

## **The Adventure Zone Balance: Here There Be Gerblins, Chapter Five**

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

The door opens, and exiting from it is a young orc woman, who is holding the biggest crossbow any of you have ever seen.

**Taako:** What's your name, dear?

**Killian:** My name is Killian.

**Griffin:** Lying precariously close to the edge of the pit, you see the one, the only, Gundren Rockseeker.

**Clint:** Gundren...

**Justin:** Gundren!

**Griffin:** And across from her is a drow, a dark elf.

**Taako:** Who are you?

**Black Spider:** I'm... I'm the Black Spider.

**Taako:** What is your, uh... what's your Christian name?

**Black Spider:** It's Brian, darling. Don't tell me— are you here also for the [static]?

**Magnus:** No...?

**Justin:** I shout...

**Taako:** Abraca-fuck-you!

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** And I cast Magic Missile at him.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Black Spider:** [weakly] I'm going to die now...

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Announcer:** I'll drink up all the potions that you've got on your shelf, so just let me introduce myself. It's The Adventure Zone!

[theme music plays]

**Justin:** Is—so there's a big door? Is that the only exit the one that—

**Griffin:** Yeah, well, I'll set up the scene. I'll start with some word magic.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** That's just how I like to—

**Travis:** Wordomancy.

**Griffin:** So the three of you have just finished a very intense battle with—

**Travis:** We're all eating a power bar, drinking some Gatorade.

**Griffin:** You're eating some Luna Bars to just like, get your vitamins, your minerals, uh, essential... oils, all from these wonderful Luna Bars. This week's episode is sponsored by Luna Bars. They're like Clif Bars, but... they won't make you as constipated.

So you've just finished this battle. Killian comes out from—she was hiding behind the open, giant iron-wrought door, because she had been disarmed. She walks out and sort of surveys the scene. And you can tell she is incredibly impressed. She says...

**Killian:** I cannot believe... you guys pulled that off. The—Brian, Magic Brian, is one of the most accomplished, powerful wizards I have ever met in all of my days. I—I am flabbergasted, frankly, that we all did not perish.

**Magnus:** Yep.

**Taako:** Well you're welcome, I guess. I guess we're pretty much rad.

**Griffin:** She walks over to the edge of the pit and looks down and goes...

**Killian:** Um. Uh. If you'll excuse me, I need to recover something very quickly. None of you go anywhere.

**Griffin:** She looks at all of you and Gundren.

**Magnus:** Hold up, hold up. Before... alright, Killian. Before you go anywhere, what is all of this about?

**Killian:** I promise I will tell you as soon as I am literally able to. Right—right now, I—I absolutely can't. It's not that—

**Magnus:** Sounds legit.

**Killian:** I want to—

**Taako:** Now listen, I have a little bit of um, uh, expertise with the magics. I'm assuming this is some sort of a... curse that's preventing, uh, further discussion from taking place.

**Killian:** You're not even—you're super, super wrong. You're like super, duper wrong.

**Taako:** Listen, let me roll to see if I'm right.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Taako:** It came up R!

**Griffin:** I'm looking—

**Taako:** It came up R for right!

**Griffin:** She reaches into her sack and pulls out a feather duster, and she says...

**Killian:** BRB!

**Griffin:** And taps herself with it, and—

**Justin:** Sorry, just to clarify, does she say "BRB"?

**Griffin:** Yeah, she says "BRB!"

**Justin:** Okay.

**Clint:** Brrrrbp!

**Griffin:** "AFK!" She taps herself with the feather duster and is, uh, her silhouette is sort of surrounded by a faint, gray light, and she jumps into the pit. And you see her as long as you can see her before she is enveloped by the pit. She's falling very slowly.

**Travis:** Okay, I turn to Taako and Merle.

**Magnus:** Okay, here's the thing, fellas. There's definitely something that—there's a thing that they're talking about that we can't, like, mentally comprehend, right? I have—

**Taako:** Alright.

**Magnus:** We have to find out what's going on. There's some other level to this cave. Why did they need his blood? What is going on?

**Griffin:** Gundren stands up, he's bedraggled, and he says...

**Gundren:** I might be able to, uh... elucidate you.

**Taako:** Oh, thank goodness.

**Clint:** What's his health condition?

**Gundren:** Bad. It's very bad.

**Travis:** He also smokes two packs a day.

**Gundren:** I—I drink MGD 64—

**Travis:** Oh no.

**Gundren:** Three—I drink a six-pack a day and then I eat the bottles. I'm real fucked up over here.

**Travis:** "I've been eating corning insulation for years."

**Griffin:** Then he says...

**Gundren:** But uh, you guys have done well. Much better than, uh... I'll be honest, much better than I thought you were. This job has brought some unforeseen circumstances, but you guys followed through, and—where's Barry, by the way?

**Magnus:** Oh, he's good.

**Merle:** He's hanging out back at the bar.

**Gundren:** Typical Barry, right?

**Merle:** That's Barry.

**Magnus:** He said he had to wait for his order of chicken wings and then he'd meet right up with us.

**Gundren:** That motherfucker loves him some chicken waaangs. Uh, just, uh... I might need your help still. Come with me.

**Justin:** Can I ask an out-of-character question? Why does no one besides Griffin and I have character voices? It would really make this a whole lot easier.

**Travis:** I am my character voice.

**Griffin:** And a whole lot less unlistenable. That's just what—Travis sounds like Magnus!

**Travis:** Yep.

**Griffin:** And Dad's—

**Travis:** Well I would—I think you'll find that Magnus and Travis have a lot in common.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure. Vis-à-vis battleaxes.

**Travis:** And love of dogs.

**Griffin:** So, Gundren leads you through these giant, open, iron-wrought doors, which opens up into a large chamber where Renee the jackhammer-bot was being stored.

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** And through another smaller, more normal set of doors, and into a very short tunnel that opens up into another room, that is, the defining feature I would say of which is, on the far wall a large, round, metal door. And this one looks a little bit more complicated than the one that you just passed through. This one has some gears peeking through sort of the metal casing of the door. It looks like a pretty sophisticated contraption. And I want all of you to make perception checks.

**Travis:** Wait... 12.

**Justin:** Natural 18 plus... three, 21.

**Clint:** 19.

**Griffin:** M'kay. Taako, in the corner of this room, you actually see a figure that is sort of huddled down and as you approach it, you can kind of get a better appraisal of what this figure is. It is a skeleton, that is sort of sitting comfortably. It looks like it was positioned comfortably in the corner of this room, just sitting with its back up against the wall.

It is draped in a bright, crimson robe and holding what looks to be some sort of cane, with a, you know, curled end in one hand that is a bit obscured by its robe, it's a bit tucked into its robe. But it's just sitting there. But whoever this was, they have been dead for a very long time. And Gundren kind of just looks at that figure and walks over to the door and starts starts looking. Looking at it, looking inside the machinery, seeing what he can do.

**Travis:** Griffy, do we need to roll to see how comfortably he's sitting?

**Griffin:** He looks like he was chill. It looked like he maybe just sort of sat here, and was kicking it, and just sort of wasted away.

**Justin:** Is it—are there any clothes or anything besides just the bones there? Or is there any like distinguishing—

**Griffin:** That's what's weird, it's just the robe. Any clothes that this person had on is gone. It's just the robe and the cane that it's holding.

**Justin:** Okay, I wanna check out the robe. I'll search the robe for any clues or anything.

**Griffin:** You look over the robe, it just seems to be a plain robe. You can't really figure out how it survived when the rest of this person's clothing sort of eroded away, but there are—there's nothing tucked away in the pockets or anything.

**Travis:** Where's the skeleton looking?

**Griffin:** The skeleton is actually looking toward the entrance that you guys walked in through.

**Clint:** Can I check out the cane?

**Griffin:** You can, sure. What are you doing?

**Justin:** I haven't told him about this guy yet.

**Griffin:** That's a good point. Justin—Taako is the only one who's sort of seen this figure.

**Taako:** Dad, there's a guy over here with a cane.

**Clint:** Is your father here?

**Travis:** He's your dad?

**Justin:** Okay.

**Taako:** Uhh, excuse me, whichever one you are, the d... dwarf, there's a cane here to look at.

**Merle:** [in a raspy, high voice] Oh, I'll check it out.

**Taako:** No, that won't do.



**Travis:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Taako:** No, no, no. No, the mouth words that you just made there can't be a sound I'm exposed—

**Merle:** [raspy, high voice] How come you can have a voice but I can't?

**Taako:** I have to sit next to you.

**Merle:** [raspy, high voice] But you're sitting next to me!

**Taako:** I'm literally sit next to you, I can't—

**Merle:** [raspy, high voice] Blah, blah, blah.

**Taako:** I can't handle that. Literally.

**Merle:** [in a deep, smooth voice] Alright, how's this? I'll go check out the cave.

**Taako:** It's getting worse.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Taako:** Now you're Tom's of Maine. I don't need a, uh, that voice, nothing, none of it.

**Travis:** Okay, while Laverne and Shirley argue in the corner, I'm gonna—

**Clint:** I'm gonna check out the cane!

**Justin:** He's gonna check out the cane. Uh, I—can I—Griffin, this is a weird

question, so I will ask it to you. Is there... are there like—is there any way to know if there's like, the robe's worth taking with me? Like if there's stats or something? Stats on it.

**Griffin:** Yep, I mean, when you surveyed it, you sort of figured out that it's just kind of a robe.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Travis:** Is there any kind of like sense magic or something that wizards can do?

**Clint:** I have sense magic.

**Griffin:** There's an arcana check.

**Justin:** There's a spell, there's a—I have a detect magic spell, but I don't really wanna do it, because I think I would have gotten a five.

**Griffin:** You also have an arcana check that you can make.

**Justin:** Oh, I'll make an arcana check. Why not?

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** It just seems to me that there's something about this staff and robe that, why is everything else... rotted away, but it's remained.

**Justin:** Uh, arcan—oh my.

**Griffin:** Probably pretty good.

**Justin:** I got a one, so I don't know if it's—I try to eat it, but I can't.

**Griffin:** [laughs] Okay.

**Clint:** Since I'm lookin' at it, can I do an arcana check?

**Griffin:** Yeah sure, screw it.

**Clint:** I got a two. [laughs]

**Travis:** What's your plusses?

**Griffin:** None of you can quite figure this out.

**Travis:** Wait, I'm gonna roll now. Hold on.

**Griffin:** You're gonna make a fucking arcana check?

**Travis:** I got an 11.

**Griffin:** Okay, it's magical, the cane.

**Travis:** Sweet.

**Clint:** I'm gonna take the cane.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** Wait, hold on. Just cause it's magic doesn't mean it's good magic.

**Clint:** Alright, wait a minute. I know what you're gonna say, but I'm gonna do it anyway. I'm gonna cast *detect magic*.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Clint:** Would that not identify the magic? "Use your action to—"

**Griffin:** I already told you it's a magic cane.

**Clint:** "You learn its school of magic, if any."

**Griffin:** You cast *detect magic* on the cane, and your mind starts to sort of

swirl. You get like, dizzy and faint, because *detect magic* is a pretty basic spell that you've used quite a few times, but you've never really gotten a response from it like this, because the response you got was... everything. It's all schools of magic. It's all of the magic that there is. Seems to be somehow embedded in this cane.

**Travis:** Cool.

**Justin:** Cool.

**Taako:** So what did you, what did you—what kind of vibe did you get from it?

**Merle:** [cowboy voice] Well I'll tell ya, pilgrim.

**Taako:** I'm dying. I'm literally dead. Rest in peace.

**Travis:** You were the one who wanted character voices!

**Taako:** I take it all back.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Taako:** Taako didn't, Justin did!

**Merle:** [normal voice] I'm uh, I'm kind of, uh, mind-blown right now. It's like kind of hard for me to—to concentrate. I think I oughta wrap this in something and carry it instead of holdin' on to it.

**Taako:** Well, wrap it in the robe, that's a good idea.

**Merle:** Oh, let's wrap it in the robe.

**Taako:** Wrap it in the robe.

**Clint:** Alright, I wrap it in the robe.

**Taako:** And bring it along.

**Griffin:** Even through the robe, as soon as you touch the cane, you feel a sort of jolt go through your body. And I—

**Travis:** Like the soft drink?

**Griffin:** No. And I want you to actually enter into an intellect contest with the cane.

**Clint:** Fine.

**Griffin:** So, you're gonna roll a d20 and add your intellect modifier.

**Clint:** Alright, hold on one second...

**Griffin:** Oh Jesus, good luck.

**Clint:** 19.

**Griffin:** I also rolled a 19.

**Justin:** Wait, wait, wait, he's also got an intelligence modifier, right?

**Clint:** Zero.

**Justin:** Zero.

**Griffin:** The cane has a plus two. So the cane actually beat you out. You are flung backwards by a wave of force, and you just sort of thunk into the far wall of the room, and you're gonna take 1d4 damage from that.

**Taako:** Oh golly.

**Griffin:** That's two damage that you take. So it's—it almost feels like the cane has rejected you.

**Taako:** Let me give it a whirl. I'll try the exact same thing that he just did.

**Travis:** Okay, I want to paint a picture for what just happened. So Merle grabs it, gets flung across the room and takes damage, and Taako goes, "My turn!" [laughs] And just reaches for it!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Taako:** I live like I'm dyin'.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Merle:** Owww...

**Taako:** Let's do this! You're fine.

**Merle:** Owww!!

**Taako:** Walk it off! Walk it off.

**Griffin:** [Rolls] Uh, okay, you have a much better chance this time.

**Travis:** I would like—also like to picture that the whole time this is happening, Magnus is just looking at the door as a dwarf flies across the room behind him.

**Griffin:** What did you get?

**Justin:** 12.

**Griffin:** Okay, I only got a six. Um... So you have bested this cane. And suddenly, it's almost like the goddamn quickening happens in this room. There are bolts of lightning shooting out of Taako as he pulls this cane from the grip of the skeleton. And as you remove it from where it sort of had it enveloped in its robe, as you pull it out, you realize that it wasn't actually the end of a cane – it was the handle of an umbrella.

And you pull this umbrella from the skeleton's grasp. The skeleton actually looks up at you, almost like it's acknowledging your presence. And as you finally wrest it from its grasp, the skeleton and the bright crimson robe both disintegrate into ashes.

**Taako:** ... So now I have an umbrella.

**Merle:** I'm in a lot of pain over here.

**Taako:** Uhh... you're a cleric, right?

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Merle:** Oh yeah.

**Taako:** Walk it off.

**Griffin:** You realize that Gundren is sort of looking at Taako agape, like...

**Gundren:** What the shit. What the shit was all that lightning stuff about? And the magic umbrella? You guys are crazy!

**Magnus:** Oh hey, nice umbrella!

**Justin:** I look at Gundren and say...

**Taako:** Handle it! That's how I do.

**Griffin:** Okay so, Gundren says uh... Gundren puts his hand on the door. And very slowly, the gears of the door start turning. And while those gears are turning, he looks at you and says...

**Gundren:** You guys deserve some answers.

**Magnus:** Yeah!

**Taako:** Please.

**Magnus:** And some money.

**Gundren:** Well, maybe. Yeah I—yes. Okay. Um. My father...

**Clint:** Wait, hold one second. I have a thing called *zone of truth*...

**Griffin:** [amused] Okay.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Sure you do.

**Clint:** In the *zone of truth*, it's a 15 foot radius... I gotta tell ya, this—I think it's important we get the truth outta my cousin here.

**Justin:** No, I think that's a great play, go for it.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** Alright, I have to, um...

**Griffin:** You say, you say, "Hold on one second, Gundren. Excuse me for a second. Aaachoozoneoftruth!"

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** You try to hide it under your breath.

**Clint:** Alright.

**Travis:** "What did you say, *zone of truth*?" "I did. Shit. I meant to lie. Awww."



**Clint:** He's gotta make a charisma saving throw.

**Griffin:** Okay. He's probably not especially charismatic, we'll say he has a plus zero. What does he have to beat?

**Clint:** Hold on.

**Griffin:** Probably a 13, right? He rolled a four, plus zero is four, so he's telling the truth now?

**Clint:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Okay. Uh...

**Gundren:** Whoa... did you guys feel that?

**Magnus:** Feel what? Nope.

**Griffin:** Well, you would have to tell the truth.

**Travis:** No, only he's feeling it!

**Griffin:** Is it targeted, or is it everybody in the zone? Are we all telling the truth now?

**Clint:** Everybody in a 15-foot radius—

**Travis:** Aw, dammit.

**Gundren:** Did you just cast some sort of magic spell on me?

**Merle:** Yes!

**Gundren:** [laughs] Okay! That's weird, I don't really cotton to that, but uh—

**Merle:** Well, I'm pissed off because you're the one that sent us on this mission to get our asses kicked, 'cause you just admitted you didn't think we could do it!

**Gundren:** You've got every right. Listen, we've gotta get through this fuckin' episode—

**Taako:** I stole a bunch of gold!

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Taako:** I stole a bunch of gold, there was a whole thing of gold—

**Merle:** He did! He did! I wasn't supposed to see him but I saw it!

**Travis:** Wait, is this compulsive truth or is it just like when we speak?

**Taako:** I—I—I opened my mouth to lie about gold.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Taako:** I was just gonna remark about how we haven't found any gold this whole time and how we were really upset about it, but I'm sorry! I found a bunch of gold and here's a third of the gold!

**Griffin:** Gundren gives a—

**Magnus:** I'm having a really great time and I think we're becoming closer as friends!

**Griffin:** Gundren looks over Magnus, he's like...

**Gundren:** That's very sweet. Your boots look weirdly familiar, where did you get those?

**Taako:** We stole your magic boots!

**Magnus:** They were given to me as a gift!

**Merle:** Shut up, Taako!

**Taako:** [high-pitched and distressed] We stole your magic boots, too!

**Magnus:** Nope!

**Gundren:** Oh, those were Tharden's magic boots, I think. Aw, I hate—

**Taako:** We stole Tharden's magic boots...

**Merle:** He's dead!

**Gundren:** I hated that guy, keep `em. Yeah, I know. I'm not crazy about that. Anyways, exposition time. My father, Cyrus Rockseeker, was the—

**Merle:** My uncle.

**Gundren:** Your uncle, yes, was in charge of security for Wave Echo Cave. And when the orc marauders came to destroy Phandalin and seek out the Wave Echo Cave and take it over, he managed to very heroically lock away all of the magical items, magical weapons, equipment, trinkets, everything, away in the mine's personal vault, which is here behind me. Unfortunately, in order to do so, he also had to... lock himself in. So he sadly sacrificed himself.

**Taako:** You okay?

**Magnus:** You know for a *zone of truth*, you're using a lot of adverbs. How do you know it was sadly? That's not truth, that's subjective.

**Gundren:** I was a bit sad about it. Fine. Some would say sadly, uh, he sacrificed himself to lock away all of the treasures of this vault.

**Merle:** So he goes all Scrooge McDuck, how long ago?

**Gundren:** Uh... this was about a decade ago.

**Merle:** [quietly] Damn those orc marauders.

**Gundren:** Yeah there's no way that I'm gonna open this door and have a happy family reunion, but fortunately—

**Travis:** I lean over to Taako.

**Magnus:** [whispering] Can you eat gold to stay alive?

[pause]

**Griffin:** No answer to that? Just too dumb. Too dumb to answer.

**Taako:** [laughs] Too dumb—I was worried that if I answered, he might respond, and that would prolong the conversation.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Taako:** Even for a second.

**Griffin:** The door makes a few definitive clunks, and Gundren says...

**Gundren:** Fortunately, this door is attuned to Rockseeker blood. Um, so I can open it up and we can have ourselves a field day with the treasures and weapons and everything within.

**Clint:** I just wanna point out to 'im that a few minutes ago—pee works too, as we found out at the spring. He could pee on the door if he wanted to.

**Taako:** Yeah, so if you need to pee...

**Gundren:** I'm totally cool, thanks for asking though. Kind of a weird question, kind of a weird request.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Gundren:** I'm regretting letting you guys into this with every passing second, but um... anyway, here we go.

**Merle:** Too much honesty.

**Griffin:** The door rolls open revealing a very small passageway that, unlike the rest of this cave, is actually kind of dark. You remember, the rock walls of the rest of this cave are sort of illuminated. They sort of have a natural, magical glow about them. But for some reason, whatever's at the end of this cave this passageway is pitch-black. And he says...

**Gundren:** Well, here we go.

**Griffin:** And starts to walk on through.

**Magnus:** Okay, some kind of light source in the tunnel may be a good idea.

**Clint:** Is that your voice?

**Travis:** That's my Magnus voice.

**Griffin:** I just—

**Justin:** Oh my god.

**Griffin:** I think—I'm making a DM decision, trademark, DM decision right now that Taako's the only one that gets a voice.

**Travis:** [sighs] Okay, fine.

**Clint:** Wait a minute!

**Griffin:** Nope, it's decided.

**Clint:** Alright, I'm gonna cast *light*. It's a cantrip.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** It gives a 20 foot radius around us.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** Uhh, brightly, and then another 20 feet dimly. And just because I can, I make it a pale lavender.

**Griffin:** How nice!

**Travis:** That's nice.

**Clint:** I can choose the color.

**Taako:** Calming!

**Griffin:** That's really, really romantic. Okay, so the four of you walk down this passageway, and as you step foot into the vault's main chamber, you notice a lot of very strange things very quickly. The first of which is, as you step foot into the chamber, the sound from the ground underneath is not the sort of soft crunch that you've sort of come to expect from the cave and mine floor. It's like a 'plink!' Like, hold on, I've got a glass here, so... [plinks on the side of a glass]

Like that. And you look down and realize that you are in fact walking on black glass, almost like obsidian. And as you look around, you realize that that is actually the composition of this entire chamber. It is a large, I would say, about 60 feet in diameter, almost dome-shaped room that is completely made out of obsidian, it looks like, black glass. And Gundren looks up and says...

**Gundren:** Something's not right.

**Griffin:** And starts to walk in towards the center of the chamber. And as you move towards him, you see a single figure that is dwarven in shape, but

it's so badly burned. Burned all the way through, almost like charcoal, with one hand sticking up in the air, with, on its hand, a silvery glove. A silvery gauntlet.

**Taako:** Okay, wha—

**Travis:** I high-five him.

**Griffin:** [laughing] Okay. You reach over and high-five the silvery gauntlet.

**Clint:** Say bro in Dwarvish!

**Griffin:** Wh—and how do you—and what is that?

**Clint:** Say bro in Dwarvish.

**Griffin:** Well, I'm asking you to bust that out for me.

**Clint:** Okay. Bushka.

**Griffin:** I think that's actually Russian.

**Justin:** Or Klingon.

**Griffin:** Or Klingon. For 'big wolf.'

**Clint:** Orb. Say 'orb.'

**Griffin:** Okay. So you high-five this silvery gauntlet, and a spout of flame actually comes out of the gauntlet and burns your hand.

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** And you actually take two damage.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Fire damage.

**Taako:** Good going, dipshit!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Sounds about right!

**Griffin:** Gundren starts to look over this dwarven figure and says...

**Gundren:** This is my pop.

**Justin:** Sorry, just to clarify, is this figure like, moving, alive...

**Griffin:** No, it's dead as fuck.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Super dead. Super burned up.

**Justin:** M'kay.

**Griffin:** Um. He looks at it and goes...

**Gundren:** That's my pops. That's my dad.

**Taako:** Do you know anything about the glove that he's wearing?

**Gundren:** It seems like some sort of magical artifact, but everything in this—this room is supposed to be filled with magic weapons, and impossible armaments that—[sighs] I don't understand what's going on!

**Griffin:** He's getting very, very, very angry.

**Clint:** I noticed! And that was almost a voice.



**Taako:** Cal—calm down there, bucko.

**Griffin:** I'm allowed to do voices, just not you guys. Except for Taako. Because he's found it, y'know what I mean? Once you've found your voice, you can bring it to the table, but this is not workshop time.

**Justin:** Do I see anything else in the room?

**Griffin:** No.

**Clint:** Well, you need a perception check.

**Justin:** Is there another exit? Is there just the one door?

**Griffin:** Just the one door. It's a vault, so it would only have the one very secure door that you already passed through. But no, this lone, crusty, crumbly figure wearing the gauntlet is—in the very sort of epicenter of this room, is the only thing here.

**Justin:** Okay, um... I—

**Travis:** Don't high-five it!

**Justin:** Got it. I wanna get the the umbrella near the glove and see if there's any kind of reaction, or if I get any sort of magical vibe of a connection between the two.

**Griffin:** Okay. Yeah, you whip out the umbrella, and you point it at the glove, and there doesn't seem to be any kind of response between the two.

**Travis:** Try flipping it open a couple of times.

**Griffin:** You hear from behind you, a voice go...

**Killian:** What did I tell you?

**Travis:** See?

**Clint:** I know who that is.

**Griffin:** You turn around and it's Killian. And she is—she looks very disappointed in all four of you. Killian says...

**Killian:** I told you guys to stay put! Don't—I don't understand why you keep being so difficult. I don't understand why any of you are here!

**Taako:** We got bored!

**Magnus:** [laughs] You left for—it was like, like four hours it felt like!

**Taako:** You left for—it was like, literally minutes!

**Killian:** It was like—it was a minute and a half!

**Taako:** We got bored.

**Killian:** It was 90 whole seconds! You guys couldn't stand still for 90 whole seconds.

**Magnus:** I don't know, why do you do the stuff you do?

**Taako:** Yeah.

**Merle:** Like try to kill us.

**Taako:** Yeah, we didn't think it would be a good podcast.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Taako:** I know what you're thinking.

**Griffin:** She, um...

**Clint:** Goodbye fourth wall!

**Griffin:** [laughs] She surveys the room and sees the gauntlet in the middle, and says—and pulls out her crossbow, and says...

**Killian:** Everybody, very slowly... none of you have high-fived that thing, have you?

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Magnus:** Nooo.

**Merle:** Nooo, god, no.

**Justin:** Are we still in the circle of truth?

**Clint:** Oh yeah, are we still within 15 feet of where we were?

**Griffin:** No no no, that was in the other room.

**Clint:** Boo...

**Griffin:** She says...

**Killian:** Everybody step aw—that is—that's what I came here looking for. It is... indescribably dangerous. Everybody, step away from the enchanted gauntlet, please.

**Taako:** Just to clarify—

**Merle:** You'd have to be a complete idiot to high-five it!

**Taako:** Did we get a verdict on high-fiving it? Definitely a thumbs down?

**Griffin:** It didn't seem to work out so great for Magnus.

**Travis:** Well, maybe it's supposed to be a low-five. Huh? I've solved it.

**Griffin:** Gundren is standing very close to the gauntlet. And he looks at Killian and says...

**Gundren:** Are you guys here with this filthy orc?

**Taako:** Hey, just—

**Magnus:** Whoa, hey!

**Taako:** Hey, cheese it with the racism, Gundro! We're all just one brotherhood of man.

**Merle:** He's an orcist!

**Griffin:** Killian says...

**Taako:** That was orcist, it was!

**Griffin:** Killian just says...

**Killian:** Did you just call me filthy, dude?

**Magnus:** Hey everybody, um, we're gonna take just two steps back, real quick, and calm down here.

**Griffin:** And Gundren says...

**Gundren:** This gauntlet, everything in this vault, is my birthright. There's no way I'm giving this thing up to you.

**Griffin:** And Killian says...

**Killian:** Don't test me. Don't test me! Had a real long day. I got all webbed up in the other room, hated that.

**Clint:** Gosh, Griffin doesn't even need us anymore. [laughs]

**Travis:** Yeah, we're just standing off the side, doing like the tennis match look back and forth like, "How's this gonna play out?"

**Griffin:** Gundren says...

**Gundren:** Boys, you've served me very well. I have one last job for you. I need you to take her out.

**Griffin:** And Killian says...

**Killian:** Hoold up! Not so sure about that decision. Doesn't seem like a good one.

**Magnus:** Now hol—stop. Everybody stop. Gundren, do you know why this room is empty and there's a gauntlet on, like, a dude's hand?

**Gundren:** I don't know why this is the only thing in this room.

**Magnus:** Okay, cool.

**Gundren:** But I know that it's mine.

**Magnus:** Killian, do you know why that is?

**Killian:** I have a pretty good goddamn idea, yeah.

**Magnus:** Okay, so Gundren, how about we chill the fuck out, and we find out what's going on?

**Taako:** Killian, are you able to talk to us freely at this point?

**Killian:** I can't—I can talk to you as much as you—here, d—here, this might answer your question. That thing is called the [static].

**Magnus:** Mm-hmm.

**Taako:** So, so yes—

**Magnus:** It's called the maraca sound.

**Taako:** I'm not great with subtlety or comedy.

**Killian:** It's not called the maraca sound. I can't tell you what it is. Gundren, step. Off. You are done. You're done. We're done here.

**Griffin:** And Gundren says...

**Gundren:** Or, better idea...

**Merle:** Unless—

**Griffin:** And he reaches over very quickly, snatches it up, and puts it on his right hand.

**Magnus:** Okay, this goes well.

**Griffin:** And the—his dad crumbles over and he says...

**Gundren:** Oh man, I feel really bad about—[screams]

**Griffin:** And he is engulfed in flame.

**Travis:** "I regret this immediately!"

**Griffin:** But very quickly, the flames subside... and he's not dead.

**Taako:** He's fine!

**Griffin:** He's not all burned up. He's—I wouldn't say he's fine. His hair is standing on end almost.

**Travis:** Like Yahoo Serious?

**Griffin:** A little bit Yahoo S—yeah, I mean, that is his hair style.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Taako:** Gundren, how do you feel?

**Gundren:** I feel... powerful.

**Merle:** Pretty!

**Gundren:** I feel so pretty, and witty—

**Griffin:** And Killian says...

**Killian:** Well, shit.

**Griffin:** And shoots her crossbow at Gundren. But he puts his hand out, the hand with the gauntlet, and the projectile burns up before it can reach him.

**Travis:** Cool.

**Griffin:** And Killian says...

**Killian:** Everyone, get away... from the fiery dwarf now.

**Clint:** So we have to choose...

**Travis:** I charge the dwarf.

**Griffin:** Okay, Merle, you charge the dwarf, and as he sees you coming—

**Travis:** You mean Magnus.

**Griffin:** Oh, sorry.

**Clint:** Sounds like the choice has been made.

**Griffin:** Magnus, you charge the dwarf, but just as he sort of stopped that projectile, he puts his hand out and knocks you back with a fiery wave of force. And you—

**Travis:** I take how much damage?

**Griffin:** You take, uh... [laughs] Five damage, actually.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Clint:** Holy crap.

**Griffin:** You go sliding across the glass floor, and he says...

**Gundren:** I'm done with this.

**Griffin:** He says...

**Gundren:** It's payback time.

**Griffin:** And he, quick as a cricket—what's the thing? What's a fun idiom for things that move quickly?

**Clint:** Bunny.

**Griffin:** Quick as a child's wish, he, uh...

**Travis:** [laughs]



**Griffin:** Flies out of the chamber through the door you came in, in a, uh... just sort of surrounded, almost like he himself has turned into a dwarven fireball. He goes flying out of the room. And Killian says...

**Killian:** That went about as shitty... as it possibly could have gone. Great—'grape' job you three.

**Travis:** And Magnus sits up and says...

**Magnus:** I almost had him!

**Griffin:** She says...

**Killian:** We need to get him, and we need to find him, and we need to stop him, before he destroys the whole world.

**Magnus:** Okay.

**Killian:** Y'all down?

**Magnus:** Super clear.

**Taako:** Sure.

**Merle:** Well, okay...

**Killian:** I'm not going to lie, this is super above your pay grade.

**Taako:** Hey, um, Killian, I'm detecting that that glove was magical.

**Killian:** Yep. Again, very, very studious. You are a p—very powerful wizard to pick up—

**Taako:** Oh, well thank you.

**Clint:** Oh, she's invoking the power of sarcasm.

**Justin:** By the way, I haven't told you guys this. I made a character choice.

**Griffin:** Oh, what's that?

**Justin:** Taako's an idiot.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Like, he is a wizard... he is dumb as hell. So when he saw that glove, once he flew out in a big fireball, that is when it clicked in his head that that might be magical. That might be a magical artifact.

**Travis:** So he's very learn-ed, but a little bit not quick on the uptake.

**Griffin:** Should he may—is it possible that—

**Justin:** Dumb as hell.

**Griffin:** —maybe he was destined to be a different class?

**Justin:** Right.

**Griffin:** Like maybe he was more suited for like, the barbarian lifestyle?

**Justin:** He was so stupid, that he went into the wrong area at Hogwarts and he was just like, "I guess magic."

**Griffin:** The sorting hat was like, "You should be like a lumberjack or something," and you're like, "No, I wanna magic," and so that's where you are.

**Justin:** Yeah, exactly. Where are we at?

**Clint:** Glad we have that backstory now.

**Justin:** Saving the world. Right.

[theme music plays]

**Griffin:** Hey everyone, this is your dungeon master, Griffin McElroy, with a really quick mid-episode break. Not a lot to talk about this week. Not a whole lot of new announcements. But just wanted to give some information about the show, because otherwise, it would be weird if Merle was like, "Check out our Tumblr!" Um, that's my impression of my own dad, I guess. I've never really done it before, so that was live.

I announced this last week, but if you haven't checked it out yet, we have a website. Uh, TheAdventure.zone. Seen a few people say on Twitter, it doesn't load. That's because you put in Adventure.zone, and we were not fortunate enough to grab that prestigious URL. It's TheAdventure.zone. It's gonna take you to our Tumblr where we have a bunch of really cool fan art, a couple of character sheets, some info about the game, and the show that we do.

Hopefully, when we get a little bit more free time, we'll be able to keep that more consistently updated. But right now, that's sort of your source for when we publish new episodes and info about the game itself.

Uh, we are on Twitter @TheZoneCast. If you want to tweet about the show, use the hash tag, #TheZoneCast. Not #TAZCast. We've abandoned that hash tag, 'cause it sucked.

We've also got a Facebook fan page. It's just The Adventure Zone. You can find it on Facebook, the way that you find fan pages, which I guess is you search for them? But we've had a few people post some pretty great stuff in there. So if you're looking for even more ways to socialize with us digitally, there's one for ya right there.

I've also had a few people this past week tweet at us, asking why we didn't do an episode last week. Uh, I probably haven't been super clear about this, but we are doing episodes twice a month, every other Thursday. That means that, by the time you're hearing this, the next episode that's gonna go up is January 29<sup>th</sup>. So yeah, we skip a week.

We've also had a few people ask if the show could become a weekly thing. Honestly, right now, no. Uh, just because it takes a shocking amount of time to uh, prep this, for me to be the DM and put the story and everything together takes a while. And then we record for a super long time, and editing all that down, uh, takes a long time.

Also, there's four of us, so y'know, scheduling more play sessions is kind of tricky for us right now. So right now, it's gonna stay every two weeks, and if that looks like it's gonna change, you will be the first to know.

I want to say a huge thanks to Glen Weldon on Pop Culture Happy Hour, the great NPR podcast, for recommending The Adventure Zone on the latest episode. We really appreciate it, and we've had a lot of people say that they found the show through that. If you're one of those people, thank you. Thanks for tuning in. And if you're not one of those people, thank you. Thanks for tuning in.

We've had a really, really, really great start. I'm kind of flabbergasted at how well the show is doing, how many people are tuning in. We could still use your help if you want to kick in an iTunes review, or y'know, just a recommendation to a friend, or tweeting about the show. I don't think we did any Twitter names this week, but next week's episode, I think we have one, and then the episode after that, we're gonna have a ton. 'Cause it's... it is exposition time, y'all.

Um, but thank you all very much for tweeting about and recommending the show. If you want to keep doing that, we super, super duper appreciate it. One last thing – if you do want to donate to the show, become a Maximum Fun subscriber and support our community of podcasts, uh, which includes things like My Brother, My Brother, and Me, Sawbones, and Bunker Buddies, three other shows that myself, Justin, and Travis all do... well, some of us do some of them. It's complicated.

But we are all on that network, and so are like, more than a dozen truly fantastic shows like Jordan, Jesse, GO!, Oh No, Ross and Carrie!, The Goose Down, a lot of really terrific shows on the network. I love being a part of it.

We've been a part of it for years now, and it is just a great home, and an amazing source of free entertainment.

If you want to become a supporter, you can go to [MaximumFun.org/Donate](https://MaximumFun.org/Donate), and you can find all kinds of details about how you can help us make a little bit of money off this thing.

Anyway, that's enough for me. We're gonna get back to the adventure. Um, I know I said last week that this was gonna be the last episode in this particular story arc, but uh, actually, we have one more, just because the session went very long. So next week's episode is gonna be the last one in this first story arc that we have titled 'Here There Be Gerblins.' And then, the two weeks after that, we're onto something new. Well, same characters and everything. Same campaign, just the next chapter, 'cause that's how we're organizing it.

Anyway, that's enough. Uh, back to the story. Back to the full crew. Thank you all for listening, and enjoy!

[theme music plays]

**Griffin:** The four of you, Killian and you three, backtrack through Wave Echo Cave pretty effortlessly. There are no extra bonus jellies for you to spar with. You make your way out, and it's pretty easy to track Gundren's movements through the cave, because he has left a charred path behind.

**Travis:** He has gone Super Saiyan.

**Griffin:** He's basically gone Super Saiyan. Only fierier, I guess? More burny.

**Travis:** Like Weekend At Bernie's?

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Kind of. You all make it out of Wave Echo Cave, and—

**Travis:** To find him congo'ing on the beach, because music is playing!

**Griffin:** Uh-huh. Andrew McCarthy is—Andrew McCarthy? What is that dog's name?

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Clint:** Yep!

**Justin:** And the single-guy... John Silverman.

**Clint:** Silverman.

**Griffin:** And Steve Guttenberg. You all manage to follow the path out of Wave Echo Cave and—

**Justin:** That was not a Steve Guttenberg film. That was Gutten-free.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs] Aw man, my joints really lock up when I see a Steve Guttenberg movie. It's really painful. So you make it out of the cave, and his fiery warpath extends beyond the cave. You manage, with Killian's help, because the three of you are dullards that can't like, follow a path of blazing fire... you manage to—

**Travis:** Now hold on! Hold on, I don't want to make this character choice for everyone, that's Taako's character.

**Griffin:** Okay. That's Taako's character. Magnus, you're actually the smartest one of the bunch.

**Travis:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** Which seems unlikely. All your class choices—

**Clint:** I don't wanna make that character choice either!

**Griffin:** If only you guys could sort of rotate classes one to the right, I think you all would probably be a lot better off. But you follow the fiery path, and after a few miles—

**Clint:** Would you call it a swathe of destruction?

**Griffin:** A swathe of burnt—I mean, all that he's destroyed is like, some plains.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Clint:** 'Kay.

**Justin:** So there are planes?

**Griffin:** There are plains, yeah—

**Justin:** Like airplanes?

**Griffin:** You're trekking back, and after a few miles, you realize that this path that—this trail that he is literally blazing is heading back towards Phandalin.

**Travis:** I knew it.

**Clint:** Uh oh.

**Travis:** He's going for Barry Bluejeans, you guys.

**Griffin:** You think he's going to kill Barry—he's, he has to assassinate Barry Bluejeans? That's his life goal?

**Travis:** No I think he's gonna go form up, like, Barry's his buddy. He's gonna go pick up his teammate.

**Griffin:** Killian says...

**Killian:** This is... this is bad. We can't let him get—if he gets to Phandalin, it's gonna be pretty horrible. We gotta stop him before he gets there.

**Griffin:** The four of you are in the cart, by the way, that you borrowed from Barry Bluejeans, that you rode to Wave Echo Cave. So, you're making pretty good time. You're not exactly sure the speed comparison between...

**Clint:** Fireballs and wagons?

**Griffin:** Fireball dwarf and a wagon, but you think you're making pretty good time.

**Magnus:** Why doesn't Killian just use her magic feather duster to make us all lighter so then it moves faster?

**Killian:** It doesn't work like that.

**Griffin:** She says.

**Killian:** Stop! Stop thinking you know how magic things work. You've proven pretty inept at it.

**Magnus:** Can we high-five the cart to make it go faster?

**Killian:** You can try, yes. If that—

**Griffin:** She's just exasperated—

**Killian:** Yeah, oh yeah, that'll do it. Oh, yes, you're saving the day, Magnus! Keep high-fiving the cart, I guess! Keep high-fiving the—

**Magnus:** I'm doing it as hard as I can!

**Taako:** This is not a joke, I cast *sleep* on Magnus.



**Clint:** [laughs]

**Taako:** I just can't, I can't—

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Taako:** I can't, I can't.

**Travis:** It instantly works.

**Justin:** That's four... five... nine... ten... 14.

**Travis:** Nope.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** How many hit points do you have?

**Travis:** 17.

**Justin:** Oh there's—wait, I forgot there's one more.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Eight! Okay, 25.

**Travis:** Okay, yep, sleepy-time.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Magnus is asleep.

**Griffin:** So yeah, you were successful in putting Magnus to sleep.

**Clint:** Aww.

**Travis:** He's sending him out to a farm and he runs and plays!

**Justin:** You're asleep, you're asleep.

**Griffin:** Nope, you're done. Sleepy—

**Clint:** You're asleep.

**Griffin:** Sleepy time.

**Travis:** But Travis isn't asleep!

**Griffin:** Justin, can—

**Justin:** I cast *sleep*—I cast *sleep* on Travis.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Oh my god, it's getting real, it's getting real! The four of you in the wagon are getting fairly close to Phandalin, and you—

**Travis:** [laughs] Magnus wakes up, puts his shoes back on.

**Griffin:** Uh, no, this is actually fairly soon after the sleep spell was cast. So... um...

**Justin:** Still asleep.

**Griffin:** Sleep lasts for how long?

**Justin:** `Til I wake him up.

**Griffin:** I don't think that's exact—I think it only last—

**Justin:** It says it puts him into a magical slumber. There—it doesn't define—

**Griffin:** For one minute.

**Justin:** What, really?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** Oh.

**Justin:** Oh, god.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [quietly] Should've killed him.

**Justin:** [quietly] What a waste.

**Griffin:** Killing him is like a sleep that lasts a long time!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** The four of you in this wagon crest a hill. You're about four or five miles outside of Phandalin at this point. And as you do, you actually see... one of the most harrowing signs of destruction that Gundren has wrought. Everything else has been, y'know, he's burned down some trees while blazing a path towards Phandalin.

But here, as you look down, you actually see a convoy of wagons that had been completely destroyed. Completely burned out. They were like Conestoga wagons, so just sort of the framing of the wagons remains. There are a few cinders actually still burning in some of the wood of these wagons. They're completely destroyed.

And you see, laid out next to them, a few charred bodies that you make out to actually be orcish. So you think that Gundren has sort of exacted some level of vengeance on orcs, who he is just not a big fan of.

**Clint:** Yeah, he's an orcist. He really is.

**Griffin:** He really is a big orcist.

**Travis:** You realize that when someone is a racist you don't, like, call them blank-ist for each person they hate, right? He's still just racist.

**Clint:** When did you wake up?

**Travis:** Okay.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** The spell only lasts for a minute, but like, Magnus actually got very comfortable. So now—

**Clint:** Can we see Thundren?

**Griffin:** Gundren?

**Clint:** Gundren.

**Griffin:** No, because the path has blazed past this wagon. He did his—

**Clint:** But he has not made it to town yet?

**Griffin:** He did—you can't tell. You can't really see Phandalin yet. He did his business here, and then he managed to keep moving on. You actually see that not everybody in this scene is dead. You see four human figures who are sort of picking over the remains, and they have their own wagon with them. They're sort of scavenging through this burned out convoy.

And actually, it's an open wagon that they have, and you can see in the back of it a cage with an adolescent orc boy in it. And he's locked up and he's just sitting there. Yeah, you're too far away, you're about 80 feet away from the scene, so you can't really hear anything, but you get the impression that these are scavengers who are taking whatever valuables they can from this scene.

**Clint:** And apparently kidnappers.

**Griffin:** And—Killian sees this, and says...

**Killian:** Aw Jesus. I know we're in a hurry. It's up to you guys. It's your call.

**Clint:** What's our call?

**Travis:** Whether we stop and help or not.

**Justin:** Is there anything to fight?

**Clint:** Actually, I think what he's wondering is, is there anything for him to secretly steal when nobody's looking.

**Justin:** No, I—no.

**Travis:** Okay, Magnus rushes over.

**Griffin:** We should change the name of the podcast to... 'Magnus Rushes In' is now the name of the adventure.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Listen, I'm playing my character the way you're supposed to. I value action over thought. I rush in to help the boy in the cage.

**Griffin:** Okay. You rush in, and...

**Justin:** Are there still fires burning anywhere?

**Griffin:** Uhh, no, they're very minor fires. You don't need to do any, um...

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** You don't need to, y'know, get out the extinguisher or anything. You rush in, and you see these four scavengers. They are dressed in pretty raggedy clothes but they have, y'know, swords, daggers, some weapons on them. And one of them turns away from the cart and sees Magnus rushing towards and say...

**Scavenger:** [in a southern accent] Oh hey, some guys, yo, hey! Slow your roll! Slow your roll, pard'ner! Uh, we're just—we're just pickin' the bones of this scene, we didn't do any of this, we promise. We're just tryin' to—four honest, y'know, fools tryin' to make a buck, tryin' to turn a buck in this hard, cold world. Certainly y'all three can sympathize with that.

**Clint:** Alright, how far away are we?

**Magnus:** I respect your motivations, and we don't have a lot of time for this. Give me the boy and we'll be on our way.

**Scavenger:** Aw, what're you gonna do with a orc boy, huh? You gonna—you gonna train him up to be your ward? He's not some pet dog that you can adopt. I know how bad you want one of them. What're you—

**Magnus:** Then why do you have him in a cage?

**Scavenger:** For sellin'!

**Taako:** What do you think happens to him after you sell him?

**Scavenger:** That's not my problem. I get the money for sellin' the boy!

**Taako:** Listen, I'm gonna give you to three. We really got a lot to do.

**Griffin:** He says...

**Scavenger:** I'm ah—I'm gonna say some cool shit now.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** He says...

**Scavenger:** Me n' my posse gonna give you ta two!

**Griffin:** And, all—

**Magnus:** We'll give you to one!

**Scavenger:** Well how 'bout this? Zero, motherfuckers!

**Griffin:** And they all draw their weapons.

**Travis:** Cool.

**Clint:** I cast *thaumaturgy*!

**Justin:** Wait no, you gotta—

**Griffin:** No, it's—

**Justin:** You gotta roll for initiative.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** Oh.

**Justin:** Yeah, it's gotten to this point.

**Griffin:** Battle time. You just—the screen just sort of got like all pixelated and you heard the, *duh nuh nuh!* And that's how you know that like, you've just entered into a random encounter.

**Justin:** [sings some battle music]

**Travis:** Are—do we think that for Magnus taking his nap, that was his short rest to regain hit points?

**Griffin:** Yeah, you guys were all on a pretty long ride, so we'll say that counted as a short rest. It was a very restful ride. So you guys can roll hit die to—

**Justin:** Except for the fact that we were following the trail of flaming dwarf, it was all really chill.

**Clint:** I rolled a 17 initiative.

**Travis:** I did as well.

**Griffin:** Who has the higher—what are your modifiers?

**Travis:** Mine is plus two.

**Clint:** Mine's minus one.

**Griffin:** Okay, so Travis goes first.

**Clint:** What did Travis have?

**Griffin:** You guys have the same score, but in the case of a tie, whoever has the highest modifier goes first. Juice, what'd you get?

**Taako:** 15!

**Griffin:** `Kay.

**Justin:** That was in character, he just said 15 and no one knew why.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Roll to see if they're unnerved.

**Travis:** [laughs] "They're shouting numbers, get outta here!"



**Justin:** Griffin, when you have four opponents like this, do they each get their own initiative roll or do they just sort of act collaboratively?

**Griffin:** I roll an initiative roll for each discrete type of enemy you're fighting.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** So if you were fighting some bandits, and a bear, and a bugbear... but there were like 14 bugbears, I would only roll one bugbear roll.

**Clint:** But right now we're fighting the equivalent of dumpster divers, right?

**Griffin:** These are actually ruffians, bandits.

**Clint:** Ohh.

**Griffin:** Yeah. These—

**Clint:** Rrruffians.

**Griffin:** These people aren't too worried about their carbon footprint as much as they are, y'know, plundering. Pillaging. First in the order is actually Killian. Killian says...

**Killian:** Let's keep thi—

**Travis:** Wait, what'd Taako roll?

**Griffin:** Taako rolled a 15.

**Justin:** 15 and I shouted it out loud.

**Griffin:** Killian got a natural 20. She goes...

**Killian:** Hey guys, let's try and make this quick.

**Griffin:** And then she whips out her crossbow and fires a projectile. This is the first time that you've really seen her giant mega-crossbow in action, where it hasn't been sort of stymied by a flaming magic dwarf. And it fires a bolt a size of, uh, a short spear at the lead ruffian that was trying to intimidate you with his countdown.

She rolls a 12 plus six, which is 18, which beats their armor class. And it does... oh god, 14 points of damage. He—the bolt hits him, and it actually sends him flying back about ten feet. It is a very powerful blow, and he lands prone, but still alive. Next in the order is Travis. Oh wait—hold on wait, I wrote a T... Yeah, that stands for... that's Magnus.

**Travis:** Okay, I'm gonna two-handed battleaxe at whichever one's closest to me.

**Griffin:** There are two sort of close to the wagon where the thing is locked up, which is also—

**Travis:** The thing?

**Griffin:** The—where the orc boy—

**Travis:** Griffin!

**Griffin:** —is locked up. That's about 20 feet away where the now injured ruffian just landed. There's another one that sort of had that guy's back who's probably the closest. He's about ten feet out from you.

**Travis:** Great. I step up to him. Two-handed battleaxe. Oh wait, gotta roll the right dice... uh, 24.

**Griffin:** Oh yeah, god.

**Travis:** And it does 1d10 plus four... 13 points of damage.

**Griffin:** Holy shit.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** As you approach him, he's like...

**Ruffian:** Bring it on, tough-guy!

**Griffin:** And then you hit him and he's like...

**Ruffian:** Don't—

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [imitates banjo twanging]

**Ruffian:** Hold up... ohh, hold up. Oh dang. Ohhh dang. Oh dang...

**Travis:** [wheezes]

**Clint:** Is this Jesco White?

**Ruffian:** Ohhh daaang.

**Griffin:** He's alive, but... but dang. Next in the order is Merle. You got two severely wounded ruffians, and the two by the cart that are still full health.

**Clint:** Okay. I am going to cast *thaumaturgy*. It's a cantrip, which allows my voice to boom up to three times as loud as normal for a minute. And I'm going to yell...

**Merle:** There's only four of 'em! Platoon... one, attack from the east! Platoon two, attack from the west!

**Clint:** Which echoes down the hill.

**Griffin:** The two full-health ruff—I'm gonna say you're making an

intimidation check. Why don't you actually roll that? And I'll give you advantage since you made your voice very loud and believable.

**Clint:** Okay, let me check.

**Griffin:** And these guys are gonna make a... we'll say an intelligence check against, they have minus one intelligence, so that should go fairly poorly. Yup!

**Clint:** You said an intelligence check?

**Griffin:** They're making an intelligence check to combat your intimidation.

**Justin:** Yeah, your intimidation.

**Clint:** Oh, okay.

**Griffin:** Cause you're lying to them, essentially.

**Clint:** Uh, nine.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** What would be his modifier on an intimidation check, Griffin?

**Travis:** Intimidation is one of the skills.

**Griffin:** There's an intimidation skill.

**Justin:** Oh.

**Clint:** Uh, plus three. So 12.

**Griffin:** They only got a four, so that is sufficient. The two ruffians by the cart look at each other, they look at the boss who's lying on the ground with a spear-sized bolt in his stomach, and say...

**Ruffians:** What do we do?!

**Griffin:** He's like,

**Scavenger:** I don't—I don't know man, I gue—I guess... I guess go check it out?

**Griffin:** And so the two ruffians split off to the east and west and start running in either direction, looking for these reinforcements to come.

**Taako:** Guys, did you hear that? Did you hear from the hills? There's an army supporting us! I think we're gonna win this thing!

**Magnus:** Yeah, Taako, definitely. [sighs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** Dear, sweet Taako.

**Griffin:** Next in the order is Taako himself, the man, the myth, the legend.

**Taako:** The fuck, I don't even have to do anything! Roll to chill!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Taako:** Chill check!

**Justin:** No, I'll go ahead and I'll give 'em a little *magic missile*.

**Griffin:** To which one? You've got two injured ones, and the other two have run off'd.

**Justin:** They're splitsville. I'll do two bolts for one of the injured, and one bolt for the other one.

**Clint:** Really badly injured one.

**Justin:** And that's a D...

**Griffin:** It's a d4 plus one. You only roll it once, and that's the result that you use for all of them.

**Justin:** Four.

**Griffin:** Four damage? Yeah you don't even need two bolts on either of those two dudes. They were—they had three and two health respectively, so they are both nixed. Stevie Nixed, these two are. Congratulations, you solved my bandit puzzle.

**Travis:** [laughs] Alright, we pop open the cage, say, "Hop in the cart," check their cart real quick. Any good shit?

**Griffin:** Um...

**Justin:** This is good. Now we own a boy.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** No man can own another man, Justin! We've freed a boy who's chosen to join us rather than stay out in the woods by himself.

**Clint:** He's an orcling.

**Griffin:** Are you—so you're freeing the boy? You're freeing the orc boy?

**Travis:** Yes?

**Justin:** Yes?

**Griffin:** Okay. You find some keys on one of those two dead bandits and you pop open the cage, and the orcish boy doesn't... seem especially grateful? He sort of barely even acknowledges your presence, and he—

**Clint:** So he's a teenager?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** Okay.

**Griffin:** He's moody, he's listening to his Nirvana tapes... and he just sort of starts to walk away. He just walks away.

**Clint:** So he's an emorc?

**Magnus:** Okay, bye!

**Griffin:** That was pretty good.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Killian is like,

**Killian:** You ungrateful little whelp!

**Griffin:** Whoa wait, that's my Gundren voice. I'm getting groggy already! She says...

**Killian:** Wow what a... what an ungra—what an ingrate. What a jerk. Gah, kids these days. Orc kids these days, I tell ya.

**Taako:** Did you know him?

**Killian:** Are you kidding—now who's the orcist? "Yeah, d'you, oh, do you, uh, do you know Steven? He's an orc, too."

**Clint:** "He's orc, too!"

**Killian:** "Hey, I know an orc named Steven, do you know him?" That's what you sound like right now, Taako!

**Magnus:** We don't have time for this.

**Taako:** I... I don't know a Steven.

[theme music plays]

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[music plays]

**Guy:** Oh, hey there, everybody. I'm Guy Branum, and welcome to Pop Rocket, a new weekly show picking over the pop culture we all love to love. We're here to talk TV, film, music, and anything else entertaining. Our journalist, Margaret Wappler, academic writer and DJ, Oliver Wang, digital strategist, Wynter Mitchell, and comedian, Santana Muha.

**Speaker 1:** It's an intellectual and incredibly snark-filled discussion about pop culture by five cranky Hollywood 30-somethings. No name calling, no rudeness, just straight talk and a lot of roleplay.

**Guy:** I'm only 30-something for another year.

**Speaker 2:** Me too. And I don't... tell anybody I'm 30-something.

**Speaker 3:** [laughing]

**Guy:** Pop Rocket comes out every week from MaximumFun.org.