

The Adventure Zone: Amnesty – Episode 9

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Griffin: Previously on The Adventure Zone...

[theme music plays]

Barclay: Moira, we need to get ourselves... [sighs] A magical, intangible weapon. I think it's time our friends here met the enchanter.

Moira: I know you're searching for answers about the origins of the magic that dwells within you. If you have the time, you may find it prudent to inquire about your abilities while in Sylvain.

Vincent: I understand, you need to see the enchanter. And I must also insist that you make your introductions to the Interpreter, as is custom for those to serve to protect Sylvain from the world beyond.

Griffin: A massive shape lifts up from the darkness below you. It is an unthinkable gigantic, gray, anthropomorphic cat.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: And it says...

Heathcliff: The people of this world know me as the enchanter. You may call me by my name. I... am Heathcliff.

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

[theme music plays]

[music plays]

Griffin: So, the three of you are standing in front of a chasm underneath the city. The air is still. There's just the sound of water dripping from catacombs behind you, and the purring of this enormous, gray cat, with a white patch of fur on its gargantuan belly in front of you. And Heathcliff says...

Heathcliff: I prefer to keep my dealings clean and concise, but I can assume that, with your current knowledge of Sylvain being what it is, that would be quite impossible. So, I have what you need, and you have what I want, and I do want this interaction to be interrupted by your ceaseless questions.

Aubrey: Fluffy?

Heathcliff: Yes, much like that. So maybe we could get through this quickly—

Aubrey: Fluffy!

Heathcliff: --before we move on. Yes, I'm a gigantic cat. No, you may not pet me. You may not pet me.

Aubrey: Who's a good kitty?

Heathcliff: No, you may not pet me. I just met you. Any other questions before we start?

Duck: I have uh, one sort of query that ends in an interrobang. Uh, a talking cat?!

Heathcliff: Yeah. Get... get used to it, mister. I'm breakin' all the rules over here. I talk, yes. I am the size of a moderately sized building. Yes, that too. I defy expectations in so many ways. But you've decided to settle on my power of speech, and so, that's sort of your bag.

Duck: So uh, what are you doing down here?

Heathcliff: I'm a little bit too big to fit anywhere topside, aren't I?

Duck: Well that's kind of a fun kind of way of dodging my question. I mean, what do you do?

Heathcliff: I find myself surrounded down here by the light of Sylvain, in its purest, rawest, most potent form. And so, I spend most of my time down here tinkering around with that power. That's why they call me the enchanter, you see, and that is what has brought you to me today. I assume you seek my services to empower one of your pieces of equipment, or perhaps, generate a new one for you, as the case may be.

I'm assuming that the three of you are human, based on the fact that you do not have fur, or fangs, or you are not spectral or see-through in any way, and thus, therefore, are hunting monsters on the other side. I know a little bit about the way of the world, so I assume that's the... that's the situation, and I assume you seek the same arrangement that I have maintained with the other members of the Pine Guard.

Travis: Uh, Griffin, I don't mean to give you notes. But is it too late to make Heathcliff speak in rhyme?

Griffin: Mmm...

Travis: 'Cause it really feels like...

Griffin: Hmm.

Travis: It really feels like that would take it over the top for me.

Griffin: I will do you something magic in a way that... no, I'm not gonna do that.

Travis: Okay, but if you see the opportunity for it—

Griffin: I will take it. I promise.

Travis: Will you take it?

Justin: Yeah, like more rhymes than the average person.

Travis: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

Griffin: What about a riddle?

Travis: Ooh! I'll take a riddle!

Heathcliff: Any other questions before we move on? Again, I do not want to be interrupted.

Travis: So, I have to remember... it's been so long.

Griffin: It's been a month.

Aubrey: So, do we just like, ask you for stuff, and you like, give it to us?

Heathcliff: I mean, I'm not a mind reader. I'm a cat.

Aubrey: Yeah, we'll say it out loud. Like, I would say, like, "I would like a magic wand." And you would be like, "Yeah," and you'd hand me one.

Heathcliff: Um, I wouldn't hand you one. I would generate you one from the ether, summoning it from the blackest depths of Sylvain. But yeah, that could be how the arrangement works. You ask, and I shall provide.

Duck: Yeah, I got a request. Do you do exchanges?

Heathcliff: Um... I'm curious to hear what you think would satisfy my mysterious needs.

Duck: Trade `em ups? Uh, I got this sword, and I would love to trade it for anything. Um, a nice whip. And when I say a nice whip, I mean a good quality one, but also one that is of a gentle, caring spirit. Y'know, just any sort of nice, kind weapons.

Aubrey: Supportive.

Duck: Supportive. Won't be like, sort of, pecking at me constantly. If you have anything, I would love to trade you. And I can kick in, umm... [paper rustling] Seventeen dollars.

Heathcliff: I have no need—

Duck: Hey, that's earth money cousin, alright?

Heathcliff: Yeah. I'm not, uh, familiar with what the exchange rate stands at right now. But I won't be needing that.

Duck: It's good.

Heathcliff: I am curious about the sword, though.

Griffin: And he extends his gigantic, furry paw, and places it sort of on the ledge that the three of you are standing on and says—

Heathcliff: Do you mind—

Duck: Ah, shit!

Heathcliff: Oh, I'm not—don't worry, I'm declawed. Do you mind if I examine your blade?

Beacon: Oh, Duck Newton. This is adorable. A lovers' quarrel, eh Duck?

Duck: Shut up, Beacon. Jesus Christ. Here, this is the—this is the sword. Please, anything you got. Here.

Griffin: You hand the sword over to Heathcliff, who raises his paw up to his face, and examines it for a moment. He actually takes out a little eyeglass, like a little jeweler's eyeglass, and examines it very, very closely. And he smiles, and hands it back to you, and he says...

Heathcliff: This weapon is quite curious. Uh, sorry, what was your name?

Duck: Yeah, I'm Duck Newton. It's a nickname. Uh, I'm uh, on the forestry service for the Monongahela State Forest. And also, I guess, the Pine Guard.

Travis: Have we ever learned Duck's real name?

Griffin: I don't think so. That's finale material.

Travis: Okay. 'Cause I would like to pitch Ruchard.

Griffin: Ruchard is... Justin, simmer on that, okay?

Travis: 'Cause it's like, how Dick is short for Richard, and Duck is short for Ruchard.

Griffin: Oh, that's quite good, yeah.

Travis: Thank you.

Griffin: He says...

Heathcliff: This weapon is indeed, uh... it is imbued with magic, but it is not our magic. This is a curious artifact, earthling. I would be happy to take it off your hands, provided your ask is fair.

Duck: What do you mean?

Heathcliff: What would you require from me for an exchange? Other than... would a really good whip really do it?

Duck: Like a... I mean, it would have to be a choice... oh, man. [sighs] I'm losin' my nerve, 'cause Minerva...

Ned: Who?

Duck: Unintentional, but Minerva gave it to me, and I figure she probably had her reasons. I was acting impulsively. Heathcliff, I apologize.

Travis: [laughs]

Ned: And all you need is Minerva to come here, see it hanging on the wall, all of a sudden, there's bad juju with you guys... Yeah, you don't want that.

Duck: Right. "Hey, Duck, I'd love to see your great sword. Can you show it to me real quick?" And I do a thing where I'm like, "Yeah, it's in the bathroom. Hold on, let me go get it." And then she'd go to the bathroom, and the window would be open, and I'd be chuckin' it down the street. Oh, call me very slamming door farce. We used to call him in college. Uh, but, so anyway, I'm sorry to have—I've wasted a lot of your time, giant cat, and I'm real sorry about it.

Heathcliff: Uh, it's quite alright. I am deeply curious about your blade. Maybe someday, we can find an arrangement.

Duck: I would think you'd be extra careful being curious, there. I would imagine that goes triple for a kitty of your size, eh?

Heathcliff: Yeah, I... that is a good point. I do not have many opportunities to be curious down here in the abyss.

Duck: Probably safer.

Heathcliff: Yes, quite. Um, so, you mentioned an Elemental you seek to slay, and I do not know of this Elemental of which you speak. But if you need to destroy something intangible, it would make sense that you require a weapon that can attack intangibly. This is... this is kitten's play. You there, the old one?

Ned: Hm?

Heathcliff: I see there, you have a primitive earth revolver. It is a thing of complete ugliness, but uh, I can give it an arcane makeover, the likes of which you've never seen, if you wish.

Ned: Well, first of all, let me explain. This gun was once owned by Elliott Ness, the famous G-man. And I borrowed it from a museum. But this is quite a collector's piece. So, what are you suggesting?

Heathcliff: I magic it up, my man. I do some magic on it.

Ned: Oh.

Heathcliff: Unless you have something else you'd like me to enchant.

Ned: Mmm, no. what's all this going to cost us?

Heathcliff: I sense upon you an item I have desired for quite some time. The earrings once belonging to Moira? I have admired these—I have admired these pendulous beauties for many years before her exile from this place. A subject I am not at liberty to go on about.

Ned: Hm, I'm not exactly sure I know what you're talking about.

Duck: We'll trade you the earrings. That's fine.

Ned: Well, Duck, I don't—

Aubrey: Hold on! We'll trade you one earring for that.

Heathcliff: I'll make you a deal. You hand me over Moira's earrings, which I have not seen since she was exiled, and I could not possibly dish the goss on this one, do not press me on it. I hate the goss, and I think it is disgust—

Aubrey: Do—can I stop you there?

Heathcliff: Yes.

Aubrey: It kind of sounds like you want to dish the goss.

Heathcliff: I would never dish the goss.

Aubrey: Ohhh. Heathcliff.

Heathcliff: Tell you what. You hand me over both earrings, I will count them as two gifts to me, and therefore, will increase the potency of the magics in imbue your tools with.

Ned: What do you guys think?

Aubrey: Does Ned get one, and I get one, and Duck gets one, or what's the deal, here?

Heathcliff: Oh, there's no need for me to be that prudent. I am just chock-a-block full of magic. So each of you will receive a gift.

Duck: Oh, hell yeah. Do it, give him the earrings. What do we care? We didn't even know about 'em 45 minutes ago.

Ned: Alright, how about—

Aubrey: He makes an excellent point.

Ned: Alright, here. Here, earrings. Here they are. They are really lustrous, so try not to schmooze them up with your cat fur.

Heathcliff: No need to be, uh, mean.

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: So I have devised a sort of new way of doing the Fantasy Costco item acquisition stuff for Monster of the Week, which I kind of had to do, because it is not nearly an item-rich game as D&D was, right? In D&D you could just be like, "Oh, you found a more powerful sword, and you found a ring that can freeze time, or y'know, whatever." And that's not really how Monster of the Week, uh, operates.

So instead, I came up with a new rule. Oh, Jesus Christ. This is...

Clint: Hm.

Travis: Can you share it in a doc with us, perhaps?

Griffin: Yeah. How this is going to work, in the future, at the beginning of each new sort of arc here in Amnesty, the three of you will receive a letter from Heathcliff. And that letter will contain a hit list of three earth items that he wants. And all three of them will be sort of available at some point during your hunt, but it will often require you to put yourself in harm's way, or a risky situation, or something, to acquire them.

These will be kind of like, side quests, so I'm not intending you to just be like, "Okay, well, I am going to the... y'know, I'm gonna rob a bank or something so I can get the magic diamond that he needs." They will be sort of organically in... I will find a way to work these organically into the hunt. It's just up to you whether or not you want to like, take the risk to get them. So it will add sort of a natural complication to things.

Every item that you bring back to him, you will gain plus one on a roll that you do when you visit Heathcliff. So for instance, if you recover all three items, you would roll 2d6 plus three, when doing this acquisition roll. And then, from there, you can either enchant a piece of gear that you already have, and make it better, or you can summon a new piece of gear, which won't be as dope as the preexisting piece of gear that you already had that you enchanted. But it will still be a new thing that you can use.

And that works with gear tags, which is a mechanic in Monster of the Week, which your gear already has, right? One harm, two harm, area. I think Beacon attacks in an area. That's a tag. Fire is a tag. All the tags are sort of, they inform the narrative. They inform what these pieces of gear can do.

So on a really good roll, you tell them, y'know, you tell Heathcliff, "Oh, I want my sword to have fire on it." And then you roll, and if you roll well, then it has it. If you roll a seven to nine, you get that tag, but you also get a sort of bad tag that will complicate that weapon. If you fail, it gives sort of me narrative tools to use against you. And then, if you fail completely, rather than just doing the normal, you fail and you get one XP, because this is sort of a high stakes roll, if you fail this one, you actually get two XP. So you still get like, y'know, a nice little boost, even if you fuck up.

But basically, the more items you recover off Heathcliff's hit list, the better chance you have to get a better item. Does that make sense?

Clint: Yeah.

Justin: Yep.

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: Okay. So, those are the rules. Ned, do you want to start?

Clint: Absolutely.

Ned: I believe I would like you to enchant something I already have.

Heathcliff: Okay, let's uh... let's have it, then.

Aubrey: His butt!

Ned: Well—

Heathcliff: You want an... I think it's already quite enchanting.

Aubrey: Aw.

Ned: Well, thanks? Um, when we discovered we were dealing with something mostly made of water, I thought of this item, which I obtained a number of years ago from a man named Reyn Guyer. He's the man who invented...

Clint: I open up my coat.

Ned: ...the Nerf gun. And I want you to enchant this Nerf gun that I acquired. It's a very historical piece. Very, very sought after. And I thought, perhaps, you could enchant this Nerf gun, because, hey, what better against something that's made of water than Nerf darts?

Heathcliff: Yeah, I can't fault your logic there. Uh, that completely holds up to—

Duck: I can.

Heathcliff: No, it holds up completely to any level of scrutiny or logic.

Duck: Right on.

Heathcliff: You want me to enchant your Nerf gun, and not your gun gun?

Ned: Yeah. The gun gun doesn't do shit against water things.

Heathcliff: No, it needs Nerf. No, definitely. The power of Nerf...

Ned: It has to have Nerf. So, I thought, maybe—

Aubrey: Well, if it ain't Nerf...

Ned: It ain't... it's nothin'!

Aubrey: Exactly!

Ned: Maybe you could—it could shoot harder, maybe? Uh, maybe...

Duck: Like a really hard hitting Nerf blaster.

Ned: Yeah!

Aubrey: Or, you could just push like, put a push pin in it, in the darts. And then that really hurts, y'know what I mean?

Heathcliff: Yeah, you were a nasty kid, huh?

Aubrey: Yep!

Heathcliff: Okay. I love this. I have enchanted so many things. Nobody has thought to bring me a Nerf gun.

Ned: Thank you.

Heathcliff: For obvious reasons. I could, uh; I could give it a magical enchantment that could turn it into the weapon that you desire.

Ned: Awesome.

Heathcliff: Hand it... hand it right over.

Griffin: And he extends his paw.

Ned: Here you go!

Griffin: What's it look like? 'Cause there's lots of different types of Nerf guns. Um, and I don't think we have to be historically accurate.

Ned: It's the Nerf Blaster. It kind of looks a little bit like a shotgun, almost.

Griffin: Okay, cool. Um, what's it—

Justin: I just feel like we're not being cognizant of our merchandising opportunities.

Griffin: No, this is amazing.

Justin: If you had said it looked *like* a Nerf Blaster, then, that's on sale. But—

Clint: It's not gonna look like it after he's done enchanting it, though.

Travis: Ooh.

Griffin: It's not—

Clint: Whatever we can manufacture on the cheap and sell.

Travis: A Narf blaster.

Griffin: It's Berf.

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: Nerph. N-E-R-P-H.

Justin: It's Berf or buffin'.

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, alright. Yeah, let's enchant this thing. So, because you handed over what counted as two individual earrings, you have a plus two on this acquisition roll.

Justin: [gasps] The enchantment! It's changing the branding! It's unlicensed! It's ready for sale! It's Berf or buffin'!

Griffin: Go ahead and roll a 2d6, Mac.

Clint: Ooh!

Griffin: Holy shit! So that is a nine plus two. Eleven.

Clint: Yeah!

Griffin: Okay. I think the tag that works here is magic, if you want this thing to hurt this water monster. Okay, so he takes your Nerf blaster, your Berf blaster, and uh, descends... I think I like Narf way better, actually. He takes your Narf blaster, and descends down into the depths. And uh, he's down there for a few moments, and then, there is a gust of wind, and a blast of light from down in the depths that shoots forward to the ceiling of this chamber.

And you hear this loud, screeching meow from down there, and then, Heathcliff comes back up. And he hands you back your enchanted Narf blaster. The barrel where the shotgun, I guess, balls were previously stored, is now this cylinder of what looks like, uh, blue stone that is like, crackling

with energy. Um, and uh, it's vaguely in the shape of the chamber that was in there, but now, it is this sort of magical power device in the center of your Narf blaster. And now, it possesses the tag "magic."

Go ahead and—what is your—I think your revolver does two harm. I think this, just to keep it consistent, is a two harm magic Narf blaster.

Clint: Um, is it close? 'Cause close is another tag on the .38, but...

Griffin: No, I think this would be whatever the next one is up from close. I think...

Travis: Medium.

Griffin: Medium, yeah. I'll figure out the exact word later.

Clint: Okay. Cool. I love it.

Griffin: He says...

Heathcliff: Okay. That one was tricky, because it was a toy for a baby, but uh...

Aubrey: Whoa. Narf is for big kids.

Heathcliff: You're right, sorry. It's a big kid toy. Um, do either of you, the rest of you, have something you would like?

Aubrey: Yes. Mr. Heathcliff...

Travis: And I'm gonna be honest with y'all. I just raised my hand, sitting here. Me, Travis.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: What's the matter with me? Yeah, I don't... okay.

Aubrey: I have kept running into a problem with this Elemental. I can do fire magic really good, and fire magic doesn't seem to be hurting, uh, this water thing. I would like to do ice, please.

Heathcliff: Now wait just a moment. You're an earthling, right?

Aubrey: Yeah.

Heathcliff: Why can you do fire magic?

Aubrey: Don't know.

Duck: Nerfling.

Aubrey: I'm a Nerfling.

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: He eyes you over. He actually lowers his huge face right next to you, and I think you get a better sense of his scale at this point, because his head alone is like three times your height. And he leans back, and he says...

Heathcliff: You are full of Sylvain's power.

Aubrey: I had a big meal when I got here. Um...

Heathcliff: No, that's... I don't know how you were so infused, if you were born on earth. But that... that is what I see. I can see it as plain as the stars in the sky. Well, if we were above ground, I mean.

Aubrey: Uh-huh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Heathcliff: I can see it as plain as that guy's hat. I see, though, you want ice magic. Hm. I'm afraid my mastery of the elements is somewhat limited. Ironically, I, too, can work in fire. Uh, ice is a little bit above my pay grade. I apologize for the shortcoming. If you have something, another idea in mind, I can see what I can do.

Aubrey: Okay. I draw a lot of attention with my magic. Anything that would like, protect me would be great? For when things inevitably get pissed?

Heathcliff: Hm. I tell you what I can do. I can provide you a limited amount of stealth, if you so desire, to one of your gauntlets.

Aubrey: Eh, I don't really sneak, but if you could just like, make my jacket magic, that would be great. Something that makes my jacket protect me, or something?

Heathcliff: I can make that happen. Let me see what I can do.

Griffin: And he sticks his paw out.

Travis: And Aubrey hands over her sick ass leather jacket.

Griffin: Uh, he—

Travis: It's sleeveless. In case anyone was wondering, it is sleeveless. It's really badass.

Griffin: That's a vest.

Justin: That's a vest.

Travis: Well, it was a jacket at one point in its life, y'know what I mean?

Griffin: Okay. Go ahead and roll acquisition for me.

Travis: What was that? I can't see it. Well, it's not great.

Griffin: That is a seven, plus two, is a nine.

Travis: Or, is it a ten?

Griffin: No, it's a nine. You can't roll twice, my friend. So, with a mixed success on an enchantment roll, your chosen tag, which would be one

armor, does get applied. But I get to pick a negative tag that I can put on it. I've got a good one.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: He rises back from the depths, after the same sort of flash of light and meow, the whole production. And he hands you your jacket, your sleeveless jacket.

Travis: Thank you.

Griffin: Uh, and as he opens up his palm, you see that... what is it made out of? Denim, I think you said earlier?

Travis: Leather. I said leather earlier, but whatever. Denim. Sure, let's go with denim.

Griffin: No, which is it?

Travis: That makes more sense.

Justin: Denim didn't require any sweet, sweet, sweet cows to die for fashion.

Travis: Yeah, so we're gonna go with denim.

Griffin: Okay, sweet moo cows. We don't want them hurtin'. Denim, though, comes from the denim... horse... and lots of them got got.

Justin: Hurr, I'm supple.

Travis: Denim horses are assholes.

Griffin: This is denim flayed from Ted Nugent, so that's great, actually. Um, he hands you back your denim jacket, and there are threads of just sort of bright, red, shimmering... well, thread, now coursing through this jacket as he hands it to you. And he says...

Heathcliff: Well, um... it is going to afford you some protection. I'm not entirely sure it'll be the most discreet garment around, but uh, here you have it.

Griffin: And he hands you back the jacket.

Aubrey: How so?

Griffin: I have given it the negative tag, "loud." Loud enough that it draws attention.

Travis: Oh, cool.

Griffin: This is a loud garment. It is loud sort of visually speaking. And I think it was probably there before, what with all of its patches and buttons and stuff, but it now has the tag "loud."

Heathcliff: And Duck. Anything you require, my friend?

Duck: You do jetpacks?

Heathcliff: A jetpack. Uh... a jet... pack.

Duck: Mm-hmm. You do jetpacks?

Heathcliff: Yeah. I mean, I'm thinking.

Duck: Just asking. I get to ask for anything. I always kind of wanted a jetpack, so I thought I'd ask.

Heathcliff: I could... I could give you a jetpack. I make no guarantees as to whether or not it would let you fly around or not, or if it would explode. I've never made a jetpack before, you gotta understand.

Duck: Not a very... very good jetpack, really.

Heathcliff: Alright, I'll make you a fuckin'—I'll make you a fuckin' jetpack, my friend.

Duck: No, but I mean, if you can't promise me that it's gonna let me like, fly and be alive, then I would say—

Heathcliff: No, let's make a jetpack, because now, I'm feeling attacked. Let's make a fucking jetpack, then.

Duck: Can I actually say, I feel like I don't actually... I'm not sure I want the pressure of having—

Heathcliff: No, one jetpack coming right up.

Duck: People expect big things from a man with a jetpack. That is kind of my... one of my concerns.

Griffin: He very slowly starts descending into the depths, like...

Heathcliff: Here I go. Jetpack.

Duck: You gotta produce if you got a jetpack.

Heathcliff: Jetpack time.

Duck: I mean, if you can make a good one...

Clint: [laughs]

Duck: You kind of spooked me... you spooked me with a little bit of the jetpack... he's gone. He's just gone down in his hole.

Griffin: If you actually... as you peer over the edge of the chasm, you see him looking up, still, like very slowly descending into the chasm, like...

Heathcliff: Okay, I'm gonna do it. I'm gonna make a jetpack.

Duck: If you can make a cool jetpack, then I want a jetpack. But like, you said we could ask for anything. You didn't really put any boundaries, and like, that's a thing that I would like is a jetpack. And I feel like I could make

good use of it. The—the—I thought about enchanting Beacon, but he probably wouldn't even let me.

Beacon: Yes.

Justin: I was waiting for Beacon to respond...

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: And you forgot it was you?

Travis: God, we're all on a certain meta level today. Hands raised, waiting for our own characters' responses.

Justin: Is Beacon there, Justin? Can I... talk with Beacon?

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: You have any real quiet sheaths? Just really, really quiet sheaths?

Griffin: He pops back up.

Heathcliff: You don't want me to make a jetpack? What do you want, a sheath or a jetpack? So you don't want the jetpack? Oh, I was so excited to make a jetpack. I could find a way to make you a jetpack.

Duck: It would output a lot of fire. And I don't... that would be a forest risk. It wouldn't even be the most convenient way of getting around the forest, which is kind of the main thing I was hoping for. Yeah, so, yeah. A jetpack. But...

Clint: [laughs]

Duck: Like a magic one? And not like, a fire one. Can you do that?

Griffin: [laughs]

Heathcliff: You're really tying my paws, here. You want a jetpack, but a magic one, not a fire one.

Duck: Yeah.

Heathcliff: You have to understand. When I create an item like this, I summon it from the ether. I have to have a crystal clear picture of it in my mind. And what you have just described is an object that, um, doesn't exist. And yeah, I just enchanted an old, old Narf gun, and so, I'm feeling a little feisty. Uh, feeling like I'm on a hot—a hot roll right now, as nobody says. So, yeah, one magic jetpack... coming right up?

Griffin: And he descends down into the chasm. Go ahead and roll acquisition.

Justin: You watch, it's gonna be like, a three. Hold on. Come on, big money, big money, big money... Oh.

Griffin: That's a six plus two. That's an eight.

Justin: Alright.

Griffin: He... so, uh, what Ned and Aubrey did is enchanting. What you did is summoning, which—

Travis: Thank you.

Griffin: ... different rules. On a seven to nine, the summoning works, but the item suffers during its creation. It has a positive and negative tag, chosen by the keeper, and it also has fragile as a tag. Uh, which is just sort of a narratively focused tag that, if things go very, very wrong, it can break. Uh, but he comes up from the depths, and he has kind of a confused look on his face, and he's like...

Heathcliff: I made it as good as I can. This... I will say this. This is the best magic jetpack in existence.

Duck: Well, thanks.

Heathcliff: So you can feel confident about that. But uh... here... here you go.

Griffin: And he extends his paw, and opens it up, and you see a magic jetpack. Um, I kind of like the visual of it being like a... like, two criss-cross belts that go around your chest, with an apparatus on the back that does the propulsion. Because you invented this from your mind's eye, maybe you could tell me what it looks like.

Justin: Well, I'm trying to think of Duck's... with Duck's age, I think it is pretty close to the rocketeer. Sort of that like, art, a little bit of like, art deco. That vibe. I don't know anything about architecture design or anything. But like, y'know, that sort of like, retro futurism. That's the word I was looking for. Thank you. Uh, that—

Travis: You're welcome.

Justin: That sort of vibe. Silver, two canisters that reach like, two points. And I feel like, from the bottom of them, there's just sort of like a blue, purple, constant thrumming, that's just like... makes them seem very scary. Like, ready to blow at any second.

Griffin: Okay. Yeah, I like that a lot. The tags—

Justin: I feel like Duck—it has an appearance that, as Duck sees it, he makes the instant decision that it will be behind glass, use in case of emergencies only.

Griffin: That is a good idea. This thing has the fragile tag, as a result of your roll. It also has a positive and negative tag, at my discretion. I'm going to give it the positive tag "quick," which is normally reserved—

Justin: [laughs] So much better than slow jetpacks.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: [slow jetpack noise]

Travis: "Do you want to take the jetpack?"

"No, let's just walk. Are you kidding me?"

Justin: Watch it go. [sputtering noise]

Griffin: Uh, it also has the negative tag "volatile," of course. This weapon is dangerous and unstable. Or, rather, this jetpack is dangerous and unstable. So, it'll get you there, and you can do some cool aerial stunts with it, but you better roll so good when you use it. Uh, so go ahead and add magic jetpack to your inventory there, Duck.

Justin: Alright. Got it, baby.

Griffin: And mark down those tags.

Justin: It's called the Flymaster, by the way.

Griffin: Sure, of course it is.

Justin: That's what it says on there.

Griffin: Because it has to rhyme...

Clint: With Narf Blaster.

Griffin: Yes. Um, all of the items rhyme today. Heathcliff smiles, and he takes those two earrings, and he says...

Heathcliff: Well, it seems like that's a good day of doing biz. I will see you all next time you have run into a quandary that you need my magical services to assist you in.

Griffin: And he takes those two earrings, and he closes his giant paw around them, and gives you a little wink, and then, descends down into the depths with a whoosh. A magic whoosh.

[music plays]

Griffin: Hey, everybody, this is Griffin McElroy. Your dungeon master, your best friend, and your classic car enthusiast. I love these old hot rods. Gotta get myself in one of these.

Thanks for listening to The Adventure Zone. It's the ninth episode of our Amnesty arc. We sure hope you're enjoying it. And I sure hope you enjoy these advertisements that I'm about to read.

The first one is for Texture. Hey, do you like to read magazines? Do you like to sort of get at sort of the details and data that's contained within these magazines, but you don't like having a bunch of paper on your person, because at the end of the day, gang, paper is so flammable. It's like, the most flammable thing that's out there. I want to tell you all about Texture now, and it's related to this stuff I just talked about. It is an app that offers over 200 top magazines, all in one place. No paper, no burning.

With Texture, you get complete issues and back issues for titles like The Atlantic, Entertainment Weekly, and The New Yorker, and they deliver newsworthy stories and relaxing entertainment anytime, anywhere. Usually, this service is \$9.99 a month, but they are giving our listeners a free trial. To start your seven day free trial, go to Texture.com/adventure. Go to Texture.com/adventure to start reading the latest issues of your favorite magazines today.

One last time, it's Texture.com/adventure.

Also want to tell you about MVMT. MVMT makes all kinds of stuff, fashion forward accessories. I got a couple MVMT watches. They are very, very sleek and stylish, and I love to wear them to show off what a fancy boy I can be. With watches, sunglasses, and bracelets, MVMT – and that's M-V-M-T, stylized – continues to revolutionize fashion on the belief that style should not break the bank.

MVMT watches start at just \$95. At a department store, you're looking at 400 to 500 bucks for a nice, fancy watch. With that kind of money, you

could buy an Xbox and play video games with Master Chief and Blinx the Time Sweeper. So really, think about where you want to put your 500 bucks. You can get the Blinx box, and still have the \$95 you need for a MVMT watch. To me, that seems like the best solution to this imaginary algebra problem I've concocted here.

But, you can also save 15% off today with free shipping and free returns, by going to MVMT.com/adventure. See why MVMT keeps growing. Check out their expanding collection. MVMT watches also make great gifts. Whether you're celebrating a grad, or your dad, 'cause fathers' day is coming up. But you can celebrate a daddy anytime. MVMT is the perfect place to shop for an affordable, timeless gift. Go to MVMT.com/adventure. Join the MVMT.

I also want to tell you about Green Leaf Baby. And these are babies that sort of fell into a big salad, and then, they fused with it. And it's a new cartoon that I'm working on, family friendly, promotes health, and it's called Salad Babies. I got distracted, there, because I actually want to tell you about Green Leaf Baby, which offers stylish and geeky gear for babies, moms, and bookworms. All of the fandoms are covered, from wizards and Jedi to dragons and Hobbitses.

Check out GreenLeafBaby.etsy.com and use the code ADVENTURE to save 15%. Now, they have the code here listed in all caps, but I don't know if you have to yell at your computer, but you might have to. ADVENTURE is the promo code to save 15% at GreenLeafBaby.etsy.com.

I also want to tell you about Susurrus. It is a game that you can play for free, right now, at SusurrusGame.com. And I'm gonna go ahead and spell that one for you, 'cause you probably need it. It is S-U-S-U-R-R-U-S game dot com. The world of interactive fiction just got a little bigger.

Susurrus: Season of Tides is a lushly illustrated, text-driven, urban fantasy game where your choices shape the world for other players. Begin your journey as a vampire, a werewolf, or a mage, and then, join your fellow players in one of ten factions as you dive into a supernatural underworld of conspiracies that goes all the way from the great old ones to the stars. To the stars.

Play your story for free at SusurrusGame.com. I'm gonna spell it one more time. It's S-U-S-U-R-R-U-S game dot com. That sounds very, very neat. Go check that out.

Hey, if you enjoyed those jumbotrons, and you want to end up getting one on the show, well, great news. We are going to reopen the sale of jumbotrons for The Adventure Zone pretty soon, here. We... here's the deal. We have gotten sort of overwhelmed by the response to folks who wanted to get jumbotrons on the show in the past, and haven't really been able to support the number of people who have come out. We tried a few ways to like, combat this, and this year, we are kind of trying something new. It's going to sound maybe a little bit strange, but uh, we're hopeful that it will help sort of manage the crowd a little bit more.

Maximum Fun is going to be doing a raffle that will let you enter for a chance to buy a jumbotron at your convenience. So, starting May 24th, listeners can head to MaximumFun.org/jumbotronraffle, and I don't know why I read that first part, because it is after May 24th. So if you want a jumbotron, go ahead and head there, and make your entry for an opportunity to purchase a personal jumbotron. The raffle will close on June 14th, and then after that, we will do a random drawing to choose folks who will be eligible to buy jumbotrons for the second half of 2018.

So again, you enter this raffle, and um, you might end up being able to purchase a jumbotron. I know that is strange. But demand has sort of surpassed the available slots, and so, the best way to, y'know, get these in folks' hands is with, appropriately enough, a roll of the dice. So, for complete details, please visit MaximumFun.org/jumbotronraffle, and you can email Daniel@MaximumFun.org with any questions.

Thanks to Maximum Fun to helping us out with that. You can go to MaximumFun.org, check out all the great shows they have there. If you want to hear other stuff we do, it's all at McElroyShows.com. And thank you to you for tweeting about the show using the #TheZoneCast hash tag. If you do that, you might end up as a character on the show. Characters like the ones you're about to meet here in the second half of this episode. We really appreciate you spreading the word, especially as we are still kind of, y'know, finding our way here in the second season of the show.

One last thing. We're doing a graphic novel with First Second that you can find and preorder right now at TheAdventureZoneComic.com. It's an adaptation of the first arc of Balance, Here There Be Gerblins. We're also gonna be going on a book tour, which you can find tickets for at McElroyshows.com/tours. That is almost sold out. We're doing four cities, and each show is gonna be kind of a Q&A, and a quick reading of one of the sections of the graphic novel. And the price of admission also gets you a copy of the graphic novel, so that will be really cool.

That is it. We are gonna be back in two weeks with the next episode of The Adventure Zone: Amnesty. So we will talk to you on June 14th. So see you then. Hang loose. Have a great summer. Talk to you later. Bye.

[theme music plays]

Griffin: So, Vincent has lead you all back through the catacombs, and onto the surface of Sylvain, back through the avenue of shops and restaurants, and across the bridge spanning the river at the center of town, right to the entrance of the castle that you spotted during your arrival. It's time to make yourselves known to the Interpreter, as you sort of promised when you showed up here. And he takes you across that bridge, and you are now in the courtyard in front of this castle.

It is a courtyard leading up towards a large staircase, into the castle's imposing front door. And as you walk through this courtyard, you see that big orange crystal that you saw earlier up close. And Aubrey, whatever like, attunement you have to magic stuff, you can feel the power radiating out of this thing. You feel a warmth coming from it. You almost feel like, kind of a sad, longing emanating from it, too.

Travis: Ooh.

Griffin: All of you, though, see something even more concerning at its base. There's a fleet of city guards standing in a perimeter around the crystal, and they are shepherding a line of residents of Sylvain in a queue toward it. And one by one, these residents, they reach the front of the line, and they produce a slip of paper to the guards, and they proceed to touch

the crystal, just for several seconds, before another guard steps in to quickly usher them away. And Vincent says...

Vincent: Uh, I would appreciate it if you would all give that crystal a wide berth. It—

Aubrey: What is that?

Vincent: Well, that's the heart of Sylvain. It's what sustains all of us over here.

Aubrey: What's everybody doing?

Vincent: They're getting their allotment of light for the day. They're filling up the ol' tank.

Travis: Aubrey looks at Duck and Ned, like...

Aubrey: So, what should we do? Y'all feel that?

Duck: Yeah, I don't feel anything.

Ned: No. Uh-uh.

Aubrey: Vincent, um... I can fee-ee-eeel the crystal? Is that normal?

Vincent: What do you feel, Aubrey?

Aubrey: Uh, like it wants a hug. Like I want to touch it.

Vincent: You absolutely can't touch it, Aubrey.

Aubrey: I want to touch it, though. Like really bad, I want to touch it.

Griffin: Vincent has been like, very, very affable for all of your interactions that you've had with him so far. But when you sort of reinforce that, his demeanor changes, and he says...

Vincent: Aubrey, you absolutely cannot touch it. I forbid it.

Aubrey: What would happen?

Vincent: I don't know what would happen, but—

Duck: Seems like she can touch it, then, right? I mean...

Aubrey: Like, the crystal wants me to touch it. It feels sad.

Griffin: He gestures to the crowd of people waiting to touch the crystal, and he says...

Vincent: Wouldn't you be sad, seeing this?

Griffin: He says...

Vincent: You can't touch the crystal. Earthlings are forbidden. The crystal was damaged, as you can see.

Griffin: And he gestures up, and sure enough, there's a huge chunk just sort of uh, carved off the side of it. He says...

Vincent: It was damaged long ago by an attack from your world against ours. That was led by humans, Aubrey. Humans are forbidden to even usually be this close to the crystal. Its power has faded since that attack. There's not enough light to go around. It is a sad state of affairs in Sylvain, and it's solely because of your people. So no, you cannot touch it. Come on, let's go. They're expecting us at—

Aubrey: Aren't you curious, though, why I can feel it?

Griffin: He sighs, and he says...

Vincent: I am, but not enough to allow something so risky. So profane. Come on.

Griffin: And he leads you into the castle. You head into this large entrance hall, where there is a long, blue carpet, leading between about a dozen pillars of carved marble, sort of lining either side of the carpet. And each one has an armed guard stationed in front of it. And you walk down this carpet, to the end of the hall, where there is a large, wooden door. And he stops, and he says...

Vincent: So, I've got to go in first. A guard will tell you when you're allowed to enter. You all seem quite pleasant, your obsession with touching the forbidden crystal aside. And I would prefer to continue working with you as the Pine Guard, if possible. You would not believe some of the humans I've had to interact with over the past few decades.

Aubrey: Ooh, dish!

Vincent: I'm not going to dish the goss.

Aubrey: Dish the goss!

Vincent: I am not like that big cat downstairs.

Aubrey: Ooh, are you gossiping about the big cat?

Vincent: Oh, you caught me in a trap. Anyway, I like the three of you, so please be on your best behavior in there. I know how vital the work you do on earth is for our peace to stay intact, but the rest can't be said for all Sylvankind. Just keep a level head. You're gonna do great.

Griffin: And he gives you a big furry thumbs up, and he slips through the door, and closes it behind him.

Ned: Well, I know one thing about Sylvain. The military has got to be the number one employer. There's guards every whipstitch.

Aubrey: Whipstitch?

Duck: Whipstitch?

Ned: It's a colloquialism.

Aubrey: Okay.

Duck: Alright.

Aubrey: I know what Ned's gonna say. Duck, I want to touch...

Duck: Yeah, you've made that pretty clear.

Aubrey: Yeah, I wasn't secretive about—maybe not right now.

Duck: Right.

Aubrey: But like... at some point. You gonna help me out with that?

Duck: Why do you need to touch it?

Aubrey: I don't know, Duck. It's just... okay, imagine walking by, say, a tree. And suddenly, that tree made you like, buzz, and like, you could feel the presence of that tree. And I mean, really feel that tree. Do you think you would just be like, "Hm, cool," and keep walking by it?

Duck: Yeah, it doesn't exactly work like that, but I see where you're coming from.

Aubrey: Right.

Duck: But um, I don't necessarily want to get on the bad side of these fellas and ladies. It seems like kind of a... kind of a dangerous, dangerous thing to try. They say you shouldn't touch the crystal.

Aubrey: I'm not gonna touch it now. And—and I will continue to work through the proper means to convince them to allow me to touch it.

Duck: Yeah. I mean, if you file all the required permits—

Aubrey: But at some point—

Ned: No, no, that's not the way to go. You gotta bend the rules a little bit.

Aubrey: No thank you, Granddad Devil. I know, at some point, I might have to break the rules to touch that stone. And Duck, I'm gonna need you to be okay with that. I'll give you a heads up before it happens.

Duck: Maybe the opposite. Maybe even the opposite. Maybe you just don't tell me that it's happened, and then maybe I'm not around. How's that sound?

Aubrey: Okay. We'll figure it out.

Duck: Okay, well, I tell you what. Maybe we should—I've had a hell of a good time shopping and not touching crystals today. We do have the one water monster that we do want to go—that has marked us for death.

Aubrey: Mm-hmm.

Duck: That we may want to go ahead and...

Ned: There's that.

Duck: ...see if we can rectify that situation. And then we'll get back to all the great shopping and crystal talk that uh, that this podcast is known for.

Justin: [laughing]

Griffin: You hear the sound of a spear's butt hitting the ground, and the door in front of you opens, and you enter into the castle's royal hall.

[music plays]

Griffin: It is a cold room, almost entirely carved from the same marble as the columns outside, with a ceiling that stretches into the heavens, painted with an intricate mural of dozens of Sylvans of all shapes and sizes, all just touchin' the crystal. Almost as if to taunt you, Aubrey. And surrounding you are rows of benches that climb the walls of the rooms, designated for

observers to come and watch the proceedings that take place here. They are all completely empty.

In front of you are three stall pedestals, adorned with crests, noting various royal titles. And seated on top of them are three individuals who, based on the crests beneath them, you assume serve important roles in this city. There is the Minister of the Arcane, a short, Sylvan woman, dressed in a thick coat with several thick scarves draped around her neck. She's reading a large tome, atop her pedestal, and does not appear to acknowledge your presence as you enter.

In the center pedestal is the Minister of Preservation, an older, large, spectral man, who looks down from his pedestal at your entry intensely, eyeing you with disdain. And atop the final pedestal is the Minister of Defense. It's Vincent, who gives you a wink and a quick OK gesture with his hand as you step inside.

And the door shuts behind you, and the sound echoes through the chamber. The three ministers are sitting atop their pedestals silently. They say nothing as you enter.

Aubrey: [whispers] Should we kneel?

Duck: Yep, maybe.

Minister of Preservation: [yells] Silence!

Duck: Oh. Okay.

Griffin: The spectral man shouts...

Minister of Preservation: You will not speak until the Interpreter has arrived. Do you understand me?

Duck: Yeah—

Minister of Preservation: Silence! Silence! God!

Travis: In the meantime, Aubrey almost, uh, offhandedly, because she has been doing it so much, kind of starts nervously doing her little like, fire jumping from finger to finger.

Griffin: The spectral man sees you and says...

Minister of Preservation: What are you do—don't make a fire. Just wait silently for the—

Aubrey: No, I was just—

Minister of Preservation: Silence! Come on! We had a whole thing about silence.

Aubrey: I didn't even notice I was doing it, sorry.

Ned: You people are so rule-oriented.

Minister of Preservation: Oh my God.

Ned: Just relax.

Minister of Preservation: The non-silence is almost unbelievable at this point. It's—oh, oh, oh.

Griffin: And he hushes up as the sound of a loud creak fills the chamber, and you see a door behind the three pedestals open. And a Sylvan girl, no older than 13, you would estimate, steps through the door, and onto a platform that is raised behind the three pedestals.

She looks tired, partially because she is wearing what appears to be a long nightgown that reaches her feet. And there is a humble throne on this platform, which she approaches, and puts a hand on, but doesn't sit down. And she peers over the railing of this platform, and looks at the three of you, one at a time, and then gives a faint smile and says...

Interpreter: Nice to meet you.

Griffin: And then she turns, and shuffles back through the door, and out of the royal hall. And the Minister of Preservation, on top of his pedestal, says...

Minister of Preservation: Yes, well. Another inspiring declaration.

Duck: [snorts]

Minister of Preservation: So, then, humans, go ahead. Introduce yourselves.

Aubrey: Okay.

Duck: I'm Duck Newton. It's a nickname. I'm from the forestry service of the Monongahela State Forest. And... the Pine Guard, apparently.

Minister of Preservation: You smell of, uh, earth and mulch. It's not entirely unpleasant. Usually, your kind have a certain stink about you. Yours is above average.

Duck: Yeah. I'm not sure where you'd be gettin' the mulch from. That's a...

Minister of Preservation: It's just dirt. Dirt, I—fresh, nice, good, forest dirt.

Duck: Oh, dirt. Sure, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Dirt. Woods.

Aubrey: Uh, my name is Aubrey, uh, Little. Or you can call me the Lady Flame, if you're a fan. And um, I'm kind of from all over. Human. Pine Guard. And I am dying to know what I smell like.

Minister of Preservation: Hm, yours is... unremarkable. You smell of denim. You smell of crisp denim.

Travis: Fresh from the horse.

Ned: And I am Ned Aloysius Chicane, master of all I survey.

Aubrey: What?

Ned: Toast master.

Duck: Okay.

Minister of Preservation: Are you eating something right now?

Duck: Do you have something in your mouth?

Minister of Preservation: Do you have—do you have a jaw breaker in your mouth?

Justin: Dad, do you have a jaw breaker in your fucking mouth? You legally have to tell me if you have a jaw breaker in your mouth.

Clint: No. I don't—I don't do jaw breakers.

Justin: In podcast history...

Clint: I don't do jaw breakers anymore.

Justin: Are you eating during the show? Is it ice? You have to tell me, legally.

Clint: That's the truth. Look on the camera.

Justin: Rewind your... everybody rewind your audio.

Griffin: We all heard it.

Justin: Second guess for my Dad. You heard it.

Travis: Is this like, now you're saying you're not eating now. Were you eating 30 seconds ago when we started asking you about it?

Clint: I did have a bite.

Justin: Ah, okay. What are you—okay, you hungry boy. What is so important that you had to eat it during this great podcast?

Travis: Which, I will let everyone know, is at four o'clock in the afternoon. Not a traditional meal time.

Clint: I have blood sugar issues, you guys.

Justin: Here we go.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Justin: Here we go. Here we go.

Clint: Maybe you don't know that, but I do have these issues I have to deal with.

Griffin: He says...

Minister of Preservation: Uh, I see. I see. I see. Have the three of you any confirmed kills of the Abominations on the other side? Do you have anything to prove your mettle?

Aubrey: Yeah, actually. We put one down.

Minister of Preservation: I see. I uh, I suppose you will do. Not that we have any choice in the matter. So, my name is Woodbridge, Minister of Preservation. I ensure—

Aubrey: Hi!

Woodbridge: Hi. Yes. I ensure the survival of our kind, in the wake of your world's countless, ruthless assaults.

Aubrey: Yeah, we can be real assholes.

Griffin: And he points to the uh, the woman dressed in all of the thick clothing to his side, and says...

Woodbridge: This taciturn individual to my right is the Minister of the Arcane, Janelle, who spends her days in unending study of Sylvain's deepest mysteries. And to my left is Vincent, Minister of Defense, whom I assume, based on the fact that he winked at you as you entered, that you have already befriended. I encourage you to take that endorsement with a large grain of salt. He has never met an earthling whom he was not instantly fond of.

Aubrey: Um, miss Janelle, was it?

Griffin: She does not acknowledge you. She is deep, nose deep, in this book that she's reading.

Aubrey: I'm a human that can do magic.

Griffin: That does it. She—she looks up, just a second, and kind of eyes you over.

Aubrey: Watch! Pchoo!

Griffin: What is the pchoo? You can't just say pchoo.

Travis: It's like a fire in my hands. Like I'm holding a flame.

Griffin: Sure. Once you... since you're trying to do it to accomplish something, right? You're trying to do it to impress this person, I think you should probably roll use magic.

Travis: Ooh. Not great. Uh, it's a six.

Griffin: Yeah, go ahead and mark experience there, Aubrey. And there is a glitch. Oh, it's not a glitch. On a miss... okay. This is what it says for use magic. On a miss, you lose control of the magic. This never ends well. So, you do whip up a zesty fireball. But instead of staying put in your hand, it launches forward, as if with a mind of its own, toward the pedestal of the Minister of the Arcane, who reflexively ducks down beneath her pedestal as the fireball collides with it, setting it ablaze, and...

Aubrey: That was an accident! That was an accident!

Griffin: ...and engulfing the book that was sitting on top of it. And after that impact, you see her reappear, and wave her hand. And as she does so, the fire swirls, and then dies down, and she sits back down at her pedestal and looks at the now charred and destroyed book in front of her, which she kind of sighs, closes the book, and peers at you.

Aubrey: I cannot stress enough how much of an accident that was, and also, if you think about it, a clear indication that I might need your help.

Griffin: Uh, Woodbridge, the Minister of Preservation, looks horrified that you just seemingly attacked one of the ministers. But Janelle says...

Janelle: It's fine, Woodbridge. It's fine. I mean, this book was rumored to contain the secrets of a spell that, if prepared properly, could cure any known disease. And I had just gotten to the good part. But oh well. Spilled milk and all that. So, what can I do for you?

Aubrey: I... am good at fire. Sort of. All evidence to the contrary. But that's all I can do, and I need more control, and I need more versatility, and I need to be able to do things other than just set stuff on fire, please. If you could just... I—I—I will read a book about it if that's easier, or if you want to like, tap me on the forehead, and I fall asleep for a minute, and I come back and I know a bunch of stuff, that would be great. Or if there's like, a magic pie I could eat, that would be cool. Whatever. Whatever you've got, I need it.

Janelle: Unfortunately, I am fresh out of magic pie, so we may have to do things the old fashioned way. I need you to understand, though, Aubrey. I live a life that necessitates unwavering focus on my studies to unlock Sylvain's secrets, so that our people might live a better life. And yet, your presence here is a puzzle I will no doubt be consumed by until it is solved. Which is deeply, profoundly inconvenient.

That being said, I have set aside a few brief moments of each day from my studies to fulfill my biological requirements, and breathe a few breaths of the

sweet night air. I suppose I can grant you some of this time, Aubrey Little. I will learn how you came across your fledgling power, and you will learn from me how to hone it. All that I would ask is that, when you do visit me for these lessons, you will wait for me to be ready. Tell me, is patience one of your more valued virtues—

Aubrey: Yes.

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] She sighs.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Thank you, everybody. I'll be here all day.

Griffin: She says...

Janelle: No, I detect an unrelenting impatience that dwells within you. It makes sense, now, that fire is the element that has answered your call. Fire is foolhardy. It is impulsive. It is a force of blind destruction. You treat it as a weapon, and it behaves as such. Consider this, until next we meet, Aubrey Little: you cannot speak to the other elements because you do not know their language.

You will be unable to harness all of the elements until you stop thinking of them as primitive weapons, and instead, treat them as they truly are. As blessings from a cosmic force, beyond your current comprehension. I look forward to our first lesson.

Griffin: And then she reaches into her pocket, and she pulls out what appears to be a small pocket watch, which she looks over, and says...

Janelle: Three minutes and 51 seconds? I'll have to make this up tonight.

Griffin: And then she reaches under her pedestal, and retrieves another gigantic book, which she cracks open and dives right back into.

Aubrey: Oh. Okay.

Griffin: Woodbridge says, uh...

Woodbridge: Do you... do you have anything else? We already sort of did the big meeting with the Interpreter, so if you—

Aubrey: Who is that, by the way?

Woodbridge: The Interpreter is um, something of a leader of our community. She... well, she literally interprets the will of Sylvain by speaking to it, and understanding its—

Aubrey: Like, the stone?

Woodbridge: The stone is but a part of Sylvain. Sylvain is the planet upon which we all stand.

Aubrey: But she can speak to the stone?

Woodbridge: She can speak to the planet.

Duck: She seemed kind of disinterested. Is that fair to say?

Woodbridge: I do not think it's appropriate to comment on her demeanor. She... her job here is impossible for any other person alive to do. So, uh, I do—I would not hold her exhaustion against her, Duck.

Aubrey: Is she actually a teenager, or is this one of those like, Narnia things?

Woodbridge: She is young, yes. She is fairly new to the role that has been placed upon her shoulders. It is not one of these Narnia things.

Duck: Can we go back yet?

Woodbridge: Yeah, I wish you would. It would be great. I—

Duck: Excellent. 'Cause I feel like we're about as well-equipped to do what we need to do—

Woodbridge: Yeah, is that a jetpack? I... what's going on there?

Duck: Please be careful with it. It honestly scares the shit out of me. I don't even really like carrying it. I'm really getting pretty stoked about taking it home. I'm half tempted to leave it on the ground as we go back to our world, but I figure I'll hold onto it. If nothing else, I can chuck it at something and try to blow it up.

Woodbridge: Um...

Duck: It's called a Flymaster.

Woodbridge: Ah, rad name. Please do go, though. That would be fantastic for me, and for, y'know, everyone.

Aubrey: Yeah, I guess we'll go, and I'll think about my magic as a gift from the cosmos.

Griffin: The guards by the door pound their spears down again, and it opens. And the three of you head back out to the entrance hall, and moments later, you are met by Vincent, who seems winded after running all the way down here to meet you. And he walks with you back through the city to the archway, back to Kepler. And he nods to the squirrel-headed guard, who catches the moonlight on their shield, and shines it onto the gate, which fills with light. And Vincent says...

Vincent: Uh, you all did fair... y'know what, it actually didn't go the best, because you did almost explode one of the ministers, which I—to be fair to you, I didn't say you shouldn't do. But I thought it maybe would've been assumed that you shouldn't try to blow up one of the people you were meeting with. But um, it seemed like she was okay with it, so uh, I would say, five outta ten.

Aubrey: I'll take it.

Ned: Yeah, that's not bad for us.

Griffin: He says...

Vincent: Um, one thing before you go. Have any of you seen any good movies lately?

Aubrey: Hm?

Duck: Sorry?

Griffin: He says...

Vincent: I—I know, it's not really part of the gig. I just, I'm fascinated by your world's pop culture. It's just, it's not important. I just thought, y'know, if you had any recommendations, or reviews, or anything. Mama used to smuggle me in some DVDs from time to time.

Aubrey: Have you seen, uh... you seen Black Panther yet?

Vincent: I have not. It is, uh—is that one out on one of your DVDs?

Aubrey: Not yet, but when it is, I'll get you a copy. It's...

Ned: Oh. Does the name Tommy Wiseau mean anything to you?

Vincent: He's from our world.

Travis: [laughs]

Ned: That does not...

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: There it is.

Vincent: Yes, I know that's something of a mystery in your world, of where he originates from. And I can go ahead and put that to bed. He is a mummy man, so yes. I'm very familiar with him. Quite a scoundrel, that one.

Duck: Listen. This is...

Vincent: Right, the monster, the monster, the monster. It's so much more important than my hobby or whatever. But—

Ned: But we can bring you—we'll bring you something. Uh, we'll hit uh, Redbox, and make you a bunch.

[music plays]

Vincent: Okay, that sounds perfect. Okay, good luck.

Aubrey: Okay, bye!

Griffin: And uh, the three of you step through the archway.

[music plays]

Griffin: Ned, it is Saturday night, late Saturday night, and that means it's time for your big television debut for Saturday Night Dead, the television show that you do because you said you did it like three episodes ago. You're back at the Cryptonomica. It is after everything else that transpired today. By the way, this whole arc so far has just been one very wild day that you all have had.

And now you're coming down off the end of it, and you're back at the Cryptonomica, about to do a quick television show. Can you—can you give me a little bit of flavor for Saturday Night Dead? What's the vibe you're going for, here?

Clint: Well, uh, I don't want to go full on, old school, horror movie night. We're using cameras in the Cryptonomica, and because of that, it's kind of a natural setting. But it'll be sort of like a, uh, Night Gallery feel. Maybe I'm standing in front of the case with uh, George Washington's upper plate, or

y'know, I'm standing in front of the case with Blackbeard's treasure or something. So, it's always visually very different, very atmospheric.

Griffin: Are you dressed up like the Crypt Keeper, or is it just sort of Ned giving you full Ned?

Clint: No, I don't want to—I don't want it to be quite that hokey. But Ned is a very stylish dresser, y'know? He's got the long scarf, and he's got the CliCs, and the weskit. Y'know, he's—he's dressed up for it. I mean, he wants to put on a good show.

Griffin: Alright. I think there's a couple folks from the TV station, which, there's only one of like, a very small handful that services, like, a pretty large area, since you all are in the radio quiet zone. They're just sort of operating the lights. There's probably a camera person there. And then, you have Kirby, with a headset on, I think, helping out, which is sort of some stage management. That's what they call it for television shows.

Travis: Yep.

Griffin: Uh, and he slides the headset off and walks over to you, and he's like...

Kirby: Ned, man, I gotta tell you. I'm pretty nervous. This is um, I feel like we didn't rehearse this at all. In fact, I kind of thought we had a dress rehearsal scheduled for earlier in the day, but then, you weren't here at all today. And so, I just think that maybe this has a good chance of being a big disaster.

Ned: I missed that. I'm sorry. I should've checked my Google calendar. But it'll be fine. Listen, this is all about energy, Kirby. This is all about bringing a spontaneity and an excitement to it. It's a live show, a live program, beaming into literally, tens of people's homes. Let's use that nervousness. Use that fear, that energy, to create something amazing.

Kirby: Yeah, I mean, that's all gonna be on you. I think it's gonna go quite bad, but uh, good—good luck. We're on in five, four... I'm doing the thing with my hand... two... I can't talk. [whispers] One. Go.

[creepy music plays]

Ned: Welcome, my friends! This is Saturday Night Dead. Live, or I should say, dead, from the Cryptonomica. I am your host, Ned Superstar Chicane. And I welcome you to this palace of the bizarre, this home for humbuggery. This is the place where you can surrender yourself for the next two hours to enjoy one of the finest science fiction horror movies ever made. Set here, in the fabulous Cryptonomica.

Our movie tonight is Beast With a Thousand Eyes. So tonight, we are going to take you through this movie, and also, let you come to know some of the amazing things we have here at the Cryptonomica, located just off Route 16155. All you have to do is come down and see us. We're open eight hours a day, five days a week, 342 days a year. And we are there to serve all of your bizarre, weird needs, when it comes to the macabre.

So, shall we begin?

Kirby: Yes.

Duck: Yeah.

Aubrey: Yeah?

Kirby: I don't know if I was supposed to talk. Yeah, go for it.

Ned: I am so excited to have with me, here, joining me on stage, on scene. I would like my two friends, uh, Duck Newton, to come out. Also, the magical, mystical, Lady Flame. Come out here and take a bow, you two.

Aubrey: Okay!

Ned: Come on, Duck. Come on. Just a—just for a minute. Just come on.

Duck: Hey everybody.

Ned: This is the amazing Lady Flame. Do a trick!

Aubrey: Oh, um.

Ned: Do some of—don't burn anything down, but do a little magic, why don't you?

Aubrey: Okay.

Travis: It's going to be a really, like, fairly cool, sleight of hand. Especially with a camera. Is this your card kind of thing. Oh, but at first, it's one of those tricks where it's like, "Oh, it seems like she got it wrong." Right? And she's like, "Oh, yeah, you're right." And then she opens up her jacket, and there's a patch of like, y'know, the three of clubs sewn into the inside. And she's like, "Oh, was this it?" Whoa!

Ned: [laughing] Amazing! Magic like that is a common occurrence, here, at the Cryptonomica. State route 16155. Come down and see us. Now, Duck, show them your talking sword trick.

Duck: I don't know what you're talking about. You asked me to come out here and give an announcement about forest safety, and I am happy to remind everybody that after you finish having fun out in the forest, uh, it's great to dump water on your fire. Everybody knows that one. But do give it a good stir around, once you've dumped the water on, because sometimes, there can be small embers that won't be extinguished. So it is important that you sort of create a dirt slurry.

Anyway, yup. So, stay safe out there.

Ned: Thank... thank you, Duck. And now you know. And knowing is half the battle. Now you've met some of the folks here, responsible for our fabulous show. Let's get right to some of the thrills and chills, starring Paul Birch, Lorna Thayer, and Dona Cole. This is the Beast with a Thousand Eyes.

[creepy music plays]

Kirby: A mil—million eyes.

Ned: What?

Kirby: It's a million eyes.

Ned: That's what I said. Beast with a Million Eyes.

Kirby: You said a thousand. It's fine. Start the movie.

[creepy music plays]

Griffin: We see a prison, two counties away. We see a common area. We see a pair of guards, watching a small assembly of prisoners, who are all seated in front of a small television. And one of the prisoners is holding the remote, and flipping through the channels, trying to find something for the group to watch.

And they flip through some home shopping stuff, they flip through a couple of infomercials, Adult Swim, probably. They flip through Saturday Night Live, just scoot right on past that. They flip past Saturday Night Dead, leaving it lingering on the channel for just a few moments, before changing it to another home shopping network special.

And a prisoner seated a couple rows back walks up, and puts his hand on the prisoner holding the remote. And this prisoner says...

[theme music plays]

Prisoner: Would you do me a favor and flip back the channel for me?

Griffin: And the other prisoner does, and this man laughs. And he points at Ned on the television screen, and he says...

Prisoner: [laughs] I know that bloke.

[theme music plays]

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[tapping sound]

Justin: Hi, everybody. I'm Justin McElroy.

Sydnee: And I'm Dr. Sydnee McElroy.

Justin: Every week, we release a medical history podcast called Sawbones.

Sydnee: We go over the history of the dumbest, grossest, weirdest stuff humans have been doing to each other since the dawn of mankind.

Justin: But it's a funny show.

Sydnee: But it's also so disgusting and stomach turning, you won't believe it.

Justin: But it's also like... [laughs] Funny. It's funny.

Sydnee: It is the wildest, grossest, nastiest stuff you can imagine.

Justin: It's a real hoot. It's called Sawbones, and we release it every week on iTunes, wherever podcasts are sold, and right here on MaximumFun.org.

[music plays]

Allie: Hi, I'm Allie Goertz.

Julia: And I'm Julia Prescott. And we're the hosts of Everything's Coming Up Simpsons.

Allie: [simultaneously] Everything's Coming Up Simpsons.

Julia: Every episode, we cover a different episode of the Simpsons that is a favorite of our special guest's.

Allie: We've had guests that are show runners, and writers, and voice actors, like Nancy Cartwright.

Nancy: I got a D-! I passed!

Allie: And we've also had people that are on the Max Fun network already.

Speaker 1: Homer wearing that golf outfit is so funny.

Julia: I love it.

Speaker 1: And there's... when he gets super into golf, he's wearing the golf hat in bed.

Allie: In bed!

Julia: We've had Weird Al Yankovich on the show.

Weird Al: I was just struck by how sharp the writing is. I mean, that's no surprise, 'cause it's the Simpsons. But I mean like, you can't say that about a lot of TV shows; particularly ones that, at that point, had been on the air for 14 years.

Allie: Find us on MaximumFun.org, iTunes, or wherever you get your podcasts.

Julia: Alright, smell ya later.