

Of Tarantula Hawks and Pickle Barrels

By

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Based on: Of Tarantula Hawks and Pickle Barrels by: David
Caldwell

FADE-IN:

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

(1860)

The desert is barren yet scenic. There is a dead branch that has fallen on a large rock.

Beneath the dead branch a MOTHER tarantula sits, brooding her egg sac. The remains of a male tarantula can be seen behind the Mother.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

I never knew my father.

The mother broods the egg sac, turning it end over end.

She stops, and carefully sets the egg sac on the ground. She turns back to the remains of the male. She begins feeding on them.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

I was never going to have the chance to know him.

The mother returns to the egg sac, and begins brooding again.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

My mother made sure of that.

The mother brooding, turning end over end.

EXT. DESERT - MORNING

The morning desert sun glistens on the silken egg sac, as the mother continues brooding it.

She broods, then stops. She places the egg sac on the ground gingerly. It begins to wobble.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

We are born in violence, driven by instinct from the beginning.

The egg sac rolls slightly. The mother looks on intensely. The surface begins to tear. It rolls a few inches. It falls open. Thousands of tiny tarantulas pour out.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

Mother didn't have to tell us what to do. She didn't have to do much really.

(CONTINUED)

The new-born tarantulas swarm the egg sac. They begin to feed on it. A small male tarantula, QUAESTIO, looks in the direction of his mother.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

I didn't know what I was seeing at the time, but it filled me with fear all the same.

The mother is back at the remains of the male tarantula, feeding. Quaestio twitches his tiny fangs, and returns to eating the egg sac.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The sun glistens on what little is left of the egg sac. A few bits of the male's body remain.

The new born tarantulas are sunning themselves near the remains of the egg sac. The mother motions for them to come closer.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

The one good thing she did for us, was telling us the history of our kind.

The young Quaestio moves in closer than the rest.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

(NOTE: The following scene will consist of illustrated still images of the events the Mother speaks of in Voice Over.)

Camera pans over an illustration of an ancient battle between tarantulas and tarantula hawks.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

She told of how our kind had been hunted by the tarantula hawks since times long forgotten, how we fought back at first.

Fade into a new illustration of a tarantula being stung by a tarantula hawk.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

She told us that our bodies were doomed to become the egg sacs for the wasps' young. Some of us might escape this fate.

(CONTINUED)

Fade into a new illustration of a young tarantula hawk emerging from the body of a dead tarantula.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

Yet she told that most of us that we wouldn't be so fortunate.

Fade into a new illustration of a swarm of female tarantula hawks in flight.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

She warned that their females were relentless, searching day and night for tarantulas to use. Once you are seen, you are as good as dead.

Fade into a new illustration of a dead tarantula.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The new born tarantulas begin skittering off in different directions. Some finish off what is left of the egg sac.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

I asked my mother why she had eaten father, and how he had escaped the tarantula hawks.

Young Quaestio sits in front of his mother. He anxiously twitches his fangs as she responds.

MOTHER

I ate him because that is what must happen when our kind mates.

Quaestio moves slowly back from her.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

She then told me that he escaped the wasps by becoming a bard, a keeper of our tales and legends.

Quaestio stops and skitters back towards the mother. She draws two circles in the dust; one large, one small. She gestures towards the small circle.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

She told me how bards were smaller than others because they wander, never staying in the same place, and eat very little when training under an elder bard.

(CONTINUED)

Quaestio sternly looks at the mother. He turns away from her.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)
She told me how he had stopped
being a bard when he met her. That
he had given into the mating
instinct.

The other new born tarantulas begin skittering off in different directions.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)
It was then that I decided to
become a bard. I would escape both
fates. I thought so anyway, because
I too will be dead at the end of
this tale.

Quaestio skitters away from the mother. He turns behind the rock and is gone. The mother turns to finish the rest of the father's remains.

EXT. DESERT - DUSK

The desert at sundown. There are large rock formations in the background. They are vibrant shades of red, yellow, brown, and pink. There is a small scrubby bush in the foreground. It shakes and dust rises from its base.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)
I met her on a very eventful day.

Near the base of the bush, Quaestio crouches across from a fully grown HORNED LIZARD. It has been 4 years since the last scene as evidenced by the size Quaestio is now. It is clear from wounds on both of their bodies that they have been fighting for some time.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)
She changed everything.

As they begin circling each other, a female tarantula, VENATRESS, 4, can be seen as she silently leaves her burrow under the bush. She is visibly agitated at having a fight occurring in front of her burrow.

QUAESTIO
You'll find that I'm not an easy
kill.

Quaestio makes small lunges at the horned lizard as they circle each other.

(CONTINUED)

HORNED LIZARD

I hope you lived well eight-legs.
You will soon be with your
ancestors.

Venatress eyes them from the shade of the bush. Neither fighter notices her as they begin fighting again.

Quaestio's body tenses as he prepares to attack.

He lunges at the horned lizard, fangs at the ready. The horned lizard dodges to the right easily. The lizard swipes its tail at Quaestio before he can dodge, knocking him back several inches.

Venatress moves to the edge of the bush's shadow. She grows more agitated.

VENATRESS

(too herself)

The fools better not ruin any of my
traps.

Quaestio quickly recovers. He skitters into a leap, aiming for the horned lizard's head. The horned lizard rears back on its hind legs unknowingly stepping into one of Venatress's traps. He falls into a narrow hole lined with silk. He is trapped, only his head visible.

VENATRESS

Great.

Quaestio flies over the horned lizard and lands directly behind its head. He sees Venatress for the first time and gives her a surprised look.

VENATRESS

Well you better finish him off, now
that you've wasted one of my traps.

QUAESTIO

R-right.

He turns back to the horned lizard and sinks his fangs into the lizard's head killing it. He turns back to Venatress who has moved to his side.

VENATRESS

Nicely done. And you're welcome by
the way.

QUAESTIO

Of course. You have my thanks.

They turn to face each other. They touch front legs in greeting.

VENATRESS

I name myself Venatress. And you my brave male?

Quaestio averts his eyes shyly, then looks her straight in the eyes.

QUAESTIO

I name myself Quaestio, my beautiful female. Would you like to join me for dinner?

He gestures toward the dead lizard. Venatress moves in close, their legs nearly touching.

VENATRESS

I would be honored.

They move toward the dead lizard.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

The moon has risen. The two tarantulas bask in the moonlight, the horned lizard's carcass lies nearby, portions of it missing.

The two tarantulas sit close with their bodies touching, keeping each other warm.

VENATRESS

I forgot how strange lizard could taste. It is good on a cold night though.

QUAESTIO

True, but I've had better.

Quaestio takes a bite out of one of the lizard's legs. Venatress twitches her fangs.

VENATRESS

So, what brought you to my little bush?

Quaestio swallows his food.

(CONTINUED)

QUAESTIO

Well, I've been on a journey,
looking for a bard that can take me
on as an apprentice.

Venatress excitedly jumps to her legs. Quaestio moves back,
startled.

VENATRESS

Really? That is great! I've always
wanted to meet a bard. I came here
myself looking for one.

Quaestio twitches his fangs excitedly and moves towards her.

QUAESTIO

One came through here? How long ago
was this?

Venatress looks at the ground.

VENATRESS

It must have been some time ago.
The only trace of him that I found
was that burrow under the bush, and
it had been abandoned years before
I got here.

QUAESTIO

Hmmm. Was there any sign of which
direction he would have taken when
he left?

VENATRESS

No, none at all.

Both tarantulas look at each other disappointingly. The moon
moves across the sky.

QUAESTIO

Well, it's getting late- wait, does
the burrow face the rising or
setting sun?

Venatress looks at him, her head tilted to the side.

VENATRESS

The rising sun. Why?

QUAESTIO

Because I bet that might have been
the way he headed when he left.

VENATRESS

It's a gamble but i think it is one
we will have to take.

Quaestio gives her a questioning look.

QUAESTIO

We?

VENATRESS

Well, i was hoping that I could
come with you. I did come here
looking for the bard, and I've
grown tired of this place.

Quaestio moves closer to her.

QUAESTIO

I would really like it if you came
with me. It'll be good to have some
company after traveling alone for
so long.

VENATRESS

I'm glad.

She touches his front leg with hers.

VENATRESS

It's getting late. How about we get
some rest. I want to head out as
soon as possible tomorrow.

QUAESTIO

Agreed.

They head to the burrow under the bush together. The moon
continues its arc across the sky as they enter the burrow.

EXT. REDEMPTION - MORNING

The sun rises behind a large rock formation, its usually
vibrant colors dulled in the morning light.

To the north of the rock formation is a town. It has two
rows of buildings that face each other. A sign post on the
edge of the town reads: REDEMPTION. The bank, jail, saloon,
and hotel are on one side. The stables, post office, and
general store are on the other.

There is a stand in front of the general store with a few
barrels sitting next to it. The sign on the stand reads:
GARVIN'S' WORLD FAMOUS PICKLES.

(CONTINUED)

There are a few people moving about the town.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

This isn't just my story. It is the story of two brothers, Liam and Sean, purveyors of what they claimed to be the finest pickles in the world.

There are two young men standing at the pickle stand in front of the general store. They are SEAN, age 22, and LIAM, age 17, GARVIN. They speak with a hint of an Irish accent.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

I had no way to refute that claim, having never even seen a pickle. Yet it must have been true, because they always had customers.

Liam leans against the side of the pickle stand and carves a small piece of wood. Sean stands behind the counter, and helps a customer, MARY, 20.

MARY

I'll take two pickles.

SEAN

Coming right up, Mary.

He reaches into the nearest barrel. His hand comes out empty. He looks to Liam.

SEAN

Liam, we need another barrel out here. Go get one from the store room.

Liam continues carving the wood. Sean gives Liam a frustrated look.

SEAN

We've got a customer. I'm sure Mary here would be grateful if you went and got her pickles.

Liam stops carving and turns to Sean. He sees Mary. She is beautiful. Her auburn hair is held in a tight bun on the back of her head. She holds a basket in her left hand, and her right rests on her shapely hips.

LIAM

Oh, right. I'll be back right away ma'am!

(CONTINUED)

He runs into the general store. He returns a second later carrying a small barrel. When he reaches the stand he opens the barrel. He pulls out two plump pickles. He hands them to Mary.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

They truly were strange creatures,
but I would come to share a bond
with Liam by the end of our tale,
that only true wanderers can have.

Liam looks longingly after Mary as she leaves. Sean shakes his head.

EXT. DESERT - MORNING

Quaestio and Venatress are walking toward the rising sun. A series of rock formations loom in the distance.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

Our time together was brief yet
intense.

The bush that hid Venatress' burrow is a shrinking speck behind them.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

We were blissfully unaware of the
events to come.

The rock formations continue to grow larger as the two tarantulas get closer.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

It is mid-day when Quaestio and Venatress reach the rock formations. They find themselves at the beginning of a path that winds its way between the gigantic formations.

There are some smaller rocks to either side of the head of the path.

VENATRESS

I've heard that it's dangerous to
go through the rocks alone.
Something evil lurks in their
shadows.

QUAESTIO

I'm sure there's no predator in
their that I haven't dealt with
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

QUAESTIO (cont'd)
before. And we're not alone, we
have each other.

Venatress twitches her fangs nervously.

VENATRESS
I don't know Quaestio, maybe we
should just go around. What if
there are tarantula hawks in there?

NIL
Yer pretty friend be right
Quaestio. Yer best bet be to go
around.

Quaestio and Venatress skitter around at the sound of the
voice. It belongs to NIL, 7, a large male tarantula whose
abdomen is covered in scars, the largest one running the
length of his body. He is missing several eyes.

He speaks as he emerges from behind the rocks at the head of
the path.

NIL
Greetings friends, and welcome to
the giant's domain. I name myself
Nil, because I have nothing and
want nothing.

The two companions hesitantly respond with their own
greetings.

VENATRESS
Greetings. I name myself Venatress.

QUAESTIO
And I name myself Quaestio.

Nil nods and begins to skitter in a circle around them.

NIL
Ain't no wasps in there though.
There is giant on four legs who
lives here. And I wouldn't say he
were an evil one.

QUAESTIO
Then is he a kind one?

VENATRESS
It doesn't matter though, because
there are no such things as giants.

(CONTINUED)

Nil stops circling and skitters in closer to them.

NIL

He is, until night falls that is.
That's when wakes. And I used ta
thing that too, (he points at his
missing eyes) till I seen him with
my own eyes!

Quaestio and Venatress shrink back in fear.

NIL

I've lived here me whole life, but
he's been here longer. He came down
out of the mountains. At least
that's what my ma said.

VENATRESS

You said he only wakes during the
night. Is it safe to pass through
during the day?

Nil turns away from them, and stares down the path.

NIL

Yeah, during the day's safe enough,
but-

QUAESTIO

But how long does it take to pass
through the rocks?

Nil turns back to them. He looks at them mischievously.

NIL

Oh, it's a good day and a half's
skitter. If ya don't stop to rest
too much.

QUAESTIO

Well, it's the quickest way forward
so we have to try.

Venatress looks at him, shocked.

VENATRESS

Quaestio no. We'll have to be in
there at night, when the giant
wakes. Besides, we don't even know
if the bard came through-

NIL

The old bard yer say? Why, a bard
came through here, but it was years
ago, when I was still a young one.

Quaestio turns to Venatress excitedly.

QUAESTIO

See, we did come the right way, and
if the bard made it through here
alive then so can we.

She touches his front leg with hers.

VENATRESS

You're right. We have to try.
Together.

They look at each other for a time, touching legs.

NIL

Well i guess you two lovelies
should be off. Yer wasting precious
daylight now!

They nearly jump when he speaks. They turn towards the path.
Quaestio turns his head back to Nil.

QUAESTIO

Thank you for the knowledge
brother. Live long!

The begin to skitter down the path. They are almost out of
sight when Nil shouts.

NIL

Don't forget to stay hidden at
night! The giant doesn't take
kindly to trespassers!

Quaestio and Venatress disappear from view as they round a
bend in the path. Nil vanishes behind the rock that he came
out from behind of.

EXT. ROCK FORMATIONS - DUSK

The sun has almost set and the path through the giant's
domain is completely in shadow. Venatress and Quaestio
skitter along the path as fast as they can go.

(CONTINUED)

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

The first night on the path was thankfully uneventful. We didn't see the giant, but we heard its growl echo through the rocks.

The giant's GROWL is heard echoing through the rocks. The two tarantulas start to skitter faster.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

We didn't want to chance a second night in the rocks, but when the sun set we still had some distance left to go. And the giant had woken early.

The giant's GROWL grows louder behind them, not just an echo any more. The sound of paws running along the path is heard.

VENATRESS

He's seen us Quaestio! We have to skitter faster or hide.

The sound of the giant is very close behind them now, its GROWL becoming a ROAR. The two tarantulas are breathing hard.

QUAESTIO

Hiding it is then!

He flings himself under a bush near the path that sits between two rock formations. Venatress quickly jumps after him.

The two of them look out from underneath the bush as the giant runs past. The giant turns out to be a mountain lion with short tan fur, a long tail, and large paws that hide deadly claws.

The mountain lion slides to a stop a short distance down the path. It turns around and prowls back down the path, its nose close to the ground.

The two tarantulas retreat into the darkness under the bush. The mountain lion prowls closer, its nose bringing it straight to the bush where they are hiding.

Quaestio turns to Venatress.

QUAESTIO

There's no use. We're going to have to make a skitter for it. Are you with me?

(CONTINUED)

Venatress looks into his eyes.

VENATRESS
Until the end.

The mountain lion moves past the bush and back the way they came. It stops at a bend in the path.

QUAESTIO
Good. (his fangs twitch) Let's go!

They shoot out from beneath bush, skittering as fast as their eight hairy legs can carry them.

The mountain lion's ears twitch as it hears them skitter down the path. It spins around and begins to chase after them.

The mountain lion is right behind them. The end of the path can be seen a short distance away, illuminated by the last light of day. It lets out a vicious GROWL.

QUAESTIO
There it is! Just a little further!

Quaestio and Venatress shoot out from between two rock formations at the end of the path.

The mountain lion slides to a stop when it reaches the end of the path. It lets out an angry ROAR that is amplified by the echoes in the rock formations behind it.

They keep skittering. It keeps ROARING.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

The moon has risen over the desert. Quaestio and Venatress finally slow their skittering. The ROARING of the mountain lion can be faintly heard.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)
We didn't stop skittering until we could skitter no more, and we were well out of the giant's domain.

The two tarantulas collapse to the ground, breathing hard. The silhouette of a tall cactus can be seen in the distance behind them.

VENATRESS
It's a good thing you want to be a bard.

(CONTINUED)

QUAESTIO

Why's that?

Venatress moves in close to Quaestio.

VENATRESS

Because by the time we find the
elder bard, you'll have enough
material for a tale all your own.

She taps him on the head with her leg and skitters away.

QUAESTIO

Hey!

He chases after her. They chase each other around and
around. Dust flies into the air.

Quaestio catches Venatress and playfully tackles her. They
tumble onto the ground laughing. They are nearly lying on
top of each other. They move apart a little. They touch
their front legs together.

QUAESTIO

Did you mean it when you said you'd
be with me until the end?

VENATRESS

I did. And not just the end of our
journey.

QUAESTIO

Do you mean to mate, when this is
over?

VENATRESS

I-I don't know. I feel the
attraction to you, but I could
never do what comes after to you.

Quaestio looks into her eyes.

QUAESTIO

I would do it for you. I would do
anything for you. Even throw away
my dream of becoming a bard. Even
my life.

VENATRESS

I can't. I care about you too much
to do that to you.

(CONTINUED)

QUAESTIO

Do you still want to be with me?

VENATRESS

Yes. Forever.

They huddle together, ready to sleep.

QUAESTIO

Do you see that cactus there, in
the distance?

VENATRESS

Yes.

QUAESTIO

I say we make for it tomorrow.

VENATRESS

Okay.

Venatress falls asleep. Quaestio follows soon after.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Nearby, there is a figure listening intently to Quaestio and Venatress' conversation.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

Unfortunately, we weren't alone
that night.

The figure is a FEMALE tarantula hawk. it creeps in to get a better look at them after they have fallen asleep.

As it stands over them it is fully illuminated by the moon. It has a jet black body with long, spindly legs. Its long antennae twitch in delight. Its translucent, orange wings glisten in the moonlight.

It examines them closely. It whispers to itself.

FEMALE

You'll do fine my plump spider.

It turns and buzzes off into the air, in the direction of the cactus.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Quaestio and Venatress skitter along close together.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

If only I had known what was about
to happen I-I would have done
anything to prevent it.

They are nearly to the base of the cactus. It towers over them. There is a large dark shape at the base of the cactus. They approach the shape. It is a large, dead, female elder tarantula.

VENATRESS

Oh my- What happened to her?

QUAESTIO

Let me check.

Quaestio looks over the body. It is covered in small circular wounds.

QUAESTIO

She hasn't been dead long. A few
hours maybe- oh no. I've seen these
wounds before.

Venatress looks at him. Her fangs begin to twitch. Quaestio begins backing away from the body.

VENATRESS

What is it? What are they from?

QUAESTIO

We have to get out of here! Now!

A BUZZING comes from above them. They look to the top of the cactus. There is the Female tarantula hawk. It flies down and lands in front of the tarantulas.

FEMALE

It's far too late to leave now tiny
spider. Especially for your plump
friend.

Its antennae twitch excitedly. It points a leg at Venatress.

Quaestio moves in between the Female and Venatress. He looks back at her.

(CONTINUED)

QUAESTIO

Go! Skitter!

Venatress hesitates, then skitters off as fast as she can. Quaestio turns back to the Female.

QUAESTIO

Leave her alone wasp!

He lunges at the Female, fangs bared. He is too slow. The tarantula hawk buzzes into the air, easily avoiding Quaestio's attack. It flies straight at Venatress, who hasn't skittered very far.

FEMALE

You're mine, pretty plump female.

QUAESTIO

No!

Venatress spins around and rears up on her hind legs, fangs at the ready. The Female hits her hard. They tumble end over end.

When they stop the Female is atop Venatress. She struggles, but the Female plunges her stinger into her body, injecting venom and eggs.

FEMALE

There, that wasn't so bad now, was it?

VENATRESS

N-no.

Quaestio stands a little way off, shaking in fear and anger. He rushes the Female again, but again the Female buzzes into the sky away from him.

FEMALE

You'll want to leave this place tiny male. Soon one of my sisters will be after you. This is our domain.

Quaestio moves over to Venatress and helps her up. She is already moving stiffly.

QUAESTIO

Save your petty threats, and leave us.

(CONTINUED)

FEMALE

Well, you've been warned.

The Female buzzes off, and disappears behind the cactus.

VENATRESS

Quaestio? Help me to the cactus. I want to be able to see the sun rise until-

They move towards the cactus.

QUAESTIO

Of course. And I'll stay with you, if you want.

He looks at her. She can barely move now.

VENATRESS

No. Leave me and finish what you started. What we started.

They reach the cactus. Venatress stops close to the dead elder, in the shade of the cactus.

QUAESTIO

But I-

VENATRESS

I know Quaestio. I love you too.

QUAESTIO

Can you forgive me though? For leading you here?

VENATRESS

I chose to come. Though it is your fault I kept going.

The paralysis has set in now. She laughs weakly. She can barely speak now.

Quaestio lingers, touching her leg with his.

QUAESTIO

Which direction should I go?

VENATRESS

Towards the rising sun. That way I'll always know where you are.

Quaestio moves to leave in the direction of the rising sun.

(CONTINUED)

QUAESTIO

Alright. Goodbye, my Venatress.

VENATRESS

Goodbye, my Quaestio.

Quaestio skitters on without looking back. Venatress looks on until Quaestio is a barely visible speck on the horizon. A rock formation is barely visible to his right.

EXT. DESERT - DUSK

Quaestio is skittering toward the lone rock formation outside of Redemption.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

It was several days before I reached Redemption. I had never before seen such a sight.

Quaestio skitters around the formation, and there is Redemption spread out before him.

There are a few people moving about the town. Quaestio begins to skitter into the town.

He passes underneath the signpost that reads: REDEMPTION.

EXT. REDEMPTION - DUSK

Quaestio skitters along the saloon side of the town. The ground rumbles as a horse gallops past towards the stables on the other end of town.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

That is when I finally found the bard. If only that had been the end of my tale.

He jumps into the space under the boards of the saloons entrance to avoid being trampled by the horse.

QUAESTIO

What strange behavior these creatures have.

A gruff voice speaks from behind him in the darkness under the saloon entrance. It is the Elder Bard NARRATUS.

(CONTINUED)

NARRATUS

You haven't seen the half of it.

Quaestio spins around at the sound of the voice. Narratus emerges from the darkness. He is a small frail tarantula. They approach each other and touch legs in greeting.

NARRATUS

Welcome to my home young brother. I name myself Elder Bard Narratus, but please just call me Narratus. And you?

Quaestio perks up at hearing that this is the elder bard he has been searching for.

QUAESTIO

Of course... Narratus. I name myself Quaestio. I'm glad that I have found you.

NARRATUS

And why is that young Quaestio? Though I'm sure that I have already guessed it.

Quaestio anxiously twitches his fangs as he speaks.

QUAESTIO

I have come to ask that you take me on as your apprentice bard.

Narratus moves in closer in front Quaestio.

NARRATUS

Tell me why it is that you wish to become a bard?

Quaestio looks at Narratus visibly more confident.

QUAESTIO

I had wanted to be a bard for a time when I was younger, but never found a bard to apprentice under.

Quaestio looks down at the ground. His fangs begin twitching again.

QUAESTIO (CONT)

I made a promise to someone. Someone who was important to me.

Narratus nods knowingly as Quaestio finishes speaking.

(CONTINUED)

NARRATUS

Very well then. I will take you on.

Quaestio fidgets with excitement.

NARRATUS

But let us retire for now. You must be tired from your journey.

The two skitter deep under the saloon toward the entrance of Narratus' burrow.

EXT. REDEMPTION - MORNING

Narratus sits at the edge under the saloon entrance. He is looking intently in the direction of the pickle stand.

QUAESTIO (V.O.)

That second day in Redemption was the first time that I saw the two brothers myself.

Quaestio crawls out of the burrow behind Narratus. He skitters up to Narratus. He sits beside him.

QUAESTIO

So, are we going to begin today Narratus?

He looks expectantly at Narratus. Narratus continues looking at the pickle stand.

NARRATUS

In good time apprentice.

Sean walks out of the general store to the pickle stand.

NARRATUS

But first, I want you to watch these brothers. I have been watching their tale unfold for some time now.

Quaestio looks on, confused.

QUAESTIO

Why do I need to watch them?

Narratus turns his head to Quaestio.

(CONTINUED)

NARRATUS

No questions now. Be patient and watch.

They both turn back to look at the pickle stand.

Sean is frustratedly looking up and down the street.

SEAN

Well now, where did that brother of mine get off to?

A few moments pass. People are starting to move about the town, going about their day-to-day business. Sean is visibly flustered as he gets the stand ready for the day.

Liam bursts out of the post office. He begins running towards the pickle stand waving a newspaper wildly over his head. He almost knocks Sean over when he reaches the pickle stand.

LIAM

Sean, Sean! You aren't going to believe this!

Sean puts up his hands to quiet his brother.

SEAN

Easy now Liam. And you're late by the way.

Liam shakes his head dismissively.

LIAM

I know. But the railroad Sean, the railroad!

SEAN

What about it?

LIAM

It's just days away now! It'll soon be only about 20 miles north of here.

SEAN

So, what has that got to do with anything?

Sean opens a barrel.

LIAM

It's got to do with me! The paper says they are looking for workers, and-

SEAN

Liam, we don't have time to discuss this.

A line of customers begins to form in front of the pickle stand. Sean leans close to Liam.

SEAN

(whispers)

Look, we'll talk about this later. Now go inside and get five more barrels. We're going to need them.

LIAM

Alright then.

Liam heads into the store.

Narratus turns to Quaestio.

NARRATUS

Now, describe to me what we just saw. A bard observes first and tells tales second.

Quaestio hesitates before speaking. His fangs twitch.

QUAESTIO

Well the older human...

The picture fades as Quaestio tells Narratus what he saw.

EXT. DESERT - DUSK

The large rock formation outside of town glows deep red in the light of the setting sun.

A familiar buzzing sound is heard. It grows louder as a familiar silhouette flies into frame. It lands on the side of the rock formation. A female tarantula hawk.

The camera moves behind the tarantula hawk. Redemption can be seen in the distance.

Further on behind the town, men can be seen working on the railroad. A train whistle is heard in the distance.