

Oblivion Girl – Episode 7

ESSA NARRATION

Skyride Studios presents... Oblivion Girl, Episode 7. Bloodhound Pete.

ESSA NARRATION

We cleared the desert over the next few days and took a train to reach the base of Mount Roset. We hiked up to the peak and watched it as it went from rocky to full of vegetation.

I paused with uneasiness, knowing someone waited for us further up.

ESSA

Was he even still alive? He'd be in his 70s...

ESSA NARRATION

As the elevation grew, our pace slowed. Thick redwood trees sprouted all around us. The cold chill of the wind was accompanied by snow as high as my knees.

We wrapped ourselves in heavy coats, and continued as the clouds swallowed the sun.

We reached a clearing in the trees, and the sounds of the forest grew quiet. Too quiet.

(Whistling)

ALITA

Why did we stop?

ESSA

Shh!

ESSA NARRATION

He was here.

ESSA

Where are you, you old fuck.

(Gunshot)

ATTICUS

Alita, get down!

ESSA NARRATION

He had missed on purpose.

ESSA

Stay here!

(Gunfire)

ESSA NARRATION

I blew past bear traps and trip lines, dodging them all with ease.

Until I reached Themis, the snow-covered marble statue of Lady Justice. She held a sword with both hands, had a blindfold covering her eyes, and an evil smirk plastered on her mouth.

ESSA

Show yourself!

ESSA NARRATION

Standing opposite the statue appeared an old man tightly gripping a rifle in his pale, wrinkly hands. An awed, worn-out cowboy hat shaded his eyes from view. His three-foot-long white beard danced in the wind.

(Spits)

ESSA

Gross. I don't have any beef with you, old timer.

ESSA NARRATION

I slowly raised my knife, gripped the worn handle tightly, and waited for him to make the first move.

(Gun fire)

My blade sliced through the air in his face, cutting a snowflake in half. He gently kicked out his right leg, which forced his upper body to lean back, allowing my knife to miss his nose by a millimeter. As my arm finished swinging around, he used the same leg to kick my knife out of my hand.

I grabbed onto his foot with my free hand, spun my knife, and tried to pull his chest into it. He spun around, and his knife missed again.

It was like trying to fight a ballerina made of wet spaghetti.

He bent over and, with his free hand, grabbed my wrist with the knife and threw me over his back. Spinning around, I ran at him as he reloaded. I used the time to flick out a Second Sun canister.

(Explosion) (Gun fire)

While he was temporarily blinded, I turned my knife around and smacked him in the jaw with the handle. The tobacco in his mouth splattered all over my face.

(Scream)

He fell into the snow cross-eyed. And I puked before fainting from disgust.

ESSA NARRATION

I remembered the first time I met him. Long before Atticus or Kial. I walked into an opening and spotted a deer grazing on a bush.

(Gun fire)

A trap sprung underneath me and lifted me into the air.

(Gasp)

BLOODHOUND PETE

Looks like I caught me a BIG ONE today.

ESSA

Hey! Don't poke strangers with guns!

BLOODHOUND PETE

Why don't you just use your knife and get out?

ESSA

Who carries knives around?

ESSA NARRATION

Pete slung his rifle on his back, then whipped out a machete.

ESSA

Overcompensating much?

(Fall)

ESSA NARRATION

Pete grabbed the rope and dragged me away like a caveman.

ESSA

What are you doing?

BLOODHOUND PETE

Well, I usually slaughter and skin my meals after trapping.

ESSA

What are you, a cannibal?

BLOODHOUND PETE

What if I am? You got all those guns, but can't even shoot a deer three feet in front of you. You might as well be throwing grenades. At least you have a better chance of hitting something.

(Cuts rope)

ESSA

I didn't train just to become target practice.

BLOODHOUND PETE

Training? You trained to be that bad? I'd hate to see how pathetic you were before all that...training.

ESSA

Where the fuck do you think you're going? You can't just say that shit to me, and walk away. Don't you know who I am? I'm Oblivion Girl, destroyer of cities!

BLOODHOUND PETE

Oblivious girl?

ESSA

Oblivion Girl.

BLOODHOUND PETE

What's your real name?

ESSA

Elyssa. What's yours?

BLOODHOUND PETE

I go by bloodhound Pete. You can just call me Pete.

ESSA

Well, Pete, you just met your death.

BLOODHOUND PETE

Oh, okay, mm-hmm.

If you done play fighting, follow me back to the cabin. I got stew cooking over a fire, should be ready by now.

ESSA NARRATION

I didn't like his attitude, but I didn't have the strength to fight.

ESSA

Are you fucking kidding me?

ESSA NARRATION

We reached his cabin by nightfall. Inside was exactly what you'd expect a mountain man's bachelor pad would look like: minimal furniture, dirty shit everywhere, and the smell of fire that had baked into the walls.

BLOODHOUND PETE

Here, there's bread on the table if you want.

Not bad, right?

ESSA

It's sooo good!

BLOODHOUND PETE

Well, eat up, you'll need it for tomorrow.

ESSA

Why? What's happening tomorrow?

BLOODHOUND PETE

You start training.

ESSA

I don't need some old guy like you training me. Didn't you hear me before? I'm Oblivion—

BLOODHOUND PETE

—Yeah, yeah, yeah, you can tell people your *scary* name until you're blue in the face. But if you don't have the fighting skills to back it up, you're gonna end up in a box, six feet underground.

ESSA

I can fight just fine.

BLOODHOUND PETE

No, you can't. I saw you try to shoot that deer. You're better than most, but after I'm done with you, you'll be the best. Hahaha.

There's a spare room down the hall. Should have everything you need. See you when the sun's up.

ESSA NARRATION

The next morning...

ESSA

Oh, fuck!

BLOODHOUND PETE

Morning to you too. Get dressed and meet me in the backyard.

ESSA

Hey, maybe don't be a super creepy, weirdo, and watch people sleep. It's creepy!

ESSA NARRATION

I geared up and stepped out to the backyard. I looked around but couldn't see him anywhere.

ESSA

I'm beginning to hate this guy.

BLOODHOUND PETE

Hey, over here.

ESSA NARRATION

I followed him through an overgrown trail down to a small clearing. Ten logs stood vertically, hung with rope around a homemade obstacle course.

BLOODHOUND PETE

Here we are.

ESSA

And where's that exactly?

BLOODHOUND PETE

Your practice arena. Here you'll learn how to hunt, fight, and shoot.

ESSA

I don't know what a bunch of logs are gonna—

(Gets knocked over)

The fuck was that?

BLOODHOUND PETE

Rule number one: Always keep your eyes open for attacks.

Come on, get up.

ESSA

Next time, let me know—

(Gets knocked over)

BLOODHOUND PETE

What's the matter, Elyssa? Don't you listen?

ESSA

Don't call me Elyssa!

ESSA NARRATION

Over the next few weeks, I failed every test Pete gave. I couldn't throw a knife. Couldn't hit a target. And kept getting trapped.

ESSA

This is useless.

BLOODHOUND PETE

It is NOT useless.

ESSA NARRATION

I spun and landed on my feet.

BLOODHOUND PETE

See, you're already getting better. Here, take it.

ESSA

But it's all rusted...

BLOODHOUND PETE

Good, then we know you won't hurt yourself.

ESSA

Ha, ha.

BLOODHOUND PETE

Run down this path here, and toss the knife between the eyes of this log.

ESSA

Sounds simple enough.

ESSA NARRATION

From my left, I felt the presence of something rushing towards me. I spun and dodged the log, missing my body by inches. I continued forward as two more came from my right. I noticed a gap between them and felt the wind as they whipped by.

I jumped in the air, spun, and tossed the knife straight at the target. The knife hurled through the air, blade connecting with the wood, before bouncing off like rubber.

ESSA

Did I win?

BLOODHOUND PETE

Better, but you're still dead. Let's do it again.

ESSA NARRATION

By the end of the day, I couldn't walk. He carried my bruised body back to the cabin.

BLOODHOUND PETE

Good work, we'll try again tomorrow.

ESSA

Tomorrow?!

ESSA NARRATION

Next, Pete showed me the proper way to throw a knife. I practiced until my hands were covered in blisters.

ESSA

Hell yeah.

BLOODHOUND PETE

Now that you can handle a dull knife, let's get you a sharp one.

ESSA NARRATION

Inside were a bunch of tools and metal traps. He cleared some space on his messy workbench, and I watched as he sharpened and cleaned all the dirt and rust off the knife.

BLOODHOUND PETE

Here you go.

ESSA NARRATION

I stared into the blade and saw my own reflection. I grinned with anticipation.

(Throws Knife)

ESSA

Maybe I was wrong about knives. Maybe they are better than guns.

BLOODHOUND PETE

Great, now we can begin hand-to-hand combat.

ESSA NARRATION

Pete showed that it only took getting slapped in the face 50 times before mastering the technique.

ESSA

Ow! Fuck! Ouch! AH!

ESSA NARRATION

I'll have to thank him for that later. After that, we moved on to tracking animals.

BLOODHOUND PETE

So, if you're laying traps, this here is the proper way. Otherwise, it's going to snap shut on your hand and take it right off.

ESSA NARRATION

What the different prints in the snow meant.

BLOODHOUND PETE

This here is a deer print. You can tell by the two toes shaped like a heart. This one over here is a wolf. It's more rounded, has four toes, and claw marks.

ESSA NARRATION

And how to follow even after losing their tracks.

BLOODHOUND PETE

You need to stop immediately. Animals often move in predictable patterns. From the last known paw print, walk in a slow outward zig-zag pattern, like this.

Tracking animals isn't much different from tracking people.

ESSA NARRATION

On the final day of my training, I woke early in the morning to silence.

ESSA

Pete? Pete? Are you here?

(Footsteps) (Door Opens)

ESSA NARRATION

I'd have to be careful. Anything could be a trap.

(Door Slams)

ESSA

Ouch! What the fuck?

ESSA NARRATION

I saw the door had cut a small hole in the bag of sand that ran outside my bedroom. I followed the string just in time to watch a knife drop from the ceiling. I rolled out of the way and barely missed getting stabbed.

I followed the tracks around the house to the front door.

ESSA

He's fucking with me...

(Footsteps)

ESSA NARRATION

I turned in time to see another headed at me. I sliced the air, cutting the arrow in half. Two more flew towards me as I picked up a log and used it as a shield.

I tossed the log aside and ran for cover in the forest.

(Footsteps)

Sweeping low to the ground, I discovered Pete's hiding spot. But he was nowhere to be seen. His tracks led down towards the training area.

Ten feet before the clearing, his footprints vanished.

ESSA

I doubt he just floated away like some ghost.

(More Arrows)

ESSA NARRATION

I hid behind a tree trunk and gripped my knife.

ESSA

Those arrows came from up high. He's somewhere in the trees...

ESSA NARRATION

Branches swayed back and forth as leaves fell to the ground.

ESSA

There you are.

ESSA NARRATION

I threw my knife into the tree tops, but he swung down a branch on a rope.

(Grunt)

As he landed, he took out his machete. With nothing but the arrow to protect me, I held it out as he swung.

(Clink)

And pinned his machete to the ground. Both of our arms were twisted and locked together, neither able to move.

ESSA

Ha! I won!

ESSA NARRATION

Pete tilted his head back and swung.

The force knocked me unconscious.

(Falls down)

ESSA

You fuck!

BLOODHOUND PETE

No thanks, haven't even finished my morning coffee yet.

ESSA

Morning coffee?

ESSA NARRATION

I looked at the clock above the fireplace. It was six in the evening.

ESSA

Don't you need to add a pinch of tobacco? If you can't find any, I'm pretty sure you spit most of your supplies all over my face.

ALITA

Uh, you know this guy?

ESSA

He's just a senile old fart with one foot in the grave. *Aren't you gramps?*

ALITA

Oh, so you do know him?

BLOODHOUND PETE

They call me Pete. Blood out, Pete. Best tracker money can buy.

(Toilet flushes)

ATTICUS

What? I washed. So, you were Essa's teacher?

BLOODHOUND PETE

(Lights Pipe)

Yep. When we first met, I thought she was a boy. You know the way she acts and everything.

(Pillow hit)

Why are you throwing my good pillows?

ESSA

If you're not going to tell it right, don't tell it at all. And no one said you can smoke in here, haven't you heard of second hand smoke?

BLOODHOUND PETE

As you can see, she had real build up testosterone. I found her wandering around the mountain with guns glued to her hands like she was expecting the next zombie apocalypse. She was so skinny. She looked like she was one step away from death. I took her, trained her to become a tracker like myself. But she didn't want that, oh no, she wanted to be a *ruthless killer*.

ESSA

Don't talk about me like I'm not here! Plus, who would choose tracking over bounty hunting anyway?

ATTICUS

I'm sorry, did you just say that Essa was trained?

(Laughs)

BLOODHOUND PETE

Of course. Do you think she just learned all those moves by herself? I taught her much more than just simple tracking. I taught her how to calm her mind, to use her brain over brawn, and most of all, to wield that knife she's always carrying around. To be honest, Elyssa, I didn't think that old thing would last as long as it has.

ATTICUS / ALITA

Elyssa?!

(Laughs)

BLOODHOUND PETE

What's their problem? Don't they know your name?

ESSA

It's Essa, Pete. No one calls me Elyssa.

BLOODHOUND PETE

Essa? Now that's a stupid nickname.

ESSA

Since you're doing a great job revealing secrets, why don't you tell them all about the embarrassing things I did during training?

BLOODHOUND PETE

Okay.

So there we were, out in the middle of nowhere. And guess who had to go to the bathroom right when the target showed up?

ESSA NARRATION

Even though I'd forgotten most of those memories, I knew Pete cherished them. He may seem like a grumpy old man, but deep down, I loved him like a father.

I didn't think I'd ever see this place again, let alone Pete.

BLOODHOUND PETE

You all can stay up as long as you'd like, but I'm heading to bed. There are two spare bedrooms down the hall. And the loser can sleep on the couch.

ALITA

The loser, huh?

ESSA

I wonder who that'll be...

ATTICUS

Fine. I'll take the couch.

ESSA NARRATION

That night, I slept in the same bedroom I had all those years ago. I tossed and turned for hours trying to get comfortable. I could hear Atticus snoring in the living room. How does he fall asleep so fast? I raised the sheets to my nose. They smelled exactly as I remembered. Nothing in the house seemed to have changed. Not even the whistle of the wind through the cracks of the windows. I finally closed my eyes and awoke to Pete standing in the shadows of my room.

ESSA

Not here, I'll meet you outside.

BLOODHOUND PETE

Don't wake up the others, or I'll kill them.

ESSA NARRATION

I put on my battle gear and wrapped a scarf around my neck. I hope he didn't bring any chewing tobacco at this time.

The full moon had risen high above the trees. The wind blew loose snow off the ground like sand.

I found Pete standing through an opening, basking in the rays of moonlight.

ESSA

Shouldn't we go back inside before the wolves come? Or have they already found me...

(Wolf howls)

ESSA NARRATION

Well, that was as much as a truce as he'd get out of me.

BLOODHOUND PETE

I didn't want it to end this way. But there's only so long you can say no to Eden... before he makes you say yes.

ESSA

I'll take Eden down along with anyone else who stands in my way. Now, let's get this thing over with before you catch a cold.

ESSA NARRATION

Like a bolt of lightning, his muzzle flashed and lit up the nearby trees. I sprinted towards the only man I'd ever considered a father.

His muzzle flashed like a strobe light as we danced through the thick forest, blocking fatal blow after fatal blow. Until finally, I pushed the barrel of his gun with my free hand as he fired.

(Gun shot)

With his chest now wide open, I swung and pierced my knife into his stomach.

BLOODHOUND PETE

You learned some new moves.

ESSA

Just a few.

(Pete collapses)

Oh no you don't. Looks like you caught one of those colds I warned you about. Come on, let's get you inside, old man.

(Drags Pete)

Well, you are no help!

ESSA NARRATION

He woke later that morning to find his wound bandaged, thanks to yours truly.

BLOODHOUND PETE

Elyssa? Elyssa!

ESSA NARRATION

We had decided to leave before Pete had time to regain his strength. The last thing I needed was a revenge round.

A cup of water and a note sat next to his bed.

ESSA

Drink the whole glass, then you can try getting up.

ESSA NARRATION

The chain wrapped around his ankle to the leg of the bed frame.

BLOODHOUND PETE

Ouch. But Elyssa, I have to pee!

Huh? What's on the back of the note here?

ESSA

You can pee in the empty cup.

BLOODHOUND PETE

Yeah right. What am I, a teenage boy?

(Pete lifts the bedframe)

Victory.

(Toilet flush)

You just gonna hide around the corner, or actually show yourself, Eden?

EDEN

Well, well, if it isn't the disgraced, tracker bloodhound Pete. I'm surprised you're still alive.

BLOODHOUND PETE

I can't wait.

EDEN

Can't wait for what?

BLOODHOUND PETE

For her to tear you limb from limb.

EDEN

I look forward to it.

ESSA NARRATION

Eden wiped his bloodied knife clean as he walked out of the cabin.

EDEN

They left this morning. Catch them before they get through the mountain.

REAPER

Yes sir!

AXIEL

What if they make it inside?

EDEN

They will. And we will be waiting.

AXIEL

Yes sir!

(Truck drives away)

ESSA NARRATION

The feeling in my toes returned as the snow melted back into muddy dirt. I hated leaving Pete in that condition. Maybe I'd have Atticus bake him a 'I'm so sorry I stabbed you' pie?

Below was a mountain village filled mostly with small shops and buildings. When we approached the main street, let's just say we didn't get a warm welcome— or any welcome for that matter. There just wasn't anyone around.

ALITA

I have a bad feeling about this.

ESSA

Oh yeah? You're just thinking that now? Come on, we're going shopping.

ALITA

But there's no one here...

ESSA

Exactly.

ALITA

Uh, why is Atticus just staring at the ground?

ATTICUS

There's some sort of pattern... in the dirt...

ESSA

That's strange. What are those?

ALITA

They're tire tracks.

ESSA

Tire tracks? But—

ESSA NARRATION

And that's when we heard the sound I'd only read about in history books. A motorised convoy of vehicles sped down the dirt road, headed straight for us. Only one organisation had the resources to ride gas-powered vehicles; It was the military. A dust cloud as high as a skyscraper kicked up into the air behind them as they raced their metal tin cans towards town.

ESSA

We need a plan, quick.

ESSA NARRATION

They weren't dressed in the normal green camo. These boys were all sporting black. They looked like they were part of some special ops team. They were special, alright... fucking Reapers.

COMMANDER MERIT BADGE

Find them!

ESSA NARRATION

The group instantly kicked down doors looking for probably us, since there was no one else in town.

ALITA

Fuck! Fuck! oh! oh! FUCK!

ESSA

Yep, they were definitely after us.

(Gun shots)

ALITA

I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

ESSA

She's getting better.

ESSA NARRATION

While Alita was wasting their time, yours truly managed to crawl in the dirt under the vehicles and plant claymores.

ESSA

Hehehe!

ESSA NARRATION

I planted them under all except one vehicle, and slid back out into my hiding place with a fistful of armed detonators. Alita had lost momentum. She led the Reapers around another corner.

REAPERS

Hands in the air!

Get down on the ground! Now!

(Gun shots)

Sniper! Hop on the...

ATTICUS

Ha ha! Take that you bastards! Oh shit!

ALITA

Um...sorry about that. Bye-bye!

ESSA NARRATION

Back on my side of the world, Commander Merit Badge made some pretty ugly faces as his team slowly decreased in numbers.

COMMANDER MERIT BADGE

You! Go back to the trucks and radio for reinforcements! Now!

ESSA NARRATION

Now it was my turn to have some fun.

(Explosion)

I've never seen a heap of metal fly so high into the air from an explosion.

COMMANDER MERIT BADGE

What the fuck...

ESSA NARRATION

As the smoke cleared, Commander Merit Badge realized he was the only one left standing. He took out his pistol and saw Atticus pointing his rifle at him. His eyes then shifted left, as Alita walked up with her pistol, before finally landing his gaze on me.

ALITA

That looked like it hurt.

ESSA

Fucking better.