

VI: A podcast by the Intergalactic Improv Initiative.

KAYA: Ride of the Valkyrie, Episode 1: A Hanar Floats Into a Bar.  
Featuring the voices of Hans Cummings, Ché Grové, Chase Hutchison, Hunter LaPaglia, JD Kelly, Leah Ryan, and creator, Kaya Renwick.

Commander Shepard is dead...but the adventures have only just begun. /  
*Should Roll.*

March 14, 2184, Terran Universal Coordinated Calendar. The Citadel, Widow System, Serpent Nebula. Kithoi Ward, Museum District. The Most Serene Blossom of the Mind's Dawning.

It is a lovely day on the Citadel, where the weather is always exactly the same and there is no day/night cycle because everybody lives however the hell they want. However, it is time for Zyn to go to work.

ZYN: This is the best part of my day.

KAYA: Zyn arrives at the museum and could you— could you describe the museum where Zyn works, Hans?

ZYN: The Most Serene Blossom of the Mind's Dawning is the most educational source on the Citadel about the Enkindlers. It tells the ...'truth' ... about what the Enkindlers are, where they went, and what they are doing now. It is a serene, beautiful place, possibly the best place on the Citadel. Admission is only five credits per person, unless you are an elcor, in which case it is seven, because they take up two seats in the auditorium.

LEAH: [laughs]

KAYA: Ah, as Zyn floats up to The Most Serene Blossom of the Mind's Dawning, they see several C-Sec officers milling around and a, and the holographic police tape over the front entrance.

ZYN: Pardon me, C-Sec personnel, I must pass through your polymer tape in order to report to my duties. If this one is late, they may dock this one's pay.

KAYA: The rather gruff-looking human man who is, like, scanning his omnitool over the outside of the facade, looks up at you and holds himself back from rolling his eyes and waves you in.

As you float in through the holographic tape, you see your boss, Leilitietava. She is the museum docent, the head of the museum, and she is possibly the most

obsequious, evangelical hanar you have ever met in your life. She is wholly devoted to the Enkindlers, believes every word that the museum, um, *claims*, and... she will take in any hanar who needs a job because she believes it is the Enkindlers' will. She has sunk untold amounts of credits into this museum. It's her baby.

She is speaking with the C-Sec officer in charge, a female turian with beige plates and very blocky dark gray markings. She's a little on the stocky side, kinda short. They are talking a little bit further into the museum amongst the exhibits, and you can tell from here that Leili is just *beside herself*. She is *distraught*. If you want to give me an Insight check on the turian, you are welcome to, or you are of course welcome to just rock on up and see what's going on.

HANS: Oh, Insight! I'm great at that. Plus zero.

KAYA: Or Perception, I mean. Doesn't matter. Whatever.

HANS: Oh, Perception. I'm *slightly* better at that. Oh! A *five*.

ZYN: This one notices nothing. Ever.

KAYA: [giggles] Ah, the C-Sec officer appears to be doing her job and politely talking to Leili. Okay. What does Zyn do?

HANS: I will bob politely in whatever passes as a hanar nod of greetings, and attempt to pass by them while listening casually in an attempt to get to wherever it is I have to...tend.

KAYA: Okay! Uh, as you float by, um... are you trying to go behind the C-Sec officer, or behind Leili?

HANS: I will go behind Leili.

KAYA: Okay.

JD: Can I ask a question?

KAYA: Absolutely.

JD: What does Zyn do at the museum? Like, what's their role?

HANS: You know how museums have, ah, certain exhibits have attendants who just stand there to, like, interpret the exhibit for visitors to the museum? That's what Zyn does.

JD: [chuckles] So, like...

HANS: [overlapping] It is a very prestigious job!

JD: ...where some museums you'd be given, like, headphones as you walk around that explain the exhibits, you just have Zyn following you— floating around with you throughout the whole museum explaining all of the exhibits?

HANS: Just— just particular exhibits. We're all assigned each— certain sections...

JD: I love this.

HANS: We also make sure people don't litter.

JD: 'Course.

KAYA: I love this. So as Zyn floats up and bobs politely, they catch a snippet of the conversation of what the turian officer is saying. It sounds like, based on her tone of voice, she would rather be anywhere but here right now, but you're catching Leili—as I said, she's absolutely distraught—and she is trying to convince the long-suffering C-Sec officer that the value of whatever—of something, you don't catch the referent—is beyond compare, and

LEILI: The truth of the Enkindlers will be direly threatened by the absence of this—

KAYA: And you're moving on past.

HANS: I will casually *reverse* as if I have forgotten something and go loiter near them. Is there, like, a trash can or something?

KAYA: Sure, why not.

HANS: Yeah, I'll go linger by a nearby trash can and idly stick one tentacle down in it as if I accidentally dropped something in there, while I'm listening to them.

OFFICER: So you're telling me that Kasumi Goto came in last night and stole this ancient artifact from your back room.

LEILI: Yes, the C-Sec officer is correct! You understand the situation perfectly.

OFFICER: But you don't know what the artifact was and you don't have any security footage...

LEILI: Oh no, the Enkindlers preach tolerance and understanding, we would never presume that any of our visitors would be so rude as to steal from our wonderful place of learning and honor.

KAYA: The C-Sec officer looks like she wants to tear her mandibles off, but instead she just gently exhales.

OFFICER: Then, please explain to me why you think legendary thief Kasumi Goto stole your crates.

KAYA: This seems to stump Leili, but it's a very brief moment and she sort of, she wiggles her tentacles and says,

LEILI: The Enkindlers told this one in a dream.

KAYA: This time the C-Sec officer literally does a little bit of a facepalm. Does Zyn want to do anything or shall we just continue?

HANS: Zyn can no longer hold back and must interject.

ZYN: If a legendary thief has truly stolen Enkindler artifacts, then surely you must see the value in retrieving them. They would be worth millions of credits on the open market to collectors interested in Enkindler artifacts. Surely C-Sec is not so irresponsible as to let crimes like this go uninvestigated.

KAYA: [laughs] The C-Sec officer looks over, and then looks back to Leili and says,

OFFICER: Who's this? One of your employees?

KAYA: Leili turns to see you and glitters with pride, she loves your work, she thinks you're a, she considers you a deeply valued member of her staff. She thinks this about everyone, but it's true for everyone, because that's the kind of hanar she is. So yeah, she glitters with pride and,

LEILI: This is Zynamondan, one of our best and most valuable interpreters. Zynamondan clearly understands the inherent value in these Prothean artifacts. Please, madam, if you would be so kind as to assist in the retrieval of these *priceless* artifacts?

KAYA: Could I get an Insight check from you this time, Hans?

HANS: Insight, oh, that's it. Eh, that's not how you roll a die. That is! Alright! A one!!

JD & KAYA: [laughs]

KAYA: Oh, lordy lou! Okay, you notice the C-Sec officer, she just kind of like, glances around but doesn't say— like, she's clearly looking at the surroundings and keeping her opinion to herself. But you can't quite tell what she's thinking. She turns back to Leili and says,

OFFICER: Well yes, I do understand that there is a significant black market for Prothean artifacts. But you must understand, ma'am, that without any information beyond 'the Enkindlers told me in a dream that Kasumi Goto stole my stuff and I don't know what that stuff is', my talons are tied.

KAYA: Leili bobs in midair thinking about this, and then turns to you, Zyn, and says,

LEILI: Zynamondan, this one has heard your tales and dreams in the break room. This would be a perfect opportunity for you to flex your wonderful skills and retrieve this priceless artifact. The Enkindlers will bless that one deeply.

ZYN: Enkindled excretia! this one will truly perform at its highest level of proficiency to track down and retrieve these artifacts. However, it would be helpful if this one knew exactly which artifacts were taken. Does the museum not have an inventory?

KAYA: Leili does another little bob and she says,

LEILI: Oh, this one does not concern themselves with the inventory list. But yes, one does exist!

KAYA: And you notice the C-Sec officer truly wants to take this hanar and just shake them like "Ya couldn't have told me this in the first place?!"

JD: Shake it like a Magic 8 Ball! [laughs]

KAYA: Yes, exactly! She holds it all in—the things you have to do as a C-Sec officer—and she just mutters,

OFFICER: Spirits preserve me.

KAYA: And she turns to you and she says,

OFFICER: You seem like you know what you're doing. Why don't we go look in the stock room to— look in the archives..?

KAYA: She's looking at you like "Give me something here?"

ZYN: Yes, that is an excellent suggestion.

OFFICER: Great, we'll do that. Ma'am.

KAYA: She turns back to Leili.

OFFICER: If there's anything else you need, please don't hesitate to ask one of my men.

KAYA: And she gestures to the, there's a couple of humans, a couple of turians who are over there. And the ones in earshot kind of 'uuugh' shudder. Leili nods, or bobs again, wiggles her tentacles, and floats over to go bother someone else.

HANS: Then I will lead the turian to wherever it is I think this inventory list might be kept.

KAYA: So you could go to Leili's office, or like the administrative office would be one option. Or you could just go into like, the back rooms, where they keep the exhibits that aren't like, on display all the time, where they kind of, they rotate things out. That's not typically your domain, you're usually with your exhibit, but you would know where it is. It's not that big of a place, I imagine.

ZYN: Please officer, follow this one to the backstage area where we keep exhibits that are not presently on display.

OFFICER: Sounds great.

KAYA: As... as you're walking back there, she asks,

OFFICER: So, you're an interpreter, hmm? And how do you like working here?

ZYN: This is the culmination of what this one's progenitors perceive as an acceptable occupation.

KAYA: 'Kay. She did not roll very high on her Insight check, so I won't make you contest that. She nods and continues, then asks, well first she checks over her shoulder, very quickly and seems content with whatever she sees. She pitches her voice a little lower and she says,

OFFICER: And what do you think about your boss?

ZYN: This one believes that many hanar in this museum imbibe excessively deeply from the well of Enkindler propaganda.

KAYA: [cackles] The turian chuckles, she's quite, she's quite tickled by this.

OFFICER: Ah, I see. So, in your opinion, do you think the good docent is right? Is this artifact actually likely to be particularly valuable? Or is it like some of the rocks I see here?

ZYN: It may be valuable to the right person. After all, is it not true that one being's garbage is another being's treasure?

OFFICER: Fair enough, fair enough, I suppose. That brings me to my last question: do you think she might have taken it, or given it to someone and is putting this on as a show?

ZYN: That would be highly unusual for one of Leili's stature.

KAYA: She sighs as you guys reach the back rooms. Clearly, she was hoping to wrap this up pretty quickly and is a little bit disappointed by your saying 'Yeah, no, that's not Leili's thing.' Okay, you've reached the back rooms. They're, actually, I imagine they're pretty well-organized. How much stuff is back here, do you think?

HANS: I would think quite a lot of stuff. Although, it probably appears to be a lot of junk to someone like a C-Sec officer. Someone who is not 'enlightened.'

KAYA: Yes, the C-Sec officer stops at the door and kind of looks around. Doesn't look terribly impressed, but she does gravitate to the pallet of crates that is relatively near the door because it is still on a pallet and is clearly stuff that just arrived. She gestures to it,

OFFICER: Odds are that it came from there or was there, d'ya think?

ZYN: This one has not actually been in this room for several months.

OFFICER: Ah.

ZYN: This one's answer is: 'Yes? Possibly?'

OFFICER: Fair enough.

KAYA: She strolls over to the pallet of crates and looks around it and discovers a datapad which she picks up and scrolls through.

OFFICER: Yeah, alright, it looks like this came in a couple of days ago.

KAYA: And she steps back and she, she eyes the stack of crates.

OFFICER: Yeah, alright, one's missing. Great.

KAYA: She taps on it a few times and then jumps as the datapad lights up with a representation of hanar bioluminescence that has not been translated.

OFFICER: Sorry, um, strobe lights! Can you read this?

ZYN: Yes.

KAYA: You certainly can. It says, in, you know, in... insert many flowery adjectives in much language here that the crate that is missing according to the datapad plus the off..the C-Sec officer's omnitool scan of what's there, the crate that was missing is probably about the... the size of a standard bipedal sapient's head. So, you know, carryable, really. And the contents are an artifact of ethereal beauty, the original provenance of which is truly unknown but, this item has come to us from the deep and generous pockets of our most illustrious benefactor. So, G-d knows what was actually in there, but whoever donated it was pretty rich and it's old? Question mark?

JD: I'm...I'm pretty convinced it's a Magic 8 Ball at this point.

ZYN: The datapad describes an artifact of immense beauty and cultural significance donated to The Most Serene Blossom of the Mind's Dawning by a wealthy benefactor.

OFFICER: I see. And does it happen to have a crate ID number attached to it?

ZYN: Not that was written in the hanar language.

OFFICER: Of course. Until I have more actionable information, I can't do shit with this.

ZYN: This one is confused why you feel turian excrement would be beneficial in this situation.

KAYA: She... she blinks and then goes.

OFFICER: Oh yeah. Hanar. Right. I can't do *anything* about this unless I have some more actionable information. It's gonna be real hard for me to check shipments or track anything if I don't know what was stolen, when it was stolen, who stole it, or y'know anything beyond "It's something and it's expensive." So, I am going to go back to the precinct and make a note of this and if you find anything, great! Come talk to me. Otherwise, I can't help you. Sorry.

ZYN: This one accepts your apology and for your information, this one does understand bipedal endoskeletal species' metaphors. This one was simply

engaging in non-sexual reproductive behavior with you. This one is laughing on the inside, as hanar lack an organ for audible vocal emissions.

KAYA: The off—the officer looks at you and then finally just has to shake her head and chuckle.

OFFICER: Alright, okay. Great. I'm not sure this day could get weirder.

JD: Just wait.

ZYN: It can.

OFFICER: Great.

KAYA: She...she takes the datapad back and she says.

OFFICER: Alright, well, I guess I'm gonna go start the endless paperwork, umm...I assume you know where the C-Sec office is in this district?

ZYN: Yes. This one does.

OFFICER: Very good. Alright, well, have a good day...sir. Pleasure to meet you, much more pleasure to meet you than your boss. Don't tell her I said that. You have a good one.

ZYN: This one's vocal apparatus is sealed.

OFFICER: Good.

KAYA: Okay, what are you going to do?

HANS: So, I have the datapad now?

KAYA: Ah, she... she took it back. Yeah, 'cause she's gotta, she's gotta use it for her reports and stuff.

HANS: Bother. Um, I will paw through the crates and see if there are any clues.

KAYA: Ah, roll me an Investigation check.

HANS: Oooh! A possibility I might not totally suck. Meh. Twelve.

KAYA: Okay, um, as you poke through, I will say that you find the backup copy of the inventory list, because whoever works back here actually, like, makes... makes

backups. What is this? And you find the same data. And you also notice that a lot of other crates in this particular shipment came from this, this benefactor who is not named, but who has increasingly purple prose descriptions of their wonderfulness involved in every single crate tag. The artifacts involved range from chips of stone from Prothean dig sites and buildings, yay, to non-functional technology, which could also just be paperweights for all you really know to a few things that like, they probably worked at some point. Some data discs, stuff like that.

And again, this, this, so it seems like the, the item that was stolen was the biggest item in the shipment, uh, definitely the most valuable, and it *still worked*. It did something. Again with the, the language isn't particularly specific as to what it did, but as you're comparing the list, like shit, shit, shit, crap, useless, junk, junk. Ah, interesting! Oh, maybe academically interesting. Actual functioning Prothean technology. *Hmmm*.

HANS: I will keep that datapad and lament the fact that I have no pockets.

KAYA: I was just thinking, like, how do hanar carry things? Do you have a little hanar backpack? Hanar hammerspace?

HANS: Well, I know they do make, they do make armor for hanar, which I have a set, but...

JD: You've got multiple tentacles, though, so you could probably, like, just hold it in one back tentacle and then the front tentacles are still free to do stuff.

LEAH: Tentacles of many holding.

HANS: Yeah, I kinda tuck it up against my body with one of the tentacles so it looks like one of my tentacles are shorter than the rest of them because it's...

JD: Like a newspaper tucked under the arm!

HANS: And I will casually, I suppose I will casually float out and return to the place where I am supposed to be working while I contemplate what this particular Prothean artifact might be.

KAYA: Okay.

HANS: Not wanting to immediately jump to the conclusion that "IT'S A BEACON!"

KAYA: Well, I mean, that would be a real small beacon, if it's head-sized. So, it's, it's their miniature beacon, it's they... after they, they were moving away from, you

know, wired technology, this is the equivalent of the cellphone. It's the mini-beacon.

HANS: It's a Prothean Head-in-a-Jar!

KAYA: [gasp]

JD: It's a Prothean Decision Maker. What you do is you shake it and ask it a question...

KAYA: Amazing! Ah, you come back out into the main room and it's, it's pretty quiet. The C-Sec officers are very idly taking scans of things. None of them seem very interested in doing anything about this.

But, I, I will say that, across the street...the 'street'... across the walkway, you notice that the cafe across the street is, its, its business is picking up. And you can see there's a line that it, it's long enough that it is, it is out the front door. It's a very popular, popular spot. Great coffee, apparently.

Popular enough that it might have security cameras.

HANS: Can I even drink? I will approach, um... Leili...long name.

KAYA: Sure, yeah, you find, you find Leili. She's not hard to find, she never is. As you, as you approach, she bobs in greeting and, and flashes at you, wondering whether, how your conversation with the, with the C-Sec officer went, and

LEILI: What are that one's next steps in retrieving the ancient and blessed technology of the Enkindlers?

ZYN: C-Sec's opinion is that as far as they are concerned, we have excreted our final fortunes in this matter. However, this one has an idea.

LEILI: Oh?

ZYN: This one will go to the cafe across the way and inquire whether or not their security cameras perhaps captured anyone entering our establishment after hours.

KAYA: She, again, glitters with pride.

LEILI: That is a most wonderful idea, Zynamondan. May the Enkindlers speed that one on your journey.

ZYN: Also, this one must inform you, C-Sec asked whether or not you were capable of pilfering the item in question. This one, however, mentioned that this one did not believe you were capable of such a nefarious act. Therefore, if you are guilty of such a crime, this one would appreciate if you would tell this one immediately so as to not make a liar out of this one.

KAYA: This, this proclamation, she flashes, like strobe light in utter shock.

LEILI: This one would never! May the Enkindlers strike this one dead where this one floats if this one should ever besmirch the truth of the Enkindlers with such horrible deeds!

KAYA: She's, she's, she's havin' a, she's whoo, havin' a moment! A hanar equivalent of a hot flash.

ZYN: That is what this one attempted to relay to the C-Sec officer in more succinct terms.

LEILI: This one is deeply grateful.

JD: Can I just take a moment to really appreciate the verbal gymnastics you two are going through right now? It's great!

CHASE: Oh, it's amazing! Oh, I'm just... just incredible.

KAYA: Thank you! [laughs] It's a ride!

HANS: So, I will float across the way to the cafe, and um...

KAYA: Excellent.

HANS: Oh gosh, it seems inappropriate to jump the line, even if I just have a question and not ordering, so I will wait in line. It's only, it's the only polite thing to do.

KAYA: Okay, uh you, you queue up, uh luckily, this cafe, the, the queue moves pretty quick. Although, you do get a few sort of confused looks, because I, I don't think hanar usually, like, buy drinks, or if they do, you know, maybe they just like, do they pour them over themselves and, like absorb it, or is it, is it a mouth on the bottom thing like other, like jellyfish? So yeah, you get a few curious looks, but...

HANS: It is rude to ask.

KAYA: Exactly! And everyone just kind of looks at you and then goes back to their, their whate— you know, their omnitools or whatever and then kind of maybe looks at

you again. And “naw, I’m not gonna”, [laughs] but, again, the line moves pretty quickly. And so you come to the counter, and it’s an asari barista, who is with a human, and there’s a quarian dishwasher in the back, and yeah a couple of humans, the asari and the humans are busily making drinks. It’s a Starbucks. Like, really, the, we’re, we’re, we’re at Starbucks level here. Um..

JD: Cita... Citadelbucks, please.

KAYA: Cita... yeah, right? Yeah, yeah, yeah. And unionized! Um...

JD: Yeah, let’s, let’s not get copyright struck straight out of the bag.

KAYA: Fair enough! [laugh]

EVERYONE: [overlapping laughs]

KAYA: [overlapping] Yeah, yeah, Spacebucks!

CHASE: [overlapping] Incredible.

KAYA: [overlapping] Spacebucks...

KAYA: The asari, the asari, uh, who looks a little, a little bit run off her feet, uh because the morning rush is a little crazy, um, gets all the way through the ‘Welcome to blah, blah, blah may I take your order...’ before she looks up and goes...

LEAH: Oh, this poor barista! [laughs]

KAYA: And just looks at you, and then looks at her till, and looks at the kitchen, and then decides she is not paid enough to ask questions, and repeats

BARISTA: May I take your order... Sir?

ZYN: This one would like to speak to your manager.

KAYA: She *blanches*!

BARISTA: Uh... um... ahh... ah... Sir!

KAYA: As she’s making this decision, and she’s looking beyond you at the line that is still going. And you know, you can tell she’s deciding between the “Do I ask what... nope! No time!” And so she, she leans back and yells into the, err, calls into the back.

BARISTA: Uh, hey, Kayli, um, someone wants to talk to you! Uh, thanks, thanks sir, um, she'll, she'll be right out, uh she'll be, she'll wait for you right over there, uh. Huh... Have a good day!

ZYN: You as well.

HANS: And I will float over to where she indicated.

KAYA: 'Kay. Um, from the, from the back rooms, um, another asari emerges, a little older, uh and she, she comes out of the, she comes out and like um, swings open the, the little, the little back gate thing and looks up at you and says,

KAYLI: Can I help you? Is there a problem?

ZYN: There is no problem with your establishment or your employees. This one works at The Most Serene Blossom of the Mind's Dawning across the way. Last night, our establishment was robbed. This one was wondering whether or not your security cameras possibly captured any evidence of activity at the museum after hours.

KAYA: Uh, you see her, she goes through this, this journey of "Oh shit, what do I have to deal with now" to "what the hell is The Most Serene Blossom of the Mind's D— oh, it's the weird-ass museum across the street, you want the... why would somebody steal things from... you want my secur... okay!" Ah, and there is definitely this air of, again, not-paid-enough-to-deal-with-this-shit.

KAYLI: Sure, I'll, we'll, we'll see...come on in, um, our security office is in the back, ah, and, and our, our, I'll, I'll get our tech to come and talk to you. Good luck? Finding whatever got stolen?

ZYN: Thank you. That was much easier than this one believed it would be after watching *Blasto Saves Christmas*.

KAYA: The asari does a double take and once again decides that this, nope, not today. Not today! Although you, you do see, so as you, you're going back, you pass the breakroom, uh, and you see Blasto posters in the breakroom, so, appar... somebody, somebody here likes Blasto, too.

HANS: I glow brighter.

KAYA: Aw! You find the security office in the back. There is a uh, a male quarian sitting in the chair, um, napping in the chair. Uh, and as you come in with the, with the manager, ah, she reaches out and, and shoves him pretty harshly on the shoulder. Ah, and says,

KAYLI: Hey, no sleepin' on the job. Wake up!

KAYA: And he jumps and straightens up.

SECURITY: Ah, ah, no , sorr... sorry ma'am, sorry ma'am. I'm awake! I'm...I'm here!

KAYA: And then he catches sight of you and goes.

SECURITY: What's with the jelly?

ZYN: There is no need for speciest slurs.

SECURITY: Oh, ahh... Sorry, I didn't realize that that was, uh okay, alright. Color me learned. Today I learned.

KAYA: He yawns in his, in his, behind his mask filter and cracks his neck and...

SECURITY: Uh, can I help you?

ZYN: This one would like to view external security cam footage from last night until opening.

KAYA: He glances at his, at his console and...

SECURITY: Uh...oo... okay, but, but are...

KAYA: He looks over his shoulder at the manager,

SECURITY: Uh, Kay... Kayli, does this guy work for us?

KAYLI: No, they work for the museum across the street. I don'... just... just, just give, give them what they want, alright? I gotta get back out there.

SECURITY: Ah, yeah. Yeah, sure, sure ma'am. Yeah, you got it.

KAYA: And he starts, he starts tapping on the, on the console... brings up the footage. Um, and it's, it's not a great angle. Uh, and it's a little grainy 'cause, I mean, they're, they're looking for people that are coming to, like, break their shit, obviously.

Um, but it does show, like part of the, of the walkway. Um, and you can kind of see, like, the corner of, of The Most Serene Blossom of the Mind's Dawning's door there, and at, we're gonna say eight hours before now, because the Citadel

doesn't really work on a day/night cycle, but we're gonna say about eight hours before now someone very fleet of foot, who does kind of look like the vid representation of Kasumi Goto, ran out carrying a crate.

ZYN: That is not a hanar. Does that crate appear large enough to contain a cranium to you?

KAYA: The quarian pauses the footage and uh, does a little bit of, of, you know, tech voodoo. Enhance! Enhance! Ah, it doesn't get particularly enhanced. It's still pretty grainy. Ah, but he manages to, to just, like zoom in on that frame. And he tilts his head and he says.

SECURITY: I guess? You guys got... that's a, that's a, that's an Enkindler museum, right? I heard about that. One time.

ZYN: It is. You should visit. It is most enlightening.

SECURITY: Alright, I'll keep that in mind. You think there's a head in that box?

ZYN: This one does not know what is in the crate. It simply use... This one simply used 'cranium' as a size comparison.

SECURITY: Ah, gotcha, alright. So, this, whoever this is they, they stole this from you, right?

KAYA: You can, he's getting, he's getting into this, like this is, this is clearly better than what he does all day, which is probably sit back here and um, imbibe way too much caffeine through his emergency induction port that's probably not settled for his, uh, stomach anyway, um, and his, his existence is probably not the best thing, but this is actually interesting, this is, like, something different. Um...

SECURITY: Whatever this is, they stole it from your place, right?

ZYN: That is our assumption, yes.

SECURITY: Well, that sucks. Um, any idea who might wanna steal stuff from an Enkindler museum?

HANS: I'll kind of rotate as if I'm looking both ways checking to see if anybody is eavesdropping, even though I can't actually turn a head 'cause I don't have a head, um and say...

ZYN: This one suspects it was legendary thief Kasumi Goto.

KAYA: The quarian tilts his head, and....

SECURITY: Oh yeah, I did watch a movie about her. Huh. Cool!

KAYA: Ah, he suggests after a, a little bit of, like poking, poking at the, at the frame again, um, that the only ways in and out of this particular part of the Ward, uh, pass by, or pass through, um, like docking quarters and transport quarters. And so, there would probably be better cameras, um, and now that you have, like, a direction that the person was going you might get lucky and find something there. Um, it's like...

SECURITY: I mean, obviously, I can't, wish I could, like, come with you and help you, but kinda stuck here, so...

ZYN: You have been most helpful. this one will proceed with this one's investigation. The structured recreational activity is a... a foot? This one does not understand that particular idiom, but... tally... tally... sex worker... no, that is not correct either.

KAYA: [cackling]

HANS: I'll, I'll just blink an equivalent, uh, aphorism in hanar, since I can't come up with the correct metaphorical way of saying it.

LEAH: No, tally-sex worker was great!

KAYA: The quarian is just kind of staring at you like...

SECURITY: Okay, uh, *keelah se'lai* or whatever. Ha... bye.

LEILI: The Most Serene Blossom of the Mind's Dawning is the premier resource on the Citadel for all those wishing to learn more about our blessed uplifters, the Enkindlers. In our galaxy-class facilities in Kithoi Ward, you can experience the awe of witnessing the Enkindlers' miracles via ancient texts, priceless artifacts, and incredible interpretation by our wonderful, highly educated guides. Allow your mind to be transported by the transcendental glory of the Enkindlers, which remains with us, even in their corporeal absence.

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KAYA: So the way these work are they're, sort of they're, they're connections between levels or sections of the Wards. Um, they're sort of like customs points, they're C-Sec Security points, that sort of thing. Um, and they do have, like they keep a log of whoever's coming in and out, um, and they're manned by more C-Sec officers, who, this, they're, they're TSA agents, basically. Ah, they do not like their jobs. They do not want to be here. They do not want to go back through the footage. They do not care. Ah, and so yeah, you are going to have to persuade them to give you some information. I will get you to roll me either a Charm or an Intimidate roll, depending on how you want to approach.

HANS: I'm still excited at this point, so I will try to be charming.

KAYA: Okay!

HANS: Plus, I have a much better chance of being charming than I do of being intimidating. Oooh! A sixteen!

KAYA: Okay! Ah, you successfully persuade the poor, hardworked, long-suffering C-Sec TSA agent to go back in the, in the records and strangely, they discover a small and difficult-to-perceive hack in their systems, and, for about ninety seconds, which is about as long as it takes to get through the transport corridor; somebody looped footage. Uh, however, um, they are able to trace, uh, that, so they didn't see anybody go through, but uh, they can tell that a crate went through because it was tagged. And so, now, you have the crate ID number.

Ah, and a quick little bit of investigation from the C-Sec officer, who is suddenly far more interested in helping because there's actual, like, criminal activity going on and this is their job, they're able to tell you that that crate was, went, traveled from this particular transport corridor to a dock in Tayseri Ward and departed the Citadel about two hours after it went through that transport corridor.

ZYN: This is most excellent information. This one gets to leave the Citadel on this investigation. How exciting. This one's protoplasm quivers. This one will, thank you!

CHÉ: Not quivers, no.

KAYA: The uh, human C-Sec officer kind of like, lil bit, lil bit weirded out by that one. But he's had his inter-species sensitivity training, so he just politely nods and says, "That's great, you enjoy your trip." Okay, so! You now know that, well, you know that! What're you gonna do?

HANS: Well, I'm not a lone wolf, I probably should attempt to pull together a crew to help me go and track down this nefarious criminal.

KAYA: Probably seems wise. Okay, um, are you going to go anywhere in particular? Are you gonna go to like the doc that the crate left from? Or, what's your, what's your plan?

HANS: Where would one go to recruit folks who'd be interested in helping with a not necessarily above the board criminal investigation?

KAYA: I feel like there might be a certain—

HANS: Chora's Den!

KAYA: There we go!

JD: [laughs]

KAYA: Alright! Are you headed to Chora's Den?

HANS: Yes!

JD: [laughs]

KAYA: Hell yeah!

VI: Bachjret Ward. Lower Markets. Chora's Den.

KAYA: Okay, it is seedy as usual! There are, there are asari, human dancers, it's dim, the drinks are flowin'. Doesn't matter that it's the middle of the day for half the people here, who gives a fuck? There are quite a few people here who look like they're havin' a good time. There's vorchas, there's couple of krogans, there's, well, I know where Bean is, uh, which is not here, unless Bean wants to be here, but I don't feel like Chora's Den is Bean's sorta place.

LEAH: No?

EVERYONE: [laughs]

KAYA: Um, but there's a couple, there's some humans here, there's a little bit of everything. Is there a drell there, or no?

CHÉ: There is a drell there.

HANS: I will approach the drell.

KAYA: Okay. Uh, Ché, would you describe your character, please?

CHÉ: Yeah, before you at the bar drinking, ah lets see, probably on her sixth or seventh drink by now, is a drell of about medium height. She has skin that gradiates between iridescent blue and sort of sea-green color. She's wearing nondescript, form fitting dark clothing, and just looks a little bit bemused at you, but y'know she's on her seventh drink, so let's see, "What, am I getting about to be picked up by a hanar? Let's see?"

LEAH: Hey baby what them tennntacles dooo?

EVERYONE: [laughs]

ZYN: Greetings, This one has an inquiry to make of you.

TITOH: Greetings. This one is curious.

ZYN: This one is putting together a, shall we say, crew—

HANS: Why am I doing air quotes, I have no fingers.

ZYN: — a crew to assist in an investigation of a theft of an Enkindler artifact from the Most Serene videbede— the museum in which this one works. And as you appear to be drell, surely you would be interested in helping this one, a hanar, with this investigation.

TITOH: Right.

ZYN: Please?

EVERYONE: [laughs]

TITOH: Have you imbibed much of the offerings here?

ZYN: This one has just arrived and has not yet had an opportunity to order a beverage that this one would not ingest in public.

TITOH: Right. So you're looking for people to... what? Find your artifact?

ZYN: Yes. This one assumes you have skills, do you not?

JD: Shots fired! [laughs]

TITOH: Well yes, but I'm normally on the other side of the theft, not the investigation side if you know what I'm saying.

ZYN: Excellent, therefore you know how criminals think. You would be a most valuable asset.

TITOH: Okay, um. Why not, I have nothing better to do. Um, what's in it for me? 'Cause honestly, um, yeah. I need a little bit more to go on here. A reward for this?

ZYN: The sense of... the sense of greatness you will feel from helping do the right thing is not enough?

TITOH: Not really, no.

ZYN: Eh, perhaps if this, perhaps this theft is suspected to be the legendary Kasumi Goto, surely she has stolen other valuable things that this one would turn a blind, uh, ocular sensory organ away from if you were to purloin it for yourself.

TITOH: Right so, Kasumi Goto has stolen your artifact. How do you know this? I mean, did you see her? Do you have... I need a little bit more to go on.

ZYN: This one has security cam footage of the incident.

TITOH: Right, so why is C-Sec not helping you? I don't want to get caught in their crosshairs, just saying.

ZYN: When was the last time you ever heard of C-Sec doing anything to help a hanar?

TITOH: You do have a point.

LEAH: C-Sec more like CSUCKS! Oooh huhuhuh!

TITOH: Right. What's your name?

ZYN: This one is called Zynamondan.

TITOH: Zynamondan, okay. Say I go along with you. What now? Just you and me going to find Kasumi Goto wherever in the galaxy she may be?

ZYN: Certainly not. This one is thinking perhaps recruiting, perhaps a vorcha for, er, distraction purposes, a krogan in case anything needs to be broken, and maybe a few other skilled individuals to utilize their particular skills that this one... Look, this one knows only about how to solve these problems from watching Blasto holos—

KAYA: HAH!

ZYN: Therefore this one assumes that is the correct way to do things.

TITOH: Okay, I'm just not sharing that much, y'know, I want a good cut of whatever we're doing. Um, and, Blasto?

ZYN: Blasto is the greatest hanar to have ever existed in reality or fiction.

TITOH: I'll take your word for it. Um, alright!

CHÉ: She downs the last of her shots of whatever she has, slams on the table,

TITOH: Let's go. I'm very interested to see where this goes.

ZYN: Huzzah. This one is pleased.

CHASE: And one of the tables, the side, you see um, a vorcha, Gratch, and a krogan, Kache, they're arm wrestling.

GRATCH: I'm gonna get you! Um, Gratch is strongest! I THE STRONGEST!

KACHE: We'll see about that.

GRATCH: Alright, on three. You ready?

KACHE: Wait, wait—

GRATCH: Oh—

KACHE: Is it one, two, three, then go? Or one, two, and go on three?

GRATCH: Umm... umm... uh, three! Go on three!

KACHE: Okay.

GRATCH: Alright, one—

KACHE: [overlapping] Two—

GRATCH: [overlapping] Two—

GRATCH: Three! Yeeeeaaaaaaauuuughh! Eh! Uuuh...

CHASE: And as Gratch is trying to move the hand, it's just not moving, the krogan's just too strong, so he like,

GRATCH: Grab my second! AH! You're— I'm going to get you!

CHASE: taking his second hand and putting it on top, at this point he's putting all his weight on it and I don't think the krogan's really struggling at this point.

KACHE: Hehehehe. Looks like you're buying the drinks.

GRATCH: Gyaaaaam!!! You've— you cheated! That's not fair! I don't like it.

KACHE: Hehehehehehe

CHÉ: Um, seeing this, I will sort of elbow Zyn in the, whatever it is, on the side of him, his side. And be like,

TITOH: You mentioned eh, um, vorchá and a krogan, right?

ZYN: This one selected those species randomly.

TITOH: Well they're randomly here. So...

HANS: I will float over to them.

CHÉ: Right now I'm just amused, I just want to see what happens.

ZYN: This one offers greetings. This one has a proposal if you are not otherwise occupied.

GRATCH: I'm not buying you a drink, too. He's the only one that beat me.

ZYN: This one would never imbibe such a beverage. In public.

KACHE: You look like a varren's kidney. What can I do you for?

HANS: I sit for a moment trying to parse that sentence.

ZYN: This one has a job.

KACHE: What kind of job?

GRATCH: Well?

ZYN: This one is putting together a crew to chase a notorious thief who has stolen an Enkindler artifact from the museum in which this one works, The Most Serene Blossom of the Mind's Dawning. It is in Kithoi Ward, across the way from Spacebucks. Perhaps you have visited the museum? ...On second thought, perhaps you haven't.

KAYA: [giggles]

ZYN: But this one would like you to perhaps audition to join this one's crew to track down this notorious thief?

TITOH: I didn't do any auditions...

CHÉ: She's like whispering in his ear.

GRATCH: Audition? Gratch is strongest. What is audition?

ZYN: You say you are strongest, however this one saw you lose to the krogan, therefore I find your claim of being strongest to be unbelievable.

GRATCH: You saw no such thing and he cheated—

CHASE: and I'm gonna take my Executioner and put it up to his head, er, his blob,

GRATCH: EH! How dare you insult Gratch like that!

KACHE: What exactly got stolen from this endawnber—

GRATCH: Uueer?

KACHE: Mind's Eye of Agamoto museum or, whatever?

ZYN: An extremely valuable Prothean artifact the size of a vorcha, turian, human, quarian, or asari cranium.

GRATCH: That sounds boring.

KACHE: They stole a head?

ZYN: Possibly.

KACHE: Is it a magic head?

ZYN: Yes. The artifact was still functional according to the information this one has.

KACHE: Ohhh...

ZYN: My apologies, friend, the head— the cranium sized object also is the size of a drell cranium. This one did not intend to leave you out.

TITOH: Quite alright.

ZYN: Batarian as well.

KACHE: So what kind of like, payment structure we talking here? The museum have a, uh, bursary? Bursary, that's the word, right?

ZYN: The museum's docent is quite wealthy. This one is certain she will, they will pay... something,

TITOH: Something? You said we'd be paid in treasure! Not *something*.

ZYN: Yes, that as well. Any, any treasure that you may... any purloined goods that the thief also has, this one will not object if you keep.

CHÉ: [giggles]

ZYN: However this one is certain that Leili— the docent of the museum will pay handsomely for the return of the artifact.

KACHE: Is it dangerous?

ZYN: Yes, it will most certainly be dangerous.

KACHE: So we get credits, *and* treasure, *and* it's dangerous? I'm in!

GRATCH: Wait! I'll come too. Don't leave me out.

ZYN: This one would never dream of leaving out our distracti— uh, vorcha com— employee. Useful person.

JD: I kind of like the idea that everyone in Chora's Den is glad that the vorcha's being kept occupied by the krogan in the room and they're like "at least he's talking to him!" [laughs]

KAYA: As all this is happening, at a table near enough that, y'know, it's in earshot, and of course the bouncers kind of do a little bit of a, as soon as Gratch is pulling out

the pistol, they're a little bit "Uhhh," but this is Chora's Den. Like, we're not quite Omega-level, but y'know, guns get waved around on occasion. And, y'know, so they don't intervene. But there is a general uptick of "Hmmm?" as this happens and a human sitting in one of the dark corners happens to hear what is going on. Hunter, can you describe your character? Describe Carver for us?

HUNTER: Yeah. I love that you say sitting in a dark corner, cause I'm just like, ah, Strider!

KAYA & HUNTER: [laughs]

HUNTER: Carver is a Systems Alliance Marine, he's about average height, maybe a little bit shorter, y'know, short king.

JD: [laughs]

HUNTER: But I mean, average looking guy, kinda just in plainclothes, he's not in uniform or anything.

KAYA: How many beers in is he?

HUNTER: Oh, fuck... um, at least three.

JD: [laughs]

HUNTER: Y'know, he's not overdoing it, but he's definitely doing more than a normal amount that he would do on whatever day, and just kinda goin' where it takes him.

KAYA: So as you're three beers in, you hear and see a hanar— a hanar floats into a bar—

JD: [laughs]

KAYA: —and picks up a drell, a vorch, and a krogan. What do you do? They're talkin— I mean, the music in Chora's Den isn't ridiculously loud, you can probably hear more or less what they're talking about, at least some of it. Gratch isn't quiet.

HUNTER: [laughs]

KAYA: What do you do?

HUNTER: Can I shuffle? I'm intrigued, but I also don't want to be rude and like, jump into the conversation. Can I shuffle a little closer to like, listen in?

KAYA: I think that's gonna be a Stealth check.

HUNTER: Oh, fuck.

KAYA: Versus like, Perception checks for everybody.

HUNTER: Okay, let's see, Stealth, let me find that... fuck!

EVERYONE: [laughs]

HUNTER: Okay...one!

KAYA: [laughs] With that lovely, nat one stealth roll, I'm pretty sure you trip!

HUNTER: Lovely.

KAYA: Like, you're gettin' up from your table and you're gonna try to like, shuffle in and you catch—

HUNTER: [overlapping] Ugh, yeah.

KAYA: —your foot on the leg of the table and you jus— EAT IT right beside—

HUNTER: [overlapping laughs]

KAYA: —these four, these four sapients who all rolled well enough to see you anyway. But yeah, you get up, you try to take a step and you eat it in front of all of them.

HUNTER: He's really just like me for real.

CHASE: So, Gratch is starting to lower the weapon at the promise of, y'know, credits and danger, and as soon as he sees this trip he goes,

GRATCH: Hey! What're you doing?!

CHASE: and he points it at him instead.

EVERYONE: [laughs]

HUNTER: Alright, I guess I stand up, kinda brush myself off,

CARVER: My apologies for my rude interruption. I happened to be over here— I apologize, you're not very quiet, it's not hard to overhear. I'm sorry, I've gotten off on the wrong foot— my name is Carver, I've happened to overhear a bit of your

conversation, and I was intrigued and was wondering if there would be room on this said crew for another crew member.

KACHE: [overlapping] Wait—

GRATCH: [overlapping] Gyaah! Boring.

KACHE: —so you also want to help us help out this strange Museum of the Enkrundled Blob of, uh, Sacramento?

ZYN: Most Serene Blossom of the Mind's Dawning. It is in Kithoi Ward across from Spacebucks.

KACHE: Yeah, that— that one.

CARVER: Yes, I've always wanted to go— I've never actually met ah, a species other than humans, so this is incredible! Yes, I would love to help out if you would have me.

ZYN: This one has several queries for you.

CARVER: Okay, fire away.

ZYN: As a human, do you know Kasumi Goto?

CARVER: I have heard the name, yes, but I won't pretend to be extremely familiar.

ZYN: Do you have a ship?

CARVER: Not currently, I do not.

ZYN: Do you have access to a ship?

HUNTER: Do I?? I don't think— cause I'm on like shore leave technically right now—

KAYA: No, you would definitely not—

HUNTER: I definitely don't— um—

KAYA: Is Carver in uniform?

HUNTER: No, I'm in plain clothes.

KAYA: And, on a meta level, Hunter, you've just been grounded.

HUNTER: Yeah...

KAYA: You don't have access to *shit*.

HUNTER: Yeah...

CARVER: Um, no, I uh, do not.

ZYN: What skills do you possess? Are you capable of behaving as cannon fodder? Or something more useful?

CARVER: According to the Systems Alliance Marine Corps, we are all cannon fodder, so yes.

ZYN: Welcome aboard. This one has no standards.

TITOH: Yeah, apparently.

KACHE: Just to clarify though, he's gettin' paid out of your cut though, right?

ZYN: We will negotiate that at a future date.

GRATCH: Can I use this cannon?

TITOH: What cannon?

GRATCH: Where's the cannon? Where do you keep it?

[everyone devolves into laughter]

VI: You have been listening to *I Should Roll*. Ride of the Valkyrie, Episode One: A Hanar Floats Into a Bar.

Featuring the voices of: Hans Cummings as Zynamondan, Ché Grové as Titoh Raas, Chase Hutchison as Gratch, Hunter LaPaglia as Carver Fairbank, JD Kelly as Kache, Leah Ryan as Bean Gainian, and Kaya Renwick as everyone and everything else.

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