blew up your classmate.

GAIGE: On accident! God, you sound just like the principal!

[click]

SPARKY FLYNT: Gaige, do you remember Marcie Holloway? Because her uncle Grill certainly does. He's here to avenge his niece in the most violent way possible. So, you know. Be ready for that.

GAIGE: Oh god I can't—

MAYA: Gaige, calm down. Just breathe—
GAIGE: Ahem. We can skip all that boring...minor panic attack. Very minor. It was more like an...anxious attack. Yeah. Anyway, one second here, need to fast forward...okay, there was this tiki shrine thing, and we needed to sacrifice a witch doctor mask to get past it. So we went back, murdered a bunch—

KRIEG: YET MORE MEANINGLESS ENDEAVORS!

GAIGE: —got the mask, whole shebang. Then went back and got past the tiki thingy.

SPARKY FLYNT: What the—did he fall from the sky? Did his transit shuttle malfunction or...what the hell?

SALVADOR: So, wait... you're saying this guy could fly?

ZERO: Like the old story / Of he with the waxen wings / Except bloodier

MAYA: The impact pattern's not that big. Fall must not have been high enough for him to lose consciousness before hitting the ground. Ugh.

GAIGE: Ha! SUCK IT, Holloway family! Even if your hitman hadn't fallen outta the sky for some weirdass reason, I woulda taken him out anyway. I killed Handsome friggin' JACK! You think one little assassin can take me down? BOOYAH. Also, sorry I killed your daughter.

MAYA: Gaige...

KRIEG: CAN I PARK MY BICYCLE HERE?!

SPARKY FLYNT: Man, who the hell is killing all my would-be assassins? Whatever, I got more. Go meet the next one!

Sir HAMMERLOCK: I’m hearing ECHOnet reports that someone's feeling ill at the local watering hole.

[click]

GAIGE: Soo...we weren't really expecting the next assassin to be alive either. Though I was still holding out hope.

AXTON: That reminds me, you owe me a hundred bucks.

GAIGE: Shut up, technically you didn't win, you said he would be exploded.

AXTON: And you said he'd be alive, so I win.

GAIGE: That's not how it works!

MAYA: Why don't you discuss this later?

GAIGE: Fiiine...where was I? Oh yeah, Maya's assassin. Oops! Heh, spoilers, sorry. Uh...okay. So we had to go all the way back to the first island, through the crab infested transit tunnel of death, through a bunch of pirates who respawned or got reinforced or whatever, and all the way up to that stupid waterwheel.

SALVADOR: And the tribals!

GAIGE: What? Oh! Yeah, that's why I was so confused earlier! Yeah, the savage village was empty earlier, but now they were everywhere, and we had to kill them all because they were shooting at us and stuff. Harder than I would have liked; one of the witch doctors upgraded one to ultimate badass.
GAIGE: But we won, because we're awesome, and we got to the waterwheel.

[click]

SPARKY FLYNT: Maya, you'll like this next dude.

MAYA: Really doubt it.

SPARKY FLYNT: He's a Siren tracker named Mordo Sophis. Father of Brother Steven Sophis, that dude you ganked back on Athenas. And boy oh boy, is he just itching for vengeance!

AXTON: Remind me why you killed this guy?

MAYA: He raised me to be a vengeful goddess slash weapon against the people.

AXTON: Right, that was it.

[click]

GAIGE: And now came the hard part.

AXTON: That entire thing was just embarrassing.

[click]

Sir HAMMERLOCK: Unfortunately, the regular path is closed for repairs. You'll have to find an alternate route. Perhaps the machinery around the waterwheel could give you a boost?
GAIGE: Said alternate route was a ladder. Which took us like, an hour to find. It was hanging ten feet off the ground, and it was really inconspicuous and we had to jump on the pistons...I don't want to talk about it. Point is, we climbed up there, found the bar, and Mordo sitting outside it.

[click]

SPARKY FLYNT: He got poisoned!? What!? Somebody is going around killing all the people I wanted to kill you, and that makes me VERY upset!

ZERO: He wanted a break / Now he can rest forever / But who poisoned him?

SALVADOR: Cerveza de la muerte!

AXTON: Hunh -- death by poison. Don't see much of that these days. Old school, I like it.


KRIEG: GIMME THAT POISON! I'LL DRINK IT DOWN AND BECOME THE BEAUTIFUL CENTER OF A HATE ESCALATOR!

MAYA: Consider yourself lucky. That poison must have worked quickly. I wouldn't have.

AXTON: Wow, that's cold, coming from you.

MAYA: You never knew his son.

SPARKY FLYNT: Whatever, I got three more VOVH members—Victims of Vault Hunters—still itching to kill you. Find the next one!

[click]
GAIGE: So we headed towards the retirement cottages, cutting through savages and pirates both. They might have been working together, I dunno, we were blowing them up too much to tell if they were fighting each other at all. Who cares. We got to the cottages.

[click]

SPARKY FLYNT: The next guy you're looking for is named Blendo, and he wants to kill Salvador in order to avenge, uh... [muttering to himself] uh...everyone. You killed his entire bandit clan, Sally. All hundred and fifty of them.

SALVADOR: That was a fun weekend.

AXTON: Up top.

[sound of high five]

[click]

GAIGE: Yeah, he was dead too.

[click]

SPARKY FLYNT: Hanged? What!? Who did—who would—SOOO ANGRY.

ZERO: He hangs in the air / The breeze stirring his body / Animate, yet not.

SALVADOR: Aw, man. The last of the Chung clan and he got killed before I even showed up? Worst day ever.

GAIGE: Well, on the upside, at least he was saved the trouble of having to smell Sal in person. No offense.
SALVADOR: Hey!


MAYA: Someone once said, he who sets out on revenge should first dig two graves. That's a stupid-ass quote, revenge is awesome.

SALVADOR: You're dark today. I like it!

KRIEG: PINATA TIME!

AXTON: Should somebody cut him down, or ... no? Alright.

SPARKY FLYNT: Whatever. Two assassins left, but they're probably dead as hell. Next guy! Who's probably freaking dead already, is a Hyperion scientist named Clements. He wants Krieg because you killed some dudes when you escaped or something I don't even care at this point!

[click]

KRIEG: 'VENGEANCE IS MINE,' SAITH THE LORD, BUT TONIGHT, HE IS GOING TO DAMN WELL HAVE TO SHARE!

GAIGE: I don't think anyone was arguing that you weren't justified. I mean, other than the assassin and sparky sparky boom man.

MAYA: You mean Sparky Flynt?

GAIGE: Yeah, whatever, I forgot his name. Anyway, Krieg's assassin was over in...I think it was still part of the retirement cottage area? He was actually inside, though, it looked like a shop or something, but it was cleared out. Except for the corpse stabbed with dozens of needles, of course.

GAIGE: And that's why winners don't do drugs.

MAYA: Poor attempt at faking a suicide, but clearly a doctor's hands at work.

AXTON: This guy piss off a doctor or something?

SALVADOR: Adios, Hyperion douchebag.

ZERO: Hyperion scum / Trying to catch a monster / Oh, the irony.

GAIGE: So who was this guy, anyway?

KRIEG: HE WAS THERE FOR THE BIRTHING! HE BROUGHT THEM INTO THE METAL FUN PALACE SO SHE COULD START THE PARTY!

SPARKY FLYNT: [tired] I got one assassin left, jagoffs. Just go find his corpse already.

GAIGE: We had to through the back of the shop thing or whatever it was, down and through some tunnels into the backside of the resort. It wasn't even on our maps!

SALVADOR: Through a secret door!

GAIGE: I don't think it was really a secret door, it was just a little...hidden.
MAYA: It was behind the fireplace. It's pretty much a secret door by default.

GAIGE: But it was too easy to find! It shouldn't count!

AXTON: That just means it was a bad secret door.

GAIGE: Fine, whatever. We found—oh! Almost forgot!

[click]

SPARKY FLYNT: So yeah, I got no idea what's going on with this last guy. I think he wants Zero dead, but I didn't really understand anything he said.

[click]

GAIGE: Good, that it? I think so. So, yeah! Tunnel, backside of resort, found assassin. He was...impaled on a bunch of weird spikes in a...ritualistic? Way? I dunno, I still have no idea what that was about.

[click]

SPARKY FLYNT: Surprising NO ONE, he's dead too. I swear, I am gonna find out who did this.

MAYA: What am I, uh... what am I looking at?

KRIEG: MODERN ART!

AXTON: That's, uh... yeah.

SALVADOR: That's messed up.
GAIGE: Heh. That's weird.

ZERO: I understand it. / A message sent, and received. / Mercy is coming.

AXTON: ...sometimes I really hate you, man.

SPARKY FLYNT: Whatever, I'm done getting chumps to do my dirty work! You find me, and I'll kill you myself for what you did to my dad!

[click]

GAIGE: So. Yeah. Still, uh, not really sure who his dad was...this is gonna bug me, I should just go and look it up.

AXTON: It was probably just some random bandit somewhere or other.

GAIGE: But I feel like I recognize the name!

MAYA: That happens sometimes, even when you don't you know, actually know it.

GAIGE: [sighs] Okay, I guess. We continued along the cliff overlooking the ocean—nice view, by the way—and found the cave Sparky had hidden in. It had a big wooden ship in it, for some reason.

AXTON: Maybe he did have something to do with Scarlet after all. Maybe he was that midget with the giant who had a compass piece?

MAYA: No, that was Sandman...

GAIGE: I really should look it up. But not right now. Point is, we got to Sparky's clubhouse.
SPARKY FLYNT: My dad was an asshole, but that doesn't mean you had to kill him! Now DIE!

[MASSIVE BOOM]

[silence]

SALVADOR: That it?

AXTON: Not many people can survive two rocket launchers to the face, dude.

SALVADOR: ...maybe he dodged?

MAYA: Nope.

GAIGE: Is the blood gone?

MAYA: What do you—oh. Uh, no just...I'll lead you out of the cave. C'mon.

[click]

GAIGE: Getting out of the cave was easier than it sounded—there was just an elevator back the way we came—and we got a call from Hammerlock telling us he got six separate text messages over the ECHOnet. One for each of us. So, you know, we went back to Hammerlock for the text messages.

GAIGE: He was still standing near the middle of the mountain village where he originally got kidnapped. I think that's like, the start of some jungle safari thing, or something? I dunno. But anyway.

[click]
Sir HAMMERLOCK: Oddly, these messages lead me to believe that the deaths of those six would-be assassins were bizarre coincidences, acted upon by six separate allies of yours.

GAIGE: Huh.

MAYA: I guess that makes as much sense as anything today.

SALVADOR: Ooh! Let's all read them at the same time?

AXTON: ...why?

GAIGE: Why not?

AXTON: Sure, whatever.

[pause]


ZERO: “To Zer0: 0ne.” Well, that's irritatingly cryptic.

MAYA: “Dear Siren: Though I find your physical attractiveness confusingly repulsive, I feel you will have an important part to play in the coming days. Knowing this, I elected to poison the siren hunters through various means I shan't go into detail about. Suffice to say, they involved a beer bottle and a straw made of anthrax, sincerely a friend.” Huh. I'm attractive?

SALVADOR: “Hola Nieto, I saw some bounty hunters were coming for you, so I hired the resort staff to take care of them. Sincerely, Abuela.” I love me abuela!

GAIGE: “Dear Gaige: Dad here. Hope Pandora's fun. Heard Marcie's dad sent some mercenaries your way, so I sabotaged their transport and” -- [sniffs] oh my god you're the best dad ever!
KRIEG: “SALUTATIONS PSYCHOMAN I'M SORRY AS A SLICE WOUND SINCERELY SAMMY!”

GAIGE: ...is that actually what yours says? Lemme see.

AXTON: I'm more interested in Zero's. What's it feel like to be on the confused side for once, buddy?

ZERO: Leaving.

AXTON: ...like, for good?

ZERO: No.

AXTON: Okay, have fun, I guess.

[click]

GAIGE: So...that's it, I guess. We spent some time partying on the island when the others showed up, Zero eventually reappeared, we all had some fun talking...is there anything else to talk about?

BRICK: Mordecai still owes me a tuxedo t-shirt!

GAIGE: Oh, hey there. Don't you still owe me a dance?

BRICK: Hence, the t-shirt.

GAIGE: But other than that, I don't think there's anything, really. We don't have any plans for any major operations [sighs] including the awesome one that got put on indefinite hold. Friggin'...I wanted to play with laser cannons.
MAYA: Gaige...

GAIGE: I know, I know...but I guess that's it, subscribers. If something else interesting happens, I'll upload another ECHO, but for now we've just got our hands full with cleanup. Later!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!