

Oblivion Girl – Episode 9

ALITA NARRATION

Skyride Studios presents... Oblivion Girl, Episode 9. The End of Oblivion.

I woke up to a jarring vibration in the truck as it sped across the rocky terrain.

My brain felt like a bowling ball being swung back and forth inside my head. My face throbbed with pain. I had hoped it was all just a horrible dream.

My eyes wandered over to Atticus, who sat across from me in the truck. I couldn't see his eyes, now hidden in the shadows.

Esso was dead. And it was just the two of us now.

The memory was so fresh in my mind, I couldn't stop replaying. It was probably nothing compared to how Atticus felt.

He was like a brother to her. I wanted him to snap out of it, needed him to. They were going to kill us.

With my good eye, I scanned around the truck. Two armed Reapers rode in the back along with us. One of them looked half asleep.

I sat up on the bench and tried to rub my eyes.

Hands were still bound, but at least they cut the rope around my feet. I stretched them out, scratching my leg with my boot.

ALITA

How long was I out?

REAPER

Hey, shut the hell up!

ALITA NARRATION

I wish Essa was here. She always knew what to do. With my swollen fingers, I gripped the rope tied around my wrists. It was soaked with sweat and blood.

Tried picking at it with my dirty fingernails, but the knot was too tight. I needed something sharp. I noticed a ripped piece of sheet metal lining the inside of the truck. I rubbed the rope against the sheet metal, I was getting nowhere fast. I took a break and tried to calm myself down.

Kial, what were they going to do to Kial? I remembered the promise I made to him the morning we left, that I'd be back soon and we could celebrate.

I wanted to keep that promise.

Something fell at Atticus' feet. I looked down and saw a piece of the rope that had bound his hands together. He placed his foot over the rope to hide it from the Reapers.

I'd have to ask him someday to teach me how he did that.

He kept his hands hidden behind his back and looked at me with icy, heartless eyes.

I knew that we'd be arriving at the town any minute. Soon there'd be more dead bodies, and I didn't know if they'd be ours or theirs.

(Truck stops) (Gun shots)

Atticus and I were tucked up against the tailgate, holding our breath. Two dead Reapers lay next to us as bulletproof shields. Atticus had one of the clips from their gun in his hand and tossed it towards the front of the cab.

(Gun Firing)

He jumped up and spun their guns at each other.

(Gun Firing)

ALITA

I'll get their guns.

(Gun Clicking)

JOPHIE

Oh, easy, Atticus. It's just me.

Where's Essa?

ALITA

She... s-she's dead.

ALITA NARRATION

The words tasted sour in my mouth. It was the first time anyone had said it out loud.

JOPHIE

Dead?!

ATTICUS

Yeah, dead! And where have you been exactly?

JOPHIE

I don't know if you recall, but your little group abandoned us down a pretty deep hole.

And what the hell do you mean, "She's dead"?

She's... really gone.

ALITA

What are we supposed to do now?

ATTICUS

We go back and kill Eden.

JOPHIE

That's all fine and dandy, but didn't you say he blew up the castle? If that's true, he'll find another rock to hide under until he's ready to strike again.

ATTICUS

So what do you expect us to do? Go back home and pretend like this never happened?

ALITA

Maybe, maybe not. Eden said he knew about Kial, so he most likely has men waiting for us back home. We have to be smart about this. We can't just go in guns blazing.

JOPHIE

I'm with Atticus. We should kill Eden, and Oblivion Girl should be the one to do it.

ATTICUS

Didn't you hear what we said? She's dead!

JOPHIE

Is she? Imagine the look on his face when Eden sees Oblivion Girl come back from the dead to kill him.

ATTICUS

How?

JOPHIE

Well, how about...

ALITA

Me? I'm not anywhere as skilled as Essa.

JOPHIE

Not yet, but you could be. You just need a little training. You're already around her size.

ALITA

You're not buying this, right? You really think I can take down Eden? I can barely hit a target.

ATTICUS

Jophie's right. We could train you.

ALITA

Even if I did accept it, where are we gonna train at? The ghost town barely had enough food for one meal. It'd take me months to get anywhere near Essa.

ALITA NARRATION

We both had the same thought.

ALITA / ATTICUS

Pete!

JOPHIE

Who's Pete?

ALITA NARRATION

We ran the gas tank dry as we pulled the truck up to Pete's mountain cabin.

The sun had risen, and the wind was still.

(Footsteps) (Knocking)

ALITA

Pete, are you home?

(Knocking)

Pete, it's us.

(Door Creaks)

ATTICUS

Alita, stay behind us.

ALITA NARRATION

With his bow and arrow out, Jophie looked over to Atticus, who gripped his rifle. They nodded to each other and cautiously peeked into the kitchen.

JOPHIE

Oh, Jesus Christ. Just a fucking rabbit...

ATTICUS

Hey Pete, you home?

ALITA

We'll check the guest rooms.

ATTICUS

I'll see if he's in his bedroom.

(Door Creaks)

Hey guys, he's in here.

ALITA

He is? Is he asleep or something?

ALITA NARRATION

Jophie wrapped his arm around my eyes before I could look inside.

JOPHIE

Yal don't want to see, Hun. You don't want to see.

ALITA

No, not Pete too.

ALITA NARRATION

I dug my face into his jacket. He smelled nice, like a field of lavender flowers.

JOPHIE

Here lies a great man, Bloodhound Pete. He lived his life....

ALITA NARRATION

I kept waiting for Essa to pop out of the door and call us names for leaving her at the castle. The air felt chillier than before. I looked around the empty forest. Without warning, snowflakes fell from the sky and melted down the back of my neck.

After we buried his ashes, the three of us cleaned the cabin. I didn't mind the extra work; anything to keep my mind busy.

Jophie discovered a rusted knife stuck into a log out on the back porch.

JOPHIE

Hmm, what do we have here?

ALITA NARRATION

He dug around the shed until he found a grinder and began sharpening it. The edge transformed from rust to silver.

JOPHIE

A gift for Oblivion Girl.

ATTICUS

Morning. Hungry for some breakfast?

ALITA

You cook breakfast?

ATTICUS

Sometimes. You need to keep your strength up. Your training starts today.

ALITA

Where's Jophie?

ATTICUS

Waiting for you out back when you're done eating.

ALITA

Uh, Atticus?

ATTICUS

Yeah?

ALITA

Why are there carrots in these?

ALITA NARRATION

At the end of the path, covered in snow, was an old obstacle course.

ALITA

How did you find this?

ATTICUS

While gathering firewood for the stove. I didn't know it was so close.

ALITA

When do we start?

JOPHIE

Now. Once you're done shoveling all the snow off the course, we'll begin.

ALITA

Shovel snow? I thought we were gonna do target practice. I've never shoveled snow before...

JOPHIE

Well then, you better get started.

ALITA NARRATION

By sunset, I'd finished the course. My hands were bleeding from blisters. Wanting nothing but to fall asleep in bed, I walked into the kitchen, smelled the stew Atticus had prepared a whole day. I ate three bowls worth before passing out in my chair.

ATTICUS

Come on. Let's get you to bed.

ALITA

You really think I can do it?

ATTICUS

Do what?

ALITA

Be as good as Essa?

ATTICUS

No. I think you'll be better.

ALITA NARRATION

The next morning, Jophie woke me by sneaking into my room.

JOPHIE

Ha! Rise and shine.

ALITA

Why'd you do that?

JOPHIE

Why'd you let me? You think Essa would've let me sneak up on her?

ALITA

You can't just-- Whoa!

That-that hurt.

JOPHIE

Here, flip it around in your hand, like you're about to stab the ground.

ALITA

Like this?

JOPHIE

Good. You'll be able to attack and defend easier than holding it upright. Now, grip it tight.

ALITA

Ah! I can't. My blisters are still healing.

JOPHIE

That's the point. You need to teach your body to forget the pain. Whether it's a blister or a bullet wound, your mind needs to learn that survival is more important than pain.

Clear it from your mind, and you'll numb it from your body.

ALITA

And what's the benefit to that?

ALITA NARRATION

Jophie ripped off a tree branch and charged at me.

ALITA

Ouch! My hand!

Ah! Okay, you win. I give up.

JOPHIE

The benefit is... staying alive.

ALITA

You could've just said that.

JOPHIE

Let's go again.

ALITA NARRATION

The next few days were on repeat. Jophie would find different ways of dumping freezing cold water on me in the morning, and then in the afternoon, he'd make me swing the knife around until my arm wanted to fall off.

The following day, I woke up extra early and had a bucket of ice water waiting for him. I stuffed my bed with extra sheets and pillows, letting him think I was still fast asleep. I hid behind the door as he snuck inside.

JOPHIE

Ah! What the— Oh, so you're ready for a fight, huh?

ALITA

No! No! I give up! Okay, I'm sorry!

ALITA NARRATION

An overnight storm had hit us, which meant I had to reshovel the obstacle course.

Over the following weeks, I became increasingly better. I learned how to swing from ropes and dodge flying objects.

After that, we advanced to hand-to-hand combat and knife attacks. I started understanding the combat moves the more I practiced. I could begin to see his attacks before he did them.

After a few sessions, the pain vanished. He was right. My mind had blocked out the pain.

I flung snow in his face and charged him. Taking a defensive approach, he protected his chest while I slid low to the ground, knocking him off his feet. By the time he hit the ground, not only had my knife pressed against his neck, but I'd also turned his weapons against him.

JOPHIE

Good job. You're getting a lot better.

ALITA

Here. I'll help you up.

ALITA NARRATION

The next day, I woke and couldn't find Jophie anywhere.

ALITA

Jophie? Are you in here? Atticus, have you seen Jophie?

ATTICUS

How should I know where he is?

ALITA NARRATION

I made my way out to the training course, stepping past the forest, an arrow bolted across my face.

ALITA

What in the—

ALITA NARRATION

I peered out the side of a tree. Two more arrows cut through the air. I had to cartwheel just to avoid them. Like a wolf stalking its prey, I hunted for him. I closed my eyes and sniffed the air.

His lavender scent seemed to come from all directions.

I ran after the sound and saw leaves fall from the treetops. I looked up, and there, perched on a large branch, was Jophie.

JOPHIE

What's going on down there?

ALITA NARRATION

He had a quiver full of arrows on his back. In his hands, he had drawn back his bow and fired.

(Impact)

I thought I was dead for sure. The tip had been padded with a thick piece of wood. I kept the arrow and ran behind cover as he fired another. The second arrow missed my head by inches. I tried to flank him from behind, but ended up triggering a trap.

I jumped and rolled as wooden spikes swung down from the trees and crashed to the ground.

I had a clear shot of Jophie through the bushes and flung my knife at his head.

Jophie jumped off his branch. Now that he was on the ground, I had a fighting chance. I ran towards him and swung the tree branch. Jophie ducked and then hit me on the stomach with his bow.

JOPHIE

You lose.

ALITA

Do I?

ALITA NARRATION

He looked confused until he saw the arrow I'd hurled flying in the air at him. By the time he woke up from his little nap, I had my knife pointed at his throat.

ALITA

You lose.

JOPHIE

Good. I think you're ready.

Go answer it.

ALITA

Ugh. Why do I have to...

JOPHIE

Think of it as your reward for winning.

ALITA

Who is it?

ALITA NARRATION

The light from the cabin spilled out onto the porch and illuminated the lower half of a man's body.

ALITA

Can I help you?

KIAL

Alita, I'm so sorry about Essa.

ALITA NARRATION

I thought I was dreaming.

Atticus and Jophie smiled at each other.

JOPHIE

Get in or out, but shut the door.

ATTICUS

Yeah, it's freezing.

ALITA NARRATION

The next morning, I followed Jophie and Atticus out for training.

ALITA

We're not going to the obstacle course?

JOPHIE

Something new today. You're going to practice stealth.

ATTICUS

Once you master this, you'll be done. Then we can go after Eden.

ALITA NARRATION

They took me deep into the forest, far from the cabin, and I felt my heart race.

We reached a ridge line that overlooked a valley and stopped.

JOPHIE

Your last training is to go out and catch a deer. You can't use any traps, and you have to bring it back to the cabin alive.

ALITA

That's impossible. You two couldn't even do it if you tried.

JOPHIE

True, but we aren't the ones filling in for Oblivion Girl.

ATTICUS

That's enough rations for five days. If you haven't completed it by then, come home before you starve.

ALITA

What about Kial? He just got here, and you're already making me not see him for five days?!

JOPHIE

We'll break the news to him after you're gone.

ATTICUS

He'll be fine.

ALITA

Thanks... I guess.

ALITA NARRATION

The snow wouldn't stop falling, which made searching for tracks close to impossible. I pushed through the bushes and branches, snapping twigs off along the way and making trails where there weren't any. If there were deer close by, I surely scared them off.

I opened my knapsack and found most of the food missing.

ALITA

Ugh, come on!

ALITA NARRATION

I dug deep inside the pouch and found a torn hole in the bottom. A branch must have poked through and ripped it open. Only a few apples and a slice of bread remained.

ALITA

I guess I'll go to bed early.

ALITA NARRATION

I woke up before sunrise. My fire had gone out, and I was frozen to the bone.

I walked around trying to gather dry leaves and branches, anything to start a fire. I rounded the crest of a hill and peered down, eye to eye with a deer.

I moved slowly with anticipation. I wanted to get this over with. Twenty feet away, the deer raised its nose to the air and then sprinted off into the darkness.

ALITA

Damn deer...

ALITA NARRATION

I gathered my branches and walked back to camp.

Once the sun rose, so did I. I felt as if I hadn't slept all night. I walked back down the hill and tried to follow the deer tracks. They went on for miles until I lost them near a river. It was far from my campsite, and my stomach begged for food. I took a bite of bread just to shut it up. At the end of the day, I had managed to catch a few fish in the river. I roasted them over the fire and devoured my dinner in seconds. On a full stomach and with extra wood tossed in the fire, I was able to sleep the whole night.

I awoke the next morning to a strange sound close by. Opening my eyes, I saw a deer just a few feet away, eating berries from a bush. Its right cheek had a scar.

I slowly pulled my blanket off and crawled on all fours like a dog. I darted out at the deer and chased it through the forest. It took off like a rocket. I followed as far as I could before it left me out of breath and stranded.

ALITA

Come on!

ALITA NARRATION

The following morning, I felt the breath of the animal against my face and tilted my eyes back to see the deer with a scar digging around my knapsack. I reached for the bag, and the deer took a few startled steps back, but didn't run away. I opened the knapsack and emptied out my remaining apple.

ALITA

Is this what you want?

ALITA NARRATION

I took out my knife and cut the apple into smaller pieces. I extended out my hand. The deer sniffed the air, walked a few feet closer, and ate the apple out of my hand.

ALITA

Fuck. Yes!

ALITA NARRATION

Atticus and Jophie were chopping firewood out front when I appeared from the woods. Like a dog on a leash, the deer followed closely behind me as I fed it the last of my apple slices.

JOPHIE

Would you look at that!

ATTICUS

I always knew she could do it. You owe me a bottle of gin.

JOPHIE

Well done, my dear. Well done.

KIAL

Guys, what's with all the noise? I'm trying to finish— Alita! Come on, I have a present waiting for you inside.

ALITA NARRATION

I said goodbye to the deer and followed him into the cabin.

Standing upright in the living room was a mannequin wearing a dark green military-style jacket, matching pants, ankle-high boots, and an all-new and improved gas mask.

KIAL

Ta-da!

ALITA

Wow! Is this for me?

KIAL

Newly upgraded, I might add.

This particular jacket and pants are woven with bulletproof fibers, capable of withstanding knives and most types of gunfire, while the cloth stays flexible and lightweight. They even have holsters woven into the back and sides for adding extra gas canisters.

Down here, we have military-grade ankle-high boots, waterproof for all extreme climates. And my new favorite, the new gas mask version 2.0. This beauty has our goggles integrated into the eyes with translucent glass. You can now view the maps without your vision being impaired. All of Essa's old accessories, upgraded just like new. Oh yeah, the mask is also bulletproof in case you were wondering. Wanna try it on?

ALITA NARRATION

He didn't have to ask me twice. Within minutes, I had the suit on and was outside testing it against Atticus and Jophie.

ALITA

Hehehehe! Yeah, bitches! You scared of me now?

ATTICUS

Terrified.

JOPHIE

Now you finally look and act apart. Congrats, Oblivion Girl.

ALITA NARRATION

All of this, along with the training, made me feel like some sort of unstoppable weapon. We had a celebratory dinner that night, and the next morning had packed our belongings to leave.

Standing outside, looking back at the cabin, I felt like I was saying goodbye to a childhood home.

Suddenly, I felt the eyes of someone watching us. I turned around and looked out to the forest. Standing behind a tree was the deer with a scar. It stared right back at me before taking off into the forest. I smiled and walked with the boys down the hill, towards Garden Grave.

Unbeknownst to us, Essa stood hidden in the forest, watching us depart. Her bandaged stomach protruded from under her shirt. A hand crept onto her shoulder.

EDEN

You'll see them again soon, but for now, we need to keep moving.

ALITA NARRATION

She turned, and the two disappeared back into the forest.

To be continued.