

ASCEND - M3 - "The Hanged Man" - FULL DIALOGUE SCRIPT

KEY

- **H** - lines for the Hunter, the NPC Character
- **P** - Player Dialogue options and lines
- **(-)** - indicates lines that make the NPC dislike the player, or are triggered by dislike
- **(+)** - indicates lines that make the NPC like the player, or are triggered by their bond
- **(X)** - indicates that the line leads to a KILL ending
- **(O)** - indicates that the line leads to a PROTECT ending

For branching dialogue options:

- **P1** leads to **H1**
- **P1.1** leads to **H1.1**
- **P#** leads to **H#**
- Unnumbered lines indicate non-branching dialogue, it's just a continuation from the previous line.

(*) - indicates end of a Conversation

(^) - indicates the end of a dialogue branch and the ability to select a different dialogue option from earlier in the conversation.

(v) indicates that a branch continues much further down in the script.

FIRST APPROACH / SHIPWRECK BEACH

LEVEL INTRO

P1: Why are you building a boat here?

P2: Where did all this wreckage come from?

H1: What do you mean?

P1.1: Why are you building a boat?

P1.2: This seems like a bad spot for construction.

P1.3: What is it for?

H1.1: The last ones were not... sturdy enough.

H1.2: Oh. No, no. It is fine.

H1.3: (puzzled) It is a boat.

H2: The wreckage? (goes back to work, doesn't answer for a while) Some of it happened here. Not all of it. Some of it is old. Washed back here again. But the, they all.. they... ended up... not strong enough.

DEEP THOUGHT: I cannot do it. I was a fool. The forestays will not hold the mast at this angle. I need a longer bowsprit. The mast will collapse on the first attack.

DEEP THOUGHT: (on subsequent perspective shifts, after first time) This is not long enough. How could I be so stupid? I will look for something to use in the rubble. I will find a longer piece of wood to replace it.

[PERSPECTIVE SHIFT PROMPT]

STURDY LUMBER / BOWSPRIT

H: What is that?

P: A bowsprit.

P: It's to replace the shorter one.

P: It will keep the mast stable.

H: Oh. Thank you... You have a good eye... meet me in the market later if you can spare the time... I could use someone with a good eye... (*)

DEEP THOUGHT: A shipwright...? Did Akka send me a shipwright? With another shipwright... no. This is my task. I know what I need better than any. I will find the remaining parts myself. I need no one else.

DEEP THOUGHT: (on subsequent perspective shifts, after first time) I will find the remaining parts myself. If not among the wreckage, then somewhere. I will find the parts.

TOWN MARKETPLACE

MARKET BARKS

(Stuff the NPC (H) says as the Player is walking around this section of the level)

H: Hm... Not my taste. They've travelled too far before reaching here. Passed through too many hands. And a bad color... (makes a disapproving sound)

H: Haha! He's made more... These never sell. Poor man. Most of us will buy one every now and then, simply to be charitable. Now they sit unused in all our houses. (chuckles).

H: Those stairs are usually littered with children, blocking the way. Every two hours or so an adult has to chase them off.

H: Oh, I love that smell! I used to travel with the caravan, when I was young. Recognizing that same familiar smell in a far-away town made me feel somehow... mature. Like a man of the world. (pause) Vain. Vain and ignorant. Now, I am a man of my village and faith.

MARKET CONVERSATIONS

MARKET APPROACH

H: ...the integrity to see my task through and eliminate the threat, so that I may fulfill the charge you have graced me with. Akka, holy protector of this, my humble village, guide my efforts. I serve you in life and obligation... Ahh, hello friend... I am looking for a prow ornament, there should be a statue that I can use somewhere ahead.

P1: What is this place?

P2: Wouldn't that be stealing?

H1: It's a market... although it is rather empty today... Seems like...seems... Oh! Everyone is at the ceremony.

P1.1 What is the ceremony?

P2.1 Alright, let's find a statue. (*)

H2: The Artisan who usually fashions my prow ornaments... he is likely... likely to be.... to be out at the ceremony with the rest of the town I think. He should not mind.

P1.2 What is the ceremony?

P2.2 As long as it's not a problem, let's find a statue. (*)

H1.1 - H1.2: (Pauses) I don't know... It depends, sometimes it is to ask for a bountiful season... maybe for protection I think... sending off the dead or maybe even as thanksgiving. It doesn't matter let's get moving. (*)

FOREIGNER'S TENT

H: Ah, one of the foreigners must have left their tent after the festival.

P1: Foreigners? Did they come to trade?

P2: What were the festivals like?

P3: Let us move on. (*)

H1: Indeed they did, I remember a spice trader who had this incredibly fine salt. I could not believe it at first, but it was finer than the sand that surrounds us. (^)

H2: (-) I thought you were not interested in such things.

P1.2.1: Don't mistake my curiosity for interest. -

P2.2.1: Opinions can change; I may have jumped to an early conclusion. +

H1.2.1: Then do not mistake my courtesy for respect. (*)

H2.2.1: I will keep that in mind. If you really want to know, I found it to be a vibrant time. The market was filled with energy. (*)

H2 (+) They were during the change of season, when we had the most traders here.

While it was chaotic, haggling with vendors is an experience I always enjoy. (He lingers)

P1.2.2: It sounds wonderful (+)

P2.2.2: Eh, whatever you say (--)

H1.2.2 Oh, and when the butchers would come, the smell of roasted pig would carry throughout the market. And the spices! Bizarre, intense smells – my nose would burn all afternoon...all right, let us keep looking. (*)

H2.2.2 Well...(awkward) let us keep looking then. (*)

LEVIATHAN MURAL

H That... (long pause) That is the Leviathan. This portrayal does it little justice.

P1. It looks fine to me-

P2 Leviathan?

P3 How big is this thing? +

H1 You cannot understand. Not like I can. (*)

H2 yes, a creature of the desert. (*)

H3 + It is unlike anything I will ever see. (*)

H3 – larger than that (long pause). (*)

DEEP THOUGHT: Akka, help me

THE STATUE OF KURAS

H: Kuras the gentle, I hope your wisdom is not lost upon me.

P1: why are you talking to the rubble? (If first statue conversation)

P2: ... (*)

P3 who is this statue of this time? (If know it's a shrine)

H1: Not talking, Praying. These are the images of my predecessors. Each who have been called in times of great need. As the greatest of Akka's servants, they serve as icons for us to emulate.

P1: They are not my icons, do what you will with them but do not involve me.-

P2: So who was Kuras?

H1.1: As you wish. (*)

H3/H1.2: Kuras was a tiller, the quietest amongst her peers. She was called when The Plague struck the townfolk. Her patience and meticulous care soothed the suffering of our ancestors. It is said that due to her tenure, The Plague will never strike, in fear of her grace.

P1: Will this be fitting for a prow?

P2: Interesting. (*)

H1: No, However wise Kuras was, she lacks the passion I require. (*)

THE STATUE OF GIDEON

H: Gideon, may the adopted give me determination

P1: why are you talking to the rubble? (If first statue conversation)

P2: ... (*)

P3 who is this statue of this time? (If know it's a shrine)

H1: Not talking, Praying. These are the images of my predecessors. Each who have been called in times of great need. As the greatest of Akka's servants, they serve as icons for us to emulate.

P1: They are not my icons, do what you will with them but do not involve me.-

P2: So then who is Gideon?

H1.1: As you wish. (*)

H3/H1.2: Gideon...Gideon is interesting. I consider him a kindred spirit. He was born and grown in a foreign land before his appointment, thus every choice he made was questioned by the people he served. That being said, his determination defended us from raiders and brigands. It was his resolve that made us a true force of the desert.

P1: Will this be fitting for a prow?

P2: Interesting. (*)

H1: However relatable, Gideon does not truly embody the ideal I need. We should move on.

THE STATUE OF AKKA, PATRON GOD OF THE CITY

H: This is it, this statue is perfect.

P1 What is the statue of?

P2: Something as poorly carved as that? (-)

P3: Fine, where to next?

H1(-) Do you not know of Akka? (Anger)

H1 (+) This is Akka, our patron, our protector and God.

H2 This is an icon of our protector, Akka carved in preparation for combat.

P1.1 What has Akka done for you? (-)

P1.1 Then enlighten me, what does Akka do? (+)

H3 You might be in a hurry to leave but at least give this the reverence it deserves. This is a statue Akka our God and protector. Akka has watched over us since the beginning. He carved this island out of the sands and made it our home. He watches the skies and the sea for those who would harm us, and makes sure they never get the chance.

P1 He seems to be someone who commands the respect he deserves. A God who smites enemy and unbeliever equally. (+)

P2 Akka sounds like a bulwark, for you, his people and his city. A God who cares for his children. (+)

P3 I don't believe in such things. (-)

P4 Okay, I understand. We have our prow, let's be on our way.

H1.1 Understand this; Akka guards my people, he carved this island out of the sands and made it our home. He watches the skies and the sea for those who would harm us, and makes sure they never get the chance.

H1.2 Akka is the prime watchman; he is the maker of land and seer of truth. He opposes those who dare wish him harm with power beyond comprehension.

P1 He seems to be someone who commands the respect he deserves. A God who smites enemy and unbeliever equally. (+)

P2 Akka sounds like a bulwark, for you, his people and his city. A God who cares for his children. (+)

P3 I don't believe in such things. (-)

P4 I shouldn't have asked. We have our prow, let's be on our way. (-)

H1 You appear to understand. He demands his followers' faith and devotion.

P1 And he rewards that faith with protection?

H1.1 Among other things, yes...While I enjoy teaching outsiders about Akka, we have more parts to find. Let us

go, we have what we need. (+NPC)

P2 I understand, although I do not believe that is how a god should act.-

H1.2 You have no experience serving Akka...Let us continue this later. We have a boat to build. (+NPC)

H2: An interesting observation, yet not without value. Come, let us continue. (+player)

H3:+ Oh...So you are godless.

H3:- Oh...So you consider yourself godless. The mentality of a fool.

P1: You are mistaken, I simply have yet to find a patron of my own.(+)

P2: Yes, but it has little bearing on our current situation.

P3: Yes, I have no need for such things; I find they are for weaker minds. -

H3.1: My apologies, I had no intention to judge. We do still have more parts to find. So let us be on our way. (*) (Impasse)

H3.2: I shall take your word for it. Let us continue onward. (*) (Impasse)

H3.3: It does not matter how weak the mind may be if it is right...I have had enough of this argument, let us be off. (*) (Impasse)

H4: I was just explaining something of great importance...you know what, fine, you seem to not concern yourself with such things anyway. As you suggest, let us continue the task at hand. (*) (Impasse)

TO THE HOUSE

H: There is a building - one of the small ones along the base of the cliff - on the other side of the village, past the marketplace. Inside, there are things that are important to me. Look for the Mark of the Sentinel.

RESIDENTIAL AREA / HUNTER'S HOME AND WORKSHOP

RESIDENTIAL AREA BARKS

H: The statue carver lived above me, my favorite neighbor. I hope he appreciates the use of his work.

MARK OF THE SENTINEL

H: The Mark of the Sentinel, a sign of honor and responsibility.

P1: Responsibility?

H1: Akka keeps the city safe, and knows what must be done for our prosperity. He chooses one of his followers to take up the mantle of the Sentinel to protect his people in ways that he cannot.

P1: God? They're chosen by Akka? (+)

P2: God appointed? Or do you mean priest appointed? (-)

P3: Protect it? From what?

P4: Sounds like a heavy burden.

H1: Akka appears to the high priest in a vision and singles out one of his people to bear this holy burden. The priest conveys his wishes to the people.

H2: Any choice by the priests is by extension, a choice of Akka. He sends them a vision of the chosen one.

H3: Right now, the Leviathan is the threat to our city. It was foreseen that it could bring ruin to the city, and Akka deemed that a Sentinel would be chosen to protect against it.

H4: Mm.

HUNTER'S HOME

H: A lot of good memories dwell in this place. And a lot of lost moments...

P: Lost moments?

H: (silence) (*)

LOOM

H: Her thumbs and fingers... so callused. Only such and such materials. Only from such and such a vendor. Sometimes she works at night. She doesn't even light a candle, so as not to wake me.

DEEP THOUGHT: She cries whenever we speak. Why does she do that? It makes no sense.

HISTORY TAPESTRIES

H: My wife is the storyteller of our village. Each tapestry tells a story from our history - stories of leaders, adventures... and great hardship. You can find a specific purpose for every thread, every pattern, a sign of her mastery. You can see her voice - hear it in the weave. Kuras and Gideon never seemed real to me until I saw them spun into her tapestries. It wasn't until then that I saw them as people.

DEEP THOUGHT: The two of them... strangers. She herself is a stranger. No, it is me. She looks at me like... like... I do not know. How do they look at me?

MISSING TAPESTRY

H: A shame.

P1: What was this one?

P2: How did it rip?

H1: An animal. The tapestry was one of her most intricate.

P1.1: What happened to it?

H2: I ripped it.

P1.2: Why?

H1.1 - H1.2: It made me uncomfortable. (a strangled pause) I apologize for being so vague. Talking about these things is... hard for me... Here, let me take you to my workshop. It might be easier that way.

HUNTER'S WORKSHOP

LEVIATHAN TAPESTRY

P: What is that?

H: That is the creature I must protect the village against. The task Akka chose me for. The Leviathan.

P1: You're a Sentinel?

P2: What is it?

H1: I am. There have been some long nights and dark hours as of late... it has been a solemn time since the curse of the Leviathan. Our village is an island, perched on a rock and I was called to be its protector... but now it feels like we are a fox, treed by a giant dog, humiliated

H2: An animal that appeared several years ago. There have been some long nights and dark hours as of late... it has been a solemn time. Our village is an island, perched on a rock and I was called to be its protector... but now it feels like we are a fox, treed by a giant dog, humiliated

BALLISTA

H: When it is finished, it will fire a four-foot bolt a little over one hundred yards. At half that range, the bolt will pierce a scale ten inches thick.

P: A scale?

H: Scales. Sand is abrasive, so it has thick scales protecting it.

SAND SKIS

H: This is what I was looking for. I can use these for the ship. As my figurehead and prow, Akka will offer me direction. These will provide me stability as I sail, and keep my ship from sinking into the sands. I almost have everything to finish the ship...

TO TOWER

H: We can go to the top of the watchtower for the last item I need - there's an old canvas on the roof that I will cut into a sail.

TOWER APPROACH

H: Do you have a moment? I would like to ask you a question.

P1: Sure. Go ahead.+

P2: Why... do we even have time for this? -

H1: If you were the Sentinel in my place, how would you go about protecting the city from the leviathan?

H2: I wish to hear your thoughts for a moment is all. If you were the Sentinel in my place, how would you go about protecting the city from the leviathan?

P1: Well, what did Akka say when he appointed to you the position? (v)

P2: Is the leviathan immortal? (v)

P3: My priority would be the village's survival. I would defend it (v)

H1: He commanded that I execute his will. That I serve as his mortal representative to defend the city from the leviathan.

P1.1: Then I would defend the city and let Akka carry out his plan. (O)

P2.1: Then destroy the leviathan to defend the city. (v) (X)

H1.1: I am surprised at your faith in a god that is not your own. Thank you for your thoughts.(*)

H2: No, nothing in this world is immortal.

P1.2: Then why haven't you killed it?

P2.2: Then end the leviathan, thus removing the danger to the city. (v)

H1.2: It is no simple task to kill such a being.

P1.1.2: Then don't kill it. Simply protect the town when the time comes.

(v)

P2.1.2: You said it yourself: nothing is immortal, simply find the right opportunity.

H1.1.2: You remain stubborn to that ideal. That is enough for now, we should press on. (*)

H2.1.2: A very direct approach, yet I find its simplicity charming. Come, there is more to be done.(*)

H2.1 - H2.2: A just proposition, bringing the fight to the leviathan would result in far less risk to the city. I am glad we spoke on this matter, thank you. (*)

H3: And who would succeed you when time has run its course? No sentinel has ever had a successor. If a sentinel dies and fails his duty, then it is divine will that the city would fall with him.

P1.3: Then so be it. I would be dead, so it wouldn't matter. (-)

P2.3: At a certain point you must have faith that Akka has a plan for you.

P3.3: If that is as you say, I would go out and kill the leviathan before that time comes

H1.3: (O) Easy enough to say when one has been here for such a short time. I think I have heard enough.)(*)

H2.3: (O) Of course you have to have faith. But doing nothing but waiting... time takes a greater toll than you might expect. We have more to do, let us continue.(*)

H3.3: (X) So a race against time to fulfill your purpose? That is a brave goal. I am glad we spoke on this matter, thank you. Come now, there is more to be done.(*)

HUNTER'S WATCHTOWER

TOWER BARKS

BED

H: That is my bed.

CLOTHES

H: My clothes. Nights are cold up here, so I took a few of my wife's shawls. And blankets.

FIREPIT

H: The firepit. I learned to cook.

H: (subsequent times, after examining the firepit again) Making a fire is very different when you have to think about temperature. I always make it too hot. Then the meat is burned and raw.

LEVIATHAN SCALE

H1 There are terrible sandstorms that wrack this village from time to time. People hide and huddle together in fear and pray for their lives. What do they think of the storm? Do they hate it? Can they hate it? (long contemplation) I keep this scale to remind me of (beat) what the Leviathan is. And my purpose.

P1 It must be a massive creature.

P2 I didn't take you seriously about it's size until now, I apologize. (+)

P3 It looks like a big rock. (-)

H1: With many more scales. This scale is a symbol of my duty and the danger should I fail in it. Why does it ceaselessly threaten us, why is it obsessed with this city?

H2 (chuckle) Accepted. This scale is a symbol of my duty and the danger should I fail in it. What could drive such a beast? And why this city?

H3 And it weighs the same. It was the closest I've ever come to killing it. Years ago. (a moment) When I look at it I'm reminded of my doubts. (beat) Why does the beast continuing bringing us ruin?

P1 It might have to do with Akka, and thus your people, his followers. (v)

P2 The beast's reason doesn't matter. Only it's actions (v)

P3 I don't think I can answer that. (v)

H1 Akka? No, he does not control the beast, or he would force it away. He would not harm those who love him.

P1.1: What if the Leviathan is a test?

P2.1: What if it is a being like Akka? An unholy blight, Akka's darkness given form?

H1.1 Testing what? How long we can endure fear and suffering? Akka is not cruel.

P1.1.1: Maybe it is a test for you. A test where the Sentinel can prove that Akka's people are his, as he is their god.

H: For me? But he would have come to me and told me, or passed down his word to the priests. I would have seen a sign.

P1: But that wouldn't be much of a test..

H1: I do not think... I would need more convincing proof. I know my God and my faith. (*)

P2.1.1: A test of faith, to show that Akka's people will never abandon him, as he would never abandon them.

H1: You try to speak like priests, but you know not what you say, you know nothing of my faith.

P1: I don't mean to presume, it just seems that the Leviathan is important, not just an enemy to defeat.

H2: You already know his importance, he my tormentor and the gravest threat to my people

P2: I'm sorry, I meant no disrespect. (*)

H2.1: A blight perhaps, but where does that leave me?

P1: Well... you are obviously Akka's cure, he chose you, his answer to the blight.

H1: A possibility I've entertained. I'll need to think about this. (*)

H2: (+) Hmmm. Why do you think that?

P1.2 The leviathan simply exists and it is threatening your city, that's all that's important.

P2.2 It is a being of the world that has decided to threaten your home. It's a force of nature. You have no measure of control over its creation nor should you think you are responsible.

P3.2 It is a curse to your city. If it wasn't, if it was just a mindless beast, it would have moved on by now for other prey.

H1.2: I felt the same way when I started my vigil. But I came up against time, the great foe, who atrophies all will. (*)

H2.2: I am not responsible for its creation, but I am responsible for its continued existence. Force of nature or not, it looms over us, a constant danger. (*)

H3.2: You make it sound so simple, but it rings true. An animal leaves when it's nose is bloodied. But the Leviathan is relentless, more like a storm than a beast. (*)

H3: (-) (sigh) I suppose you can't... (*)

DEEP THOUGHT: Akka take this from me

HUNTER'S MAP

H: Where will it emerge? I can ignore that region it seems to favor clearer sections of the sand ocean. If I were to try luring it into a canyon, I could have an easier target to work with perhaps... but then it would...

P1: I'm not sure this is a good idea.

P2: You seem distracted

H1: What did you say?

H2: Distracted? How so?

P1: You seem to be so focused on this that you fail to notice your surroundings

P2: I think you have a problem

H1: You don't understand, I need to know this map, I must always be ready.

There are plans and strategies... if I wasn't focused everything would be lost, there's too much at stake to fail.

P1: But that's the point. You have tried to do it all, and it's just too much for one man. (v)

P2: Something has been bothering me. (v)

P3: You have focused so hard on this Leviathan... I think it's a mistake, you are making a mistake. (v)

H1: It is not. Every Sentinel has a difficult task. Kuras and Gideon had much worse. I need to be ready to fight at all hours.

P: That doesn't matter, every fight has resulted in your failure and your city rotting even more. Stop clinging to your home, it's gone.

H: But it does matter... If I fail...all that I protect.

P: you have already failed, your people are gone, all you can do is honor their memory. End the leviathan. End this battle.

H: I haven't... It is still standing, the people will return... we can rebuild (quietly) I know I can... (*)

H2: What? What could possibly be bothering you?

P: If the Leviathan is so monstrous and unbeatable, then what stops it from destroying the city?

H: I don't understand?

P1: If something like the Leviathan seriously wanted to destroy the city, do you think a man in a cobbled together boat, with a few spears, and just his determination could stop it?

H1: No, They couldn't...I mean, of course I can, I have done it...It may have almost killed me... it doesn't matter what I think, I have to do it. (*)

P2: You heard me, you sit here counting the times you have failed to defeat it, yet this place still stands, albeit in ruins. So why hasn't it destroyed the city already?

H: I... No, it that's not important. The city still stands. What matters...all that matters is that I end it before... I don't know, but I must stop the leviathan... I must. (*)

H3: Oh really? And what mistake would that be?

P: You disobeyed Akka's command

H: How dare you? What do you know of Akka's commands, you have only just learned of him!

P1: If he commanded you to defend the city then by leaving and obsessing over this beast, have you not disobeyed that command?

H1:The only real way to defend the city is to kill the Leviathan for good. That is my duty.

P: If that is true then Akka would have commanded you to do just that. But he did not.

H: Mphm (silence) (*)

WATCHTOWER ROOFTOP

ENDING HUNTER MONOLOGUES:

- (Leviathan Screech, NPC turns to look at the desert) Every time you escape me, so we fight to live. I return defeated- yet you are more deserving to die. Akka guides my hand.. yet my hesitation has ruined Akka's city. Driven his people away. After everything it's

destroyed, all the suffering...enough to fulfill my purpose. You face a man with nothing to lose.. I'll take the canvas, I can use it as a sail.

{Hunter goes to kill the Leviathan driven by his religious zeal}

- I was given this tower as a headquarters. The tower is a place of inward reflection. Some seasons I had divine purpose. Always the Leviathan but--time, I never suspected-- a foe too woven into me. I believed in Akka's will. Every time I defended my home I feared that it would be my last. Everyone is gone. Whether the battle between the ocean or desert, the question is not who would win, it is who would give in first... (Pause) My village relied on me. So I won't fail them again. The beast will die or I will.

{Hunter is consumed by his failure, and sees no other option but to kill the Leviathan for redemption}

- I used to know what I needed to do, but ...I don't know. Called to protect the village. And I have. Was tasked to ensure our safety, and I have and now, what is there to protect. What is he but our God? Akka carved the island. Akka watches over us. So then why do you remain silent? Nothing left to protect and still you remain silent. What haven't I done? ... The more time I spend staring out into the desert, the more painfully clear it becomes. It was when I decided to go out and kill the beast. Now... now the village looks like this. Akka, I have failed, I forgot what you were asking of me.

{Hunter realizes he strayed from his duty. The revelation weighs heavy but he stops hunting the Leviathan and breaks his cycle}

- The village was defenseless for two days, and when I came back, most of them were gone, (a moment) my family will return. They will come back once I kill it... My city, with its markets and homes carved into the cliffs. That glows with the brilliance of Akka. (a moment) No, I left my home and my people. Both gone. (Leviathan Screech, NPC turns to look at the desert) I can still kill it. Close by. -...Would it mean victory? The people I love are gone, and there is no purpose left. Nothing left in these dances. This ghost of the beast, seethes in cycles. I'll appease the anger no more.

{Hunter realizes that without his city and people, he has no reason to fight anymore. The Hunter let's go of his anger, giving up his hunt of the Leviathan and breaking the cycle}



Written by: Stefan Heinsen

Editors: Michael Pattengale, Dane Wheaton, Michael Shahan