

## The Adventure Zone: Amnesty – Episode 34

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**Griffin:** Previously on The Adventure Zone...

[theme music plays]

**Griffin:** There are notes about the beast folk. According to the notes, just like used to be animals over on earth, and then, as they sort of spent time in Sylvain, and this alien world quickly transformed into these new forms.

**Thacker:** [robotic voice] Sylvain has become [unintelligible]. Those living on her surface would seek to shatter her body entirely in pursuit of their own survival.

**Woodbridge:** My name is Woodbridge, Minister of Preservation. I ensure the survival of our kind, in the wake of your world's countless, ruthless assaults.

**Griffin:** And the Interpreter turns back to face you, and gives you a little bow, and she says...

**Interpreter:** Yes, everything's okay, I just—[echoing] God, she can't even pay attention for a moment, even in the presence of royalty.

**Griffin:** Your finger touches the cold, smooth stone as Minerva's blade cuts through the air.

[theme music plays]

[music plays]

**Griffin:** For three quarters of one second, a veil is lifted. Minerva, the scion far from home, swings her blade through the air, and six gateways to another world are torn throughout the fabric of Kepler, West Virginia. The

citizens manning the outposts around town prepare themselves for whatever lies beyond these rifts.

But for three quarters of one second, Minerva finds herself uncharacteristically unprepared for what she sees through her portal. It is not Sylvain. What Minerva sees, and the rest of Kepler sees – albeit, with slower minds – is light. And through the light, shapes, lights at different depths, a chamber, antiseptic and cold, illuminated from below by a pulsating, living dome of brilliant light; illuminated from above by a helix of beams of light, stretching endlessly up a cylindrical chamber.

It is a world... it is a room that Minerva has seen before. Just two short months ago, standing on top of the Green Bank Telescope with her squire. And now, like then, pieces of a puzzle she's been solving her entire life begin sliding slowly closer together. Literally and figuratively, the heroes of Kepler see the light.

And through that portal, for three quarters of one second... they are seen in return. Minerva's Zweihander reaches the end of its arc, and strikes the rocky ground below her feet. Like a television changing channels, the portal's destination shifts. And then... the town is overtaken by storm and fury.

Thacker, your ears adjust as if they've just popped, due to a very sudden pressure change in this central chamber of the FBI compound. Um, at least, that's where you, y'know, think you still are. You are surrounded by dark, grey fog, which has seemingly consumed this room entirely. Your vision is restricted to just like, a foot in front of your face, and you hear the sound of fighting and of yelling in the distance. And it's almost just completely muffled. And you see no one. You can barely see your own hands.

What do you do?

**Clint:** I think he would call out and try to find the others.

**Griffin:** What do you call out?

**Thacker:** Hey, guys! Gals! Peoples! Hello? Anybody there? It's... it's me, Thacker! Thacker, Thacker...

**Griffin:** You hear your own voice muffled, as if you're like, trying to yell while you are underwater. And... it's as you have that sensation of hearing your own voice, being sort of drowned out by this cloud that you're standing in, that you remember that this is not the first time that this has happened to you before. Uh, and you start to feel yourself, for whatever reason, getting very angry. Getting very, very upset.

What do you do?

**Clint:** I think he's gonna give into it. I don't think he's... I think it's the Quell. 'Cause it did happen before. The fog...

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** And he passed out. But then he started having all these visions and all those memories, and all those emotions... and I... I think he might've fought it the first time. I think he's gonna open himself up to it.

**Griffin:** Holy—

**Clint:** Now that he kind of has a little bit more of a handle on his psychic stuff.

**Griffin:** [laughs] Okay.

**Travis:** You're gonna try to ride the wave, instead of swimming against it.

**Griffin:** Yeah. This is extremely good. You're gonna ride the wave. We'll see what comes of it. Uh, you feel how you felt just, y'know, a few hours before when you were sitting by the river, and you were trying to establish that psychic link to find out where this thing is. But now it's like... now it is more desperate. Now it's like... now it's here, and you are here, and it's not just this intangible, mental scanners thing. It's in your lungs.

And you're trying to make the most of it. Why don't you, uh... hmm. I would say this is act under pressure, but it almost feels like a weird—like, it has to be a weird roll of some sort, right? This is you trying to use your psychic stuff, which is like explicitly weird. So I think maybe it's like, use magic, or some, y'know, amalgamation of that. Or maybe it's one of your abilities. I don't know, uh, what all The Seeker has.

**Clint:** Well, there's one thing The Searcher has called The Things I've Seen.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** When you encounter a creature or phenomenon, you may declare that you have seen it before.

**Griffin:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Clint:** The Keeper may ask you some questions about that encounter, and will then tell you one useful fact you learned, and one danger you need to watch out for, maybe right now.

**Griffin:** Uh, okay. Uh, yeah. I mean, you've definitely, definitely had this happen to you before. Um, a thing you remember. A fact that you will find useful. I think the thing that you will find useful is that you are susceptible to this stuff, and you don't know if everybody else is. But this fog, this cloud, is what makes people go berserk. But that's not all that is in it.

There are these visions that you saw, just a few hours ago, these blood red entities that uh, seem to be hiding in the fog, and are probably going to be the first troops that come over during the invasion. And I mean, that is also the danger. And I think, thanks to that, you are able to see through this fog more clearly, and you can see some... you see one of these shapes, and it is walking towards a couple silhouettes. You can't make out who they are, but you see this blood red shape, almost like, centipede-like. But like, the size of a saint Bernard, moving towards two of, y'know, the folks who were just in this room with you before Aubrey touched the archway.

Do you want to... y'know, do you still want to try and tap into the power, or is that the extent of like, your psychic event here?

**Clint:** I need to do something to help them. I need to warn them. I think Thacker would take off in a run.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** As fast as his old legs can carry him, in the direction of the two silhouettes, waving his arms and yelling at the top of his lungs.

**Thacker:** [yelling] Centipeede! Centipeede!

**Travis:** That's a great battle cry.

**Thacker:** [yelling] Hey, y'all! Centipede!!

**Griffin:** Duck and Aubrey...

**Travis:** Uh-huh?

**Griffin:** You both are in this fog, and you are close enough to each other. Duck was, y'know, probably flanking you fairly close when you went up to touch the archway, and so, when this cloud arrived, you all were, y'know, in arm's reach to each other. And like I said earlier, it's so dense, this cloud, that you can barely see anything beyond just a foot. But you can see the silhouette of the other person. You can see Duck's hat, and you know that he is there.

Uh, but you cannot see too much else. You hear yelling, and it is so loud and so purposeful, and it is coming to your right, and it is seemingly a drowned-out voice yelling 'centipede.'

**Thacker:** [muffled] Centipede! Centipede!

**Travis:** Uh, I'm going to read a bad situation, then.

**Griffin:** Okay. [laughs]

**Justin:** Seems bad.

**Travis:** Seems accurate. I don't know that it's ever seemed more accurate than it does right now.

**Griffin:** Uh, why don't you...

**Travis:** And that's plus what... plus sharp?

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Travis:** So that brings me up to eight.

**Griffin:** Okay, that is a mixed success. For a mixed success on read a bad situation, you get to ask one question from the list. And we're in the finale now, I don't think we have to read the list every time.

**Travis:** Man... it sure would be helpful, though, 'cause I never remember what it is.

**Griffin:** [laughs and inhales] What's the best way in? What's the best way out? Are there dangers we haven't noticed? What's the biggest threat? What's most vulnerable to me? What's the best way to protect the victims?

**Travis:** I am going to go with, what's the biggest threat?

**Griffin:** Uh, that's a tricky question. The biggest threat is—

**Travis:** I didn't write it. You just read it out loud to me.

**Griffin:** That's fair.

**Clint:** [laughs quietly]

**Griffin:** Uh, the biggest threat is this cloud. The biggest threat is this cloud, because it is... uh, you feel it trying to take hold of you, but you find, for whatever reason, your willpower is not even, y'know, weak enough to be tested like that. And like, this is the thing—

**Travis:** You mean Aubrey specific? Like—

**Griffin:** Uh, yeah, Aubrey specifically. Like, you feel like this thing has—

**Travis:** What's up?

**Griffin:** You have no power over me, weird cloud full of centipedes. Um, and it is the transit system through which like, the other horrors and nightmares that the Quell is capable of producing, uh, y'know, it is how they travel. It is how they get to where they are going to go.

Um, yeah.

**Travis:** Now, I want you to know, I actually read a bad situation with ulterior motive. To open up my third eye!

**Griffin:** Okay. You open up your third eye. What's that mean again?

**Travis:** Uh, so, when I, uh... I take in extra information. Take plus one hold on any result of seven or more, plus you can see invisible things.

**Clint:** Ooh!

**Griffin:** You can see invisible things. Okay. Uh, yeah. You see this centipede. You can see it through the cloud. Aubrey, you just got like... cloud vision. Like, you can see—you don't even see this cloud anymore. You just see the archway, and you see Duck nearby kind of squinting his eyes, and you see Thacker, charging at you, yelling 'centipede.'

You see, behind some crates near the door into this room, you see Barclay and Mama and Agent Stern, and y'know, they're trying to look around for what's happening, too. Uh, and you see this centipede right in front of you.

**Justin:** Uh, can I tell that Aubrey is locked on? I mean, can I—do I—

**Griffin:** Yeah, let's get Duck into the action.

**Travis:** Yeah, I think Aubrey says, like...

**Aubrey:** Duck, look out! Giant centipede, two o'clock!'

**Griffin:** This is, by the way, this is seconds after you've just touched the archway. And you're not exactly sure if the plan has gone off without a hitch, but this is not, like, y'know, joining you in media res. This is, you touch the archway, and then boom, here we are.

**Travis:** A bada bing, bada boom. Centipede.

**Justin:** Um, can I make out where the thing is? Like, can I—

**Griffin:** Yeah, I would say—I would say, with Aubrey's help, and it is so close to you now, and maybe you just would've seen like, a shadow, and not known what to do with it. But Aubrey has like, clearly outlined for you where it is, and what it is, and what it's... y'know, what its intentions are. So yeah, you can see it.

**Travis:** Its intention is to date my daughter.

**Justin:** [laughs] So, uh, I remove Beacon, and try to strike at where the center of the thing probably is.

**Travis:** Its thorax, I believe. Or is that the abdomen?

**Justin:** Yeah. Thank you, yes.

**Griffin:** Roll to kick some ass.

**Travis:** Some thorax.

**Griffin:** Roll to kick some thorax.

**Justin:** [laughs] Hey!

**Griffin:** Ooh, that's a good ten!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Ten! Plus...

**Clint:** Oh.

**Justin:** Two. 12.

**Griffin:** You don't have that advanced move. Did you...

**Justin:** We never did those, really?

**Griffin:** I mean, you take them on level up. It's one of the things you can take on level up. By the way, you guys missed a lot of rolls last episode, and I have not been tracking your EXP for you, and we are not gonna have another chance to level up. So just like... if you got one, holler, and we'll have to do it sort of mid-stream here.

**Travis:** I'm about halfway to one.

**Griffin:** Okay. You may need to go back and do an inventory between episodes.

**Justin:** Why do that when the beloved listening public will do it for me? Did your hero, Duck Newton, level up?

**Griffin:** Text us now at 1999.

**Justin:** Tweet at me. But first, see if other people already did, 'cause you don't want to be a jag about it.

**Griffin:** Okay, what is it you—as you like, approach this thing with Beacon drawn, you can see its shape completely. How do you strike it, and then we'll choose your extra effect.

**Justin:** I just say... uhh, I don't know, fuck it. And then I swing it right down to where I think the middle probably is.

**Duck:** Best of luck, partner. I don't know, bud. Just do your best in there, alright?

**Griffin:** [laughs] Uh, okay. What is your extra effect? You gain the advantage; take plus one forward or give plus one forward to another hunter. You inflict terrible harm. You suffer less harm. You force them where you want them.

**Justin:** I'm gonna do plus one forward to Aubrey. I feel like a little extra oomph. I feel like we're gonna need a little extra sauce to uh, to put this thing down.

**Griffin:** Okay. Uh, yeah. Alright, you bury Beacon into this thing's midsection, and you hear it scream. And as it screams, like, Thacker, you feel like... somebody just kicked you in the head. It is a voice that you know, and it's a voice that, y'know, for a time, like, came out of you. And just hearing that, having that like, disassociation, like... just... it is—it gives you a searing headache, just for a second.

You see this thing writhe in pain on the floor, and where you cut it, you start to see it like, fold backward on itself. And new sort of... new legs start appearing from the wound—

**Justin:** [gasps] Ewww.

**Griffin:** —trying to stand up. Uh, you, Duck, as it makes these new legs, one of them is just like, whipping around wildly. And it, uh, catches you across the face, and you take two harm.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** But you don't.

**Justin:** Don't. But I don't.

**Griffin:** But you don't. You have a very strong—

**Travis:** 'Cause you got a tough face.

**Justin:** It's so powerful and cool.

**Griffin:** It just glances off your iron-like face.

**Travis:** Old iron face.

**Justin:** Goddamn it! It still hurt.

**Duck:** Goddamn it!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh, okay. Aubrey, you have plus one forward. Thacker, though, you were kind of next in the order. Do you want to try and do something else?

**Clint:** I'm gonna try to pin it to the ground with the spike in the walking staff.

**Griffin:** Uh, okay. You wipe off some of the dude blood from it as you draw your walking staff. Uh, you just gonna sort of, y'know, dragoon this thing? Or what's up?

**Clint:** Yeah, just kind of swing it over my head two-handedly, and just whomp it right into the ground, and hopefully pin it in place.

**Griffin:** Uh, okay. Why don't you roll to kick some ass?

**Clint:** That would be a nine...

**Griffin:** Plus tough?

**Clint:** Zero!

**Griffin:** Ooh, really? Uh... Duck, can you do anything to help him out?

**Justin:** Yeah, I could—with my attack, I could try to... I could say I stunned it a little bit. Y'know, not—made it a little easier to hit?

**Travis:** Yeah, I already have plus one forward from the third eye. So...

**Griffin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Travis:** So maybe take that move, y'know, put it where you want it, to...

**Justin:** Yeah, I didn't realize he was next in the order. I would've directed it at him. So can I just say I did that?

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure. You give plus one forward to, uh... we'll retcon that. You give plus one forward to Thacker, which brings it up to a ten. Uh, on a ten plus, you... I'm guessing you force them where you want them, right? If you want to pin it to the ground?

**Clint:** Yeah, I would think so. Down being the direction I want them to go.

**Griffin:** Okay. Same thing. This thing, uh... you jab hard into the ground. And again, you're standing on the grass surrounding the archway, so it is not difficult for you to get—it's tough for you to get through this thing's

chitin or whatever it has. And it is not hard for you to like, pierce into the loam below. And sure enough, you get this thing stuck into the ground.

And then like, a half second after you pierce through this thing, these tendrils whip up out of its back where you stabbed through and just start like, wrapping and tangling around your arms. And as you pull away, you feel this, like... horrible stinging sensation, and you take two harm.

**Clint:** Except I really do!

**Griffin:** Except you really do. [laughs]

**Clint:** Okay, but did I succeed in pinning it to the ground?

**Griffin:** Oh, yes, for sure. Aubrey, what do you do next?

**Travis:** I'm gonna blast it with—

**Griffin:** You hear—

**Travis:** I'm gonna kill it with fire, I think.

**Griffin:** Okay. What does this look like?

**Travis:** Uh, Aubrey, two hand, y'know, like, full on blaster style, is just like... [fire blasting sound] Gonna shoot some fire at it.

**Griffin:** Just Iron Man'ing it?

**Travis:** Exactly.

**Griffin:** Alright. Roll and use magic.

**Travis:** Well, that's a six. And then I have minus one, right? 'Cause I'm using magic. Makes it a five.

**Griffin:** No, no, no, no. It's just plus two is your magic.

**Travis:** Well, sure. I was doing my math differently. But basically, that brings it to an eight. Or, to a seven. Wait—yes. Eight. And then plus one forward, a nine.

**Griffin:** Uh, and I will say that everything that, uh, that your buddy Thacker just did, pinning this immobile centipede to the ground... I think that handily brings it up to a ten.

**Clint:** By the way, I'm guessing this is an oversized centipede, right?

**Griffin:** Oh, yeah.

**Clint:** We're not like, all trying to hack up this—

**Travis:** No, that's the weird thing.

**Clint:** Tiny little worm. [laughs]

**Travis:** It's like, one inch. It's so weird that we're freaking out.

**Griffin:** It's one—it's a little guy. No, it is Saint Bernard sized.

**Clint:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you have no problem just nuking this thing. And as you do, it just turns into this bright red, just sort of gelatinous... not like—it's not like, um, it's not like blood. It is way too bright, and uh, like, gooey for that. You see it just like, splatter across the floor, inert. And when it falls, the storm in like a pretty good radius around it – so like, most of this room – just kind of gets pushed away. Just gets kind of repulsed away from where this thing fell.

And when it does, it sort of reveals Agent Stern with the rifle out. And he like, y'know, reacts with panic as suddenly, you appear, and there's this red, like, splotch on the ground. And he says...

**Agent Stern:** Didja—did you all—you all took care of it, then? You all—

**Aubrey:** Yep, it's dead. It's dead. Put the gun down. Stern. Gun down, please.

**Griffin:** He lowers it.

**Aubrey:** Thank youuu.

**Griffin:** And just past them, you see Janelle, who is similarly, like, trying to get her bearings as you all appear. And Mama stands up and walks towards you and says...

**Mama:** Was that... was that it?

**Aubrey:** Yeah, Quell's dead. We did it.

**Duck:** I don't think that was the Quell.

**Aubrey:** Damn.

**Thacker:** That was Lil' Quell.

**Aubrey:** I loved his latest album. [laughs]

**Griffin:** You see that red fluid now start scooting across the floor, just sort of, uh... just sort of, y'know, rolling over itself, trying to make its way back into the archway. And Mama looks down at it and says...

**Mama:** Yeah, I don't think you actually did it. I don't think it's done.

**Aubrey:** But I burned it! With fire!

**Travis:** I put a box on top of it. [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** Make it go into a jar!

**Griffin:** Yeah, you can do that. There a crate. We've established there are crates in this room. You grab one of the crates—

**Travis:** I put a crate on top of it.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you grab one of the crates *not* filled with plastic explosives, and you just... [laughing] Put it on top. And now the crate, comically, is trying to scoot closer to the archway, and—

**Travis:** I sit on top of the crate. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah. Barclay sits on it. He's like...

**Barclay:** You have places to go. I'll... I'll do the crate sitting. I'll fall on this grenade, everybody. I know, it's heroic.

**Aubrey:** We could just put a second crate on top of it, Barkley. Like, you don't have to...

**Barclay:** No, no... this is my sacrifice to make. Don't you take this moment from me.

**Clint:** [laughing]

**Aubrey:** But there's like, a hundred crates in here. We could just put—

**Duck:** Beautiful. Our own fuckin' Palom and Porom right here. Touching.

**Travis:** How dare you. How dare you conjure that image. You know. You *know*. That's our second Final Fantasy—

**Griffin:** Final Fantasy tragedy reference in the finale arc, yes. Mama says...

**Mama:** Okay, well, I mean, we don't want to risk it. More stuff might be headed this way, and um... y'know, we gotta—we gotta have just another point of control here. So I guess me and Agent Stern and a very relaxed Barclay are gonna take this point. Are y'all gonna be okay on the other side?

**Duck:** Well, I mean, we have no way of knowing that. I hope so.

**Thacker:** Oh, yeah. It's right up here. Tappin' the ol' noggin' for ya, for those of you listenin' on somethin' else. It's all up here in the ol' noodle. I can get us there in one piece. Don't you worry about it, sport.

**Aubrey:** Yeah, we'll just all go with this guy we've known for three days. [laughing] It's gonna be great.

**Griffin:** Uh, Mama says...

**Mama:** It's alright, he's, uh... he's with me.

**Aubrey:** Okay.

**Griffin:** And uh, Agent Stern like, walks over to the corner of the room, and uh, comes back over to the three of you, and um... I think... I think to Aubrey, because y'know, you are the person that he knows the most. You all lived together, essentially, for a year. Uh, he holds out this black case, and it's open. And inside, you see that same kind of orange brick that he warned you all about earlier; the explosive Semtex.

And it seems to be rigged up with some kind of like, handheld, uh, remote. And he closes it, and hands it to you, Aubrey, and he says...

**Agent Stern:** Just... just in case. Now, just in case. If you bring this back, and you don't use it, I am going to have to take it back. But just in case you need—

**Aubrey:** Oh, yeah. I feel weird holding it? This is, uh, terrifying. This is terrifying!

**Agent Stern:** I mean, someone else can hold it if you need to.

**Duck:** I mean, I'm pretty tough. I can hold it if you need me to.

**Aubrey:** Yeah! Hey, I—listen. Stern?

**Duck:** She's highly flammable.

**Aubrey:** Yes. I appreciate, but one of the three of us is known to spontaneously catch fire. Sooo...

**Duck:** Yeah, it's not great.

**Aubrey:** I'm gonna hand it to the adult, Duck, and let him hold it. Thank you, though. Hey. Thank you. This is going to prove very helpful, I bet.

**Griffin:** He says...

**Agent Stern:** Yeah. Um... Y'know, just in case. Oh! It is a—it is a case. I—

**Aubrey:** It is a case. Oh.

**Agent Stern:** It's one of my trademark jokes.

**Travis:** And we have a good, 30-minute long laugh.

**Griffin:** You hear a like, screaming—

**Justin:** [laughs] And the world ends.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs] Yeah. You hear a screaming, like, roar. Several of them, actually, in the distance, through the thick canvas of this facility, uh, coming from far off in Kepler as other outposts sort of wage war against whatever's coming through.

[music plays]

**Griffin:** And Janelle says...

**Janelle:** We really should go, don't you think? It seems like maybe your friends are in danger?

**Aubrey:** Hold the line, Mama. Uh, we'll be back in one piece... probably.

**Duck:** Well, hopefully three pieces. That would be rough.

**Aubrey:** Well, yeah. I meant indivi—okay.

**Duck:** [laughing]

**Travis:** And we go through the gate.

[music plays]

**Griffin:** The twice-locked door of the Kepler sheriff's station rattles and cracks against the weight of the bright red horde outside. Sheriff Zeke Owens, alongside Detective Megan and Deputy Dewey, catch glimpses of the terrors through cracks in the boarded up windows. They number too many to reliably count, let alone take on in open combat. Everyone in the sheriff's station knows this.

Nevertheless, their resolve does not falter. Detective Megan fills the chambers of two service revolvers, counting her ammo with care. Sheriff Zeke retrieves every box of shotgun shells from the station's safe, and orders them in a neat pile. He pulls the ring of keys from his belt, and slides open a cell door. He enters and kneels down beside its occupant.

**Zeke:** I'm sorry I haven't tried to... be more... here for ya. I've been trying to just, y'know, give you some space. I was—I was there. I know it was an accident. But uh... I... I just assume that's probably not enough for... for you to let yourself off the hook. Am I right, Pigeon?

**Griffin:** Pigeon is sitting on the floor, wrapped in a thick, wool blanket. She nods.

**Zeke:** I... I can't pretend to know what that feels like, Pigeon. That guilt is gonna ride you like a dog for the rest of your life, and I... I can't imagine the weight of that. But... I do know loss. And I know what it can do to ya. Make you feel like... your life's not worth nothin'. That all the joy and pleasure in the world has been locked away; just not an option for someone like you anymore. I know that feeling, Pigeon. I swear.

**Griffin:** Pigeon looks up from the floor, teary-eyed. Detective Megan enters her cell and hands her a cup of coffee.

**Zeke:** Now, normally, you'd need to take yourself a bunch of time before you can get yourself back up on your feet again. I get that. But uh... we don't really... [laughs] Got that kind of time. So...

**Griffin:** He leans down close.

**Zeke:** One day... believe it or not... you're gonna laugh at a joke. You're gonna go swimming, and you're gonna smile in the sunlight. You're gonna pet yourself a good dog, and it's gonna make you feel happy. You ain't always gonna feel like this, Pigeon. Other people, maybe, but not you.

And how do you get there? How do you get to that point? I don't know. But you are gonna get there. And we're gonna keep you safe. Okay?

**Griffin:** Sheriff Zeke cocks his shotgun and nods at Detective Megan, who says...

**Megan:** Hit it, Dewey.

**Griffin:** Dewey smiles and hovers to the front door. Manifesting with all of his power, he undoes the locks and throws the door open.

**Dewey:** After y'all!

**Griffin:** Crimson beasts and clawed horrors clash through the open door, flooding into the station, charging the three humans at the rear of the room. Zeke leaps forward, grabs the bars of the jail cell door, and slams it shut, trapping himself, Megan, and Pigeon inside... and the beasts outside. They press against the bars, trying and failing to reach their prey.

Pigeon climbs to her feet. Zeke aims his shotgun. Megan cocks her revolvers and shouts...

**Megan:** Welcome to Chicago, dipshits!

[music plays]

**Griffin:** You, Thacker, and Aubrey, and Duck, with Janelle in tow, emerge through the archway and into the pavilion where this arch is kept under watch by the city guard. Only, nobody's here. And as you look around the town below you, you realize that nobody is here in Sylvain at all.

And the town hasn't been destroyed. The homes and the businesses and the temples and the restaurants, like, they're all still standing in relatively decent condition. The like, crystalline lamp posts that line the main drag are still illuminated. And the only sign that something is off is the absence of, y'know, all of the Sylvans, and the knee-high layer of that dark cloud that is just everywhere. It is all over the town, within the wall's borders, and it is just sort of like, slowly shifting across the ground.

Uh, and Janelle points in the distance and says...

**Janelle:** We're going to have to find a way over to the castle. And I... I don't know about getting back into that fog again. Um... anyone have any ideas?

**Thacker:** The main road is what gets us there. That's the direction we have to go in. So, are you suggesting we... fly? Or... what?

**Aubrey:** Can we fly?

**Thacker:** I don't know everybody's—

**Janelle:** I don't know if we can... I do not know if we can fly, uh, Thacker.

**Thacker:** It's pretty much a straight shot to the castle.

**Duck:** Aubrey, you got any, um... you got any wind powers?

**Aubrey:** I'll—yeah, sure!

**Travis:** Uh, Aubrey like, claps her hands in front of her, trying to make a biiig blast of wind to blow away the fog. See if that works.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I mean, I cannot see any reason why you would need to roll for this. You can generate—you can do magic. This is not a particularly difficult thing. Uh, what's it look like? How big a—

**Travis:** She definitely closes her eyes first. Y'know, this is the first time back in Sylvain since she touched the stone. She closes her eyes and says...

**Aubrey:** Uh, hi, magic. It's me again. It's Aubrey. Uh, we're trying to get past the fog. Uh, so we can stop the Quell, which I assume you want to happen too. So if you could help me, I'm gonna blow away the fog.

**Travis:** And then she like, puts her hands out to her side and like, makes a biiig clap in front of her.

**Griffin:** As your hands collide, you hear somebody respond. To what you just said. You hear someone say...

**Voice:** Please, please, please, please. I know I failed them. I know I'm a fraud. Please, if that's you, if you're there, anywhere, please, *please* help me!

**Aubrey:** Hi—hello?

**Travis:** Do I recognize the voice?

**Griffin:** Um, yeah. You recognize the voice, because you've heard it before. You've heard it in your head before. It is Alexandra. It is the Interpreter, uh, who you have met several times now. You've had some, y'know, weird connections with. You've heard her voice in the past. You've experienced one of her memories in the past. Uh, you hear her. You do not see her anywhere. But as you cast this spell, uh, and dispel this wind all around you, you hear her desperate plea.

**Aubrey:** Alexandra? Can you hear me?

**Griffin:** There is no response to that. And honestly, it's probably kind of tough to uh, think about maintaining a conversation because of what happens when you cast this spell.

**Travis:** Oh!

**Griffin:** The wind, uh, displaces the fog in front of you, and pushes it away effortlessly. And y'know, like, Moses parting the Red Sea, you descend the stairs and watch as, uh, y'know, for 50 feet in front of you, the fog parts, revealing the road beneath.

Um, and it also reveals... something else. It reveals, um... uh, first, you see like, an arm coming out of the fog. And then you see, like, a pair of legs coming out of the fog. And then you see just like, uh... you realize there are bodies. And they're not laying on the ground. They appear to be just sort of floating in the fog.

**Travis:** You hate to see that.

**Griffin:** And you recognize that some of them, uh... some of them are like, furry. And some of them are, uh, uh, not. Some of them are just like, Sylvan bodies that are sort of starting to emerge, and falling to the ground where the storm parts. And... they start to move. And you start to see Sylvans and beast folk alike beginning to move. You see shadows in the cloud starting to move towards you, and move towards where you've sort of parted the storm here.

**Travis:** Now, Griffin, this may be a silly question, but... move in a normal cool way?

**Griffin:** No.

**Travis:** Ahh.

**Griffin:** Move in a... animalistic, uh, extremely, like, lethargic. Like, injured, uh... but sort of unnatural way, certainly.

**Travis:** Yeah, that's what... y'know what? I could've assumed that, but I... okay. Yeah.

**Clint:** Are they between us and the road?

**Griffin:** Uh, you have this like, area of the road, this like, split in the cloud that Aubrey has opened up, where they are not. They seem to be like, pushed into the cloud. But uh, they are starting to close that gap right in front of you.

**Aubrey:** It's time to run, folks!

**Duck:** Let's fuckin' go!

**Thacker:** Yeah!

**Travis:** And Aubrey takes off.

**Griffin:** I think act under pressure. Everybody act under pressure, plus one for, uh, what Aubrey just did. But this, y'know, making your way through this, uh, obstacle course of arms and legs that are trying to approach you and grab onto you I think is... I want to see who, uh, who is dexterously moving through this.

**Travis:** I rolled a seven plus zero cool, plus one, so an eight.

**Justin:** I rolled an 11 plus two, 13. Hell yeah.

**Clint:** Um, Thacker rolled a ten. But! He has a trait called Just Another Day. "When you have to act under pressure due to a monster, phenomenon, or mystical effect, you may roll plus weird instead of plus cool." He has two plus weird. That takes it up to a 12. Adding the one takes it up to 13.

**Griffin:** [laughs] So I mean, you won with the ten. You just wanted to brag about how good and high your number was.

**Clint:** I know!

**Travis:** He gets to so very rarely, Griffin. Let him have this.

**Griffin:** Sure. Uh, Duck and Thacker, you all take off. Like, you all are, y'know, effortlessly leaping over these arms that are swinging out, trying to grab you. And you just cruise right on down main street towards the castle and the, um, y'know, the garden with the crystal in front of it. And yeah, you just have no problem doing that.

**Clint:** Are you rolling for Janelle?

**Griffin:** Uh, Aubrey, you—no, I never roll. Uh, Aubrey, you are similarly, like, pretty easily making your way through. And Janelle is like, holding onto your hand. You realize that she is actually having a little bit of trouble moving as quickly as you're able to, and so you're trying to pull her along. And you see her get grabbed by a couple of the hands, and uh, a couple more like, grab onto her robes, and try to start pulling her under the storm.

Uh, that is the mixed success, is that you are, y'know, no issue moving through, but Janelle appears to have been grabbed.

**Travis:** Uh, I'm gonna roll to kick some hands.

**Griffin:** [laughs] Okay.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** So that's a nine.

**Griffin:** Yep.

**Travis:** But my tough is minus one, so it's an eight.

**Griffin:** Oh, so you are not using magic, you are just using...

**Travis:** I am kicking the hands that are grabbing her.

**Griffin:** Okay. Describe what this looks like.

**Travis:** So, still holding her hands, keeping her on her feet, Aubrey's just hauling back with her, y'know, with her strong right foot and just kickin' the hand. Y'know? Kickin' the hand that's grabbin' the robe, as they say.

**Griffin:** [laughs] You just start—

**Clint:** And I would say—I would say with a 13, Thacker can certainly pay a point forward. 'Cause he went over 12.

**Justin:** I don't think it works like that.

**Travis:** Is that how that works, Griffin?

**Griffin:** No, that's not how it works at all.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Aubrey, you all look back and see Aubrey just start skankin' it in the middle of this crowd. [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And uh, you hear crunching and pummeling below your feet, Aubrey. Uh, but one of these hands like, grabs onto you, and you feel like, this sick—like, right at your calf. And you feel this like, sickening kind of feeling just starting to course through you a little bit before you kick that shit away, too. You take one harm, ignore armor.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Griffin:** And with that, though, you manage to free Janelle, and the two of you catch up with Duck and Thacker, and the uh, you manage to clear this barricade that somebody had built up in front of this garden here, and you manage to make your way out of the storm and into the crystal garden, just below the steps of the palace.

**Travis:** What do we see?

**Clint:** And did we leave a slipper on the steps of the palace?

**Griffin:** You unfortunately did not. You see a few things. As you actually like, approach the palace, as you're like, y'know, running down the main drag, you see, uh, down some alleyways... and then once you like, get clear of the city, towards the palace, you see like, parks in the distance, and uh, hillsides in the distance in different parts of the town.

You see Minerva's rifts open all over Sylvain city here. And they are like, too narrow for you to see what is going on on the other side, but you see like, frantic activity around each one as the Quell sort of pushes its invasion through those different points.

But as you make your way past the barricade and into the garden here, you see—obviously, you see the crystal, and um, it is just... it is barely illuminated now. It is this like, faint, dark, fading orange. And, uh, up the stairs in front of you, you see the castle. Uh, it's... it's got these huge, massive doors that are shut tight. And you can see some armor with some figures in the armor laying on the ground in front of those doors with their, uh, y'know, their jagged spears and pieces of armaments scattered around the entryway.

Uh, that is what you see.

**Justin:** Should I read a bad situation? [laughs]

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Justin:** Yeah, I feel like it's all bad situations from here to the finish line. That's a seven plus... two. For a nine.

**Griffin:** Uh, anybody want to help out?

**Travis:** Yeah. So then I guess I will also—would I also roll?

**Griffin:** You'd roll to help out, and describe like, what you're doing to help him read a bad situation.

**Travis:** I hold my hands up in front of his eyes like two binoculars, and I'm like... [squeaking noise] Does that help?

**Griffin:** What are you doing to look around the scene for dangers?

**Travis:** Uh, I'm going to attempt to open that there third eye. So Aubrey's like, closin' her two eyes. The normal two eyes. Y'know, the ones—

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Griffin:** You're shooting sonar out, essentially. Roll to help out.

**Travis:** Uh, I rolled an eight.

**Griffin:** Uh, okay. Your help grants them plus one to their roll.

**Travis:** Well, I have seven plus one. Eight. Yes.

**Griffin:** Right. Uh, you grant them plus one to their roll, but you expose yourself to trouble or danger.

**Travis:** I mean, that happens, y'know? Anytime you open your third eye, you're opening yourself to some psychic danger.

**Griffin:** Sure. That bumps you up to a ten, Duck. What are your three questions that you get to ask?

**Justin:** What's my best way in?

**Griffin:** You see, just to the right of those massive double doors, there is a stone circle built into the wall. And in the center of that stone circle is like, a vertical slit, and it looks like a sort of medieval, y'know, padlock situation. You figure that that is probably the mechanism to open the gate.

And I think that actually, uh, Janelle is up there, investigating it also, and like, sort of checking her robes. And she turns to you, and she says that...

**Janelle:** I—I don't have my key. I didn't think that I would be gone this long, and that they would shut anyone out. The only ones with a key are the head of the palace guard, and... ugh. Maybe the Interpreter?

**Griffin:** Uh, that is what you get from that question.

**Justin:** Are there any dangers we haven't noticed?

**Griffin:** Uh, there are.

**Justin:** Cool.

**Griffin:** Uh... end of question.

**Justin:** I mean, that's asked and answered. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah. Uh, yeah. There is a danger that you have not noticed. You see, uh, some of that armor that is laying in front of the doorway into the palace... you see it start to move. And it is the biggest form that was laying on the ground here. Uh, and you see it start to shamble and pick itself up, up to its feet. That's a danger you didn't notice!

**Travis:** Okay.

**Justin:** Now, if I were to say, what's the biggest threat to me, is that gonna be the reanimated armor?

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah. I'm just gonna burn that one. [wheezes]

**Griffin:** M'kay.

**Justin:** Uh, I wanna take advantage of that. The fact that I'm noticing it kind of like, already uh, reforming. Is there, um...

**Griffin:** There's someone inside of it.

**Justin:** Oh, there's somebody inside. It's like, getting back up, right?

**Griffin:** Yes. Uh, and it starts to trudge towards Janelle as she's investigating the lock.

**Justin:** I'm gonna whip Beacon around its leg to try to knock it off balance while it's sort of getting its bearings.

**Griffin:** Uh, okay. I think it is not in a position to attack you right now. It has one of these, uh... Its spear is even bigger than the uh, than the other ones that are laying around, and it's got this, like, y'know, jagged edge to it. It's almost more like a, uh, like a pike or something like that.

**Travis:** Man, this is some Dark Souls shit.

**Griffin:** I do not think that this is a kick some ass, then. So I think it's, uh...

**Justin:** Act under pressure?

**Griffin:** Probably act under pressure. Yeah.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Wow.

**Justin:** Nine plus two.

**Griffin:** These are those finale rolls. You do the thing—

**Justin:** Yeah, that we needed.

**Griffin:** —that you set out to do.

**Justin:** Yeah, I pull Beacon out, and whip it around its leg, and Beacon says...

**Beacon:** Have a nice *trip*.

**Justin:** And then I pull, and he falls over, and Beacon says...

**Beacon:** Eat my whole ass.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs] And that would be like the pommel, right?

**Justin:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** Uh, this thing starts to jab its huge spear, unaware of Janelle's direction. But you like, without even thinking, whip Beacon around its leg and knock it down, and it misses. And its spear clatters to the ground, and kind of slides past Janelle. And...

[music plays]

**Griffin:** It misses its assault, and it starts to stand up again. This time, angrier than before. And it turns to see who attacked it, and now, Duck, you can see who it is.

You see... horns on its head, poking through a large plate helmet.

**Travis:** [gasps] No.

**Griffin:** And you see familiar eyes that have gone blackened and, y'know, hollow. And he stands to his full height, just this massive, imposing height, wearing this bulky plate armor, and glowers down at you... and it is Vincent. The Minister of Defense and friendly goat man who you have encountered.

**Justin:** God fuckin' damn it.

**Clint:** Can Thacker take a move?

**Griffin:** Yeah, Thacker, go ahead.

**Travis:** You sound confident, Dad, and I love it.

**Clint:** I am. Cosmic Insight.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** Again, he has encompassed the soul of the universe!

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Clint:** Oh, no, I'm sorry. Psychic Event. I'm looking at the wrong thing.

**Travis:** He has not encompassed anything! [laughs]

**Clint:** To use his sensitive powers, opens his brain to the psychic environment. And in this case... well, I'll just roll. I'll just roll.

**Griffin:** Okay. Yeah.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Clint:** Oh, crap. Well, it's a nine.

**Travis:** Plus weird, right?

**Clint:** Plus weird, which is two. That's an 11.

**Griffin:** Okay. Why were you oh crapping?

**Clint:** Well, because I wanted to get one through six, because one through six, a bad roll, you make contact with something dangerous. And I was thinking maybe it would...

**Griffin:** Oh, bud, trust. If you had gotten a one through six, making contact with something dangerous would've fucked you right up. That's not a good thing. That's a baaad... that's the not ideal result of this scenario.

**Clint:** Okay, well, in this case, he gets a definite impression. A vision, a tangible aura, an overheard thought, something from Vincent.

**Griffin:** Uh, okay.

[music plays]

**Griffin:** Time stands still. The scene around you is like, you're seeing it through this, um... this bright, red filter. Uh, and you look around, and you can move a little bit, but everybody else is kind of in position. You see Duck with his sword drawn, and you see Janelle starting to like, fall backwards away from Vincent. Uh, and you see Aubrey with her third eye open.

But you can move a little bit, and right where Vincent is, you... you just see this like, blinking red light that is in his form. And it is, y'know, roughly humanoid, occupying the space of his body. But this light turns toward you, and speaks to you in a familiar voice. And it says...

**Voice:** [robotic] Are you coming to me?

**Thacker:** Yes. I'm... I'm coming. And I'm bringing some friends.

**Voice:** [robotic] What is it that you hope to accomplish?

**Thacker:** Peace. I... I... I'm lookin' for peace.

**Voice:** [robotic] The time for peace is long past. You should know that, Thacker. Both of our worlds are blighted. It's time for us to begin anew.

**Thacker:** Then I... I guess I'm... comin' for war then, I suppose, if that's the only option I got left.

**Voice:** [robotic] So be it.

**Griffin:** And that filter, that red filter, is just gone. And... now you see time catch up to you. And your head, Thacker, is just... you fall to your knees. Your head is just splitting. And you hear this loud clanging noise, and... when you look up, you see that... Vincent has fallen to the ground. And this time, he is just breathing. And you can actually tell that, whatever influence he had on it, the Quell's influence, the same thing that took you over, it's gone now.

It has retreated away from Vincent, who makes his way up to his knees and shakes his head off, and you probably feel a sympathy for him, knowing how shitty he probably feels right now. This Quell hangover. But he recovers, and... the first thing he does is look up at you. He locks eyes with you, Thacker, and he says...

**Vincent:** Wh... Hello. What... what was that?

**Thacker:** Uh... well, my friend, that is, uh... that was the Quell. And it... it kind of gets in your head and makes you act all goofy. Uh, but I gotta tell ya. As far as I can tell, you didn't do anything wrong. Of course, I only been here about 90 seconds, so...

**Griffin:** Yeah. He—as he stands up and picks up his spear, he looks around at some of the felled guards. And he just shakes his head, and just looks completely... just has this vacant, distant look on his face. And—

**Thacker:** Well, it—it wasn't you, though. It wasn't you. Listen – it came on me, and I was like, crawlin' around on ceilings, and I was wipin' people out, and... it ain't your fault. You didn't do it. Don't feel bad.

**Duck:** Here, partner.

**Justin:** I hand him the Slim Jim that Leo gave me.

**Duck:** Why don't you try snappin' into this? It always helps me clear my head.

**Griffin:** He—this whole time, he has been like, trying to process everything, and it is taking him so much longer than it normally would. And he looks down at this bright, yellow, long, shitty looking package... [laughs] With a long, nasty looking beef stick inside of it. And he looks at you curiously—

**Travis:** This week, we're sponsored by Slim Jim!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** He looks at this big, shitty, awful, uh, idiot snack.

**Justin:** [laughing]

**Clint:** You are really kissing this endorsement goodbye!

**Griffin:** And... for just like a second, you can tell that he's not thinking about what just happened. He's not thinking about, like... you have interrupted this downward spiral that he was going through, and reminding him of just sort of all of the little pleasures of earth that you all have brought him. All of these just sort of, uh, mindless, fun distractions. And he looks up at you, and just seems to kind of shake it off. And he tears the package open and takes just like, an enormous goat bite out of it. And he says...

**Vincent:** Are you all here—hold on. [spitting noise] Bleh!

**Duck:** [laughs] Use as directed. That is exactly, absolutely right. That's how we do it on earth.

**Vincent:** That is bracing.

**Clint:** [absolutely loses it]

**Duck:** It's the fucking... it's the fucking cumin. Cumin will get you every time, bud.

**Griffin:** He—now he looks around and like, instantly puts together... okay. Things have fallen apart. The gates are closed. You all are here. There has to be a reason for it.

He hobbles over to the lock, and jams his spear in it, which he twists. And the doors, uh, part open, just narrow enough for all of you to slip inside.

**Travis:** As we head inside, Aubrey closes her eyes again, y'know, following Janelle. Closes her eyes again.

**Aubrey:** Alexandra? Um, if you can hear us, we're on our way to help.

**Griffin:** You don't hear any response. But... you have that third eye open, right? To help him out?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Exposing you to danger?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Everybody else has gone inside. You're the last one to slip through the door. And as you do... just in your periphery, just for like, a blip. Like, if you did not have your third eye open, like, you obviously would've missed it.

[music plays]

**Griffin:** It's like a single frame spliced into a film. You see, hovering in the air, 20 feet away in the distance, uh... you see five of those four-armed beings made out of light, just kind of hovering in the air, and just kind of... observing. And then... in a blink, they're gone. And the doors creak shut behind you.

[music plays]

**Griffin:** Hey there, everybody. Thanks for listening to The Adventure Zone. This is Griffin, uhh... I've already messed this up. But you know who I am

and what I do. Thanks for listening. Uh, this is episode 34, and I hope you like it, and we're just a few episodes out from the end of Amnesty now. Getting all sentimental. And thank you all so much for all your kind words. All your support throughout this whole season. It has meant the world to us. Real excited for what's coming up next, and we'll be able to talk more about that really soon.

But before that happens, I'm going to tell you about a couple of our sponsors. The first one, you know. You know them. 'Cause it's the Squarespace, baby! Squarespace. They are the website makers that... well, you the—you—okay. You'll use them to make the website. It's complicated, but they will let you turn your cool idea into a new website.

Also, it's not complicated. It's super, super simple. We don't know nothin' 'bout, y'know, Javascript. C... SS. C+C Music Factory. Any of that stuff. But we've used it to make websites, and we don't know anything. And these websites, you can use to blog or publish content, or sell products or services. They got these beautiful, customizable templates created by world-class designers. Everything you can use just for a mobile thing, whatever. They got domains that you can buy and choose from over 200 extensions. They got free and secure hosting. It's great.

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Also want to tell you about Blue Apron. This is the cooking box! This is the box that you will get, and the box is gonna have tasty ingredients in it. But guess what? If you do stuff to those ingredients – chop them, flavor them, heat them, oil them, whatever – then they're gonna taste even better, 'cause that's how cooking works. And Blue Apron's gonna like... that's cooking 101, and that's what Blue Apron's gonna teach you.

This season, you can experience the joy of cooking something new and making dinner fun with Blue Apron. Check out their summer menu and try favorite burger recipes with the Beyond... the Beyond Burger burger! The plant based burger phenomenon.

Uh, I'm a big fan of Blue Apron. That's no bullshit. I really enjoy cooking these days, and I definitely would not have gotten there without the help of, uh, of Blue Apron. They make cooking at home a sustainable part of your weekly routine. Their menu is carefully designed using unique, specialty ingredients to bring chef-quality recipes to your dinner table.

So! To start making delicious, brag-worthy meals at home without the hassle, try Blue Apron. Check out this week's menu. Might have something tasty on it? Something tasty? Maybe seared pork chops and peach salsa? Maybe a yellow tomato and zucchini pasta? Maybe you can check it out?

Get \$60 off when you visit [BlueApron.com/Adventure](https://BlueApron.com/Adventure). That's [BlueApron.com/Adventure](https://BlueApron.com/Adventure). Blue Apron: A better way to cook.

Thank you to everybody who has been tweeting about the show using the #TheZoneCast hash tag. Probably no—well, definitely no more new characters, I would say. Uh, 'cause we're just a couple episodes out from the true finale. But uh, it still means a lot for you spreading the word as we move into the ending here of Amnesty. People have been really singing the show's praises to their friends and getting them listening, and that is, uh, how we've been able to grow and have the audience and all the great opportunities that we have today, and we are so grateful.

Thank you also to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. Go to [MaximumFun.org](https://MaximumFun.org), check out all the great shows there. If you like this show, I bet you're really gonna like Mission to Zyxx. It's an improvised comedy, like, sci-fi space opera, uh, that is just a hoot. Joined the network, uh, I think just earlier this year, and uh, yeah. That's the Max Fun recc for today.

Uh, and... yeah, we got new merch. If you go to [McElroy.family](https://McElroy.family), you can find out all of our news and garbage and stuff. But we got new merch, including an Adventure Zone fanny pack that uh, I can't believe we got to make. And I'm very, very excited.

Uh, yeah, I think that's probably gonna do it. Uhh... I just—I'm filled with gratitude today, for everything. Your support for the show, for the graphic

novel, uh... for all of it. It means the world. You all have changed our lives. Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

So now that I've thanked you profusely, quick programming note – uh, the next two episodes that follow this one are probably gonna be the final two episodes of TAZ: Amnesty. I'm like, 99% sure of that. And they're coming at kind of an inopportune time, because we're just about to go back out on tour again, and then we're gonna go on a big group family vacation, which I'm very, very excited about. Uh, and we all just kind of have a lot of irons in the fire, and I want to make sure that the episodes are as good as possible. I don't want to try and squeeze, y'know, scoring and editing them into like, a two day window.

So, the next episode's gonna be delayed one week, and then the like, final final episode, what I assume will be the final final episode, will be up one week after that. Uh, so, that is gonna be... September 12<sup>th</sup> is gonna be the next episode, and then, the week after that, September 19<sup>th</sup>, I believe we're gonna finish TAZ: Amnesty.

I know we just kind of had to do this a little bit ago. I'm sorry for the delay. But uh, these episodes are pretty, y'know, important, and uh, if they have to be late so that they are... we only get to release them once, right? So I want to make sure they are up to snuff before they go out there.

So, next episode. Delayed one week. It's gonna be up September 12<sup>th</sup>, and then the final episode, I think, is gonna be up September 19<sup>th</sup>. It's definitely gonna be up September 19<sup>th</sup>. I *think* it's gonna be the final episode.

Anyway, that's it. Uh, get back to the episode, and uh... I'll talk to you later!

[music plays]

**Griffin:** The fluorescent overhead lighting of the Saint Francis medical center annex flicker as the monstrous entity gains entry. Slinking around cubicle corners and through emptied meeting rooms, this beast, an eight foot long, six legged, bright red komodo dragon stalks the living prey it senses in this building.

A trash can topples over in an adjacent room, and the lizard roars, exposing its crooked, razor-sharp teeth. It charges in the direction of the sound. It finds Muffy, wounded and bleeding, her back against the far wall of a meeting room, her eyes closed, pleading for help. The beast charges, smashing through the doorframe into the room, toppling tables and chairs in its furious assault. Its mouth opens wide as it makes contact... with a wall.

It slumps to the ground, dazed for a moment. It sees its own shadow on the wall, and turns to find a projector shining down onto the screen it just rammed. Muffy's voice comes from the shadows.

**Muffy:** Honestly, dear, that's bush league hunting.

**Griffin:** She emerges into the light, string drawn on an ornate longbow. Two other figures wearing robes flank her with crossbows in hand. They fire a volley at the komodo dragon as it charges in their direction, sticking bolts and arrows all around its face and body.

The beast prepares to leap and finish its assault, when something lands on its back, dropping it to the floor. A ceremonial dagger pierces its head. And then, whatever was binding its form together loses its sway, and the beast disintegrates into a gelatinous, bright red puddle.

Winthrop lifts himself up and out of the creature's remains, looks down, and recoils in horror.

**Winthrop:** My Louboutins!

[music plays]

**Griffin:** The castle doors shut behind you, and you actually see a couple of guards that have their backs up against the door, like, pushing it shut. One of them is this fearsome looking bulldog creature, wearing this studded armor. The other one, you've actually seen before – it's a squirrel that you've seen a few times that used to guard the archway. But it's here now, and has this bandage over his left eye.

And it is... it's fairly ramshackle here in the foyer of the castle. There is a small fire in the center of the room, and there are a handful of Sylvans sitting around it with just vacant expressions. Their energy is clearly flagging. You get the impression that they probably haven't siphoned anything off of the crystal for quite some time now.

And there are a few folks all around the room who are in a similar state. There are a couple of specters; two who are—they're almost invisible. They are only barely opaque. And one of them actually makes his way over to you, and you can't really make out who it is, because his form is so blurred. But his voice says...

**Specter:** Pine Guard. Have you come to deliver us in our hour of need? You're, uh... a little late.

**Griffin:** Uh, and now you recognize this person as Woodbridge, who is the Minister of Preservation here, whose form is just not really visible, and uh, you can't see that sort of smarmy, shitty face that was so mean to you the first time that you made your way here.

**Duck:** 'Ey, what happened to you?

**Woodbridge:** Uh, look around you. It was Goose, right? Or was it...

**Duck:** Duck. Yeah, it's a nickname.

**Woodbridge:** Quail. Uh, well, the same thing that's happening to everybody else, Duck. We're dying. We're all—we are all dying or dead. Isn't that—

**Griffin:** And then he looks and sees that Vincent is with you, and that Janelle is with you, and he stops, and like, shakes his head and says...

**Woodbridge:** You're ba—you're back? You're—you—people can come back?!

**Duck:** Yeah. I mean... I don't know about... yeah. I don't know. Um... yeah, I'm sorry about the hold up, by the way. Had a few other things to attend to, y'know, earth-side. So I am sorry about that.

**Griffin:** Uh, Woodbridge then turns over to Janelle and says...

**Woodbridge:** And our wayward Minister of the Arcane has returned. I take your mission was not a success.

**Griffin:** Uh, and Janelle kind of looks down at the ground. She looks, uh, like she feels really guilty.

**Aubrey:** Hey, my dude? I'm sorry that you're like, fading away or whatever the fuck, but quit being a piece of shit. Like, we're here now, and we're trying to help, and she was doing her best, so get off her nuts, alright?

**Woodbridge:** Ah, yes, I understand. It was her idea, you know. To—

**Aubrey:** Oh my God, I am going to melt you into a puddle in the ground. Like, everybody's clearly going through some shit. Do you really think this is the time?

**Woodbridge:** I don't see that we have any—

**Griffin:** And Janelle just like, holds her hand out, and he goes like, flying across the room, and runs into a big crystal chandelier in the ceiling.

**Aubrey:** Yes!

**Griffin:** Which he kind of bounces off of.

**Aubrey:** Thank you!

**Griffin:** And Janelle says...

**Janelle:** I've wanted to do that for a long time.

**Aubrey:** Yes, he is a piece of shit.

**Griffin:** Uh, and he sheepishly like, sinks back down to the floor and makes a real, uh, shitty glare over at Janelle, and wanders closer to the fire. And then you all hear footsteps rushing toward you from the royal chambers, and you see... uh, the Interpreter. Who, Aubrey, you've seen a few times during your lessons now, and Duck, you haven't seen since you were first introduced to Sylvain, y'know, almost a year ago now.

She looks like you saw her the first time. She's a young girl; only now, her cheeks are like, fairly, uh, sunken. And she has tears in her eyes, and she just leaps at Janelle, and just clutches her legs. And Janelle is similarly, like, kind of teary-eyed, and she says...

**Janelle:** I'm—I'm so sorry, dear. I'm so sorry. I won't leave you again.

**Griffin:** As you all are kind of witnessing this reunion, Vincent turns to you, Duck, and he says...

**Vincent:** Have you been, um... have you been beefing up? You look—uh, I know I haven't seen you in a while. You look great!

**Duck:** That's cool as hell. Thank you. Yeah, I've been training with uh, some more Chosen Ones back earth-side. Been trying to work on my delts and my glutes and my pecs and everything. Thank you for noticing. A lot of people just let that pass by. Appreciate it.

**Aubrey:** I said—

**Thacker:** It's the uniform.

**Aubrey:** I said you look good, Duck, okay? I said it.

**Vincent:** When we get through all this, we should do some sparring! What do you say? Just two bros, working it out!

**Duck:** Yeah, I'm gonna take a pass right now, 'cause you're all jacked up on Slim Jim energy. We call that meat meth, and I don't need to battle somebody in that condition.

**Clint:** [laughing]

**Duck:** All that fuckin' sodium goes right to your muscles.

**Travis:** Aubrey, as this is happening—Aubrey is gonna make her way over to Alexandra.

**Griffin:** Uh, okay.

**Travis:** She needs to have words, she and I.

**Griffin:** Sure. Sure. Uh, you walk over to her, and she is still holding onto to Janelle, and her face is just like, buried in Janelle's robes, and uh, you hear the Interpreter's voice say...

**Interpreter:** Thank you, Aubrey. Thank you, Aubrey. Thank you.

**Travis:** I hear her voice, or I hear her say it?

**Griffin:** You hear her voice.

**Travis:** Okay. Aubrey tries to think, "You're welcome, Alexandra."

**Griffin:** Mmm, nothing happens.

**Travis:** Damn it.

**Aubrey:** Hey, Alexandra? Can I talk to you for a minute?

**Griffin:** She pulls her face away from Janelle's robes, and she says...

**Alexandra:** Aubrey? What is it?

**Aubrey:** Uh, yeah, Janelle, you can... you can chat, too. You're probably going to be, uh... hey, um, so, Janelle and Alexandra, I can, uh, hear Alexandra's thoughts? Aaand, I can't really—so, I was trying to talk to the lady who lives in the magic, y'know? And uh, instead, I heard Alexandra. And Alexandra, you said something about maybe having deceived some people? And maybe having messed up a little bit?

**Griffin:** She goes white as a ghost. White as a sheet. When you say that.

**Aubrey:** Yeah, that's what I thought. So we need to have some words, the three of us.

**Griffin:** Janelle looks at her, and looks at you, and says...

**Janelle:** You... You heard her thoughts, Aubrey?

**Aubrey:** Yeah. I was trying to talk to the lady who lives in the magic.

**Griffin:** She looks back at both of you, just with the rare look of puzzlement on her face. Uh, Thacker, what are you doing while all these conversations are happening?

**Clint:** Well, I mean, the only thing in here are the denizens of Sylvain, right?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** Maybe he's really investigating them and checking out to see if... I mean, how many—have you given us a count as to how many people are—I mean, how many creatures are in there with us?

**Griffin:** Uh, maybe, y'know, a little over a dozen or so. Not like, y'know... not the entire city. Actually a very, very small number of people have made it in here into the castle.

**Clint:** So I think he's kind of walking through the crowd, and kind of looking at 'em, kind of uh, checkin' 'em out. Y'know, just in case there's, y'know, a quisling in the brush, as they say.

**Griffin:** Okay. Uh, I don't even think you need to investigate a mystery. I think this is your, uh... whatever it is. The thing where you know this. You know this shit. I would not make you roll for this, because you are the earth's like, preeminent Sylvain scholar. Uh, and you have seen Sylvans before, and you have read about Sylvans when they start to go hollow like this. When they start to lose their connection to Sylvain.

[music plays]

**Griffin:** So like, you know what this looks like. And what you notice is that... Woodbridge has started to like, come back a little bit. Like, Woodbridge is now a little bit more tangible. A little bit more visible of a specter than he was just, y'know, right when you came in. And this group that was sitting around the fire, just kind of looking kind of vacant, they're actually like, having a... like a, y'know, inspiring conversation with each other. A hang in there talk with each other.

You notice that like, everyone in this room actually seems to be... y'know, gearing up for battle. Seems to be getting their gumption back. Looking around the room, Janelle obviously notices that, too, and... you see her, Aubrey, clasp her hands over her mouth. And she looks at Duck, and she looks at Thacker, and she looks at you, and she says...

**Janelle:** I know how to stop the Quell! We—

**Aubrey:** Okay?

**Janelle:** We need to go, right now. I—I will explain on the way.

**Griffin:** And she takes off running towards the royal chamber, towards an open door at the back of the room.

**Travis:** Uh, Aubrey grabs Alexandra's hand and says...

**Aubrey:** We're not done talking! Come on!

**Travis:** And pulls her along with her.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** I just follow along. I mean, I—yeah. Fuck it. Yes.

**Clint:** Uh, and I think Thacker leaves a little bit more slowly, and really giving the last scrutiny to the room left behind.

**Griffin:** As you leave the room behind, it—this thing that you notice, it's even more prominent. Now like, the people around the fire are like, standing up and starting to like, pump each other up. Woodbridge is just like, y'know, still a specter, but like, his form has come back. And you see him actually like, looking at his hands, realizing what has happened. Everybody seems to be like, reenergized.

**Clint:** And it continues even as we're leaving?

**Griffin:** Uh, as you leave, you notice that everybody is just sort of like... everybody's just kind of better. And... you follow along behind.

[music plays]

**Griffin:** The ward around the Cryptonomica is broken by the swarm of Quell terrors. One of Janelle's retinue faints from exhaustion. Kirby leaps to catch her. Indrid removes his glasses and begins clicking his mandibles and stretching his long, chitin covered arms and legs. Moira closes her eyes, and the more ballistically deadly objects in the room begin floating in an orbit around her.

A window smashes upstairs. Dani turns, slipping off a ring as she sprints to the second floor. She kicks open the door to Billy's old room, fully transformed, and sees a bright red, winged gargoyle finding its footing after

smashing in from outside. She bears her fangs, rears back her claws, and leaps toward it.

The front door into the building topples over. Moira hurls a salvo of staplers, stones, and books in the direction of the horde. With a flap of his wings, Indrid is on one of them, repeatedly smashing it into the wall and ceiling. Kirby stands his ground against a charging, red bear, but is thrown like a ragdoll across the room and over Ned's old desk. He climbs to his feet as the bear prepares another assault, and then... Kirby hears a chorus of battle cries from outside.

There are dozens of folks, young and old, all charging the horde. They emerge into the moonlight, and Kirby notices their uniforms. No – not uniforms. Their merch. Shirts, hats, jackets, pins, stickers, all read... Saturday Night Dead.

[music plays]

**Griffin:** Kirby grins. He leans down, retrieves a brass-tipped walking stick from below the desk, and pounces.

Upstairs, Dani lands the killing blow on her enemy, but her fury has given her tunnel vision. A blood red cobra slithers into the room, cautiously approaching the unaware Sylvan. The cobra strikes... and is intercepted. Snatched out of the air by a small, furry, white paw.

The snake's head is twisted violently. It spasms, and two, short, furry, white arms slam its body into the ground with a decisive thunk. Dani hears the impact and turns. Doctor Harris Bonkers stands before her, on two hind legs, three feet tall, the dying snake held – *held* – in one of his anthropomorphized paws. His face is... a mask of amazement, like Dani's, who says...

**Dani:** Huh.

[pause]

**Griffin:** And you all go into this antechamber beyond the royal chambers, and... and once all of you are standing on this symbol with Alexandra and Vincent and Janelle, uh, she places her hand on the ground, and it lights up. And this elevator starts to descend. And it drops below the castle, and it is suspended on these four, thin rails. And you have an almost uninterrupted view of the chasm below the city.

Aubrey, you've seen it before, but the scope of it, Thacker and Duck, is just breathtaking. It is just this enormous, earthen void, with a—it's got a viewing platform that the elevator, the bottom of the elevator docks into, that seems to stretch partway around this chamber's circumference.

And at the center of all of it is the crystal. The rest of it, what's attached to the comparatively humble peak right in front of the castle. This is the iceberg below the water. And like what you saw above ground, the light is almost like, completely extinguished. Right now, actually, the only light is coming from below.

There is searing, red light that is flashing from the endless void down below the viewing platform, and it is dramatically illuminating everyone and everything, every several seconds, joined by a deep, labored breath. But... Janelle doesn't seem to care about any of that. She is staring at you, Aubrey, and her mouth is hanging slightly ajar.

**Aubrey:** What... hey, what's up? Do I got a booger?

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** She grins for like a second, and then goes back to that slightly vacant expression. And she looks at all of you, and she says...

**Janelle:** Did you notice?

[music plays]

**Janelle:** Woodbridge and the others?

**Thacker:** They were gettin' stronger.

**Griffin:** She takes a beat, and she looks back at you, Aubrey, and she says...

**Janelle:** Do you know?

**Aubrey:** Do I know what?

**Griffin:** She... grins again, and takes a step back, and she says...

**Janelle:** You can hear the Interpreter's heartfelt, pure, unspoken pleas. You can nourish our people and sustain their vital energies just by being near them.

**Aubrey:** Uh-huh...?

**Janelle:** You have powers beyond anything I've ever seen, Aubrey. You can break the Quell's corruption. You've restored life to the dead! Aubrey... you're not *from* Sylvain. You... *are* Sylvain.

[music plays]

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[music plays]

**Raleigh:** I'm Raleigh Smirl.

**Sydnee:** I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Taylor:** And I'm Taylor Smirl.

**Sydnee:** And together, we host a podcast called Still Buffering, where we answer questions like...

**Raleigh:** Why should I not fall asleep first at a slumber party?

**Taylor:** How do I be fleek?

**Sydnee:** Is it okay to break up with someone using emojis?

**Taylor:** And sometimes we talk about butts.

**Raleigh:** Nooo we don't. Nope.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Find out the answers to these important questions, and many more, on Still Buffering, a sisters' guide to teens through the ages.

**Raleigh:** I am a teenager...

**Sydnee:** And I... was... too.

**Taylor:** [simultaneously] And I... was... too. Butts. Butts, butts, butts butts.

**Raleigh:** Nooo. [laughs]

[music plays]

[gavel banging]

**Speaker 1:** Judge John Hodgman ruled in my favor.

**Speaker 2:** Judge John Hodgman ruled in my friend's favor.

**Speaker 3:** Judge John Hodgman ruled in my favor.

**John:** I'm Judge John Hodgman. You're hearing the voices of real litigants, real people, who have submitted disputes to my internet court at the Judge John Hodgman podcast. I hear their cases, I ask them questions – they're good ones – and then I tell them who's right, and who's wrong.

**Speaker 1:** Thanks to Judge John Hodgman's ruling, my dad has been forced to retire one of the worst dad jokes of all time.

**Speaker 2:** Instead of cutting his own hair with a Flowbee, my husband has his hair cut professionally.

**Speaker 3:** I have to join a community theater group.

**Speaker 1:** And my wife has stopped bringing home wild animals.

**John:** It's the Judge John Hodgman podcast. Find it every Wednesday at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org), or wherever you download podcasts.

[gavel banging]

**Speaker 1:** Thanks, Judge John Hodgman.