

The Adventure Zone: Amnesty – Episode 16

Published October 5th, 2018

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Griffin: Previously on The Adventure Zone...

[theme music plays]

Griffin: You hear music coming from Minerva. It's like a sad and beautiful like, acoustic blues tune. You see a black Imperial Crown Coup wrapped around a tree. In the driver's seat is your accomplice.

Clint: I fill my pockets, and then, I gotta run into the woods.

Griffin: I think you are surprised when you cut clean through the pole.

Aubrey: Whoops!

Griffin: And it falls over, into the store. The counterweight and the tram, and your car, kind of tied up in this cable, are very, very slowly, slowly, skidding to a halt.

Justin: Beacon has now coiled its way around the goat's throat.

Duck: Y'all don't know me. Listen, I—I would not just kill your friend lying here unarmed on the ground like this.

Beacon: But I most definitely would.

[theme music plays]

Griffin: Maybe we should start with like, a refresher, 'cause it's been a Gregorian calendar year since we've played this game. In this one, you hunt big monsters, or sometimes—

Clint: Ooh, scary.

Griffin: Yeah, sometimes. It is a little scary. I'm gonna go ahead and give this one PG-13.

Travis: Griffin, have we revealed yet that we're the real monsters?

Griffin: Yeah. I think if you've been paying attention to like, the subtext of the podcast, we have... The Walking Dead is actually maybe even us, if you can believe it.

Clint: Oh, nice. Well, I don't need it, because I've taken copious notes. But I'm sure the other two—

Griffin: Okay, well why don't you—

Clint: The other two might need it.

Griffin: Yeah. Why don't you lead us, then, Dad, in prayer?

Clint: Uhh... dear Lord, please bless us with recognition. With cognitive abilities to remember all of the many wonderful things that have happened, and thank you for the blessings of podcasts.

Justin: Alright, he doesn't know. [crosstalk]

Griffin: He has no idea, yeah.

Justin: Just pullin' it out of his old ass.

Clint: Amen.

Griffin: So, basically, things have been happening—

Justin: Hmm. [laughs]

Griffin: --that are bad. Bad things have happened that are bad, like accidents. You had uh, Danimal's wreck because of the Gatorade bottle, you had the Pizza Hut sign falling into the building, and now you had the funicular tram. Something went wrong with its brake mechanism, and it fell,

and was only prevented from wrecking the base station and the people inside of it because of Ned and Aubrey and the brave sacrifice of the Lincoln Continental.

So, that has sort of been the main threat. There... it's kind of followed a pattern where there's been a sudden storm, and as it passes, that is when things start to go wrong. You have also seen, now, these hooded figures that now, you know to be these goat men that kind of resemble some of the creatures, including Vincent, that you have seen over in Sylvain. And Duck, you were in the middle of a sort of standoff where you had one of them taken captive with Beacon wrapped around its throat, with two more sort of facing you down.

Um, what other sort of stuff has been... Aubrey has kind of had some issues with her magic, and her not really understanding how to make it uh, work reliably, I guess.

Travis: I would say that she has some reluctance to safety and danger, and y'know, concerns.

Griffin: Sure.

Justin: I think it's great that Travis' roles in The Adventure Zone have been such that, should he actually roll unfavorably, he has to create a narrative reason why this is happening. Certainly, this is not within the bounds of reality. Certainly, there's a narrative reason why my rolls are bad.

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: Justin, the dice tell the story, y'know? I'm just—

Justin: [laughing] The dice are telling the story.

Travis: I'm a humble messenger, but the dice truly pin the tale. On the donkey.

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] Let's see, is there any other... We also had Ned sort of realizing that uh, it was Aubrey's house that he robbed, and that was sort of a fateful event in this campaign. It was the last robbery that he and his partner had before uh, they had their wreck that left the partner behind.

And Duck, you had, let's see... a vision. A pretty bad vision of a meteor falling planet side, back in the first episode. Anything else that we need... You met the Mothman, that was cool.

Travis: Duck has a sister.

Griffin: Duck has a sister. He also saved Juno from the funicular falling. Oh, the uh—these goat men had the um, the tools from Danimal's car, the one that wrecked. So they took what seemed like his arborist tools from the vehicle, after it crashed.

I think that's it. I think we might be belaboring now. Y'all ready to hop back in, now that we have sort of some ground work?

Clint: Yeah!

Justin: Yes.

Griffin: Okay. I mean, let's pick things up with Duck. That is sort of the most pressing thing that I'm curious how it is going to resolve. You have this one, uh, goat man held captive. You have the sword to its throat, or rather, I guess, around its throat, which is sort of a unique way to put a sword to something's throat. And you have these two goat men that you are facing off against; one with these long shears, and one with a big shovel.

And as you and Beacon say this badass shit, the two goat men facing you down don't really... they really take a beat, here. They don't know how to respond. They don't look scared as much as they look... they look confused. Uh, they look like the possibility of one of them being in danger actually never even occurred to them.

And I think they have a beat here where they are just kind of stopped still in their tracks, and uh, just sort of stare at you, waiting for your next move. What do you do?

Justin: Uh, I'm gonna try to talk to them.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: And it sounds a little something... that's a weird intro. I should always do that before I start talking.

Griffin: [laughs] And now I speak.

Justin: And now, my character speaks.

Griffin: [laughs]

Duck: Listen, y'all, I'm gonna be honest with you. He's got a mind of his own. And this is—I'm not playing good cop, bad cop. You better start talking so I can call this whole thing off, 'cause he will decapitate your friend.

Beacon: Mm, Duck Newton tells the truth. Nothing would please me more. Please, discusssssss.

Travis: This is great, because Justin's been recording the shit out of the Sawbones audiobook, and so, Duck Newton's voice has changed and become a lot deeper.

Justin: Yeah, he's down... he's down here, 'cause this is all I have left.

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, the people on the tour we're about to go on are just gonna get sort of tatters. Tatters of Justin's soul.

Justin: You know when I get—well, I got one of those Hollywood doctors to give me the shots of the good stuff to keep the glitter and glamour spilling out my pores for the ticket buyers, of course.

Griffin: Uh, these two goat men that you're facing off with, they look at each other. And the one holding the shovel kind of blinks, and then, says...

Goat: [bleating]

Griffin: And you immediately realize that they do not speak your common human tongue. They really have no way of speaking to you. You don't even know if they understood what you just said. They obviously understood that their compatriot here is in danger, but that's about the long and short of it.

I guess my question for you is like, what are you hoping to accomplish with this hostage situation?

Justin: So here are the questions for me as a player. One, I'm obviously outnumbered and in a great deal of danger. Can I secure my safety? Second, I assume, because of the structure of the show, that these people have... no, these goats have bad intent. But Duck, in the world, does not know that. So that is... I'm trying to ascertain, I think, that. Is this a situation where these are hostile, or, y'know, what's the deal? Those are the two things I'm trying to achieve.

Griffin: Follow up question. This goat man that you have held hostage is, y'know, has human characteristics and also animal characteristics. Does Duck feel an actual sort of reluctance to commit violence to this thing? Obviously, the big, y'know, omnibear that you guys fought in the woods, and the water ghost that you fought, you didn't necessarily have that element of, y'know, um, personification, I guess, for lack of a better term.

Justin: Yeah. Well, and I think also, this is a situation where he has managed to get the upper hand, and Duck is not the sort of dude who's just gonna like, decapitate an unarmed creature that he has pounced upon with nary a word spoken one way or the other. I mean, he is... like, even if it was just an animal and not a personified animal, like it didn't attack him yet. It may be responsible for some bad stuff, but he's not gonna like, decapitate the thing just because he has the opportunity to.

Griffin: Sure. Okay.

Justin: He may come to regret that, but that is where he is coming from.

Griffin: Let's do this, then. I think this is probably gonna be a manipulate someone. I think that's how we codify this, and it's how we move the plot forward. You want them to do something, you have something that... you have leverage, which is this captive. Um, so, I think just to firm this up and to move forward, you tell them what you want them to do, and you roll plus charm, and you give them a reason. Which, I think your reason here is just, "Or I'll kill your friend." Or not friend, but y'know. Fellow goat man.

Justin: And I'm definitely using some like, hand motions to try to indicate like, basically just weapons down. Like calm. Y'know what I mean? Like, calming, like I would probably with an animal. As effective as that is. I have no idea. Uh, roll 2d6... uh, oh no. It's a four. It's a four, isn't it? Oh no.

Griffin: Oh, buddy. Oh, pal.

Travis: Oh nooo.

Justin: Oh, bad.

Griffin: Uh, okay. I'm gonna take a hard move here. Um, they... I think they get one over on you. The one with the shovel sort of just starts taking a step back. It's holding onto its shovel. It actually grips a little bit tighter to its shovel, because it doesn't want to lose this tool. The one with the shears starts to put it down, and then, I think its legs just sort of compress and then spring forward at you, just so blinding fast, and closes the gap between the two of you.

And I think before you or Beacon have the chance to react, the shears go through the goat man that you are holding hostage, right through its shoulder, and into your shoulder.

Duck: Oh man, that's my shoulder!

Griffin: You have, uh—

Travis: Oh no!

Griffin: You take three harm as uh, as this shear goes into you. And it pulls it back, and the goat man that you were holding captive falls to the ground, and is bleating. And bleeding. Hey, alright.

Justin: Hey. Nice.

Griffin: Uh, just bleating up a storm. And in this moment, you are looking at this goat man that you're holding hostage, or you were just moments ago. I think at this point, Beacon is now off this thing, and the two of you are just kind of on the ground. And the other two goat men have been kind of emotionless, right? Kind of robotic, although they are not robots. Almost like, confused by this hostage situation, and the emotions that you were trying to conjure up. The one on the ground is fucking... it's terrified. It is terrified, and it is exhibiting a lot more emotion than the other two ever did.

And the one with the shears gets ready to leverage another strike, down at you. And then, both of the standing goat men, their ears perk up, and you see them look into the trees behind you, and you hear a car pulling up. And as it pulls up, these two remaining goat men run away, and you hear snow crunching, and through the brush comes Barclay. And he's holding his car keys. He has a baseball bat in hand, and he surveys the situation, and he says...

Barclay: Uhh... Okay, so it's goat men this time?

Duck: Yeah. Apparently it's uh... goat men.

Griffin: He uh, he helps you up to your feet, and...

Duck: Ahhh...

Griffin: Yeah, he uh, he has a jacket on that he takes off and presses to the wound in your shoulder. Obviously, it's not as bad as it would've been for a normal person, because you absorb two of the harm with your sort of chosen armor. But he says...

Barclay: Alright, let's get back to the lodge. Did you—did something happen? Did I miss something? Was there another sort of big accident?

Duck: Yeah, the uh... what do you call it... gondola? Sky gondola. Had a crash.

Barclay: Yeah, we need to get you back to the lodge and sew up that shoulder. I—

Duck: I'll be okay. Listen, can you get in there and check on everybody? I'll be alright. I'll wait in the car.

Barclay: I mean, I will, but I think we have a big more of a pressing issue.

Griffin: And he looks down at the ground where there is still the injured goat man, just kind of writhing. His bleating is getting a little bit quieter. It seems like his consciousness is starting to wane, and he says...

Barclay: I don't really know what to do in this situation.

Duck: Hey, you don't speak goat?

Barclay: No, I don't fucking speak goat. Why would I speak goat?

Duck: That was racist, wasn't it? Shit.

Barclay: A little bit, kind of.

Duck: I'm sorry. Yeah. I just assumed. You seem like a Sylvain kind of...

Griffin: Barclay says...

Barclay: Yeah, he does kind of look like a Sylvain thing, but he's definitely not.

Duck: Wait. Seriously?

Barclay: I mean, he would be able to speak if he... I don't know... I don't know what this thing is, Duck.

Griffin: And the goat man on the ground is now looking up at the two of you, and its breathing is slowing. You actually see like, tears in its eyes. This being is looking up at you as the two of you are speaking. I think it stopped sort of crying out at this point, and it's just kind of quietly looking up at you.

Duck: Alright, listen. We gotta get this thing back to the lodge. Or this... person.

Barclay: Whoa, whoa—

Duck: I know, I know, I know. But look at it, man. It's gonna die if we don't do something. Hell, we got veterinary equipment down there. Somebody will be able to at least take a look, see if we could do something. Can't just let the poor thing die. For all I know, there's three of them on earth. That's not how I do it.

Griffin: He uh, he kind of laughs nervously, and he goes...

Barclay: We can't tell Mama about this, okay?

Duck: Yeah, man. It wasn't high on my list, bud. I just want to help the thing if we can. It's kind of my fault. Mainly Beacon's.

Beacon: Duck Newton, I will persist when you are dust. Do not take a moment to question my—[garbled]

Justin: And I rolled him back up and put him on his holster.

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Okay, Barclay helps you pick this goat man up. I think as you get it off the ground, it sort of bleats in protest for a bit. I think its shoulder hurts quite a bit as you lift it up. And uh, the two of you manage to get it—it's

actually a truck that he is driving. It's Mama's truck, and Barclay helps you put him in the truck bed, and then kind of looks around and realizes, like, oh shit, we don't want anybody to see this, and has a tarp back there that he covers the goat man up with. And the three of you head back to the lodge.

Let's also resolve Aubrey and Ned. You all have just jumped out of a moving vehicle. Ned, you have just seen your automobile be destroyed as it sort of gets tangled up in the cable and counterweight and car. I think all of those things just kind of turned into a big, big ball, and stopped just before running into the base station.

And you all, I think, also came to a stop about 30 feet from the base station. You're pretty close, now. And you can actually see the engineer in there, Mark I think is what we named him last time. He is listening to some music on some headphones, and he has his back to this like, obviously wild, chaotic scene, and just has no idea what happened behind him.

What do you do?

Clint: We weren't injured when we jumped out, were we?

Griffin: No. I think that the way we kind of justified it is, the sacrifice was the car, and I wasn't gonna make you all sort of, y'know, break all of the bones in your body. I think you landed in a... y'know, there was some thick snow in here, so you landed in that and were pretty much okay.

Travis: But at this point, like, it's... is the situation done?

Griffin: Yeah. Situation's done. There is no more harm posed to the—no more threat, rather, posed to the base station.

Ned: So the car's not salvageable? Would you say it's totaled?

Aubrey: Yeah, Ned, I'm gonna say it's totaled. I hope you have insurance.

Ned: [inhales] ... Yeah.

Aubrey: Oh, Ned. Oh, no.

Ned: Okay, I'll tell you what. Let me get a few things out of the trunk, and then I guess we have to trudge back up the hill?

Aubrey: I mean, I can call a Lyft. No wait, there's no cell service. Fuck.

Griffin: [laughs] Gotcha again.

Clint: Alright, so, Ned goes and gets the Wookiee costume out of the trunk. It's unharmed.

Griffin: Sure. I love the sort of unofficial like, bag of holding that Ned always has on him, where he just always has either one of the objects that we've sort of established that Ned had in character creation, or from Heathcliff, or just that you fuckin' stole from some celebrity at some point. So I imagine there's quite a few things—

Clint: My trunk of holding.

Griffin: Your trunk of holding. I imagine there's quite a few things. As you are sort of rooting around in the trunk, which, by the way, it's probably pretty hard to get to, because it's not much of a trunk anymore as much as it is like a, y'know, a can of Dr. Pepper that a horse stepped on. God, that's a fucking beautiful metaphor. Jesus Christ, I'm good at this. Holy shit.

Justin: What a talent. What a talent.

Griffin: You guys are so fucking lucky that you get to play this fucking game with me, the dream master.

Clint: You're like a word smith. You're a word smith.

Justin: Once in a fucking generation.

Griffin: God damn. Uh, as you're rooting through the uh, the engineer is alerted to the police sirens that are actually going off as these two sheriff station vehicles pull up in front of the base station, and you see two figures run inside. You see Sheriff Zeke, and you see Deputy Dewey sprint into the

station and start checking the area. And uh, I think that they see you, and Zeke looks kind of surprised to see you, especially, Ned. I think he doesn't—I think he notices you, Aubrey. But when he sees Ned, he's like, "Aw, fuck."

And the engineer walks over to the train car cable counterweight situation, and starts looking around, and says... he says...

Mark: Hey, uh, are you, uh... are you two okay? You weren't in the train, were you?

Ned: No, no, no, no. Oh gosh, no. We uh, we avoided that. Uh, it was a close call, but uh, no, not on the train. Not on the train. We were in the car. Um... it's a terrible, terrible tragedy. Awful. It's one of a kind. Collector's item. If you know anybody who buys scrap metal, I uh, I'm... they could give me a call.

Griffin: I think as you are speaking about uh, for some reason, in the moment of him discovering that the train has been destroyed, asking him about sort of second hand scrap metal retailers, he is uh, he is sort of now focused entirely on the train. And he says...

Mark: Aw, shit!

Griffin: And he runs back to the base station, and you see him pick up his radio and try to contact the engineer back at the top. Um, but then, he puts the radio down and kind of looks at it, and like, slaps it against his palm. And his radio has stopped working. And then, he shakes it a little bit, and you see some brown liquid come out of it, and then you see him kind of realize that the uh, the coffee he was drinking earlier spilled onto the radio, which kept it from working.

And he uh, just starts, I think, walking up the hill, just to make sure that everybody at the top station is okay. And with that, Sheriff Zeke walks over to the two of you and says...

Zeke: Alright, so, this uh... this seems like it's starting to become a bit of a uh, a habit with y'all, huh? Being right in the middle of the mess of things lately, huh?

Ned: Total accident, sheriff. I was trying to uh, drive down the hill to warn Mark, because we saw the funiculee, funiculah out of control. And so, I was trying to drive down the hill—new chains. So I thought, yeah, we'll just drive down, warn Mark, he'll be okay. And just... the car, they weren't as good of chains as I thought, and just drifted right into the path of the train. Terrible, terrible accident. Thank God no one was hurt in this.

Griffin: Sheriff Zeke looks over at you, Aubrey, and sees you being kind of quiet. He says, uh...

Zeke: Are, uh... are you okay, miss?

Aubrey: Uh, yeah. Uh, like he said, y'know, just... right place, right time. Wrong place, wrong time.

Zeke: It can't be both at the... it can't be both at once.

Aubrey: Well, I mean, we did kind of save Mark. But also, kind of wrecked the car. So y'know, I would call it a win, but...

Zeke: [sighs]

Aubrey: Anywho, we should get going.

Ned: Yes, we've got a thing.

Aubrey: Oh, right, yeah, that thing. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ned: That thing, Aubrey.

Zeke: Y'all, this funicular's been serving this town for a few decades, now. And there's been an accident, and I still don't know what's going on at the top station. I don't know if anybody else has been hurt, and as far as I can see, Ned, your car crashed into a train, and all of it got wrecked. So I—

Aubrey: Well, hold on. Talk to the guy at the top of the hill, and he'll tell you, the cable broke long before our car got in the way. We saved Mark. Like, we saved the station. You're welcome.

Ned: We're sort of heroes.

Griffin: He looks a bit caught off guard. He says...

Zeke: That don't change the fact now where, two days in a row, something's gone wrong in Kepler, and y'all have been at the scene.

Aubrey: Yeah, but you're here too, so...

Ned: Hmm.

Zeke: I'm a fucking sheriff. This is how it works. I'm always there when bad things happen.

Justin: [laughs]

Aubrey: A likely story.

Zeke: Listen, I'm not—y'all aren't under arrest or anything, but...

Aubrey: Okay, bye!

Zeke: But—Ned, would you mind just coming down to the sheriff station with me, just answer some questions? I need to know something, okay?

Aubrey: Okay, Ned, seems like you've got this.

Ned: Whoa, whoa!

Aubrey: So I have to, uh, go. I've got that thing, like we said.

Ned: The thing. The thing, yeah. Yeah. I'll go with you, sheriff, and uh, Aubrey, you go do the thing, and make sure that the thing is okay with the thing.

[music plays]

Aubrey: Sounds great.

Griffin: Do either of you know what he's talking about?

Travis: No.

Clint: I don't even know what I'm talking about.

Griffin: Fantastic.

[music plays]

Griffin: Duck, you and Barclay have managed to get this goat man back to the base. The base?

Justin: The base? That sounds very militaristic, I love it.

Griffin: Back to uh, back to Amnesty Lodge, back to the uh, the Pine Guard headquarters underneath in the cellar. Uh, Barclay hops out of the truck as you all get there, and sort of gives you like a hold on signal, and then runs inside, and comes out, and he says...

Barclay: Alright, uh, Mama's not here. I think she's out running errands or something, but we're in the clear.

Griffin: And uh, he helps you get the goat man inside, and up on the... I don't actually know what your sort of veterinary infirmary situation looks like. Can you sort of... can you describe, like, is this something that Duck knows how to do? Or, what are you sort of envisioning this scene looking like?

Justin: Duck is probably first aid, I would think, as far as like, what he can do. That seems to me to be logical, like he's not a... serious, y'know, uh, he's not an animal physician. But I think he probably is aware of um, y'know, the basics.

So, what we're talking about in this area, I think you can imagine a metal table in the middle of the room, and then, some like uh, like, formica counters sort of surrounding it, with wood cabinets above, sort of cheap wood cabinets, that are filled with all manner of tinctures and medications. Tinctures sounds fake. Medications.

Griffin: [laughs] Salves, and uh...

Justin: Salves and potions. Yeah.

Travis: Yeah, some ointments. Liniments.

Griffin: Potions...

Clint: Unguents. Some unguents.

Justin: I'm uniquely positioned to keep continue to crank out synonyms here after recording the Sawbones audiobook, so you probably want to stop this game right here.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: Uh, but, and that is, uh... there's also a scale in the corner of the room, and that is sort of what we're, uh, what we're looking at here.

Griffin: Okay. Um, so, first off, as you all come in, Thacker, who you've seen down here in sort of the little kitchen dungeon area that Mama set up. Every time that you all have been down here, Thacker has just basically been uh, comatose. Just sort of lost in whatever sort of state that he is in, seated crisscross applesauce, just kind of in the middle of the kitchen there.

And as you all come in, and this goat man is starting to shout a little bit more – not super loudly, not shout, but just sort of starting to make some animalistic noises – Thacker actually looks up, and comes up to his knees, and is just sort of surveying this scene quietly.

You get the goat man laid out on the table, and uh, you've definitely seen like, some cuts and bruises on the trails and uh, from people sort of hiking the Appalachian trail, and sort of getting some grisly wounds along the way. You know that, miraculously, or perhaps not miraculously, like, you don't really know what the physiology of this thing is. They don't seem to have hit like, an artery or anything like that. This thing is obviously very, very injured with a wound that goes clean through, but there's not like, a ton of blood.

So, you get the impression that y'know, maybe you can just seal this thing up, and y'know, give it some antibiotics or something. I don't want to sort of tell you how this scene works, but you get the idea that like, this is maybe a little bit above your pay grade, but you could take a shot at it, treating this thing. And you have Barclay, also, helping you out.

I think Barclay is actually helping hold this thing down, because every time you get close to this wound, it... it gets super scared again. It gets very, very scared.

Duck: Okay, uh... so, there's a wound right here. Uh, what do you think, clean it? Definitely want to clean it with alcohol, first. I remember that. Yes. Alcohol. Clean with alcohol first.

Justin: So I go and get the bottle of alcohol off the shelf.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: I get a clean rag. And I... you don't really think of clean rags, do you? [laughs] Like, a clean hand towel. Dump some alcohol on it, and I say, uh...

Duck: Sorry?

Justin: And then I pour some alcohol onto the wound.

Griffin: I'm trying to think of the best way to do this. I want you to maybe act under pressure, and we can let it ride for like, this whole process. This is like, Duck performing surgery roll, and we will... we'll see how it goes. That's plus cool.

Justin: Alright.

Griffin: Alright.

Justin: Seven. That's more like it. Now we're cooking with dice.

Griffin: Uh, seven plus...

Justin: Plus cool.

Travis: Cooking with dice.

Justin: Nine.

Griffin: Uh, nine. Okay. So, uh, on a mixed success, the keeper is going to give a worse outcome, hard choice, or price to pay. I think the price to pay is... the goat man just screams. Just screams. As soon as the alcohol touches the wound, he screams, and looks terrified. He's like... it's like he's never felt pain before, and this is a very bad pain, and uh, he screams.

And then, uh, I think faints, and is now just completely unconscious. Which is gonna help things. But, as he screams, above you, because this is the cellar beneath the Amnesty Lodge, you hear a chair scoot back. You hear that like, [chair scooting impression] noise. And then you hear footsteps sort of rushing toward the front door.

And Barclay looks up at you, and his eyes get wide, and he says...

Barclay: Uh, uh, I got this? I guess keep sewing him up?

Griffin: Barclay almost looks like he's like, uh... y'know how like when you get in a really bad situation that you're completely out of your depth, it can be almost like, funny? Like you almost sort of like... this sucks so bad. I think he's kind of in that state. He's like, "Oh good, somebody's coming down to check on the monster we kidnapped."

He races up the cellar stairs and shuts the door behind him, and you actually hear him talking to Agent Stern just outside of the cellar. What else do you do?

Duck: Alright, so we gotta uh... let me get the suture kit out here. I'm really... oh, man.

Travis: Now, I am curious. How much of this is Duck not knowing what to do, and how much is Justin not knowing what to do?

Justin: I mean, I'm trying... it's a little bit of... y'know, I try to bring a little bit of myself to every character I play, Trav.

Travis: [laughs]

Justin: Uh, alright.

Griffin: I don't know why Duck Newton would have more surgical experience than Justin McElroy. So I'm totally fine with how this is playing out.

Duck: Listen, uh, I'm gonna be... here's the one thing I will say to you. I don't know... the one thing I don't know is anesthesia. I wouldn't begin to know how much to dose you for that. So this is gonna hurt a lot, man. I'm really, uh... I'm really sorry. Do you want to bite down on something, or...

Griffin: Uh, the goat is unconscious.

Duck: It's unconscious. Alright, well, at least there's that.

Justin: Uh, alright, so I need the needle driver, and the forceps, and scissors, and a needle and thread.

Travis: [laughs] Somebody's Googled!

Griffin: [laughs] And a phone with Google on it.

Justin: This is what it says—this is what it says on the inside of the suture kit. I'm reading the inside of a suture kit, okay?

Griffin: Okay. We don't need—

Justin: These are the things that are in there.

Griffin: Sure. Let's not... for some of our more squeamish listeners, let's not do an in-depth, y'know, nasty suture scene.

Justin: How about this? I sew him up.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Yeah. Duck has probably sewed things before. So he is competent, at least, at that. Um, and then, he knows to like, put some antiseptic on it, cover it with clean bandages, et cetera, et cetera.

Griffin: Right. Well, let's hop into like... in the middle of this process—we're gonna let that nine roll and the price to pay is that Barclay was sort of peeled off. While you were in the middle of this process, it's starting to get a little bit later in the day. As you are in the middle of sewing, I think you are startled as you hear from behind you...

Minerva: Duck Newton! Are you prepared for to—Duck Newton. [laughs] What is the meaning of this?

Griffin: And behind you appears Minerva.

Duck: Minerva, your timing sucks. Um... this goat person man, whatever, was... got hurt, and I'm just trying to uh, keep it together long enough save its life. You don't know anything about sutures, do ya? I don't even know if you have flesh, come to think of it, right? You're like a ghost.

Minerva: I'm not a ghost, Duck Newton. I have fl... is this creature you're tending to a foe?

Duck: Uh... y'know, I don't know. I think so. My gut tells me that this guy and his buddies are what have been responsible for some of the bad stuff that's been going down lately. I can't say for sure, but uh, yeah. I mean, Beacon almost cut his head off, and I felt like shit about it, honestly. And he was hurt, and I was just trying to fix him up. I don't know. For um... for information, y'know? We could grill him or something.

Griffin: She shakes her head, and she says...

Minerva: Beacon tried to do what Beacon is supposed to do. What *you're* supposed to do. Duck Newton, dispatch this beast at once. It's vulnerable to you. Strike true! Drive your Beacon into its heart!

Duck: Uh, listen. I was about to say let's put it to a vote, but...

Beacon: Yes, let's see how—

Duck: No, we're not doing that. I'm not gonna kill an unarmed, unconscious creature in cold blood. I'm not gonna do it. Especially when I don't know what his intent is.

Griffin: She shakes her head and looks down for a minute. And we talked about how like, you always see her in silhouette, so it's really hard to actually kind of read her. But she is furious. You can tell, just from her like, her body language. And she says...

Minerva: Your job is not to befriend your foe, Duck Newton. It is to vanquish them. It is to leave them no quarter, no hope to which to cling. Your calling is to paint your besieged homeland in the blood of those who would see your world destroyed. Now strike, Duck Newton!

Duck: You listen to me. I'm gonna save this weird goat, and then I'm gonna try to teach it English or some shit, and I can figure out what's going on here. If you continue to push me to kill this thing, I will walk away from all of this. And if you need evidence that I am not kidding with you, look at the past fuckin' 20 years, Minerva. I'm gonna do this on my own terms.

Now, unless you can hold a thread, I would ask that you leave me the fuck alone, and let. Me. Sew.

Griffin: She... freezes, and she puts a hand to her forehead. And you can see her silhouette start to tremble a little bit, and she says...

Minerva: I... I...

Griffin: And then she disappears. And you finish your operation, and the goat man stabilizes. He's still unconscious. He is – and again, this is probably something you've seen on the trail, maybe with some of the gnarlier sort of injuries that have come through the ranger's station. He's in shock, and he is alive, and uh, not bleeding anymore. And you can actually tell you actually did pretty good stitches here. And uh, he is laid out to rest, and you...

It's a couple hours later, and you're keeping an eye on him, and something happens that hasn't really happened before, which is twice in the same night, Minerva comes back. Usually, she just comes back at that same appointed time that she always comes back, and now, she is making a second appearance. And as she shows up, as you sort of see her appear, she is standing still, and you hear that blues music that you heard so many months ago when she tried to appear to you, and you saw her sort of frozen in place.

[music plays]

Griffin: And you can't hear her. And you get the impression she can't hear you, and she becomes unfrozen, and sort of holds up a finger, sort of telling you to wait. And eventually, that music fades. And she speaks, and she says...

Minerva: I owe you an apology, Duck Newton. I was trained in my order's temple for nearly a century, but it seems that you just... you can't train temperance, can you?

Duck: Listen. I'm sorry that I kind of snapped at you. I was under a lot of pressure, and I've never had to sew up... well, neither a goat nor a man, to say nothing of a goat man. So it was pretty intense.

Griffin: [laughs]

Minerva: Yes. I... I hope you don't think less of me, Duck Newton. Training a champion remotely like this, it requires absolute trust. And if that trust was harmed, Duck Newton, it would make me a less effective tutor to you.

Duck: Nah, we're fine. Just try to remember next time. I mean, I don't know a lot about sword fighting, and y'know, flips and kicks and stuff. But I spent my whole life trying to figure out how I think about stuff, and in the woods, you get a lot of time to sort of go back and forth on that kind of thing. And I know where I stand, Minerva. I know where I stand.

Griffin: She sits down, which you've never seen. You see her pull something, actually. She walks away from you, and then, you see her sort of miming almost, like she's pulling a chair over. And she sits down, and she takes her hand, and is kind of rubbing it over her bald head, and she looks at you, and she says...

Minerva: I think that that will serve you better than any training I could ever give you, Duck Newton. My... [sighs] There are things I haven't told you, Duck Newton, because if I told you them, they would damage the trust that we have. That trust that is imperative to this process. My rage towards your world's assailants, Duck, it is born of my own world's destruction. My home, Duck. My planet, Miralaviniax Orbital Body 5. Or Five, for short. It's a bit of a mouthful.

It was... it, too, was connected to another place, far flung from our own world. Like your world, ours became tethered, and the beings that poured through that fissure, Duck... we lost, and we kept losing. And that is why my passion manifests as fury, Duck. I know your toil, and it makes me... tired.

Griffin: ...she says. And I want to drive home, you have never seen anything like this—

Justin: From her.

Griffin: --from Minerva. She is always sort of this um, larger than life, always bombastic, sort of warrior champion. And this is not... this is not that.

Duck: I'm, uh... damn, Minnie, I'm really sorry about your world and everything. That's... that's tough.

Griffin: She uh, puts up a hand, and stands up, and she says...

Minerva: Please, just forget about this conversation, Duck Newton. You need further training, and my lessons will not be as effective without your complete trust.

Griffin: She looks around, and she says...

Minerva: My time is almost up. Your visions, Duck. Are you still having your visions?

Duck: Yeah. Um... they're kind of back and forth on whether or not they're helpful or not, but I'm still getting them.

[music plays]

Minerva: And your latest vision?

Duck: Uh, yeah, it was a real barn burner, honestly. [laughs] A meteor destroying everything. It was pretty intense.

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

Minerva: Are you abs—

Griffin: And then she vanishes.

[music plays]

Griffin: Uh, okay, Ned. You are in the sheriff's office. You're not in like a cell or anything like that, I think you're just sort of in a holding room. There is a table, and um, Deputy Dewey has come in a couple times, just to make sure that... You need anything? You need some coffee, or a Diet Coke, or... those are really your two options. I guess water, you could also have. Just sort making sure that you're taken care of. You are not a prisoner, at this time.

Ned: Cronuts? Any chance that you have cronuts?

Dewey: I mean, I could whip you up some donuts.

Ned: Cronuts. It's sort of like, half croissant, half donut. And I don't mean like, the left side is a croissant and the right side's a donut. It's sort of like a donut, but with layers, and... nevermind. That's alright.

Dewey: I mean, I'll get on Alta Vista and find a recipe.

Griffin: And he walks out of the room, off to Alta Vista. And a few moments later, Sheriff Zeke walks in, and he sits down across from you, and he doesn't really know how to treat you. Like, your last interaction with him was on the front porch of his house as you were trying to get Calvin to come out and help you fight the water monster. And he uh, he sort of brushes his hair back, and he says...

Zeke: I need you to start by telling me why you were at Leo's place when the Pizza Hut sign fell down.

Ned: Uh, picking up a `za. I had... we had ordered, I think it was... they have a buy one, get one. They had a BOGO with two toppings, and breadsticks. And y'know, the weather was so bad, I didn't want some other poor citizen out, driving around in that crap. So um, was uh, driving down there to uh, pick it up myself. And just happened to notice the impending disaster, and well, being the hero that I am, I sprang into action to help Leo and all of his friends.

Zeke: And um... and then the funicular, you just happened to be there also when the brakes failed?

Ned: Well, we were going to go do a little snowboarding. My friend, Jake Coolice, had told me there was some rad thrashing boarding going on there, man. So, um... we were heading down to uh, y'know, hit the powder, as they say. Because I was so shook after the Pizza Hut thing, I needed to get my mind off of it, and it just seems like a little extreme board action was just what the doctor ordered.

Griffin: He chuckles, and he says...

Zeke: Well, I got a theory. You wanna hear it?

Ned: Of course.

Zeke: I think maybe business has been a little bit slower at the Cryptonomica since your big Bigfoot sighting. And uh, I think maybe you're trying to drum up a little bit of holiday traffic. Trying to make things uh, some supernatural mischief happen all around town. Maybe chalk it up to, I don't know, man, the Jersey Devil or some sort of alien or something.

Ned: Well, let me ask you a theoretical question. Would something like that be, y'know, a misdemeanor? Or would that be like, a felony? Um, y'know, just pranking around like that? I mean, I'm not saying I did, but I mean, if that were something, that would probably be a minor... something you could pay with a small fine, right?

Zeke: One... no. Two, that's not a denial, Ned.

Ned: Well, then, I'll deny it. Categorically deny it. Y'know, I have other ways of promoting. Y'know, I have a new TV show. It's the Saturday Night Dead.

Zeke: Yeah, I've seen it.

Ned: We're having a Krampus Festival. Did you know that? A holiday... Krampus, Krampus 2, Krampus: Unleashed. Matter of fact, if you would like to be on the show, I would love to have you make a guest appearance.

Griffin: He smiles, and he says...

Zeke: Yeah, I seen your show, Ned. I like those old movies.

Griffin: And he um...

Ned: Thank you.

Griffin: He pulls out a uh, he reaches into his jacket, and he pulls out a pack of cigarettes. And he says...

Zeke: You mind?

Griffin: And he starts to light one up.

Ned: No, certainly not. Not a lot.

Griffin: He smiles, and he says...

Zeke: Ned, I know that you and I have uh... we have our differences about how we think this town should run. But I know you didn't have anything to do with the... the train. It's a bit curious how your car ended up tangled up, but I guess you stopped it from killing ol' Mark, so I guess we do owe you a, I don't know, man, key to the city or something. I'll talk to the mayor, I don't know.

I know that... Ned, I see every stiff that comes through this place. Do you think I don't know that something's wrong with this town? You're fairly new in town, Ned. You never got to meet Sheriff Neely. He served before me, taught me everything I know. He died in the woods back in 1991. Bear attack, they said. So, I took over his office. It's been nearly 30 years since then, Ned, and people still wish they had him over me, and I don't blame 'em, 'cause there's plenty of folks in this town who know enough to be afraid.

You were at the tram, and you were at Leo's. I'd bet you had something to do with the H2Whoa debacle that happened a few months back, too. All I want to know is what's going on in my town, Ned, so I can stop it. If there's

anything you know, anything that can help me out, anything that sounds beyond belief. I've tried everything else. I am all ears, Ned Chicane.

Ned: Sheriff... may I call you Zeke? Good. Y'know what? I'm just gonna tell you the truth. I'm just gonna spill the beans. Now, that isn't such a big deal, because I'm not really sure what the beans are. But I think we're on the same side. I think we're both on the side of the angels, whoever the angels are. There's weird shit going on around here, and it sounds like it's been going on for a long, long while. And I'm hooked up with a couple of people that are... I've come to kind of care about, and depend on. And they're involved in some wild, crazy shit. [laughs]

And I just... kind of go along for the ride. I don't have any answers, except to tell you, you're right. There's something really weird going on, and I would just as soon have you for a friend and an ally as an opponent. So I'm not sure what I can tell you, because I'm kind of clueless.

Griffin: Let's firm this up. Are you saying that you... are you wanting to initiate Sheriff Zeke to the best of your abilities? I know that you're saying that Ned is fairly clueless, and I don't know how much of that is your understanding of what Ned knows. 'Cause I mean, Ned went to another planet, right? Ned went to another planet. Ned has killed two abominations. Ned knows about the Pine Guard. Like, Ned knows quite a bit.

Are you sort of letting on a little bit, without sort of giving away the whole thing? Or what's... what are you doing with Ned right now?

Clint: I think, to be honest with you, I think Ned feels a little overwhelmed. And I think, y'know, Ned has spent all these stories basically... I mean, he's gotten closer to Duck and to Aubrey. But y'know, at his very heart, Ned's not a hero. And I think he's kind of looking for any kind of support he can get.

No, I don't think he wants to tell the sheriff everything. But I think maybe there are things about himself that maybe it's time for him to, y'know, break down the façade a little bit for somebody who might be able to help him.

Griffin: Uh, okay. He says...

Zeke: I need you to understand where I'm coming from, Ned. I don't believe in the bullshit that you peddle at the Cryptonomica, let alone the idea that there are actual things that go bump in the night. Are you saying that there is some sort of supernatural danger here in Kepler?

Ned: Let me put it to you this way, sheriff. Because I don't think I have done anything illegal lately. There's something going on here, and I guess the way I would put it to you is... maybe you ought to buy a little bit of the bullshit that is the Cryptonomica. Maybe you should have an open mind, and when I can tell you more, I will tell you more.

Griffin: When you say, specifically, "You should buy some bullshit from the Cryptonomica," I think he laughs out loud, and lets you sort of finish your thought. And then he puts out his cigarette, and he says...

Zeke: I don't know why the fuck I'm talking to you about this, Ned Chicane. I don't—I don't know why I thought I was gonna be able to get a straight answer out of you. I tell you what. You're not under arrest or anything, but uh, why don't you sit in here for a bit? I gotta file some paperwork, and then I'll come, and we can get you home. How's that sound, Ned?

Ned: Sounds great, Zeke.

Griffin: And he stands up. And I think he stands up pretty fast. I think his chair actually falls over as he does so. He's kind of... he's a little bit pissed off. He thinks that you've just sort of taken him for a ride for a little bit. I think he's mostly angry at himself for like, allowing himself to start to sort of buy into it.

And I don't want to sort of take away the fact that you are opening up a bit to him. I think that you have said things to him that are gonna sink in. but I think in this very moment, he's thinking, "I just wasted my fuckin' time." And he storms out of the holding room.

And you're sitting in this holding room for a little bit, and I think just being in a sheriff's office kind of takes you back. Maybe returns your thoughts to all of the other, um, corrective institutions you have uh, been fortunate

enough to visit during your career of burglary. We haven't really talked much about Ned's history, and so, I want to like, get into that a little bit, as long as we have this like, solo scene. And I don't know how much thought you've given to this, but how did Ned get into burglary?

Clint: Um, I think Ned has... he kind of saw himself as like a Robin Hood. Y'know, almost like a treasure hunter. Ned just had the physical gifts, the mental gifts for theft. Never anything armed robbery or anything like that. He was more of a cat burglar.

Griffin: Sure.

Clint: And usually, tried to steal things that had been stolen, so that he was stealing them from thieves. And that's where a lot of the—

Griffin: Now, I do want to address the fact that you have stolen, so far, canonically, an Oscar, I think, from Clooney. You have stolen a Nerf gun prototype from the inventor of Nerfs. I don't know that necessarily they were thieves.

Clint: Not exclusively...

Griffin: [laughs] Okay.

Clint: Robin Hood.

Griffin: Maybe once or twice, you stole something from thieves, and that's how you sleep at night. But most of the time, it is sort of...

Clint: Well, I think he started off as just a flat-out burglar who liked to collect weird shit.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: But then I think he kind of saw... there was an incident in his past where he saw that that was not good. And he basically had a life-changing moment. He had an incident where he just decided that this was not for him anymore.

Griffin: I do also want to drive home that the final burglary you ever did was Aubrey's house, which, I don't necessarily know that that was an entirely altruistic heist. And we can get into that, that y'know, maybe that one was a bad one.

Clint: That was... that's what I've been thinking.

Griffin: Okay. That was like, a nice opportunity. And so, you kind of broke your own rules a little bit, just to get the sweet score. Okay. We also haven't talked much about your partner, so let's like... I don't know if you have any ideas as to like, how the two of you met. But I have like, kind of a scene that I think could be fun, if you're cool with that.

Clint: Go for it.

Griffin: Okay. So, you are... it's a long time ago. I don't think you're in like... you're not in West Virginia. I don't think you are... I mean, you tell me. Where was your... did you have a base of operations for your uh, cat burglary operation? Or were you sort of all over the place?

Clint: Um, no, no. he just kind of traveled. He loved traveling by train, by rail, and never really had kind of a lock down base of operations or bivouac.

Griffin: Okay. Um, let's say you're in Connecticut somewhere.

Clint: Okay.

Griffin: Uh, in a fairly rural part of Connecticut where the houses are nice, and they are secluded. And you are in the middle of, not like a huge haul, but like, a safe haul. Which I think, for like a career burglar, is kind of what you go for. It's not all about like, the Oceans Eleven million dollar getaways as much as it is like, the grind. Oh, I can do this and not get caught.

You're actually in the middle of a house that is being fumigated. And so, the family is not present. There are some neighbors nearby, but you are inside this house that is inside a giant tent, and you have a gas mask on that is protecting you from the bug spray that is happening in this house. And I

think you can maybe even smell it a little bit inside the gas mask, but it is protecting you from harm.

And as you're sort of poking around this house and just having a leisurely robbery, you turn a corner into an office, and you see a figure actually also robbing this room of its valuables, and this figure turns towards you, and he's wearing a gas mask, too. And the two of you are just kind of frozen in place as you run into another burglar in the middle of this scene of your crime.

What do you do?

Ned: Um, pardon me, sir. Uh, I'm uh, I'm Larry. I'm with Terminix. Uh, you're really not supposed to be in here while we're fumigating. While we're uh, clearing out this residence. So you probably need to uh, to leave immediately.

Bob: Okay, well, I'm uh, Bob from Pestblasters 5000. And you're not suppo—what are we doing?

Ned: What?

Bob: Are we both going to pretend, then, that we're both in the trade of killing bugs? Or are we going to fess up? This is—I have to admit, I don't know the protocol here. This is unprecedented for me.

Ned: Look, uh, there's obviously been some kind of advance scouting mistake. Uh, you obviously are uh, well entrenched here. Why don't I just... why don't I just leave you to it, and let you get about whatever the hell it is that you're doing, and I will find another place to quote unquote get rid of vermin?

Griffin: He says...

Bob: Alright, there, Larry. I mean, that works for me. I've scouted this place out for quite some time, and uh, need... I'm a little cash light right now, so I could use the, uh...

Griffin: And through the tent, you can see, uh, through the windows. It's like this big red and yellow like, circus tent almost. You see lights flashing against the side of the tent. Blue and red lights. And uh, you know that there are police officers outside, and "Bob" says...

Bob: Well, uh, Larry. It seems like we're well and proper fucked, huh?

Ned: Yes. Um, but, do you, uh, know of any perhaps back door to the house? Or root cellar, or anything, so we could get unfucked by leaving?

Griffin: He just starts moving at this point, because you hear officers start approaching the front door, and start trying to figure out how to like, get through this bug tent. And he runs to the back door, and tries to open it, and sees that the tent is sort of surrounding it, also. And then runs to a basement door, which he tries to open, but uh, finds it securely padlocked. And he starts trying to kick it down, and it's not working.

Ned: Please, allow me. Do you mind?

Griffin: He steps back, and Bob allows you access to the lock.

Ned: I know I can do this.

Griffin: Probably act under pressure.

Clint: Act under pressure? Alright. Act under pressure. Alright, so...

Griffin: Is this one of... let's establish this, though. Because I know—I don't think you have a skill that's like—or you tell me, actually. I don't know... let's look at your character sheet.

Clint: Well, there's burglary.

Griffin: Yeah, this is like, your first time actually doing some burglary, even though it's in like a flashback, and the crooked... let's see. When you break into a secure location, roll plus sharp. On a plus ten, pick three; on a seven to nine, pick two. You get in undetected, you get out undetected, you don't

leave a mess, you find what you were after. So let's do that. We've never done that roll before.

Clint: Alright.

Griffin: And we can say this break into a secure location is like, this robbery.

Clint: Alright. I rolled a seven plus two sharp.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: So that would be a nine.

Griffin: Is a nine. Okay, pick two. You get in undetected... I mean, let's take that one off the table. You got in, I guess, undetected until you ran into another burglar in this place. You get out undetected, you don't leave a mess, you find what you were after.

Clint: We get out undetected. [laughs]

Griffin: Sure. And you get one more. You don't leave a mess, you find what you were after.

Clint: Okay, find what you were after.

Griffin: Okay. I think that just means like, you get a sack of loot. You did very well on this robbery. And I think that Bob did, too. Bob also has like a satchel that he has stuffed full of stuff. And uh, you managed to get the basement door open, and uh, run down the stairs, and uh, Bob turns on a flashlight. He actually has like, a head-mounted flashlight, and you see some stairs leading up to a cellar door that is unsecured and unlocked. And Bob pushes it open, and the two of you hop a fence, and make it out okay.

I think, actually, Bob helps you up over the fence, first. It's a very, very tall fence, and uh, you actually hear police officers coming around the side of this back yard that you're in and start opening up the gate that would allow

them access. So he's moving quickly, and actually lets you get up first, which is maybe more noble than the average burglar.

And uh, he uh, he manages to skitter up the fence himself, and the two of you manage to get off to safety. And um, after you've made it a certain distance, you come to like a hill by the roadside where these police officers are, and the two of you roll down it and are sort of laying with your backs up against it, waiting for the police officers to leave. And Bob takes off his mask, and... what's your partner look like? We also don't know his name. I'm sort of leaving that up to you, unless you want to keep calling him Bob and Larry which is fun, but it's also the Veggie Tales.

Clint: Boyd Mosche is his name. M-O-S-C-H-E. Boyd Mosche.

Griffin: O... kay.

Clint: Um, he's uh... he's a big guy. Like Michael Phelps. Kind of tall, y'know, fairly athletic, and just a hard looking guy. He just—he looks... y'know what I mean? I mean, he looks like... he looks like a badass.

Griffin: Okay. We can leave it at that, and just sort of leave the rest up to the audience's imagination. He takes off his mask, and you see this, y'know, this chiseled jaw. This very physical looking dude, who takes the mask off, and like, looks over at you, and kind of like, gives a panicked smile. And the two of you just kind of lay there quietly for a bit, until the cars start to roll away, and he looks up and makes sure that the coast is clear, and he comes back down to you on the hill and gives you a thumbs up. And he says...

Boyd: That was a bit closer than I uh, I like to come to the fuzz. Alright, you seem trustworthy. As trustworthy as we come.

Griffin: And he offers you a hand. He says...

Boyd: Boyd Mosche.

Ned: Hello, Boyd. Nice to meet you. My name is... Arturo Copperthwait.

Griffin: He shakes your hand, and he laughs, and he says...

Boyd: No it isn't.

[music plays]

Griffin: Hey everybody, this is Griffin McElroy. Your dungeon master, your best friend, and your thirsty boy. And I don't mean that in a horny way. I mean, I require fluid. Thank you for listening to The Adventure Zone: Amnesty. This is episode 16, and I hope you enjoy it. It was a very long recording, and a very long edit, so I hope you enjoyed it. I hope it turned out well. And hey, let's talk about some of our sponsors for this episode? What do you say?

Our first one is Blue Apron. Blue Apron is great. I have told you about them approximately 200 times, so you really should know this stuff by now. But they deliver you farm fresh, perfectly portioned ingredients, and step-by-step chef designed recipes to your door, that you can use to make delicious, home-cooked meals. Their mission is to make incredible home cooking accessible to everyone, and they, I think, have done that, because I really didn't know how to cook until I started doing Blue Apron, and now I do.

These boxes allow you to cook incredible meals in as little as 20 minutes, and you can get out of your cooking rut and experience the joy of new recipes. So, check out this week's menu and get your first three meals for free at BlueApron.com/adventure. That's BlueApron.com/adventure to get your first three meals free. Blue Apron: A better way to cook.

I also want to tell you about Boll & Branch. Listen, we're never gonna agree on everything. You say potato, I say I'm allergic to potatoes. Nice try, trying to poison me? On my birthday? But anyway, I think we can all agree on the fact that we could all use more sleep, and Boll & Branch is there to help you with that.

They make all of their products, from bedding to blankets, from 100% organic cotton. They start out super soft, and they get even softer over time. They have thousands of five star reviews, from Forbes, Wall Street Journal, and Fast Company are all talking about Boll & Branch. Shipping is

free, and you can try them for 30 nights, and if you don't love them, you can send them back for a refund.

So, to get you started right now, our listeners can get \$50 off your first set of sheets at BollandBranch.com, promo code ADVENTURE. Go to BollandBranch.com today for \$50 off your first set of sheets. That's B-O-L-L and Branch dot com, promo code ADVENTURE. BollandBranch.com, promo code ADVENTURE.

Got a couple jumbotrons here. This one is for Matthew, and it's from Nate, who says, "Hey, Matthew. I can't believe we've been together for ten years already. I'm not sure when this would air, so I hope you have a fantastic day, slash vacation, slash birthday, slash anniversary, slash pride, slash anything. Love Freckles, Olivia, and your very gay husband, Nate." What if all of those fell on the same fuckin' day? Can you even imagine the hullabaloo of your vacation birthday anniversary pride anything day? Out of control. I love it.

I have another one here, and this one's for Billy and Janelle, and it's from Joe, who says, "Billy and Janelle, congratulations on your engagement! While the gem stone on your ring may not be a lens through which to view other worlds," it is. Try it. "It is something of far greater significance – a symbol of the love you share. We are certain that you'll spend the rest of your lives together in great joy, alongside the world's second best dog, Gaston. Your comrades." Oh, shit! Your dog got burnt up! Apply this ice directly to the burned part of your body where this sick dog burn just got you.

I want to thank everybody who's been tweeting about the show using the #TheZoneCast hash tag. If you do that, you might end up as a character on the show, like Janelle, named for Crzyart on Twitter. Maybe Crazyart? Uh, Woodbridge, named for Chris Woodbridge on Twitter. Agent Stern, named for Joseph Stern on Twitter.

Uh, yeah, if you tweet about the show using the #TheZoneCast hash tag, you might end up as a character. But really, we just appreciate you spreading the word. It means a lot, and it is how we have found most of the audience that we have right now, so we're very appreciative of you all telling

people who you think might be into hearing people play roleplaying games for a while.

I want to thank Maximum Fun for having us on the network. You can go to MaximumFun.org, check out all the great shows there. They got shows like Tights and Fights, and Switchblade Sisters, and Judge John Hodgman, and show many shows at MaximumFun.org. We have other stuff at McElroyShows.com. We got a graphic novel you can check out at TheAdventureZoneComic.com.

Oh, this is very important, 'cause this is gonna be the last chance that you have to do this before it's out. But Justin and Sydney wrote a book for Sawbones. I've had it for a few weeks, now. It is so good. It is such a fun read, it is full of all kinds of interesting history about the bad ways that people have tried to heal people in the past. It comes out on October 6th, and—oh, sorry, October 9th, and you can preorder it right now by going to bit.ly/sawbonesbook. And that'll give you the link to where you can get this book.

It is—seriously, it's great. And they worked super hard on it, and I'm sure they would appreciate you supporting them. Once again, that's bit.ly/sawbonesbook, all one word.

Alright, that's it. I'm gonna let you get back to the rest of the episode. We will be back in two Thursdays with a new episode to treat and entice you. A super gross way to put that, but I'm stalling, because the calendar's taking a while to load, because I can't add four and fourteen. But if I could, I would tell that October the 18th is when the next episode's gonna come out, so have... have it. Bye.

[music plays]

Griffin: So, Aubrey, you have headed to Sylvain. I think that... let's address this. Have you been back to visit Janelle and like, do your magic lessons? It's been a couple of months now since you were sort of first introduced to the world of Sylvain, and Janelle sort of told you to come back, and she wants to study you just as much as you want to learn from her. Is this the first time that that has happened, or have you done this a couple times now?

Travis: I would say that like... it's probably happened a couple times, but very, like, cursory check in. No big advancements or anything along those lines. Think if we're talking in terms of like, Karate Kid, this is still like, the paint defense, wash the car kind of thing.

Griffin: Yeah, or to like, put it in the terms that we've already established, like, she has studied you, and you have not learned anything from her.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Which is probably frustrating. She's like, "Okay, do your thing, do your thing, do your thing. I want to test your natural aptitude before we actually get into the..." And maybe you've started to think like, "Maybe she can't teach me anything," which is probably very frustrating to like, be able to use magic, and not trust this person is gonna be able to help you improve it or make it safer.

Um, so you are in her chamber, sort of in the castle in the center of the city. And this room is... it is incredibly Spartan. There is just a single desk in the middle of the room, with a single book, and a cup of tea on the desk. She keeps things like, super simple in here, so she can focus absolutely on like, the text that she is studying at any given time.

Um, and as you enter, she um, she gestures to sort of a large clearing in the room where there is a big, circular rug laid out. And she has had you sort of stand in the middle of that each time you've come in, and she says...

Janelle: Okay, Aubrey. Um, it's been a couple of weeks now, and let's see how things are coming along.

Aubrey: [sighs] No.

Griffin: I don't think she has any patience for this shit whatsoever. This is a person who like, uh, is responsible for discovering the magical cure that will save this world. As soon as you say no, she says...

Janelle: Okay.

Griffin: And she stands up, and walks over to her desk.

Aubrey: No, you don't—you don't understand. [sighs] Can I... can we talk for a second?

Griffin: Uh, she sets her book back down on the desk, and she sits down in this rotating chair at the desk, which she rotates around to face you as you stand in the center of this rug. And she says...

Janelle: Okay, but I only have a few moments. What would you like to talk about?

Aubrey: When I use magic, people keep getting hurt. And I... can you make it... can you please take the magic away, please?

Janelle: Hmm.

Aubrey: I don't want to do it anymore. I can't control it, and I just end up hurting people that I love, and I don't want to do it anymore. Please.

Griffin: In all of her years of doing this - I don't actually know how long she's been the Minister of the Arcane, but she's been like... she has known how magic has worked in this world for a while, and been a tutor to many, many people in its ways. She is taken aback by this question. You get the impression nobody has ever asked for this before.

And I'm trying to decide how she takes it, because you've actually caught me off guard quite a bit. And she says...

Janelle: Aubrey, I apologize. I have perhaps spent too much of our time together learning from you, without imparting my own wisdom to you. And for that, I believe I have wronged you. I need you to understand, though - I cannot take your power away from you, Aubrey, because it doesn't belong to you. It doesn't come from you. Do you want to know where this magic comes from?

Aubrey: Yes.

Janelle: What does it feel like when you conjure the phenomena that you conjure?

Aubrey: I mean, it's hard to describe, but... y'know how like, when you get tickled, and you laugh, and you don't really laugh on purpose, but it feels right and natural to do, but you're not really thinking like, "Laugh now." You're not reacting to a joke, it's just that the outcome... I can't think like, "I would like to make fire now." But it's there when it's the right reaction to have. Does this many any sense?

Griffin: She stands up from her desk, and walks over to this pot and small ceramic cup, and she pours you a cup of tea and walks over to you and hands it to you. And this is more—this is already way more warmth than Janelle has ever shown you. And she says...

Janelle: It is a reflex.

Aubrey: Yeah. Yeah, like that.

Janelle: That is not how it is for me at all, but that is what is so fascinating about you, Aubrey. And I know that it must be frustrating, your mistakes that you have made with your magic. But these kinds of mistakes are to be expected. Obviously, yours have been maybe a bit more destructive than most, but your magic doesn't work the same way as everybody else's.

Griffin: She pulls out a... she can see you getting frustrated, and she says...

Janelle: Let's start with brass tacks.

Griffin: And she walks over to a shelf, and pulls out a scroll, which she unfurls on her desk. And she kind of beckons you over, off your training rug, which is, I think, something you use to like, kennel break dogs. So maybe there's a different word for it. And she gestures to this parchment, and you see a map of the planet, Sylvain. And there are these lines that like, crisscross the entirety of the map, almost like parallels and meridians on an earth map. But they all connect in the middle.

Not in like, the middle of the depicted surface of the planet, but like, in the center of the planet. And she says...

Janelle: I cannot take your power away, because it is not yours. It is the planet's. Every planet, Aubrey – ours, yours, all the planets in the sky – are living beings. And I don't mean that in a new age kind of way, I mean that quite literally. It is a living, sentient being. We named our Sylvain. You named yours Earth. They likely have names far more ancient than those, but we need to call them something.

And like you've figured out, magic doesn't work like it does in your stories. You don't cast fireball when you want to summon a fireball. When we use magic, we're not channeling some energy from within ourselves. We are beseeching the planet to change itself to meet our needs. Improving your magic, Aubrey, making your magic safer, is simply a process of learning how to ask for that power more specifically. It's to become a better conversationalist.

Aubrey: I'm trying. I... [sighs] It's hard for me. I'm not... [laughs] As you know, I'm not a good listener. Are there other types of magic besides just... like, the fireballs... y'know, I... can you teach me how to heal?

Janelle: There is no healing magic, Aubrey. Just as there is no fireball magic, there is no earthquake magic. You ask for healing, and if you ask correctly, and your voice is heard, the planet will heal. You are thinking of this power as something that you master these specific channels of. It is not like that. You can do anything, Aubrey, as long as you ask for it, and as long as the planet abides.

But where I struggle to teach you, Aubrey, is that that reflexive magic that you use... it is not like ours. Our magic is so much more difficult, which may be frustrating for you to hear, but there are those who train for decades, centuries even, Aubrey, and can't produce any more than a candle flame. What you have done so quickly, this magic that comes as second nature to you, it is unique among any creature who has ever walked the... either of our planets, before you.

Aubrey: But why? I don't deserve it. I can't use it. I hurt people. I don't want to hurt people anymore.

Janelle: Then don't.

Griffin: She says...

Janelle: I don't know how to put it to you any clearer than that.

Griffin: She gestures for you to actually sit down on the chair. She sees you getting upset.

Janelle: The reason you have been hurting people, Aubrey, is because you don't understand what you are capable of. It is a kind of doubt. And I know it doesn't work like this. I don't have, perhaps, the best people skills. I know you can't just tell a person not to doubt anymore. But that doubt has kept you from knowing your full potential, Aubrey. It has not allowed you to learn the difference between burning flame, and a healing, warming flame.

You have to lean into this power, Aubrey. If anything else, walking away is not going to do you any good. A dull knife is far, far more dangerous than a sharp one. Does any of this make sense?

Aubrey: Yes, but... it doesn't change the fact that I'm afraid.

Griffin: She smiles, actually, when you say that. And she says...

Janelle: [laughs] Now, that is one thing that I do understand.

Griffin: And she um, walks over to the window of this room and opens it, and um, opens the curtain in front of it, and gestures outside. And you see the courtyard outside of the castle with uh, with that big, orange crystal, and the line of Sylvans waiting to receive their allotment of power from it. And she gestures towards this scene, and she says...

Janelle: What do you see when you look out there?

Aubrey: I see a crystal that I'm not allowed to touch.

Griffin: She smiles. She says...

Janelle: That is the last hope of a people who have yet to realize that the land that they walk on is dying. It scares the hell out of me, Aubrey. There are those who believe that the centuries of assaults on our world from yours has left Sylvain weakened and unable to support the life that clings to her surface. There are those who believe her affliction is terminal; that the planet is dying, that the corruption that lies beyond our city's gates is just one of many symptoms that accompany the sunseting of our world.

Or maybe it's already dead. Maybe we're just siphoning the last bit of warmth from—

Griffin: And you hear someone clear their throat by the entrance to Janelle's chambers. And as you look towards it, you see the young girl who greeted you on your first visit to Sylvain: The Interpreter. The sort of unofficial ruler of this land. And Janelle just bows quickly. You can kind of tell, she's embarrassed that the Interpreter walked in during her talking about the end of the world. And uh, the Interpreter says...

Interpreter: I apologize for my intrusion, Ms. Janelle. Woodbridge seeks audience with you in my chambers. He has an adjustment to our rationing that requires approval of the full council.

Griffin: And Janelle turns back to you, Aubrey, and says...

Janelle: Aubrey, I know you're scared. But that fear... that fear is the reason your powers are as unpredictable as they are. You need to trust yourself, Aubrey.

Griffin: She actually takes your hands, and she says...

Janelle: You're unlike anyone I've ever met. Your powers... [laughs] Your powers rival my own, Aubrey, and you have been doing this for approximately 15 minutes. If I had what you had, I know I would have fixed this kingdom a long time ago. Your power is rare, and I know it is scary, but it is a beast you must tame for the sake of both of our worlds.

Aubrey: I'll try.

Griffin: And she nods and walks out of the room. And the Interpreter turns back to face you, and gives you a little bow, and she says...

Interpreter: Again, my sincere apologies. [echoing] I wish she'd stop coming here. It's her world's fault that Sylvain's dying in the first place.

Griffin: And the words you just heard did not match up to the mouth movements that she made. You get the impression that she actually asked you a question with the words she was speaking, and she is waiting on a response.

Aubrey: I'm sorry?

Interpreter: I said, do you need an escort to—[echoing] She's just as bad as the rest of them. She's just taking what she wants with no concern for our people.

Aubrey: Uh... escort back to the... is everything okay?

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

Griffin: And I think with that, she just kind of smiles and nods, and you get the impression that she just said bye to you in some way with her mouth words. And she starts to leave.

Aubrey: Okay, bye.

Griffin: And she walks out of the room. I think you find your own way out of the castle, and as you sort of walk through the big double doors leading out of the castle, the serenity of this entry hall is shattered by the ringing of alarm bells in the distance, off to the west, by this huge wall that surrounds the city, sort of protecting it from the darkness beyond.

And suddenly, all of the soldiers in here, in the entry hall, rush out. And you see the courtyard evacuated as the guards out there also rush towards the sound of these bells, and the people waiting in line are scared, and so frustrated that their wait has been interrupted. They clear out, too. And a couple of guards like, rush by you, and they say... y'know, they tell you to get to safety, because there is something trying to break through the wall at the edge of the city.

And you are in the courtyard, alone.

Travis: I would like to touch the crystal now, Griffin.

Griffin: Uh, why don't you act under pressure for me. Tell me what... how? How are you touching the crystal?

Travis: Like, so light. Like, just like... because on one hand... okay. Let me explain myself. On the one hand, like, Aubrey knows she's not supposed to. And like, after the kindness Janelle has just shown, doesn't want to like, y'know, ruin anything. But on the other hand, I think she really has it in her head that interacting with the crystal in some way is going to like, recalibrate her power, or... something will unlock, or it's something she's supposed to do.

Griffin: I love that. I love that. And I'm not saying that like, I love that, not because I'm saying you're correct, you've solved my crystal puzzle. But I just love the idea that Aubrey is like, "If I just touch the crystal, I'll be able to do magic again." Okay.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Are you just sort of rushing up to it? Are you trying to like... are you proceeding with caution?

Travis: Yes, definitely caution. And like, she's just gonna like, touch it with one finger. And as she does, she says...

Aubrey: I'm sorry.

Travis: And then touches it. So I rolled a six, and my act under pressure... oh, I don't get any pluses. But I'm gonna use luck, because this is very important.

Griffin: You are burning through that luck, my man.

Travis: I've only used three!

Griffin: Okay. Um, so, that bumps you up to a twelve. Correct. Which is, you do what you set out to accomplish, which means you touch the crystal unbothered. Um, okay.

As you reach toward the crystal, like, just as the skin of your finger makes contact with it, it pulls in your whole hand. Your whole hand is now on the surface of this crystal. Both of them are pulled to its surface, almost magnetically.

[music plays]

Griffin: You feel... Aubrey, you feel like all of the moisture in your body is being pulled out through your palms. You can't breathe, because you're convinced, in this moment, there is nothing to breathe. You feel your consciousness, like, falling away from you, almost like you were just pushed down a well, and the world is getting much, much, much, much farther away. The prevailing feeling that you have right now in this moment is one of absolute certainty that you are dying as you touch this thing.

And eventually, you push backwards off of the crystal. And you fall back, away from it. And as you fall, you haven't taken any harm from this thing that just happened as you touched the crystal, which is the good news. As you fall, you land in a flower bed. It is a bed of these beautiful wild flowers, just blooms of reds and whites and yellows and dark purples, all surrounding this crystal, spreading across just a huge swath of the courtyard. And they were not there a moment ago.

They look beautiful. It's kind of hard to appreciate them, because you do kind of feel like dog shit a little bit. And as you sit up from these flowers, you catch a glimpse of yourself in the crystal. You're sweating up a storm. You

look and feel a little feverish. There's one detail that really stands out. What color are Aubrey's eyes?

Travis: Uh, they are brown.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: But like, y'know, kind of like a like... just like a pretty light, y'know. Aw.

Clint: Like a hazel?

Griffin: Sure. Uh—

Travis: Is hazel brown?

Griffin: I have no idea. Okay, uh, your left eye is that color. Your right eye is now this dark orange hue, with like a starburst of lighter orange just around the pupil. And you catch a glimpse of your new eye color in just this one, large, smooth facet of the crystal. And its new tint is nearly fading away in the gemstone's brilliant, orange expanse.

[music plays]

Griffin: It is the following morning, and the three of you have regrouped back in the Pine Guard HQ, underneath the Amnesty Lodge. Duck, what have you done with the goat man? I think the goat man has been stabilized, and you sort of kept vigil throughout the night, and uh, he seems to be okay. He had a little fever, actually, just sort of in the early hours of the morning, but it has broken. He is still unconscious. Do you just have him sort of loose, still? Just like, out on the table?

Justin: He is handcuffed to the table.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Can't be too careful. The door to the uh, in-fur-mary is...

Griffin: Oh, man.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Griffin: No.

Clint: Woo!

Justin: ... is locked.

Travis: Yeah, he did it.

Justin: And there's a big sign outside that says, like... "Caution: Bird flu." Or something. Yeah, it says that. It says that. It says, "Caution: Bird flu."

Griffin: Uh, okay. So nobody...

Travis: Caution: Bird flu inside. And it's kind of spelled out like The Walking Dead.

Griffin: Okay, I like that. Um, are you trying to keep this thing secret from your... from Ned and Aubrey, or uh, what's like, your... 'cause I didn't imagine like, the infirmary being its own—

Justin: No, they can know about it. I'm just trying to keep—I don't want it to be like... I don't want to have to like, discuss this with everybody in Amnesty.

Griffin: Okay. Alright. I mean, let's have that scene, of you sort of revealing your new friend.

Duck: Alright. Y'all, come to the infirmary for a second. I want to show you something.

Aubrey: What, and get bird flu?

Duck: Yeah, it's a clever ruse.

Ned: In-fur-mary. Okay, now I get it. Yeah! [laughs]

Travis: Griffin, did Aubrey's eye remain that color, or—

Griffin: Oh yeah, baby.

Travis: --is that just a temporary—

Griffin: Oh, yeah.

Travis: Okay. She's wearing sunglasses for sure.

Griffin: Okay.

Duck: So, um... you're gonna feel some impulses to probably get your uh, get your dander up when we go in here. I need you to just keep it calm. I spent all fuckin' night trying to keep this thing alive.

Justin: And then I open the door to it.

Aubrey: Oh.

Duck: Yeah.

Ned: A goat.

Duck: Well, no, it's... I mean, you look at the legs, you can kind of see...

Ned: [gasps] It's Pan!

Duck: No—

Griffin: No, we're not crossing over.

Clint: It's pan!

Justin: There's no crossover here, sir. No. There's no—

Griffin: [laughing]

Justin: There is no... there is nothing satirical about this creature.

Ned: I had to go there.

Duck: Well, I'm bringing you right back.

Aubrey: Duck?

Duck: Yeah.

Aubrey: Who is this?

Duck: Uh, I don't know. It doesn't speak, uh... English, or like, human, as near as I can figure. And uh, well, I-- Beacon, really, almost cut its head off. And you can see, it kind of jacked me up pretty bad.

Aubrey: Uh-huh...

Duck: I think I'm healing okay.

Griffin: Oh yeah, you're totally fine. Your one harm you had is gone by this point.

Duck: Yeah, so, I just... I was hoping y'all would have some ideas.

Aubrey: About... idea... ideas about the goat man?

Duck: Yeah, like, how to figure out... its... plan? Now that I'm saying it, it does sound pretty fuckin' dumb.

Aubrey: Um, excuse me, Mr. Goat Man. Could—what—hi.

Duck: Yeah. I mean, we covered that no English or human tongues as far as I know.

Aubrey: Right, right, right.

Griffin: The goat man is unconscious at this moment. Are you trying to rouse it now to converse with it, Aubrey?

Travis: I mean, that seems like step one.

Griffin: Okay. Um, it awakens—

Ned: Aubrey, ask him if his name is Mr. Tumnas.

Aubrey: I won't be doing that, Ned.

Griffin: It uh, it awakens peacefully as you sort of rouse it, and it sits up, and sees the handcuffs attached to its wrists. I think it tries to pull away, just like, once. And then it looks down, and then kind of just stares at the three of you with just sort of obvious curiosity. And...

Aubrey: Hi!

Griffin: And it just looks at you, Aubrey. It's staring at you.

Aubrey: My name is Aubrey. Hello. Are you okay?

Griffin: It doesn't respond.

Ned: Have you tried feeding it?

Duck: Yeah, I mean... it's had a fever, and I thought you were supposed to feed a cold, starve a fever? I thought that was it, but I couldn't remember.

Aubrey: Could we say 'them'? 'It' feels... I'm so sorry about them. So...

Travis: And Aubrey points to the wound.

Aubrey: Are you feeling better? Does that hurt?

Duck: It doesn't speak English. I mean, we can like...

Griffin: He points to, like... puts his hand on his wound, and doesn't really know how to like, respond or anything like that. But he saw you point to his wound, and he reaches up, and touches it, and just puts his hand back down.

Aubrey: Okay, um... I'm gonna try something.

Travis: And Aubrey closes her eyes and says...

Aubrey: [sighs] I would like to speak to this creature.

Griffin: Uhh... okay. This is a, I'm guessing, a use magic. What would this sort of... what category are you assuming this would fit under?

Travis: Um, so there is actually part of use magic that is speak to... let me see where it is...

Griffin: Communicate with something you do not share a language with. Holy shit.

Travis: There it is.

Griffin: Fuckin' holy damn.

Travis: I been waiting to use that shit this whole time.

Griffin: Alright.

Travis: That's a seven...

Clint: For five seconds.

Travis: No, like, since I saw that on there. So it's a seven plus two, so a nine.

Griffin: Alright. You choose the effect and the glitch. Aubrey, you pick one of the following glitches. 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... oh, see, I want to say the effect is weakened.

Griffin: Okay. Yeah, that's fine. Uh, here's what's happened. You touch the goat man. And...

Justin: Touch the Goat Man was the name of my first studio album. It was not well received.

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs] [singing] Touch the goat man! Dun dun dun dun dun!

Justin: [singing] Dun dun dun.

Griffin: You touch the goat man, Aubrey, and you make some magic. And it actually does feel a little bit different than it has felt in the past. Ned and Duck, you see this faint sort of orange light just sort of pulsate out of where Aubrey touches this goat man, and the goat man sort of is a little scared of this at first, and starts to pull away, but then just kind of like, sits there for a bit. And uh, just sort of takes the touch.

And Aubrey, you pull your hand away, and this goat man is now still looking at the three of you.

Aubrey: I'm Aubrey.

Griffin: Uh, it sort of... now it's kind of scared again, because it just heard you say something. The goat man like, yelps a couple of times. Just bleating. Just... [goat sounds] And uh, looks at you, Duck. I think this—he's sort of looking at all of you, panicked, but when it's the most scared, it looks to you, because you are the one who saved its life. And it definitely knows that.

Duck: Aubrey, I don't mean to be judgey, but it seems like your spell didn't quite take hold.

[theme music plays]

Griffin: And with that, the goat man stands up from the table, and sort of gets yanked back by the handcuff attached to its wrist. And looks at you, Duck, and he smiles. And he says...

Goat Man: [clears throat] Duck!

[theme music plays]

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[music plays]

Speaker 1: [singing] Is there a dog in a car? At a bar? On the street? Yay!

Allegra: I'm Allegra Ringo, a small dog owner. My dog Pistachio howls when she's excited.

Renee: And I'm Renee Culvert, a big dog owner. My dog Tugboat tips over when he's sleepy.

Allegra: And we co-host a podcast called Can I Pet Your Dog? that airs every Tuesday. We bring you all things dog.

Renee: Yes. Dog news. Dog tech. Dogs we met this week. We also have pretty famous guests on. But Legs – we're not gonna let them talk about their projects.

Allegra: No.

Renee: Just want to hear about those dogs!

Allegra: We don't want to hear about your stuff. Only your dogs. So join us every Tuesday on Max Fun.

[music plays]

[gavel banging]

Jesse: I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn, and justice is within your reach.

Speaker 1: My mom refuses to take my phone calls.

Speaker 2: My boyfriend says I should take our cats with me to graduate school, but I think he should keep them.

[cat meow]

Jesse: In the court of Judge John Hodgman, justice rules.

Speaker 3: My partner's board game collection is out of control.

Speaker 4: My sister won't stop stealing my clothes.

John: I'm Judge John Hodgman. I'm tough, but fair.

Echoing Voice: Tough but fair!

John: I'll bring you justice, and I'm only a click away. Tipping. [gavel bang] Automotive etiquette. [gavel bang] Siblings. [gavel bang] Roommates. [gavel bang] If you've got a case, go to MaximumFun.org/JJHO. Judge John Hodgman is tough, but fair.

Echoing Voice: Tough but fair!

Jesse: Subscribe to the podcast today.

John: Judge John Hodgman rules. [gavel banging] That is all.