

The Adventure Zone: Amnesty – Episode 7

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Griffin: Previously on The Adventure Zone...

[theme music plays]

Calvin: This is the only place I could think to come to, 'cause y'all know about monsters and stuff. And so, well... I got a new one for ya. Something grabbed me and pulled me under. Y'all, I swear to God – the water, the pool, started to lift up.

Barclay: A good place to start is maybe heading to the scene of the attack last night, and seeing what you can find out there. Obviously, be careful. You don't want to fight it until we know how to kill it. And for God's sake, whatever you do – don't get in the water.

Agent Stern: I'm looking for Ned Chicane, proprietor of the Cryptonomica. I was told by his associate, Kirby, I could find him here.

Ned: Hmm. What do you need jolly old Ned for?

Agent Stern: Mr. Chicane, my name is Agent Stern, FBI. At your earliest convenience, sir... I would just love to see your Bigfoot video.

[theme music plays]

Griffin: We fucked up. Well, I fucked up. I goofed.

Travis: Listen, Griffin, when one of us fucks up, we all fuck up. Depending—

Justin: Well, I don't know about that...

Travis: Depending on how bad the fuck up was.

Griffin: I did a goofy bad job. And um, maybe we should start by sort of acknowledging that.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: The game's actually called Monster of the Geek.

Travis: What?

Griffin: Yeah, I've been saying the name wrong this whole time.

Travis: I don't think that's it, Griffin.

Griffin: No, okay. So, there was a thing we should've done after the first arc that we didn't do. And really, it's not my fault for fuckin' up, because we like, didn't know that we were coming back to this at that point. And so, anybody could've made this mistake, and so, really, I'm not in the wrong at all, if you think about it. But you all—

Justin: If you think about it.

Griffin: You all should have more experience than you do have, now. And before we get back into the action, and the big climactic stuff that's happening, maybe we could resolve that, first. We should also maybe talk about the fact that Travis and I are recording in the same room, because he's in Austin, and I fuckin' hate it.

Travis: I don't care for this at all.

Griffin: 'Cause he sort of embodies... he does a thing with his back where he kind of arches it as he records, and he makes like a fantasy face. That's the only way I can describe it.

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: I'm a fantasy kitty.

Griffin: He does like that. He says, "I'm a fantasy kitty," a lot.

Travis: Rawr!

Griffin: So at the end of each session, the keeper will ask the following questions: Did we conclude the current mystery? Did we save someone from certain death, or worse? Did we learn something new and important about the world? Did we learn something new and important about one of the hunters? We're supposed to do this after every time we play.

Travis: That's yes, yes, yes, and yes.

Griffin: Yeah. We're supposed to do this after every time we play, so the answers won't always be yes. But I think it would be, for the purposes of our podcast, a bit redundant if we did that after every time we played. So I think it makes more sense for us to just do it after every arc. So, did we conclude the current mystery?

Travis: Yes.

Clint: Yes.

Griffin: Did we save someone from certain death?

Travis: Yes.

Clint: Yeah.

Justin: Yes.

Clint: A bunch of people.

Griffin: Pete's not dead. Folks ask about Pete. We just didn't get back to Pete. But Duck—

Travis: He was in the bushes?

Griffin: Yeah. Duck definitely saved Pete with his actions, so that's a yes. Uh, did we learn something new and important about the world?

Travis: Yes.

Clint: Oh, yeah.

Griffin: I think unequivocally yes. And did we learn something new and important about one of the hunters?

Travis: Yes.

Clint: Yeah.

Griffin: If you get one or two yes answers, each hunter marks one experience. If you get three or four, each hunter marks two. So everybody mark two experience. Does that bring anybody up to five?

Travis: No. I think it brings me close. I think it brings me to four.

Justin: Yeah, wait. It does. It does bring me to five.

Griffin: Awesome. So when you hit five experience, you get an improvement. And you get a list here that you can pick from, and once you have leveled up five times, you can start picking up advanced improvements, which let you sort of take your character in even more directions. I think, so, just a general housekeeping announcement, I think we're gonna start doing more, um, of a like, lunar interlude style between episodes, between arcs, to handle this stuff. 'Cause this is a really weird energy to start out this episode.

Justin: Indeed.

Griffin: Uh, Dad, did you level up, or are you at four?

Clint: What if I'm right at five experience?

Griffin: Yeah, that means you've done it. You've leveled up. When you mark the fifth experience box in your playbook, you level up. You erase all—

Clint: Yeah, but how could I level up and not Trav?

Griffin: Uh, you fucked up more than him. He rolls super good.

Clint: Oh, yeah. Well, then, yeah, I hit five. Yeah.

Griffin: Then both of you get—

Travis: Can we get rid of the mythos that I roll super good? I just only do things that my character is good at.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah. We're doing Roll 20 now, so that's gonna get rid of the mythos one way or the other. Improvements. So, you get to choose from this list. Get plus one to a rating, max plus three. So, if you want to increase one of your stats, you can do that. You can take another move from your playbook. Whenever you made your character, you had to pick specific moves to choose from. Uh, you can take a move from another playbook, and that makes... that one's kind of a discussion between you and me, trying to find something that makes sense, so that you don't like, make an OP, like, I can do magic and transform into a big monster. Which is one of the archetypes.

You can gain an ally, or gain a team. Uh, this is like, a mechanical thing where you get an ally or a team, who will then sort of be in your service, and you pick a different, like, type for them. Are they a subordinate that will follow your instructions? Are they a friend? Are they a bodyguard? Are they a confidant? And you just have them. You can gain a haven, which is actually something that the archetype The Expert has. And that gives you sort of different abilities when you are back in your headquarters. And then, you can upgrade your haven, if you already have one. You have different things...

So, for Crooked, recover a big stash of money. So that would be one for Ned. Other... oh, Spellslinger, you can take another combat magic pick. So maybe you will want to do that when you level up. Uh, so those are the things you can do. What are you guys feeling like, Ned and Duck?

Clint: I really thought about gain an ally. But I think I've already got that in Kirby. I think that might be a little redundant.

Griffin: So what we could do is, just make that official. Because like, before, Kirby was just an NPC in this world. And if you wanted to convince him to do something, you had to convince him to do something. If you choose gain an ally, gain a team, and you pick, like, what kind of ally you want him to be, then that's mechanical at that point. You don't have to like, roll to convince him to do stuff. He will do stuff for you. So I don't think it's redundant, I think it is—

Travis: It codifies what—

Griffin: It codifies what is already there.

Clint: That's what I'd like to do. I would like to have somebody on this podcast do what I tell them to do. So yeah, let's go with him.

Griffin: Okay. So you get to pick. Subordinate, lieutenant, friend, bodyguard, confidant, or back up. And those sort of add some flavor to like, what Kirby's actually gonna do for you. Also, keep in mind that like, Kirby, at this point, doesn't know about the Pine Guard, doesn't know about the things you do. And so, if you—

Travis: And we have been sworn to secrecy.

Griffin: Yeah. So if you do this, then that's fine, but you have to find some way to like, rectify that. Whether that's like, letting Kirby in, that is one thing you could do. Or, y'know, whatever.

Clint: No, I think subordinate.

Griffin: Okay. Yeah, I think that—

Clint: I'm just gonna really lean into the, me telling him what to do.

Griffin: Okay. And so, like, mechanically, now, if you need Kirby to do something, instead of having to like, convince him to do it, he's just your guy.

Clint: I got my claws in Kirby.

Travis: Ew, gross.

Griffin: Okay. That's very good. Duck, what about you?

Justin: Yeah, I'm picking up an additional point in tough. I know that's not very dramatic, but I feel like it is representative of the sort of off time that we've had, that it makes... that makes sense to me.

Griffin: Okay. Um, so, that'll bring you up to plus three tough, right? So that just means you will—

Justin: No sir, plus two tough.

Griffin: Oh, okay.

Travis: And y'know, Justin, if you want to make it more dramatic, people can picture like, a Rocky-style montage, where he's like—

Justin: Sure.

Travis: --lifting ice blocks, and like, punching stone, or whatever. I've never seen Rocky, but I assume he punches stone a lot.

Griffin: I know the idea of like—

Clint: Meat. He punches meat. Sides of beef.

Travis: Well maybe he punches both, Dad. You can punch more than one thing.

Griffin: I know the idea of like, the training montage, is maybe a little bit rote for the purposes of our podcast. But what I really like about it, in

context of Duck, is this idea of like, Duck's abilities were maybe not his own for a bit. He just had these supernatural reflexes, and could take a hit and stuff. And the training in his last episode was him actually trying to take some of the responsibility of that on himself, and I think that this is a smart choice for like, making that mechanical.

Okay, that is how improvements work. We're gonna start doing these in interlude style episodes. But for now, let's get back into the action. So, at the end of the previous episode, Agent Stern from the FBI came into Amnesty Lodge and introduced himself, asking to see the Bigfoot video from—

Travis: Agent Stern, and his partner, Agent Pesci.

Griffin: Uh, so, that is where we find you. That's where us finds... us. Um, the last line, there...

Agent Stern: My name is uh, Agent Stern, FBI. At your earliest convenience, Mr. Chicane, I would just love to see the Bigfoot video.

Ned: All you have to do is go to the Cryptonomicon with me, and you can watch the video there.

Griffin: Is it Cryptonomicon or Cryptonomica?

Clint: I don't know.

Ned: Cryptonomica!

Travis: [laughs] What a great start.

Justin: Let's look at what our merch says.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: We got merch?

Griffin: He says, uh...

Agent Stern: Oh, no, I know. I stopped by. Your associate, Kirby, suggested that there might be more of the video than what you're actually showing on the floor in your establishment. Also, I'd like to sort of talk to you about the details of how you acquired such a remarkable video.

Ned: Ah, well, of course you would. It's pretty breathtaking, isn't it?

Aubrey: One second, Ned. Um, could you show us like, any kind of ID, or anything to back up this whole, "I'm an agent," thing?

Ned: I have my driver's license.

Aubrey: No, Ed—Ned—what was it? Not you.

Ned: Oh, sorry.

Griffin: Uh, Agent Stern looks kind of sheepish for a second. And he's like...

Agent Stern: Oh, God, of course. Sorry, what am I thinking?

Griffin: And he reaches into his jacket and—

Aubrey: Slow.

Griffin: What are you—slow?

Travis: Aubrey has had minor, like, juvie run ins with law enforcement in the past. She is distrusting.

Griffin: He reaches into his breast pocket, and he pulls out a badge in like, one of those little nice, leather badge holders. Whatever they call them. Uh, and opens it up to reveal an authentic looking, uh, ID badge, that lists his name.

Travis: Should I roll to check for psychic paper?

Griffin: It's... I guess if you want to.

Travis: Well, what would a roll be where I could determine if—

Griffin: It's not psychic paper. I don't want you to—

Travis: No, but if it seems legit or not. Maybe read a bad situa—yeah. I'm just gonna roll, and we'll see how it goes. Oh, super good. I rolled a ten.

Griffin: Okay. It's not psychic paper.

Travis: I know it's not psychic, but does it seem legit?

Griffin: Yeah, it looks very legit. I mean, I don't know if you've ever seen an FBI badge before, but it definitely—you know, for sure, that this guy is on the level. His badge says he works for the FBI, there's the cool FBI seal there.

Travis: Aubrey has watched a lot of X-Files, so most of her FBI knowledge is from that.

Griffin: The badge actually says, uh, the words, underneath his sort of FBI designation, it says, "Unexplained Phenomena." And he says...

Agent Stern: It's all right there. This, uh—it's actually expiring soon. My birthday's coming up, so I need to get this reauthorized. But um, yeah, I—I am a federal agent. I'm actually... so, I work for a team called—uh, a small task force called UP: Unexplained Phenomena. Uh, myself, I have been researching, well, for some time, now, several disappearances that have been attributed to... and this is gonna sound silly, and I understand you wanting to check my credentials, because it probably sounds kind of goofy. But uh, they are attributed to the Sasquatch.

Griffin: And when he says that, uh, Barclay, who is sort of standing in this scene with his, uh, he's collecting the cups of tea that you all were drinking on a tray. He like, tips the tray over, and they all smash down to the ground, and he quickly cleans it up and leaves the room. And he says...

Agent Stern: The video that you put up online, Ned, it uh, it looks remarkably similar to other video sightings that I've been researching for some time, associated with these disappearances. And so, I know it's kind of a longshot, but I just want to hear more about it. We don't have to talk today. I know you seem to be in the middle of a conversation, here, so maybe we could circle back tomorrow, back at your shop, or sometime later this week. Whatever works for you?

Ned: Well, of course, friend Stern.

Griffin: He smiles—

Travis: I do like how, over time, Ned's character voice is kind of evolving into like, Robin Hood, a little bit. Yes, Prince—

Clint: Yoikes and away, friend Stern!

Griffin: He smiles when you agree to that, and puts his badge away. And uh, he takes a look around Amnesty Lodge, the lobby that you all are standing in, again. And he says...

Agent Stern: Say, um... I actually just arrived in Kepler. It's a beautiful town. The pines are gorgeous this time of year. Um, I'm new to the area—

Duck: They're ever—they're evergreen. They're gorgeous pretty much all year.

Agent Stern: Ah, I see. Well, I'm new in town, and I don't actually have a place to stay yet. This establishment seems very nice. I was wondering if there's a room available—

Aubrey: Oh, no, you don't—no, you don't want to stay here. [whispering]
Bed bugs.

Agent Stern: You have...

Aubrey: I don't. I don't... I... listen. If I could afford a better place than this, I would. This is a real fleabag. You don't...

Griffin: Uh, this is gonna be a roll. 'Cause this is a nice place that doesn't have bedbugs. I think this is gonna be a manipulate someone. When you have given them a reason, tell them what you want them to do, and roll plus charm. The reason is bedbugs, and what you want them to do is not stay here.

Travis: I got a five plus one, so six.

Griffin: Mark experience. Hey, you leveled up.

Travis: Yay, I leveled up.

Griffin: Um, maybe decide which improvement you want on your own time, and let me know—

Travis: Oh, I see. Everybody else gets to talk about theirs.

Griffin: --what it is. Um, I mean, you can do it while we're playing, here. So on a miss, I get to make a hard move. And the hard move, I say, is uh...

Agent Stern: Oh, a few bedbugs don't scare me. I uh, I actually—I've come prepared. I have my own sort of travel kit. I packed a lot of, y'know, tick and bug spray. I knew I was coming through a more rural area, and I'm always sort of prepared. So um, if there is a room available, I would love to have it.

Griffin: And I think Barclay is back, and doesn't really know what to say, and he says...

Barclay: Yeah. Uh, okay. We'll get you checked in, and uh... get you a nice room, I guess.

Griffin: And he smiles, and says...

Agent Stern: I'm going to continue sort of my search around the general area, sort of familiarize myself with the town. But uh, I will be back this

evening, and we can set up the room. Thank you so much. Uh, Ned, tomorrow? Just let me know what time works for you.

Ned: Um, yeah. Right. Got it. Mm-hmm.

Travis: Uh, real quick, I have picked third eye.

Griffin: Ooh, what's that do?

Travis: Because third eye, when you read a bad situation, you can open your third eye for a moment to take in extra information. Take plus one hold on any result of seven or more, plus you can see invisible things. On a miss, you may still get one hold, but you're exposed to supernatural danger. Unfiltered reality is tough on the mind.

Griffin: I love that, that's very cool.

Travis: So I feel like it fits in like, of her learning about magic, and getting in touch with her own, like, kind of magic powers.

Griffin: Yeah, I like that. That's a cool development. Okay, go ahead and mark that down. And everybody should be at zero experience at this point. Um, okay. And so, Agent Stern, uh, turns on his heels, and walks out the door. And Barclay puts his head in his hands and says...

Barclay: Oh, shit. Oh, shit. This is gonna make things real hard, y'all.

Duck: Well, certainly, people have come looking for you before, I have to assume, right?

Barclay: I mean, it's not just me. This place is full of werewolves, and vampires, and ghouls, and stuff. It's gonna be tough to keep that under wraps with the feds literally under our noses.

Duck: Yeah. It sounds like he's pretty squatch-focused though, wouldn't you say?

Griffin: He says...

Barclay: Yeah... I guess as long as I keep this on.

Griffin: And he motions to his bracelet and says...

Barclay: I—I—I guess I can keep it on until he takes off. It gets a little stinky inside the...

Aubrey: Listen, Barclay, here's what you do. We'll take care of this. If he starts asking questions about, y'know, sightings, or anything like that, just have everyone at the lodge laugh it off, right? Really play up the like, this is a tourist trap thing, and we staged it. This is Kepler's whole thing. Y'know, make jokes about the Loch Ness Monster, that kind of thing. Really like, make it seem as absurd as possible. Don't let anyone answer seriously.

Barclay: Okay, yeah. That's good advice. I'll make sure to get the word out, and make sure that everybody keeps their... their illusions up. And again—

Aubrey: Side note. Loch Ness Monster. Is that anything? Do you guys know anything about that?

Barclay: I mean, I've never seen 'em. That doesn't mean that they're not here. And again, just one more time, Ned, thank you for posting that very cool video on the internet. Um, I sure do appreciate all the cool stuff that's happened because of that, of me fighting the bobcat. It was really—like, a really, really, really cool thing to have happened.

Ned: I remember that. That was the time I saved your damn life, right? When I pulled up and knocked the monster off of you, and let you have a ride back to the lodge. Hm, remember that part of it, Barclay?

Barclay: Okay, square is square. Alright, we gotta get moving. I don't know when this water monster showed up, and I don't know how long they're gonna stick around, so time is of the essence. But y'know, now we're on double super spy level of discretion. So um, head to the pool.

Aubrey: To the pool!

Barclay: Yeah. To the pool. Just, uh—

Aubrey: Oh, I thought that would be like, where the scene ended.

Barclay: No, not quite yet.

Aubrey: To the pool!

Barclay: Okay.

Griffin: And you go to the pool. [laughs]

Travis: Maybe there's some kind of transition here. [scene transition sounds with his mouth]

Griffin: Yeah, do you take Ned's car?

Travis: With like a spinning Pine Guard patch, y'know. [scene transition sounds with his mouth]

Griffin: Maybe it's the hubcap of the Continental.

Travis: Oh, yeah. Well, it's a spinning Pine Guard patch, and then it fades into the wheel.

Griffin: Oh, that's fucking great, Travis.

Travis: This is why we should always record in the same room.

Griffin: I know, this energy is electrifying.

Travis: Oh, I can feel it.

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, so the three of you arrive at Kepler High, and I think it's... I forget if we established this in the first episode of this arc, but I think it's

like, Saturday. So the whole front parking lot is as empty as you would expect it to be. Um...

Travis: Except for a couple cars for some kids that were in detention. And maybe they learned a little bit about each other, y'know?

Griffin: And themselves.

Travis: One kid's kind of like a punk, and one kid's kind of a nerd, and one kid's kind of a jock.

Griffin: One of the cars has a bumper sticker on the back that said "I duct taped a kid's butt cheeks together."

Travis: Uh-huh.

Griffin: That's still the most buckwild thing, right?

Travis: And I think it's superglue, actually. I think. Is it superglue?

Griffin: I don't know. Anyway.

Travis: He adhered a kid's butt cheeks together somehow.

Griffin: Yes, through some means, magical or otherwise. So this school, Kepler High, it's a pretty... it's a pretty humble building. Its student body is around like, 800. Duck, did you go here?

Justin: Uh, yeah, absolutely.

Griffin: Okay, so you have a little bit of familiarity with the building. Is it weird seeing the school in the same way that like, it's always weird to go back to a school that you went to when you're a big grown up?

Justin: Yeah. I don't think Duck has really had much reason to uh, come back here, y'know? It's not like patrolling this is part of his route. That really wouldn't make much sense. I don't think he's been back for a good long time.

Travis: What kind of social group did he fall into?

Griffin: Yeah, what were you? Were you an Estevez? Were you a Hirsch? Were you a Ringwald?

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: Were you a Sheedy?

Justin: Oh, God. What kind of... what kind of high school kid was Duck?

Travis: Were you a greaser?

Griffin: A wastoid?

Clint: Were you a T-bird? Maybe you were a T-Bird.

Justin: Y'know...

Travis: A real Bueller?

Justin: No, he was, uh... he was, uh, a bad boy.

Travis: Like a Bueller bad boy, or like a Hirsch bad boy?

Justin: No, like a... he was kind of a burn out.

Griffin: Alright.

Justin: Yeah, that feels right to me. Yeah.

Travis: Y'know, I think we keep saying Judd Hirsch. I think it's Judd Nelson. Isn't it?

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Oh, yeah. Judd Hirsch would be a wild... [laughs] It would be a wild passing choice. Uh, okay. So you were kind of a wastoid, and then you discovered the beauty of the pines, and lived—

Justin: Well, no, he just wanted... he hid in the pines. I mean, I think it feeds into like, he wasn't somebody with an abiding love of the world. He wasn't somebody with a call to duty. He wasn't somebody who thought he was headed for big things. I think he would just like...

Griffin: Smoke cigarettes in the woods?

Justin: Smoke cigarettes and fuckin' hang... not in the woods. Like, he wouldn't have gone to the woods. He just kind of like, wanted to play Tony Hawk, and hang out.

Griffin: Cool. I dig it.

Travis: And now he just vapes 24/7.

Griffin: Now he just vapes constantly.

Justin: I don't think that's canonical.

Travis: Which of our characters vape? We never covered that.

Griffin: He's got a magic vape that can talk to him, also. It's separate from Beacon. Um, so, as the three of you work your way behind the building to this sort of standalone pool building behind the school, uh, Duck, you're sort of reminiscing about all the good times here. But the three of you are a bit shaken as you turn the corner, and you see the standalone pool facility, which has its own parking lot, attached to an access road, that winds around the campus.

And in that lot are two vehicles. There's a fairly beaten up old Jeep, and then a silver, mid-sized bus parked immediately adjacent to it. Um, and there's some belongings that are sort of scattered inside the bus, you can see through the windows. And from within the double doors leading into the pool building, you can hear a woman shouting. What do you do?

Travis: Aubrey takes off running. For the building.

Justin: Uh, can I do that as I read a bad situation?

Griffin: Yeah, I think that would be good.

Justin: Oh, wait.

Griffin: Roll 20, baby.

Justin: Plus one is eleven.

Travis: Woo!

Griffin: Uh, so, Duck, hold three. And you get to ask the—something from the list of questions here. Uh, if you act on the answers, you get plus one ongoing while the information is relevant. I'm trying to decide now if it makes more sense for you to do this, uh, like, the doors burst open, and you can see inside. Because then, you will be able to tell, like, a lot more about this situation than you can—

Justin: I think that would be a lot more logical, right? Like, the door opens, and...

Griffin: Yeah. Okay. Then let me describe what happens next, and then we will resolve the questions that you do here. Um, and so, the three of you burst into the pool, and it is not empty, as Calvin mentioned it probably would be. As you enter, you see a woman, outside of the pool. She's wearing a pair of shorts over a swim suit, and she's got a whistle around her neck, and she is sort of yelling orders toward the pool, where a dozen or so older folks are treading water, with these small floats that they are holding onto. Uh, and the door to the pool slams shut behind you, and this sound booms through the chamber, and it brings these proceedings to an immediate halt.

And in unison, the whole assembly, instructor and class alike, they turn to face you. Because while swim practice might not be scheduled for today, water aerobics for the Majestic Pine Senior Living Center is.

[theme music plays]

Griffin: Hey everybody, this is Griffin McElroy, your dungeon master, your best friend, and your big ol' boy. Thanks for listening to episode seven of The Adventure Zone: Amnesty. Had to think about it there for a second. And I hope you enjoyed it, and thank you all so much for all of your support during the Max Fun Drive. You all came out and absolutely crushed it, and we are so, so, so grateful that you all chose to show your support for our show. It means a whole heck of a lot. Sorry to cuss.

Got a few advertisements to talk about this week. First off, it's Blue Apron. Blue Apron's really tasty. They send you a box with pre-portioned ingredients and instructions on how to turn those ingredients into delicious, home cooked meals, using things like knives and fire, mostly. I love Blue Apron. It taught me how to cook, and I had a whole bunch of really, really great meals thanks to this service, and then, learned how to make even more meals because of the great skills that I learned. Skills like heating, and cutting food.

Anyway, for six weeks, from April 16th through May 21st, Blue Apron is teaming with AirBnB to bring you the best home cooking from around the world. Each week, our menu will feat—their menu. Oops. Now you know I'm reading it. Each week, their menu will feature a recipe developed in collaboration with an AirBnB experience's host, like Cici, a chef from Shanghai who makes incredible kung pao chicken. A beloved, sticky, saucy mix of crispy browned chicken and vegetables. So check out this week's menu, and get three free meals, when you go to [BlueApron.com/Adventure](https://www.blueapron.com/Adventure). Blue Apron: A better way to cook.

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I have a jumbotron here, and it's that I desperately want you to check out Cloud's Armory. Here's what they have to say. "At Cloud's Armory, our creations come from wood, glass, metal, plastic, and stone. Our business crafts items of all kinds. Armor, journals, dice towers, play mats, jewelry, dragon eyes, key chains, engraved photos, and more." That's—I don't know why they included 'and more.'

That's literally every object. "The best part is that they're all customizable. And if there is something you want, but don't see on our site, contact us, and we'll find a way to create it and quote you a price. Enter the promo code TAZ, that's TAZ, or mention this ad in your custom order for 15% off your purchase." Just browse their goods at CloudsArmory.com, and if you want a custom designed item, just use their contact form and they'll make your fantasy come alive.

All my fantasies? 'Cause I got one that involves me on a rocket ship, with my best friend... I couldn't think of anybody. Uh, do I not have friends? Uh-oh.

I also want to tell you all about Dames and Dragons. And I'm going to do so by reading this thing that they wrote. "Do you want to experience the magic of Dungeons and Dragons, but you've made an oath to never speak to another human being? Do you want to watch a classic fantasy series, but can't stand the sight of human faces? Do you want to experience the genuine camaraderie of over ten years of friendship with only your ears? Then listen to Dames and Dragons, a D&D 5e actual play podcast, featuring an all-lady cast. The power of friendship and primo dump humor."

[laughs] You got me. It's gotta be rich with dump humor, because you've got me, even with that teaser. Find it wherever podcasts are sold, and that means, y'know, Brookstone I think sells podcasts. Um, I saw some at the checkout aisle at HEB, so check your grocery store. And then also, probably like, iTunes and the internet.

Thank you so much for tweeting about the show using the #TheZoneCast hash tag. It really means a lot when you spread the word like that. Most of our listenership comes from word of mouth, and so, if you have a friend who you think might be interested in the story that we're telling, go ahead and tell them, and you use the hash tag #TheZoneCast if you're using Twitter, and you might end up as a character on the show. So, that is... that's still great, and you're still great, and thank you to Maximum Fun. Maximum Fun's still great. This is just a quick check up on things that are still great.

You can go to MaximumFun.org and check out all the great podcasts there. They're all for free, and they're all shows that you're just gonna adore. Shows like Tights and Fights, and the Greatest Generation, and Stop Podcasting Yourself, and Lady to Lady, and so many more, at MaximumFun.org.

And if you want to hear other stuff that we do, you can go to McElroyShows.com. We're also still—we've got some tickets available for the book tour that we are doing for the Adventure Zone graphic novel. You can preorder that now at TheAdventureZoneComic.com. And if you want to come to our book tour, there are still some tickets available. We're doing a few stops across the US. I know there's still tickets in Cincinnati, Ohio, where we're gonna be speaking at the Taft. Um, and I think a couple other ones, but yeah. You can find tickets to those at McElroyShows.com/tours.

And while you're there, you can also grab tickets to some other live shows that we're doing, for MBMBaM and for TAZ. So, all of that at McElroyShows.com/tours.

That is it for the advertisements for this week. Again, this is going to be the last of our weekly episodes. We are now getting back into our regular, biweekly groove. We hope you enjoyed this nonstop stream, but we need to take a breath, and live our lives again. So, we will be back in two weeks, on

May 3rd. So, we'll be back with the next episode of The Adventure Zone: Amnesty then. Talk to you then. Bye.

[theme music plays]

Griffin: This instructor turns to face you all, and I think all of the folks exercising in the pool, also kind of rotate to face you all. And the instructor says...

Instructor: Uh, pool's closed, folks. We... we just got started here. We got it booked for a couple hours. Do you—do you need something?

Griffin: Um, and this might be a good time, Duck, for you to read the situation, now that you are inside. So you have three hold if you want to ask these questions.

Justin: Okay, how about this? What's the biggest threat?

Griffin: Um, so, what you... I think the biggest threat is an assumption that you are making, and you know that this is the pool where Calvin was attacked last night, and you have no reason to believe that whatever was in here got away. And based on what she just told you, they just got into the pool, and so, nothing has popped off yet. But the biggest threat is the fact that there are a dozen people sort of helplessly swimming in this water that came alive last night, and tried to kill a young man.

Justin: Okay. Uh, what is the best way to protect the victims?

Griffin: The best way to protect everybody in this room is to get them out of the pool, and ideally, out of the building, so that they don't, y'know, see a big water monster, assuming it rears its head. There's a lot of things about this situation that could break very bad for them, and there's a lot of ways that it could also sort of break very bad for the secrecy of the Pine Guard's mission.

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

Griffin: Hmm. Duck, you are... I think you're a bit startled as you come in, and you see that there are—oh, shit, there's people in here. But you catch out of the corner of your eye, in the center of the pool, right above the drain, where nobody's really swimming and exercising, they're all kind of up against the wall where the instructor is standing. You see a single, large bubble come up from the drain, and hit the surface of the pool, and pop.

Travis: And it goes, [bubbling noise].

Griffin: It goes, "Bluh bluh, I'm a spooky bubble."

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: Uh, that is what you notice. So, if you act on the answers, you get plus one ongoing while the information is relevant.

Clint: I have an idea.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Ned's gonna go over and speak to the instructor.

Griffin: Okay. I mean, you're all sort of standing right—like, you are all sort of engaged in conversation with her.

Ned: How do you do? My name is Ned Chicane. You may know me from my local establishment, the Cryptonomica. And your name is...?

Hannah: Uh, my name is Hannah.

Ned: Hannah.

Griffin: Named after, uh, Hannah Searson on Twitter. Thank you.

Ned: Uh, my mother's name was Hannah Searson. That is such a coincidence. Perhaps you didn't know this, but uh, I work with the local television station, and I was watching my compatriots on Good Morning Kepler, and they had a public service announcement about your class, here.

And since I'm so closely tied with the chamber of commerce, I was thinking, this is wonderful therapy. The exercise, the swimming, the muscle toning and all that. But have you heard about the hot springs out in back of Amnesty Lodge? I would have to think that that would be much more healthy, much more therapeutic, and good for your fine swimmers here, than just swimming around in a chlorinated pool.

Griffin: She looks at you, and she says...

Hannah: Y'know, I do remember hearing about the hot springs. I didn't think that that would be quite large enough for the sort of water aerobics that I do.

Ned: Oh, it is. Well, no, but think about it. It's like those little pools that they show in the TV infomercials, where you swim against the water.

Hannah: It has an infinity jet in it? It's a hot spring, right?

Ned: It's the hot springs, and then, the water is flowing, and y'know, that would... I would have to think, that would be much better for your constituents here, rather than flopping around in the water. Having that water pushing against them, and the warmth, and the natural minerals. It's very soothing. I don't know if you've been there. But for someone like me, in his mid to late 30s, it's very relaxing.

Griffin: She laughs. She laughs, and laughs, and laughs. She laughs. She has a good, good belly laugh.

Ned: But having close relations with the lodge, I'm sure they would love to have you try out that facility. As a matter of fact, we just came from there, and it's empty. It's unoccupied, even as we speak.

Hannah: Uh, yeah, that sounds very promising. I'll tell you what – after this session, I will head straight there, and see what I can find out.

Travis: Aubrey would like to cast a spell.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: She would like to make a chill breeze to blow over, as Ned is talking about how warm—

Griffin: Is this like a subtle thing, like, oh, a hot spring sounds—it's not like you are trying to knock these people away. You are just subtly trying to influence the conversation with a cold wind.

Travis: Correct.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: That was a twelve.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Jesus. Get that pull right when you need it.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: What does that, uh—what does that mean?

Travis: I can inflict harm?

Griffin: Yeah, I think that maybe this is use magic, and not an attack.

Travis: Yeah, that's what I'm saying. So I'm looking at it, and I think it's just kind of... inflict harm, but I'm trying to inflict very impermanent, it is cold, harm.

Griffin: Uh...

Justin: So this... can I just... [laughs] I just want to... I just want to drill down for a sec. We—this is the moment in the episode, and in this arc, where Travis is making a combat roll against some elderly, wet, senior citizens. I just need to clarify that's exactly what's happening currently.

Travis: But listen! I rolled a twelve. I have—I have crappy ass spells.

Justin: No, you're gonna fuckin' demolish them. No question, Trav, you're absolutely gonna wreck these old people's shit.

Griffin: No, I think it's not a combat roll. It's like, it's use magic. And when you use magic, instead of just like, attacking them, you get to choose an effect. And one of them is, do one thing that is beyond human limitations, which is kind of a bucket thing. I think with a twelve, because you're not trying to hurt them, you don't hurt them, right? A twelve is an unconditional success. You do what you were trying to do.

Travis: Do not want to hurt these olds...

Griffin: I think, uh, yeah. I think that a couple of the windows were open over the bleachers, and I think, from outside, a kind of chilly breeze comes in. Is this weird, by the way? Because I wanted to sort of make more a moment out of this, of Aubrey doing something that's not just explicitly like, fire, fire, fire. This is not a fire thing. This is—

Travis: She's been training.

Griffin: Unless...

Clint: Unless.

Justin: Unless.

Griffin: It is kind of a heat thing?

Travis: I mean, yeah. Because the other option is to draw the heat out of the water.

Griffin: Right.

Travis: It was one of the... those were the two things I was going back and forth of like, chill breeze, versus make the water colder. Doing use magic instead of combat, maybe she just kind of like, pulls heat out of the water.

Griffin: Okay. Yeah. The water starts to get very... uh, not very cold, but uh—

Travis: Colder.

Griffin: Unpleasantly cold.

Travis: And this is the thing that I know from Teresa working at a pool, that like, people who are in the pool and swim laps can like, tell the difference when you drop it like, a degree or two.

Griffin: Yeah, for sure. Okay. I think, as you are describing this hot spring, Ned, uh, one of the swimmers says...

Swimmer: Yeah, uh, that actually sounds real nice about now. This—this pool is, uh, it's getting kind of chilly. And I'd like to heat up my bones. And I don't see why we can't do our, y'know, lifts and stuff in a warmer climb, if they got room for us.

Griffin: Uh, and the rest of the people in the pool agree, and I think Hannah is kind of pushing back against this, but she's like...

Hannah: Oh, okay. Fine. Uh, everybody get your stuff, and um, I guess we'll head up to Amnesty Lodge. It's up cliff side, right?

Aubrey: Sure.

Ned: Uh, Duck? Duck, what would be the best way for them to get there?

Griffin: Duck, you see those bubbles. Now it's not just one. There's a lot of bubbles starting to appear in the middle of the pool.

Duck: Um... y'know what? Why don't I call in a transport? Uh, we got a lot of vans that we usually use to haul shrubbery and brush that we've collected. And uh, I'll have them send a van down here.

Hannah: Well, we have—we have a van. It's not—

Duck: Well, that should of come up earlier, don't you think, that you had a van on hand? Here I am, falling over myself, offering y'all vans. Uh... what a goose. Alright, well, why don't—

Hannah: I thought your name was Duck?

Duck: Yeah, it's a nickname. Well, listen, if y'all got a van handy, why don't you hop in, and get on chuckin'? Don't forget to, uh... don't worry about your clothes. We'll drive them up separate.

Hannah: Why can't we take our clothes?

Duck: You need to... you need... uh, you—here, I'll get them.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: [laughing] Duck runs to pick up the clothes.

Duck: Y'all start loading in the vans, and I'll bring your clothes out to you. It's just another one of the many services we offer from the forestry service.

Hannah: Is clothes... oh, okay, I'm going, I'm going, I'm going.

Duck: Go, go, go, go, go.

Griffin: Uh, I think because of... I know this seems a bit silly, but all of you have rolled very well here. I think they all sort of start climbing out of the pool, and in a single file line, they hurry out the door as Duck is picking up their clothes off the bleachers, and just throwing them out the open doors. Uh, and soon, all of them—

Justin: No, he takes them to the van. The van's right there.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: He throws them in the van.

Griffin: As he's doing this transport, everybody's outside, you and Ned see the bubbles getting faster and faster, and then they stop. And Duck, you finish taking all of their stuff out to the car, and you hear the engines kick on, uh, and drive off. And the doors close behind you, um, and now, you are all together, and the water is motionless, just for a moment.

[music plays]

Griffin: And then a ripple extends from the center of the pool. And as it reaches the perimeter, the water around the edges of the pool starts to recede, as if called back by a tidal pull. And the water collects at the center, forming a small mound. And then the water splashes upward from the center of the pool, and the mound explodes.

A primitive hand reaches upwards, several feet, grasping at nothing, before collapsing back into the pool. Three identical cylindrical pillars of water lift from the surface, and then recede, just as quickly. Two waves form at either end of the pool, and splash together, hanging there for just a moment before dropping. The water takes several shapes quickly, before settling on one: a tendril reaches upward from the center of the pool, writhing about, throwing water all around the room, before standing perfectly straight up, ten feet into the air.

Aubrey: Well, dunk.

Travis: Read a bad situation, please.

Griffin: Okay. I think this is probably a more reasonable time for you to do that.

Travis: Uh, I rolled a nine.

Justin: I go ahead and draw Beacon, by the way.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Yeah, roll a nine plus one. Ten.

Griffin: Okay. Go ahead and ask your questions.

Travis: This is the thing, because a lot of these are very straightforward. Like, what's the biggest threat? Probably that big water tendril.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Um, I'm going to say, what's most vulnerable to me?

Griffin: I think with that, I can tell you, do not get in that water. You know that what is vulnerable to you is like, your breath. And you—

Travis: No, I mean—I think it means like, what's vulnerable to me to attack.

Griffin: Oh, to attack. Um, yeah, that's tough. That's tough for me to describe to you. I think that you uh, logically, know that like, the water in the tendril is the thinnest. You can't like, shoot something into the pool, right?

Travis: Well, let me start with then my magic eye, which is actually third eye. Magic eye is the posters.

Griffin: Yeah, your blur your eye, so you get real close to the water, and sort of, the shape starts to take... um, what does that look like to you? Describe what the third eye—

Travis: Well, I would say, um... I envision it... so, there's a thing in the Dresden Files where they talk about wizard sight. And I always imagined it kind of like, if you switched over to the negative, y'know, like, in a photo. Except, in the negative, I could see the things...

Griffin: I like that. So like, inverse color sort of thing.

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: Okay. Yeah, that's neat. Um, you see, uh... I think, even with your third eye, you see, faintly, not in the tendril, but actually in the water, under the tendril, several feet deep in the water, you see that yellow light that Calvin described yesterday. And you are the only one that can see it. Ned and Duck, you just see the pool, and you just see the tendril. But with your magic sight, you see, uh, you see this shape in the water. And then, if you are asking what is most vulnerable to you, it's whatever that thing is.

Travis: Okay. So, next question, what's the best way out?

Griffin: Uh, either the door, or the windows over the bleachers.

Aubrey: Okay, let's...

Griffin: You have one more, I think, if you want it.

Aubrey: ...start backing towards the doors.

Travis: Uh, what's the best way to protect the victims? Which I guess are us.

Griffin: The three of you? Um, I mean, the best way to protect the victims is to not get in the water, and get as far away from this thing as is possible. Um, but I mean, you also know that like, you're gonna have to fight this thing eventually. And so, whatever you can learn...

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: So, Aubrey, after sort of reading it, that tendril, which was sort of poking straight up before, it kind of bends and crooks towards the middle. And sort of, almost like it looks in your direction, like it is eyeing the three of you. Still in the middle of the pool, still like, a little bit of a ways away from you. Uh, but it seems to have noticed you. Ned, what are you up to?

Clint: Ned climbs the high dive, starts up the ladder, climbs up the high dive, um...

Aubrey: Okay...

Justin: Gonna hit him with a phoon.

Clint: Ostensibly, to get away from whatever's going on. But, I think he's going up there to get a higher perspective, that maybe, looking down on it, uh, visually, that it'll tell him more about the situation than being on eye level with it.

Griffin: Okay. I don't think it's like, a super high dive, because that, to me, seems like, weird pacing. Like, "Oh, no, let me climb this ladder for 30 seconds." But I think it definitely puts you at eye level, and you are on this high dive. And it sounds like investigate a mystery, right? Which is less, I know, it seems like that's all you guys are doing right now, but that's kind of—

Travis: But we know nothing.

Griffin: Right, this is sort of a research gathering mission. And investigate a mystery is more about like, what the monster is, and not what immediate danger you all are in.

Clint: So I rolled a nine, plus two, for sharp.

Griffin: These fucking rolls. You guys are killing it. Um, hopefully, when you actually fight this thing, you guys will fuck up a bunch. That's my dream.

Clint: What sort of creature is it?

Griffin: Here's what I... this is one of those situations where like, the answer is so obvious that I won't charge you one of the hold two. Because I think you can't see what Aubrey sees, what sort of creature it is, is shape shifting water. And it's taking a different shape than the one that Calvin described yesterday, so you assume that it's got a few tricks up its sleeve. But what sort of creature it is, is a big shape shifting water monster. But I won't charge you a hold for that, because that's sort of obvious.

Clint: Alright, then, what can it do?

Griffin: Okay. I think the way that we resolve this is, the tendril notices you climb up the high dive, and get on eye level with you, and the tendril starts to move in your direction. Like not just the tip of the tendril, but like, the shape itself, the base of it, moves across the surface of the water. So, it seems to be able to move around, to do whatever it wants to do.

Travis: I got it. You guys. Old people in a pool, energy in the pool... this is a cocoon situation.

Justin: Cocoon. We've got a cocoon situation on our hands.

Travis: We have got a full blown cocoon.

Griffin: Uh, you have one more question, Ned.

Clint: Well, if it's zooming at me, I'm gonna want to know what can hurt it.

Griffin: You get the impression, getting an eye full of this tendril right now, uh, you still don't know what this monster is, right? But you know that if you can sever this tendril, if you can sever this water, this aquatic tentacle, it will... it will go away. Um, that doesn't necessarily mean you've killed the beast or whatever, but you get the idea that, y'know, the water is thinner here on the tendril than it is at the base of the pool. So if you sever it, it will resolve this situation.

And with your questions asked, this thing is now moving towards you. Now, the tip of it is moving towards you at speed. Um, looking like it actually kind of goes around the side of you, almost like it wants to grab you. That is a soft move of me setting up future danger. What do... what do you do?

Clint: So it's moving at me, at speed. [laughs] I want to take Justin's suggestion from earlier and do a phoon.

Justin: Oh no, the phoon. The dreaded phoon.

Clint: I want to phoon into the pool. I'm not gonna have time to get down the ladder, probably.

Justin: So many childhood summer days being wrecked by the power of the phoon. My worry has now pivoted. I am no longer concerned for my dad's imaginary character. I'm now concerned for this pool tendril, getting ready to get his shop wrecked.

Griffin: A... can you explain what a phoon is?

Justin: The terrible power of the phoon.

Clint: A phoon—a phoon is a dive, invented by my cousin, Tom Neil, that it's... imagine a jackknife, but you do the jackknife, and you don't unfold, so that it's... you get all of the worst elements of a belly flop, but even more, because it impacts all of your body.

Justin: And it is short for typhoon, correct?

Travis: It is both punishment for other people in the pool, but mostly, a way that one might, I don't know, give penance for something terrible they've done.

Justin: The least pleasing way of entering a body of water.

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: It is. And it might disrupt the surface tension a bit.

Griffin: Okay. I like this. So go ahead and act under pressure, it sounds like. You roll plus cool, 'cause you are in a pressured situation. I like the instinct. I like, "Oh, shit, I can't get back down that ladder fast enough. This thing is gonna get me. May as well charge right into it."

Clint: Okay.

Griffin: As you do a cool dive.

Clint: [laughing]

Griffin: You are kidding me.

Clint: Twelve, plus one cool.

Justin: The phoon! The phoon!

Clint: Thirteen! That's not just a phoon, that's a... [yells] Phoooooon!

Travis: So this kills the creature.

Griffin: Yeah, they die. Uh, okay, here's what happens. You realize you're not gonna make it down that ladder, and you turn into a phoon off the edge of the diving board. A full spring. The diving board makes that satisfying like, pla-la-la-la-la noise.

Clint: [diving board noise]

Griffin: Uh, and Aubrey and Duck, from the uh, from the ground level, you see Ned's imposing form launch off the end of the diving board. And as you are going down, the path of your phoon actually cuts through the tendril, and the force, the pure inertia of your maneuver here, it cuts through the tendril and severs it from the pool itself. And as it does, the water that was forming this tendril loses its shape, and sort of just falls, harmlessly, down onto the floor.

And Aubrey and Duck, you probably get splashed a little bit by this, as the water falls and hits the water. Ned, you killed the tendril, but you are now inside the water. You splash down into the pool, and as you do, and you are now submerged a few feet under the water, your face is illuminated by this yellow light as you are now just right up against it. Now that you are like, right up against it, you can see it.

And that is what has happened. And then, I think you also, like—

Clint: Full disclosure. There's gotta be some damage done. I'm telling you, a good phoon hurts.

Griffin: I think it hurts, but you rolled a twelve, so like, I am powerless to sort of do a bad thing to you, here. You did something... the most rad phoon anyone's ever done. The bad thing that has happened—

Travis: And it has Aubrey and Duck standing at the side. "The perfect phoon..."

Duck: We've always heard tale of it, but I never thought I'd see it with my own eyes.

Aubrey: He did it!

Griffin: So something bad did happen.

Aubrey: This is exactly how he would want to die.

Griffin: Um...

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: What?

Griffin: Something bad did happen, though. I think because you were so smooth in this maneuver, you like, got a nice, deep breath as you were heading down, so you are not sort of being actively damaged or whatever. But, you feel that same tug that Calvin felt, actually, far more powerful. Duck and Aubrey, from above the pool, you see Ned being kind of yanked around the deep end of the pool. Like, by his feet, you see him just sort of zooming around the water, as, Ned, you are being pulled all around the water.

You had a nice deep breath, so you are not being damaged by this, but this thing's got a hold on you now, and is... you are its plaything, now, inside the pool. Duck, what do you do?

Justin: So... I'll tell you what Duck does. Duck has his sword out, and he just stands there. He doesn't have any idea what to do. He knows that his friend is in danger, he knows that there's a monster in the thing, and he's

got nothing. For Duck, this is like... it's 100% the situation that he kind of feared would happen. He doesn't know how to do this. He doesn't know what to do. And I don't think he does... anything.

Griffin: That's very good. Uh, okay. Aubrey, you see Duck pull out his sword, and then just kind of freeze up.

Aubrey: Duck?

Duck: Yeah?

Aubrey: Grab the skimmer!

Duck: The skimmer?

Aubrey: Pool skimmer!

Duck: Alright. Uh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yes. The skimmer. Skimmer, skimmer, skimmer.

Justin: So he runs over to grab the skimmer, and is gonna try to, I guess, catch... him?

Travis: Okay. Going one step further than what Aubrey did earlier, she's gonna try to lower the pool temperature even more.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Um, so that the water gets sluggish, and slower.

Griffin: Hmm.

Travis: To kind of help Duck.

Griffin: I will say, totally. You have no idea if that works, right?

Travis: Oh, no.

Griffin: You have no idea if that's like, what this thing—

Travis: Listen.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: We don't know anything. Here goes nothing.

Justin: Oh, no.

Griffin: Oh, shit.

Justin: Oh, no. You rolled a five.

Travis: Oh, no. Uh, is that plus weird? So that's a seven. It's not a total miss.

Griffin: Uh, yeah, that is a seven. So I'm so glad this happened, because use magic has one of the coolest effects on a mixed success. On a seven to nine, it works imperfectly. Choose your effect, and a glitch. The keeper will decide what effect the glitch has.

So, you get to choose whatever effect you were trying to do, which I think was do one thing which is beyond human limitations, which was uh, soaking up the heat of the pool. And then you choose a glitch. The effect is weakened; the effect is of short duration; you take one harm, ignore armor; the magic draws immediate, unwelcome attention; or, it has a problematic side effect.

Travis: Um, I'm going to say, for this... [laughs] Because I think it'll be the most interesting...

Griffin: Yes, yes, yes.

Travis: The magic draws immediate, unwelcome attention?

Griffin: Uh, yeah. So here's what happens. The water gets cold, and Ned, you feel it, now, and now it's uncomfortably cold. It's not like, freezing, but

it's like, y'know, probably around 50 degrees or so, which is very, very cold for water. You don't want to be in water that cold for that long. But as it cools down, Ned, you do feel this thing stop pulling you, and you, uh, you are now sort of under the water. And I think that, now, you see the skimmer in the water that Duck has put down there for you. You're probably pretty disoriented at this point, because you've just been dragged around the water for a while. And so, I think it's probably pretty easy for you to grab onto that, if you want to.

However, the unwanted attention. Uh, the water... you see it start to pull away from the deep end of the pool, where Ned was just at, and now, it forms a huge wave on the more shallow end of the pool that was closer to where Aubrey is. And now, it is a... it comes down on you, and splashes over you. And as it does, it just kind of actually stays there.

The water is now no longer contained in the pool. It's not pulling you into the pool. It has come to you, and it is all around you, and you are submerged. And I think it caught you by surprise, so you are out of breath.

Ned. What do you do? Uh, I think let's resolve, first, did you get pulled up through this—with this skimmer? Are you back out of the water, or are you still in the water?

Clint: Yeah, Duck—I grabbed the skimmer, and Duck pulled me up, and I took a breath, and now I'm back at it. Um, I'm gonna help out.

Travis: Oh, good. [laughs]

Clint: Ned goes running towards Aubrey, and takes his automatic walking stick, and just sweeps it right through the stream of water to try to break the contact between the globe of water and the water in the pool. And that's a seven, and there's... he has no tough, so he's kicking some water ass, sort of.

Griffin: Okay. On a seven, you and whatever you're fighting inflict harm on each other. You charge towards it, and you bring up your cane in like, an upward sweeping strike, and you splash some of the sort of narrow connection of water between this frozen wave and the pool. And as you do, a

tendrils peel off the wave, and just smashes you from above. It clubs right into you, and hits you for one harm.

Clint: Hm.

Griffin: Um, but I think you are sort of unfazed in that, and you continue, sort of, your strike against this connective tissue. And you finally, with one more sweep, you do sever it. And as that happens, Aubrey, the water falls away from you, and you fall to the ground and take a nice, deep breath.

Aubrey: [gasping inhale]

Griffin: Which probably sounds very good in the audio. Duck, you are up, and both of your compatriots, at this moment, are sort of free.

Justin: And what did you say the effect of the walking stick was?

Griffin: It basically killed the wave.

Justin: Cool.

Griffin: So the shapes that this water is making are minions, which is another mechanic in this game. It's not the boss itself, but it is things that are serving the boss, and that's kind of how I am uh, making sense of how this monster operates.

You see the water start to move around. I think there's a few of the exercise floats that uh, a few of the exercisers were using earlier, and you see them start to rotate clockwise, sort of around the center of the pool. Um, but no shapes have formed right now. What do you do?

Duck: Listen, y'all, I—I think we need to get out of here posthaste. I—I know we haven't learned much from this, but I'd say that we've learned that it's a living pool, and uh, it can send as much water out as it wants and not get tired, and not get hurt. Um, and I think if we play that game long enough, we're gonna end up, uh, underground. So I'm kind of feeling like we should maybe get the hell out of here.

Griffin: Uh, I think as you say that, the water uh, it—the water starts to pick up its sort of spiral. And now, a full blown whirlpool is forming in the center of the pool.

Aubrey: Yeah, y'know what?

Duck: Yep, yep, yep, yep, yep, yep.

Ned: Yep, yep, yep.

Griffin: So what do y'all do?

Clint: Run away!

Justin: Yeah, we run. We're gone.

Griffin: Okay. You all run towards the door. And right as you reach it, you hear a sickening kind of gurgling noise as that whirlpool closes up. And as it does, the pool stands completely still. And Aubrey, I think with your third eye magic, still sort of traces of it still functioning, uh, you can tell that this light that was in the water is now just gone.

Aubrey: Huh. Well... I've got good news and uh, potentially bad news.

Duck: Well, why don't you hit me with the good news first?

Aubrey: Okay. Good news is, I think we're safe for the time being, because whatever was in that pool seems to be gone.

Duck: Alright, mission accomplished. Good work Pine Guard, huh?

[theme music plays]

Aubrey: Well... then we've got the bad news.

Ned: Which is?

Aubrey: The bad news is, um... I think maybe it went into, y'know, all the water? Like, in town? I think it's not just confined to the pool.

Duck: Well... Fuck.

[theme music plays]

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Oliver: How's it going everyone? I'm Oliver Wang.

Morgan: And I'm Morgan Rhodes. We have a brand new show on the Maximum Fun network that we'd love to share with you. It's called Heat Rocks.

Oliver: Morgan, we should probably explain what a heat rock is.

Morgan: It is a banger, a fire track, true fire.

Oliver: Right. Dope album. Each episode, we will bring on a special guest to join us, to talk about one of their heat rocks. It might be a musician...

Morgan: A writer...

Oliver: Maybe a scholar.

Morgan: I mean, I would've been happy to just talk to you about your heat rocks. But this is a different show, so...

Oliver: Yeah, I think people might enjoy hearing maybe the guests instead.

Morgan: To do that, you'll have to go to MaximumFun.org. So if you want to talk about hot music, you should check us out.

Oliver: Heat Rocks.

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Lisa: Clippy, the Microsoft Office helper.

Emily: Death during consensual sex.

Lisa: And the talking mongoose.

Emily: We ask each other stupid questions. Uh, if you got a packet with like, 300 seeds in it, what kind of plant would you choose the seeds to be? [laughs]

Lisa: [laughs] That felt like you were assigned to ask me a question, and there were certain words you weren't allowed to use. We talk about Martha Stewart, her pony, and other celebrity horse news. Ben Church.

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[music plays]