

HOOK, LINE, AND STINGER

SIDE QUEST

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AGGEE, HELIOS, and RAINBOW sit together at a table, stone faced, jaws agape, staring in disbelief.

NEARBY, a man sings and dances while playing ARMPIT FARTS.

FART MAN A good fart, is fine art, a kickstart to a poo.

The current applicant for "Somarria's Got Talent" bows deeply and throws kisses to the masses.

RAINBOW Can ya fight?

FART MAN I can fart ten different sounds at any octave.

HELIOS I <u>HATE</u> toilet humor. Get out!

The dejected man exits, leaving Ariadne's Artisans deflated.

RAINBOW All the best gravers already belong to a hunting party.

AGGEE I'm starting to think resurrecting

Bedia would be easier. Maybe we should just stick with three.

HELIOS Teen Tigada Kaam Bigada!!

AGGEE

Huh?

HELIOS "When ominous three come together, work will definitely suffer."

RAINBOW Death always comes in threes.

AGGEE Three isn't bad. Third time lucky? Third time's a charm? Three fates, three wishes, three bears. RAINBOW Three candles burning. Bad! Three knocks on the door. Bad! Three butterflies on a leaf. Bad! Three hoots of an owl. Bad! Three times a bridesmaid--

HELIOS Bad luck comes in threes. (shakes his horns sadly) No, we need a fourth member. The universe is made up of four elements: earth, water, air, and fire.

ALLIE (O.S.) Who am I? Am I the fire? Please let me be fire.

AGGEE Who are you?

ALLAREYA MAYLEAF, (a delightful half-elf maiden with a spring in her step), CONJURES RESUMES and hands one to each judge.

ALLIE Hello, I'm Allareya Mayleaf. My friends call me, Allie.

RAINBOW What's your talent, Allie?

ALLIE This a, audition for a musical troupe? (off affirmative nods) I'm a bard. More of a tribal poetsinger. I like to compose and recite hero verses, valiant deeds. I can fart backup if required.

They quickly survey the resume.

HELIOS Says here, you're a half-elf? Where you from?

RAINBOW Are we allowed to ask that? Interesting though Helios is half-Minotaur, I'm a Half--ling, and you're a half-elf. (off Aggee) Where does that leave you, Aggee? AGGEE

I play a mouth harp. My lovely friend here, Rainbow plays a theremin. And, the big lug, Helios plays--

Helios elbows Aggee sharply and brandishes his axe.

HELIOS I play the axe.

AGGEE He plays the flute.

The bartender on duty, slams the bar with his palm.

DRAGNET (O.S.) HELIOS! Damn your eyes! You know the rules.

Helios sheepishly stows the axe.

ALLIE Are you a traveling band?

AGGEE We're Hunter musicians. Can't have the musician without the hunt first. We perform primarily on weekends and holidays.

ALLIE Given the opportunity, I would love to travel. That's what brought me to Gravers Dig.

HELIOS Somarria has some exotic locales that'll get you killed, if that's what you're into.

AGGEE How are you in a standup fight?

Allie yanks a blade and taps the crossbow on her back.

ALLIE It is better to stand and fight. If you run, you'll only die tired.

DRAGNET <u>HEY</u>! Stow those weapons! Sorry, Dragnet. She's new.

SIR DRAGNET OF DINWOODY, (a down on his luck, Perrin knight royalist, has turned over his charger and lance for a dishcloth and towel). He struts close, and slaps an OFFICIAL DOCUMENT onto the table, displaying the HOUSE RULES.

DRAGNET

Read her the Riot Act, willya? (levels evil-eye on Allie) The only weapons allowed in here, are my rapier wit and this vorpal towel. (cracks the wet towel) You abide, hear?

RAINBOW

(off Dragnet's exit) Are you on the lam? A lot of folks come to the Grave running from something or another. I ain't judgin' if you is. The past has a way of catching up to a person.

ALLIE

Nah. Nothin like that. Just looking to see the world.

SNAGGLE, (a one-eyed, malformed GEKKON news carrier), FLIES IN, performs a wide sweep, SEARCHING--

Finds his target. He lands abruptly--CLANK--onto the table.

SNAGGLE Snaggle! Snaggle! Saaa-nagg-ll!

The Gekkon's gnarled claw passes Rainbow a gold leaf LETTER.

RAINBOW Who's it from?

SNAGGLE

Snaggle!

RAINBOW Anonymous? Hmmm.

SNAGGLE FLIES AWAY

AGGEE I don't trust that lizard. HELIOS Why? He only tried to murder you. (to Rainbow) What's the letter say?

RAINBOW It's addressed to, The Corsicans?

AGGEE Who are the Corsicans?

DRAGNET Hunters from Latium. I heard they left town last week.

HELIOS Stupid ass, Gekkon. He delivered the letter to the wrong people.

DRAGNET What's it say?

RAINBOW Should I open it?

ALLIE

I would.

Rainbow tears into it, revealing exquisite penmanship--

RAINBOW (reading) <u>WE HAVE BEE ARTHUR</u>! If you ever want to see her alive again, bring the **Book of Kelleth** to the Anumian Grove <u>tonight</u>, by twelve Gary Calls. Speak of this to anyone and we'll smoke her ass.

A fearful gasp catches in Rainbow's throat.

RAINBOW (CONT'D) Someone has abducted Bee Arthur.

AGGEE Who could do such a thing?

ALLIE You know this Bea, she's a friend of yours?

RAINBOW Yes. The dearest, sweetest soul. ALLIE Then we should do everything possible to save her.

HELIOS What's this, Book of Kelleth?

Rainbow shrugs.

RAINBOW Couldn't tell ya. Never heard of it. But we only have like... what time is it?

ON CUE: We hear an eerie GARY CALL echo over Gravers Dig.

HELIOS 6 o'clock. Six hours.

ALLIE Do we know who sent the letter?

RAINBOW Probably the person who hired Snaggle. We could ask him. (scans the bar) Dragnet, where did Snaggle fly off too?

DRAGNET Just left, said something about getting back to business.

AGGEE Omba must be in town.

RAINBOW We need to find him. See what he knows.

HELIOS How is this our problem?

RAINBOW I'm saving Bee. You can stay here if you want. (to the others) Who's comin'?

Rainbow runs to the door, followed by Allie and Aggee.

ALLIE (O.S.) What does this job pay? Dragnet clears the table of cups and scraps.

HELIOS You like ships? I hate ships. Especially Oomba's. I hate Fluffy.

DRAGNET You picking up the tab?

Helios scrambles for the door --

HELIOS Wait! I'm coming.

EXT. GRAVERS DIG HARBOR - DOCKSIDE - EARLY EVENING

Ariadne's Artisans roll up on the, ROLLING TARGONIAN. Immediately they spot a familiar congenial COOK on deck.

Rainbow waves excitedly, jumping up and down.

RAINBOW (channels Cookie Monster) COOKY!

He waves back and she rushes to greet him.

HELIOS

I'll wait here, keep a watch out for imminent threats.

ALLIE Is this a rough neighborhood?

AGGEE No, it's okay. Helios has a bad phobia of ships. Stay with him, make sure he doesn't get into trouble. We'll be quick.

ONBOARD THE ROLLING TARGONIAN - A BEAT LATER

Rainbow arrives on deck DOPEY WITH EXCITEMENT, her voice glitching with cracks, followed by Aggee.

RAINBOW C-cc-cooky.

COOKY Your tiny friend is broken. RAINBOW Cooky, Cooky. We have terrible, terrible new news. You gotta, gotta help help us.

COOKY Wait here. I get potion to fix your word salad brain injury.

RAINBOW

What? No, no--

AGGEE Bee is in trouble.

COOKY Bee trouble? You should call pest and rodent control.

AGGEE Snaggle gave us a ransom note.

RAINBOW Bee Arthur was bee-napped.

COOKY Snaggle shanghaied a bee?

RAINBOW

Listen Cooky. Snaggle was just the messenger, the middle-man. He mistakenly gave us a ransom note. We need to speak with him. Is he here?

COOKY

He's somewhere. HEY SNAGGLE! (pause, no response) He gets around, that guy. Worthless beast.

RAINBOW Does he still work for Omba?

COOKY Mostly side hustles these days. Maybe I can help.

AGGEE Have you ever heard of The Book of Kelleth?

Cooky thinks for a moment, then slowly shakes head.

COOKY I know Kelleth the Kooky. He too scatter brained to write book, me thinks. Me Cooky, but he way more kooky.

AGGEE You know him?

COOKY Aye. Psychotic Wizard. He much too infatuated with Cthulhu for his own good health. By the way, Fluffy wants to know when you come to visit. You want to say, Hi, now?

RAINBOW I can't. Not now, Bee needs me. (second thought, hands Cooky one of her shoes) A gift for Fluffy.

Cooky grins accepting the precious gift.

AGGEE If Kelleth did write a book, where might he have hid it?

COOKY Have you tried the library?

BACK ON THE DOCKS - SAME TIME

Allie and Helios watch the ship from a safe distance.

ALLIE You dislike ships, because you were in a ship wreck, or something?

HELIOS

Or something. I died on that ship. Only a little bit. I got better.

ALLIE You? Wait. How do you get better from dying?

HELIOS What are you pretending to not be running from?

ALLIE Man, I'm here for a good time, not a long time. HELIOS We could break into the Anumian Grove and knock-some-heads, I mean, while we wait. ALLIE Would your friends, like that? HELIOS Yes. Rainbow and Aggee run up--RAINBOW C'mon on, hurry. HELIOS You find Snaggle? AGGEE He's a free agent, work for hire. Ain't here. RAINBOW Cooky suggested we search the library for the book. We hear an eerie GARY CALL echo--RAINBOW (CONT'D) It's 7 o'clock. Let's go. Rainbow runs. ALLIE Hey! You lost a shoe. INT. GRAVERS DIG - JARNETHAN'S LIBRARY - 8 O'CLOCK The four friends pile into JARNETHAN'S LIBRARY, having just finished an anxious town-wide search. Distantly we hear, GARY CALL !!

> RAINBOW How did you get us lost? Aren't you a guide?

AGGEE This library is new. I've never been here before.

JARNETHAN (O.S.)

Quiet!

Everyone turns to the LIBRARIAN working behind a desk.

The man, JARNETHAN, wears studious glasses and is impeccably dressed business casual. He takes a sip of HOOCH FROM A JAR.

JARNETHAN (CONT'D) Shssss! Have some respect, hmmm?

The four quietly approach the desk and the obvious drunk behind it.

JARNETHAN (CONT'D) (heavily slurred) How may I assist you?

AGGEE We're looking for a book.

JARNETHAN What's the title? I'll see if I have it in stock.

The four scan the "so-called" library and find a CAVERN OF EMPTY DUSTY BOOK SHELVES staring back.

ALLIE Where is your stock?

Jarnethan points to a lone shelf with THREE BOOKS.

Rainbow quickly flips through the three, reading the spines.

RAINBOW We're looking for, the Book of Kelleth.

JARNETHAN I don't have it.

HELIOS Have you ever had the book?

JARNETHAN

What book?

HELIOS Book of Kelleth, comma, the. He thinks and takes another quick sip from his jar.

JARNETHAN Sounds vaguely familiar. I feel déjà vu, like, it's a popular title. Yeah, I had it.

AGGEE/HELIOS/RAINBOW/ALLIE WHO CHECKED IT OUT?

JARNETHAN A bunch of sailors in pirate hats, nay, one pirate hat, wanted it.

RAINBOW When? Today? Did you give it to them?

JARNETHAN

Nah! The curator from the museum, Cynthia, she already checked it out. And hasn't return it. (fist pounds the desk) People keep checking out my books and never return them. I need to hire, Book Bounty Hunters.

Jarnethan suddenly notices a STACK OF BOOKS on the counter.

JARNETHAN (CONT'D) Would you like to buy my book? I wrote and illustrated it myself. It's a children's book about cute baby tunnel terrors who take over Gravers Dig. It's a true story.

RAINBOW Gravers Dig seems like a tough market for children's books.

JARNETHAN Nobody brings their kids here.

ALLIE

Imagine that.

Rainbow hands Jarnethan casino chips.

RAINBOW I'll take a copy.

He hands her a book.

JARNETHAN It's a signed, limited edition. (looks at everyone) So, what brings you in?

HELIOS We're Book Bounty Hunters you hired to help retrieve your book.

JARNETHAN

What book?

HELIOS Book of Kelleth.

ALLIE

Comma, the.

Jarnethan suddenly JUMPS UP, EXTREMELY MOTIVATED.

JARNETHAN Let's storm a museum.

EXT. THE HUNTERS MUSEUM OF GRAVERS DIG - 9 O'CLOCK

If there is a fun part of Gravers Dig, the Museum is on the block that it's furthest from.

Four shadows skulk slowly toward the main entrance. Rainbow steps into moonlight scanning for any unwanted attention and then gazes skyward to admire the THIEF CONSTELLATION.

RAINBOW That bodes well.

A green ill Jarnethan stumbles drunkenly, holds up his hand--

JARNETHAN

Wait.

He HURLS CHUNKS. Beat...

JARNETHAN (CONT'D) Whew! Okay. That's better.

AGGEE Maybe you should slow down, huh?

JARNETHAN I possess special aptitude for transforming hooch to heave. Very accomplished. He giggles and we distantly hear, GARY CALL !!

RAINBOW Damnit! It's 9 o'clock. Where's the book?

JARNETHAN

What book?

HELIOS Gods damnit, the Book of--

JARNETHAN Kelleth, I know. (wipes mouth) I was just pulling your tail, Mr. Minotaur.

He points.

JARNETHAN (CONT'D) This way. Archives Collection, round back. (brushes nose) I have nose for books.

AROUND BACK, MOMENTS LATER

A STEAMPUNK DOOR with lead glass windows bar their entrance.

Helios tries to peer through smoky glass. And then, GRASPS a RING DOOR KNOCKER and receives an ELECTRIC SHOCK.

HELIOS

Ouch!

AGGEE What are you doing?

HELIOS Seeing if anyone was home.

ALLIE Let me see that lock.

Helios steps back nursing his hand.

Allie wiggles the handle.

THE FLOOR DROPS OUT

Allie flails, running in space like Wile E. Coyote and FALLS--

She lands on a quivering mass of *SOMETHING*, and sticks like a fly on flypaper. And then, slowly sinks, absorbed into a transparent living organism.

A BEAT LATER, she floats weightless, slowly being digested inside a GELATINOUS CUBE.

HELIOS

It's a trap!

Helios reacts swiftly, yanks his axe and leaps in. The axe's sharp edge shears a gaping wound in the jello substance.

AGGEE Helios, what are you doing?

Aggee releases a volley of arrows that slice and disappear inside the thing--

SPEAKING OF INSIDE

Allie holds her breath and uncorks arcane energy in the form of ELDRITCH BLASTS.

The cube hums, illuminated with brilliant flashes.

Rainbow and Jarnethan peer apprehensively into the pit.

RAINBOW What is that?

JARNETHAN Did I not mention? The museum has formidable security.

RAINBOW What if a child had tried to open that door?

JARNETHAN Like you said, no one brings their children here.

Rainbow THROWS HER CHAKRAM whistling into the thing and like Aggee's arrows, it too disappears.

RAINBOW Are you gonna help?

Jarnethan pours hooch onto the creature causing it to get violently angry. Bubbling and coursing like lava it slowly rises out of the pit.

JARNETHAN KICKS the thing and it bursts like a water balloon.

He takes a swig from the jar and offers it to Rainbow.

A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Everyone a little worse for wear, reconvene, ready for museum assault #2.

RAINBOW Is there anything else we should know?

JARNETHAN We're gravers, we don't plan, we do.

HELIOS I don't feel well. I think we should postpone this adventure for another time.

AGGEE What about Bee Arthur?

HELIOS We'll figure something out, tomorrow.

ALLIE

I know I'm new to this band. But we can't just leave an innocent victim held hostage by, who knows, what kind of thugs--

HELIOS I don't think you're a good fit for our band.

Rainbow gasps.

ALLIE Should I leave?

HELIOS That's probably for the best.

RAINBOW What? No. Allie stay here. Helios, why are you being so rude?

HELIOS We're the power trio of Gravers Dig. We don't need 'em. AGGEE Helios, that's enough, now. RAINBOW He's just afraid. (to Helios) Are you okay? HELIOS I'm fine. RAINBOW Do you want to talk about your feelings? HELIOS No. RAINBOW We can. HELIOS No. RAINBOW It's healthy. HELIOS No. AGGEE Helios chill. We're gonna find the Book of Kelleth, save Bee. And then you and I are gonna have a talk. HELIOS Get out of my face. ALLIE Are your friends always like this? RAINBOW They're normally really nice. Helios is scared most of the time. Right now though, he's not acting

AGGEE I don't like this new attitude.

scared.

HELIOS I don't like this new penchant for breaking and entering.

Rainbow and Aggee bust-a-gut. Bwhaahahah!

AGGEE

Penchant? Really? What did you do with Helios?

RAINBOW Helios, I need you to look at my face. Are you cursed right now? Blink twice if you're in there?

HELIOS BLINKS TWICE.

Everyone recoils.

Allie SLAPS Helios. He HEAD BUTTS her in return, sending her reeling.

HELIOS

GET OUT.

Rainbow CASTS SUGGESTION on Helios--

RAINBOW Helios, STOP! Stop being bullheaded.

Helios snorts angrily.

AGGEE

Just. Stay. Calm.

Allie shakes off mental cobwebs, WEAVES AN INCANTATION creating an ear piercing KLAXON ALARM that drives Helios mad.

He ROARS and storms forward, his axe a whirlwind of bad intentions.

The two friends, Helios and Aggee exchange a flurry of blows, slash, dodge, lunge, block--

ALLIE There is honor among thieves. But what you're doing, is not honorable.

RAINBOW He is not himself.

JARNETHAN

It must be one of the museum's elaborate security measures.

Aggee raises his staff to the heavens

AGGEE

Thief aid us in this heist.

IN THE HEAVENS, THIEF pulses and the sky suddenly goes DARK. ON HELIOS, 70's BLACKLIGHT stand two superimposed minotaurs.

HELIOS

Kill it.

DOPPELGANGER HELIOS (indecipherable) <click-clack alien chitter>

AGGEE Oh, no. It's the return of Fauxlios!

RAINBOW directs a MAGE HAND that binds Helios in a tangle of slithering python ROPES.

RAINBOW I want people to know, I was this close to taking Hold Person today.

Helios struggles against the ever tighter living ropes.

AGGEE Forgive me, Helios.

He clobbers Helios with his bo-stick. Bam. BAM. B.A.M.

Allie lights him up with an ELDRITCH BLAST. THUNDER BOOM.

ALLIE After this, hopefully I'm still in the band.

RAINBOW DASHES, quick as a bunny, rapier point extended and runs him through.

RAINBOW Last name Skewers. First name Beef.

She yanks her rapier free--

THE DOPPELGANGER FALLS DEAD at Helios' feet.

THE NIGHT SKY RETURNS.

HELIOS Get these off me. I hate ropes!

AGGEE First Helios. Give us one-of your merry moo's.

HELIOS Before or after I kill you?

RAINBOW Now that's, Helios.

INT. THE HUNTERS MUSEUM OF GRAVERS DIG - NIGHT

The HEIST infiltrators slowly tip-toe their way through the museum, past elaborate exhibits featuring Somarria's notorious hunting grounds and a zoo of exotic creatures.

HELIOS Don't touch anything.

ALLIE This is the weirdest crime I've ever committed.

RAINBOW Committed a lot of crimes, have you?

ALLIE

A lot.

AGGEE What was that?

Everyone pauses, listening intently. Distantly we can hear Gary calling the 10 o'clock hour.

RAINBOW We're running out of time.

Jarnethan snaps a finger and nods.

JARNETHAN Follow me folks, the archives are this way... (stops, looks) No wait. That way.

IN THE BACK OF MUSEUM - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

They stand in awe, marveling at TWO TITANIC STONE HAND SCULPTURES, that guard a distant hallway beyond.

AGGEE (nudges Helios) You know what they say? Big hands, big flute.

HELIOS You're incorrigible.

AGGEE Glad to have you back, buddy.

JARNETHAN They're harmless. They were created for a Hands Across Chaldea exhibit for the World's Fair.

Jarnethan points to an INSCRIPTION ON THE WALL:

ALLIE (reading) "Foes don't proceed. Only friends do."

RAINBOW We're all friends.

ALLIE How do you demonstrate friendship?

She shakes hands, her dainty hand swallowed up in the massive mitt of a hand.

The HAND GRINDS SLOWLY OPEN.

ALLIE (CONT'D) That's remarkable.

AGGEE It's true what they say, Friendship is Magic.

Aggee shakes hands with the other and it RUMBLES OPEN.

They move down the hall and once past, THEY GRIND CLOSED.

INT. MUSEUM ARCHIVES - SOON THEREAFTER

The archives is a warehouse of crates, mountains of crates like something out of an archaeology documentary.

ALLIE Holy Hera, look at all this.

RAINBOW Jarnethan, how about that nose of yours. Which way?

He points to an adjoining chamber--they quickly move--where they find vast columns and rows of--

AGGEE That's a lot of books.

RAINBOW Where do we start?

ALLIE Do we even know it's here?

Helios walks over to a table that has a sign that reads: "New Arrivals". Picks up a lone book.

HELIOS Book of Kelleth, comma, the. (holds up victorious) Banzai baby!

RAINBOW Thief favors you, Helios.

Helios flips open the book.

JARNETHAN That's a book, you don't want to read. Trust me. It'll drive you to drink.

AGGEE Why are we standing around? We have a Bee to save.

EXT. GRAVERS DIG - DIRE STREETS - LATER

The Book Thieves huddle up to make plans.

RAINBOW Aggee, you know where the Anumian grove is?

AGGEE Pfft. Of course. You insult me. HELIOS

You didn't know where the book store was? You had us wondering around the Vim & Vigor.

JARNETHAN

It's been a long week. I think I'm gonna head home. My jar is empty.

RAINBOW Thank you, Jarnethan. We'll return your book when we're done with it.

She holds up CROSSED FINGERS to her friends.

JARNETHAN I love you more than drink, but don't make me prove it. Farewell.

They wave good-bye as Jarnethan disappears into the shadows as we hear GARY CALL 11 O'CLOCK.

RAINBOW We're cutting it close.

ARIADNE'S ARTISANS RUN

EXT. ANUMIAN GROVE - APPROACHING MIDNIGHT

The four band mates come barreling into the grove after a sustained overland marathon, huffing and puffing--

RAINBOW You didn't tell us... it was an hour's... run... outside of town?

AGGEE I'm a chan. How was I supposed to know how damn slow you run.

RAINBOW Look at these legs. I wasn't built for marathons.

Helios and Aggee draw weapons, sweep the grove for trouble.

Allie gently nudges Rainbow.

ALLIE You, you see this?

In a nearby tree, hangs a HUNTER'S CAGE and inside it--

BEE ARTHUR!

AGGEE Careful, it could be a trap.

Rainbow runs to the cage.

RAINBOW Bee, are you okay?

Bee attempts to fly, but her delicate wings are limited by the tight confines of the cage.

RAINBOW (CONT'D) Poor girl, what did they do to you?

Allie scratches her head confounded.

ALLIE

So, Bea Arthur is a bee?

RAINBOW A-huh, a Dire Bumble Bee. Isn't she the most beautiful thing you've ever seen?

Rainbow shakes the cage.

RAINBOW (CONT'D) Help me get her out.

Rainbow and Allie search for a door or a lock, but nada.

ALLIE Its hermetically sealed.

The boys join the gals.

AGGEE We're alone. No one is here.

RAINBOW Maybe we need to read the book?

ALLIE Jarnethan warned us not to.

Helios closely analyzes a rectangle opening in the bars.

HELIOS What is this? RAINBOW That's just a food tray slot. To feed prisoners.

HELIOS Is it? Or is it a book drop. Huh?

A MAGICAL SHIMMER radiates around the opening.

RAINBOW That's a stretch.

AGGEE

Just try it.

Rainbow feeds the book through the slot and--

THE BOOK AND THE CAGE MAGICALLY DISAPPEAR.

Bee Arthur HOVERS excitedly, buzz, buzz, buzz.

RAINBOW Bee you're free!

AGGEE Now how are we going to return the book to Jarnethan?

ALLIE

I think it best, we didn't. That book was a bad influence on him.

HELIOS But who the hell kidnapped Bee?

Shrugs all around.

RAINBOW I don't want to stick around and find out.

AGGEE Lets get the Helios out of here. Let's run.

RAINBOW I'm not gonna run, when I can fly.

Rainbow mounts Bee and away they go.

IN THE DISTANCE WE HEAR GARY CALL 12 O'CLOCK.