

The Adventure Zone: Amnesty – Episode 29

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Griffin: Hey everybody, this is Griffin. So, this is gonna be kind of a weird episode, and I wanted to give you a heads up about it and sort of explain why we made it the way that we made it. So, if you've been listening to the show for a while, you've probably realized that the last couple arcs of Amnesty have been a lot more collaborative, in terms of like, figuring out where the whole thing is going.

Uh, I've been fairly open about how I don't have this big structured plan like I had for Balance, and that's been really exciting for me, and I know it has been for the boys, too. And in sort of setting the stage for the finale, we all kind of decided that we wanted to make that last little bit of world building also fairly collaborative before we threw all the characters in and see how they fair.

And y'know, there's still... it's still kind of up to me to form the uh, the adventure, if you will, of that final arc, based on the decisions that the boys have made about their characters and how they've responded to the events of the last episode. And so, it's not just like we're fully scripting the whole thing out. Rather, we're just sort of setting the stage, I think, is the best way to put it.

And in talking about it, we decided that it would be very helpful, not just for all of us, but for all of you, or if you have fallen off the show for a while and are just getting back into it, to have a bit of a primer for everything that you need to know about the world before we go into the last handful of episodes of TAZ: Amnesty. And instead of just like, doing a The Adventure Zone Zone where I just like, barrel down the camera and tell you everything that's happened in the story, uh, we wanted to do something a little bit more weird than that.

So, this episode, it features some clips from past episodes of like, pertinent data that you need to have as we go into the finale. But, there is also some

new stuff in there; some scenes that are, I would say, semi-scripted, semi-improvised, that give some detail on how Kepler has changed after the collapse of the mountain. No like, big decisions were being made behind the scenes, I would say. It is, y'know, mostly uh, vague hints about where the characters are in the convening months after the collapse. Um, and so, I don't feel guilty, like we should've... "Oh, man, we should've rolled for that."

Um, so, this episode is partially scripted. Some scenes, giving some new details about the world, and y'know, what is going to set up the events of the finale. And a lot of it is also sort of details that you need to know about some of the big mysteries that we have in the world.

Moving forward, we have a guest performer, Hal Lublin, a friend of the show from We Got This, who... we came up with this idea like, four days ago. And so, it's been a real rush job trying to put it together, and we've been excited to make it. But uh, and Hal managed to get us like, his audio within the span of like, a few hours, which is pretty remarkable. So thank you to Hal.

And um, yeah, that's it. I will come back in the break to talk to you again, and uh, then, in two weeks, we will have the first episode of the final arc of TAZ: Amnesty. So I hope that this tells you everything you need to know before we get to that point, and yeah, here it goes.

[background chatter]

Agent Hanes: Ms. Cobb? Brought you a coffee. Agent Stern tipped me off. Cream, no sugar, right? Right. Well, I guess I'm talking for the both of us. My name is Agent Hanes. Was transferred down from central last night. Beautiful country out here.

So... [clears throat] Your friends call you Mama, but I'm guessing I'm pretty far from being considered a friend, so... Ms. Cobb, I know you've been a guest of the Department of Unexplained Phenomena for several weeks now, and I understand you've been somewhat... recalcitrant. I was brought in because I excel at helping people... be more helpful.

I can appreciate your situation. I can, Ms. Cobb. You have a secret you feel like could shatter the world if it got out. And let me assure you – it's out. An extraterrestrial entity tore the top off your mountain and sent it tumbling through town. Many of your residents saw one of these beings with their own eyes. Saw your associate corralling it back to your inn.

You've been here a while, so maybe you're not aware. Amnesty Lodge is closed for business. In fact, the whole top side of town is under lock and key. Whatever you're hiding, whatever you know about the archway, about what happened to Mount Kepler, about the entities you were providing safe haven to... it's only a matter of time before we figure it out.

Or, you could just tell me. Right now. You could explain to me why your designated yourself the sole warden to planet earth. And I could expedite your release so fast, you could take that coffee to go, still hot.

Mama: I'll tell you... [sighs] What I told everyone else. You answer me one question, and I'll tell you what you want to know. What happened to all my guests at Amnesty Lodge?

Agent Hanes: Turn off the feeds. Look, we don't know. The inn was stripped clean by the time the FBI arrived. I mean, we found the bat cave you had going on in the cellar, but nobody was there.

Mama: Well... alright, then. Alright. Yeah, I've been keepin' this a secret for a few decades, now.

[ambient music plays]

Mama: And Hanes, it's got me real tired. So... it was about a year ago now that things started to change. Y'know what? I'll give you the usual spiel.

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Mama: There's... another world. One that is connected to our own. And that connection... it's popped up in so many places around the world throughout time, and right now, it's here in Kepler. And this other world, Aubrey, it's an

incredible place, and a dangerous place. And us humans have been crossing over into it for... well, as long as we've been around, I guess. We've been bringing back stories and folk tales, which, surprise – they're mostly true.

But that connection, Aubrey... it ain't a one way thing. They've been crossing over, too.

Griffin: And Mama looks at the guests in this lobby, and she nods, and they look kind of nervous for a second. But then, one by one, they stand up, and they start undoing different accessories. Some bracelets, necklaces. A couple of them slip off rings that they're wearing, and one by one, they transform. And the two guests seated at the chessboard grow in stature, and grow these thick layers of fur surrounding them, and suddenly, they're just werewolves.

And the guest that was dusting the piano turns transparent and spectral. And Dani's skin starts glowing slightly, and her eyes turn this dark orange, and her teeth become long and pointed. And you are suddenly standing in this lobby with a bunch of monsters.

Aubrey: Oh, okay.

Griffin: Mama says...

Mama: You okay? You alright? I know this is a lot.

Aubrey: Yeah. No, I've watched movies and TV shows before, so this actually isn't as surprising as you might think.

Griffin: She kind of laughs and says...

Mama: Most people don't take this as well, so I'm glad that you are. Listen—

Aubrey: Well, it's one of those things where, y'know, I've always... y'know, no matter how skeptical you are about like, sci-fi and fantasy stuff, there's also always like a part of your mind that's like, "But maybe..." And so, this is

one of those things where it's like, "Yeah, okay. Yeah, sure. Sure, sure, sure."

Griffin: She says...

Mama: So, that's the truth of the matter. Monsters are real. But, as is the case with so many of life's most profound curiosities, well... there's a lot more to it than just that.

Now, there's something I need to show you, but before we do anything else, Aubrey, I need you to swear on your life that you're not gonna tell another soul about what you learned tonight. Can you do that? I'm not... I don't want you to take this lightly. This is like, end of the world level secret. I need your absolute discretion on this.

Aubrey: Mama, not only do I swear on my life, I swear on the life of Dr. Harris Bonkers, PhD.

Clint: Whoa.

Griffin: Is Dr. Harris Bonkers with you? Is Dr. Harris Bonkers always with you?

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Do you mean like, spiritually?

Griffin: And physically.

Travis: Oh. Um, yeah, y'know, the term I've been thinking about a lot, and I think Aubrey has, now that she has done real magic, is 'familiar.'

Griffin: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

Travis: Okay. Um, but I think maybe for this, I think just for, because it's dangerous, maybe she left Dr. Harris Bonkers with Dani.

Griffin: Okay. Mama says...

Mama: I don't mean to scare you, Aubrey. It's just... can you imagine what would happen if the wrong people learned about a place full of magic and monsters and everything? What they might do to take advantage of that kind of power, to own it?

Aubrey: Let me reassure you right now – I can make fire with my mind. I'm not really scared of anything. So...

Griffin: She says...

Mama: I know that, but it's important you understand the gravity of the situation, 'cause I've dedicated my entire adult life to keeping that stuff out of the public eye. It is the most important thing we do around these parts.

Aubrey: Uh-huh.

Griffin: And you're walking a bit further into the woods, and she starts to explain. She says...

Mama: Okay, so... this other world, it's called Sylvain. Sylvain, Aubrey, it's an incredible place. It is a living world, and I mean that literally. Whole place is alive, sustaining its inhabitants with this magic power. And that's a thing that those inhabitants are understandably pretty protective of.

Aubrey: Uh-huh.

Mama: Problem is, throughout history, those gates on our side have been popping up all over the place. And humans have been crossing over into Sylvain and making a mess of things. Made some bad blood between us and the Sylphs. It's hard to blame either side, really, 'cause where these gates appear on earth, so do the... well, we call them Abominations. But don't you worry none about that, though – that's mine and Barclay's cross to bear, not yours.

But the worse that things got in Sylvain because of the humans, the stricter their laws got. And today, they got some pretty draconian laws in effect, governing who can and can't live there. And the outcasts, well... they don't really got anywhere to go. Hence the Amnesty Lodge. I give those Sylphs a safe place to sleep at night, and that seems about the least that I can do for them.

And Aubrey, I don't know nothin' about your life and what you want from it, but... you could be safe there, too, I think. Somehow, you... you fit into this picture. I know it.

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Barclay: Alright, so the Pine Guard was established after the Abominations first started appearing in Kepler, back in 1988. And some concerns citizens around town found out about the monsters, and about Sylvain, and they took it upon themselves to start fighting back in secret. And their ranks have fluctuated since those days. Folks, y'know, died fighting the Abominations. Some packed up and left town.

This computer used to belong to a dude named Thacker. He was with the Pine Guard from the start, too. He kept notes on everything they ever fought. And in this, the oldest functioning computer on this fucking planet...

Griffin: And he like, kind of slaps his palm against it, waiting for it to start. And he says...

Barclay: About six years ago, Thacker took off in the middle of the night without a word to anyone.

Griffin: And he kind of sighs, and he looks around the office, and he says...

Barclay: There's a lot of that going around these days.

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Barclay: Holy shit, that's Thacker. Mama, where the fuck did you find Thacker?

Griffin: Mama kind of sighs, and then she hobbles over to a uh, a load-bearing sort of pillar in the center of the room. There's a few of these sort of strewn about. She leans up against one to take some weight off her ankle, and she says...

Mama: Alright, so uh... God, where to fuckin' start? Y'all are a bit new to this, so there's a bit of context you're probably missing out on. I've been doing this for 30 years, and you used to be able to set your watch by the Abominations. They've always been dangerous, but they used to be... predictable.

But now, they're getting stronger. They're starting to break the rules. Out of curiosity, what was that last Abomination like? The one I missed out on?

Duck: It was wet. Y'know, it was a real watery one.

Aubrey: And it gathered around water and made itself like, bigger, and it was like, y'know, a watery monster thing.

Griffin: And she kind of chuckles, and she says...

Mama: So, let me get this straight. We get a powerful fire wielding magician that joins our party... and the next Abomination is made out of water? Don't you think that's a heck of a coincidence?

Aubrey: Oh, wait. Are you—you're saying somebody planned it?

Griffin: She says...

Mama: I don't know, but for whatever reason, recently, the Abominations... they've started playing for keeps. So I went out, and I tried to find Thacker. He left years ago. He had—

Griffin: And when she says his name, he kind of like, lifts his head up and snarls, and then kind of like, leans back down to his sort of focused-on-the-floor position. She says...

Mama: He left years ago. He headed out to Sylvain, see what he could learn about... well, where the Abominations come from. He went beyond the walls of the city out there, he went into the corrupted lands that surround Sylvain, where those unlucky enough to get trapped end up getting, y'know, a little nasty.

And he studied those folks. He survived out there in the inhospitable wilds, all the time, looking for the source of the Abominations. Now, it took me a long time to find him, and when I did, he... well, he was like this. He spent a bit too much time out in the dark. He lost himself out there. But I managed to get him back here. Wasn't easy, but I managed to get him back here and lock him up down here, down at... well, I haven't been down here in a bit.

This actually used to be the safe haven for the Pine Guard where we did our work, back when there were enough of us to justify having a safe haven. Anyway, he's not especially talkative, as you can see. But as was his charge here with the Pine Guard, he kept records of his studies in his journals. He didn't find anything.

Griffin: She holds up one of his journals and says...

Mama: He found, y'know, some feral Sylphs, sure. But nothing like the Abominations we've faced in the past. No cracks in the fabric of reality that these things keep slipping through. He looked for years, y'all, and he found, just... he found dick.

Duck: [laughs]

Ned: And who is Dick?

Duck: The plot thickens.

Mama: He—no. He found nothing. He didn't find anything. And... what y'all gotta understand, something that I've been realizing over the last couple years of hunting monsters to protect this town is... we fight the Abominations to protect Kepler. Because someone's gotta do it. But one day, we're gonna face something stronger and craftier than we are, and we're gonna lose.

Or maybe we won't. Maybe we're gonna slay every damned thing that comes through that gate... until we get old, and until we lose our edge. Until someone maybe gets wise about the portal, who, y'know, crosses over and starts a war with Sylvain. Or until the gate shuts down, and opens up somewhere else on earth, turns into somebody else's problem.

It's starting to feel a bit like a futile effort, so I headed out into the wilds of Sylvain to try and find somebody that I hoped might have an answer. But... once again, we've come up empty.

Griffin: She uh, sets the book down, and she turns toward you all, and she looks, um... she doesn't look as spritely as she usually does. She looks pretty tired. She says...

Mama: The Pine Guard's work is hard. And it's necessary. But really, it's just... a stall. Unless we can figure out where the Abominations are coming from... one day, the monsters are gonna win.

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Sarah: You gotta—y'all are talkin' like I've been clued in on this stuff for 20 years. I'm smart as hell, but can we just—can we—can we take it back just a notch?

Duck: I mean, okay. She's an alien from a dead planet who jumped out of a hole in my brain. I don't... I don't see what's tripping you up with that, Drake.

Minerva: Technically, it was a wormhole that I had planted in your brain to communicate with you from across the cosmos.

Duck: Right. Like I said. [laughs]

Sarah: And then you put one of them holes in my head to help bring you here?

Minerva: Exactly!

Duck: It sounds a lot worse than it actually is. Um, plus side, you can sword fight and stuff now, if that's your thing.

Leo: Alright, gang. Come on, focus up. Let's call this meeting of the Chosen Club to order.

Duck: Minerva, you were on patrol last night. You see anything out of the ordinary?

Minerva: I saw a blade-wielding hovercraft approaching the mountaintop, Duck Newton. Leo later informed me it was merely a helicopter, and no cause for concern.

Leo: Yeah, close enough.

Duck: Alright. Minerva, anyone spot you? How's operation uh, blend in with earth's society going?

Minerva: Remarkably well, Duck Newton. Listen – tonight I will eat a pizza, and watch The Voice.

Duck: Well... [laughs] I'm sold. Drake, it's your turn to take the Sylvans up to H2Whoa: That Was Fun to top off. You know how to get around the road block?

Sarah: I do, though, I still need someone to explain why we're risking our necks so some folks can go out and have some fun in the sun.

Duck: It's a long story. Leo, what's the word from Sheriff Owens?

Leo: Some more FBI folks rolled into town last night, but uh, otherwise, all's quiet on the western front there, Duck.

Duck: Well, let's not get used to it. Full moon's in a week. If things stay on schedule, something's heading our way.

Minerva: Indeed, Duck Newton. My dreams have been troubled as of late.

[ambient music plays]

Minerva: The visions have yet to come into focus, but... I am certain – retaliation is on its way. The hour of our shared destiny is nearly at hand.

Sarah: What—what—what destiny, though? Can y'all please... can y'all just stop with the cryptic shit? Like, what are we doing?

Minerva: Duck Newton?

Duck: [laughs] Sure. Uh, no problem.

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Griffin: You see everything around the base of this beam just getting sucked up into it. Trees, and cars, and houses, and the earth itself, all traveling up to beam to be destroyed by this massive ball of fire in the sky. And as you gaze upon this scene, the gravitational pull of the beam gets stronger, pulling in more and more of the earth, until your house starts coming apart, and you feel yourself flying upward into this beam, into the sun...

And then you wake up in your bed again. And standing at the foot of your bed, watching over you intently, is a humanoid shape made out of faint, translucent light. And a voice comes from it and says...

Minerva: I apologize for the rude awakening, Duck Newton. If you must take a moment to collect yourself before speaking, I completely understand.

Duck: I—what the fuck?

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Minerva: My name is Minerva, Duck Newton, and I am here to tell you you've been chosen to fulfill a fate of cosmic importance!

Duck: Alright, first off, who the hell are you? I know you're not a friend of my mom, 'cause you're callin' me Duck, and I know she hates that. So you're not a friend of my mom. Who are you? Who sent you? Is this—aww, okay. This is computers. I've been hearing people talk about that at the AV club. They're saying a lot of stuff about computers and all the stuff they can do. You're computers, aren't you?

Minerva: I am not computers, Duck Newton. I come from a faraway place. You're not ready quite yet to understand that, but you must understand, Duck Newton, and this will be difficult news to hear. Your world is imperiled, Duck Newton. It is besieged by a supernatural threat that would spell certain doom for not just your planet, but for two planets that have found themselves linked by destiny itself.

Even now, horrific Abominations march on your world, threatening to destroy the lives of your neighbors, friends, and loved ones without hesitation or remorse. The forces your world have assembled to defend itself will prove insufficient to see to this threat. You have been called, Duck Newton, to do what they cannot.

Duck: Yeah, I got class tomorrow, though.

Clint: [laughs]

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Minerva: You have been chosen, Duck, and that is a decision that cannot be reversed. I would ask of you this – take up the blade. Take up your fated instrument. And if you do not feel the call to pursue your destiny, I shall take my leave until you have grown to accept the tasks appointed to you.

Duck: Um... well, I am, of course, honored. Uh... [laughs] Uh, I mean, I'll keep the sword. That seems pretty kick ass. But I don't know what I'm supposed to—you want me to go kill the rest of the McLeod clan, and then um, I'll be the only one? Like, there can only be one of us? Have you seen that movie? There can be only one?

Minerva: You know I have not seen any of your earth...

Duck: I haven't seen it either. It's like a sword guy. I don't know. It seemed kind of dumb to me, but uh, I'll keep the sword. Hell yeah.

Justin: I pick it up.

Duck: Pchoo, pchoo! Look at me! Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh!

Griffin: How, uh... how does it feel?

Duck: Uh, pretty kick ass. Yeah. I mean, I'm not gonna go like, what, stab Dracula, whatever the fuck. But it's alright.

Minerva: But you could. You have the power to stab... you said Dracula?

Beacon: Minerva, instruct this beef boy to unhand me, please.

Griffin: How does Duck feel about that?

Justin: He is shocked. Drops it on the ground like, what the fuck.

Beacon: Oh, excellent. Another skilled combatant.

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Minerva: Duck Newton! The moment of your destiny has arrived!

Griffin: And there, standing before you, is a presence. And it's a presence you first saw some number of years ago, and that's something that we're gonna have to figure out together. Um, she, like you saw so many years ago, she has no real features that you can make out. She's just sort of this outline of a person made of this faint, blue light.

Duck: Alright.

Justin: And I turn heel and start walking away.

Minerva: Duck Newton, wait! I must know if you've been training your body to achieve and maintain peak physical capabilities, Duck Newton!

Duck: Well, uh... y'know what, I did try that uh, cross fit. Darren opened up one of them cross fit places. They do bait during the day, and then during the evenings, they got cross fit.

Clint: [laughing] Bait and cross fit!

Duck: And uh, I tried it. I'll be honest, though, it was—

Minerva: And did you master this martial art of crossed fit, Duck Newton?

Duck: Well, the first class was free. But honestly, the way my schedule is sometimes, I didn't think I'd be able to uh, dedicate... [sighs] As much time as it required to really make the membership pay off. Y'know how it goes.

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Duck: I looked at that thing last night. You don't understand – you've been dealing with this a long time. I looked at that thing. It wanted to kill me. It could've killed me, if I had given it half a chance. And maybe you all are itching to throw yourselves into the fire from the proverbial frying pan, but

I'm not. I want to keep living. Hell, I got a boat to finish. I got a cat to feed. I... this isn't me.

Griffin: She says...

Mama: I think you're selling yourself short, there, Duck. I think... I mean, hell, do you think most folks could've faced off against this thing last night and lived to tell the tale about it?

Duck: I mean, I'm not—I'll admit that I'm not... I mean, I'm tougher than your average—I was gonna say bear. But I mean, that's technically, I guess, still accurate. But I mean, really think about this for a second. I mean, walk through it with me. We could sit here and make all the plans we want. And then we go out into the forest, right, and we find it.

And then it sees me, and I see it, and then I rear back, and what the fuck finishes that sentence? Seriously, what do I do? Do I run up and punch it in its stomach? Am I gonna spin kick it? What exactly is the plan here that your buddy—I'm sure I'm kind of hard to kill, but y'know, I'm not exactly, y'know, packin' heavy artillery over here.

Ned: What about your special item in the Chicanery?

Duck: Oh, God, Ned. Ned, I told you to throw that thing away!

Ned: I don't throw anything away. I'm a big, hairy hoarder.

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Minerva: I told you earlier that my world, like yours, was tethered to an alien planet, besieged by Abominations from the other side.

Duck: Mm-hmm.

Minerva: This was only part of the truth. I was... the war councilor for my people. I pushed us into a conflict with that alien world. Our steel and fighting prowess crashed against their insectoid chitin and hive mind

coordination, and there were losses - incalculable losses on both sides. But ultimately, our world lost the war. They left us with just a handful of survivors.

And so, I forced the last great minds of our civilizations to create a weapon that could defeat our foe for good – a disease. Lethal to our enemy, innocuous to ourselves. I delivered the payload myself, Duck Newton, and I watched as every living being on that planet...

I'm the only survivor of both worlds now, and so, I sought out the reason for our shared fate, and in doing so, found earth and Sylvain. And you, like other Chosen before you, were selected to keep your people safe. That is just part of your destiny, Duck. Your true destiny is to not follow in my footsteps.

I told you this now, because my concerns about losing your trust... of damaging our... relationship... in a few moments, it's not going to matter anymore. Your power, Duck Newton, it stems from your connection with me and my world. That includes your power of foresight. Surely, you saw it, Duck. What you saw in your vision, the meteor...

Duck: Yeah. Yeah.

Minerva: ...it was never coming to earth. It was coming for me. My world was prepared once for this contingency. I will go to ground, and try as I always have to survive. But... the mechanism through which I am able to speak with you... it will be annihilated.

Griffin: She crosses one of her arms across her chest, and gives you a bow, a deep bow. And then, she stands up and takes one last look at you and pivots to the side one more time, and she says...

Minerva: It's time to stop hiding. You need to finish what I started. Go to him.

Duck: Go to who?

Griffin: And she turns back to you, and she says...

Minerva: Duck Newton... my pupil, my friend... I was not talking to you.

Griffin: And she disappears. And then there's a knock at the door to your apartment. Leo Tarkesian, your neighbor and friendly local grocer, clears his throat and says...

Leo: So uh... we should probably talk.

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Leo: I was also Chosen there for a bit, until you were chosen. Before the gate opened up in the woods here in Kepler, there was one up in Manhattan. Old 91st Street station. It's been shut down for like, half a century or something. Gate opened there, monsters started to come out. Minerva showed up in my dreams like I'm sure she did for you, popped up in that weird like, spectral form.

Duck: Spectral form, yeah.

Leo: I thought she was like, a Slimer or something.

Duck: Yeah.

Leo: Did you—was that your first inclination? I've never had anybody to talk to about this, but I thought it was a Slimer.

Duck: I thought I was high. Uh, because I was in high school, and I had... yeah, I thought I was high.

Leo: Well, anyways, she taught me the ropes, she, y'know, gave me the powers, and I, y'know, protected New York City from otherworldly threats there for like, 19 years or something. And uh, y'know, got older. My body stopped being quite as spritely, and uh, then my gate disappeared. And uh, next thing I know, Minerva told me that she's chosen someone new, and my shift was over, so I had to get to Kepler where the gate was now, and

deliver the new chosen one a blade and keep watch over him as he learns the craft. So that's what I've been doing.

Her people... I don't know how much she told you about her people. They got some sort of psychic thing where they can like, share their combat prowess with whomever they choose, as long as they get like, a line of communication open with them. And uh, I guess it's gone now. Uh, for you and me, Duck, that line of communication... and this next part, it's gonna sound a lot scarier than it actually is, so y'know, baton down the hatches.

Um, Minerva was talking to us through like a wormhole, Duck, that we uh... a little, barely there even little wormhole that was sort of inside our brains?

Duck: Mm-hmm.

Leo: I guess now that she's gone, the uh, the phone line's been disconnected. Please try later, y'know?

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Griffin: And then, just beyond the perimeter fence around the Green Bank Telescope, we see Dr. Sarah Drake watching all of these events unfold. And then, she feels this terrible pain in her head; just this splitting headache that just lasts for like, a flash. But it's enough to just reel her over. She falls to one knee and hangs onto the fence to regain her balance and pick herself back up, and as she picks herself back up, her face is illuminated with this soft, blue light. And then, we hear a voice speaking to her.

Minerva: Hello, earth scientist! I need to borrow your corporeal hands for a minute.

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Minerva: Duck Newton... this is going to hurt a whole bunch. Are you ready?

Duck: Yeah.

Griffin: Your sight vanishes just instantly as this flash of pain just splits your mind in two. And you feel this feeling like, growing and buzzing now, and moving. This pain is moving. It's stretching outward, out from your forehead. And then, just like that, it is gone. And your vision returns, and you see, hovering just in front of you, a small hole that is floating in the sky.

And this four-armed being looks at it like, curiously. Its head cocks to the side. And then, it sort of takes a step backward into the antenna with clear alarm. And then, it is thrown back, as you are, by this beam of piercing green light that bursts downwards, through the clouds above, into the antenna of the telescope.

And this hole that just came out of you, it is crackling with this green energy, and it's expanding. And through that hole, Duck, you see something. You see a vision of these ruins, of these like, toppled pillars and collapsed walls, and these like, obliterated pieces of large, inscrutable machinery, all of which are completely dormant except for one. And in front of that device, you see a shadow approaching faster and faster, and then... she leaps, and she's here.

She's holding this massive, two-handed sword with both hands, and she's careening through the air before sliding to a perfect halt on these two, large, wooden sandals. And then, she looks back over her shoulder at you, her real, tangible shoulder, and she says...

Minerva: Thanks for the lift, Duck Newton!

Duck: I had it...

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Griffin: Hey everybody, thanks for listening to The Adventure Zone, episode 29 of our Amnesty arc. Getting ready for the finale. Before we get you there, though, before we get you to the rest of the episode, you have to cross the bridge of sponsorships.

Our first sponsor this week is Squarespace. Squarespace is, get this – it's a frickin' website that you use to make websites, and that makes me scared for the future, because then, soon, it'll all be websites. But I mean, if you're gonna do that, you should probably do it with Squarespace, because they let you turn your cool idea into a new website like it's not even anything. No problem at all. They let you showcase your work, or do whatever the heck you want.

They got beautiful, customizable templates, created by world-class designers. They've got powerful e-commerce functionality that lets you sell whatever you want online. They have a new way to buy domains and choose from over 200 different extensions. They've got analytics and built-in search engine optimization that helps you grow in real time, and they have 24/7 award-winning customer support.

It's really slick, really easy. We've used it to make a whole bunch of websites, and uh, we don't know anything about making websites, and Squarespace still allowed us to do that. So, it's a very nice little operation they got going.

Go check out [Squarespace.com/Adventure](https://www.squarespace.com/Adventure) for a free trial, and when you're ready to launch, use the offer code 'Adventure,' and you're gonna save 10% off your first purchase of a website or domain.

I also want to tell you about Blue Apron. Blue Apron's great. We are big advocates for them. They will send you a box, the box is gonna have just everything you need to make a delicious, home cooked meal, and y'know what? Have fun doing it. You can learn new techniques, you can learn so much doing Blue Apron, because this box is gonna have recipes, it's gonna have fresh, y'know, seasonal ingredients, and it just helps you make cooking at home a sustainable part of your weekly routine.

It makes it just super easy to cook a delicious, wholesome meal instead of, y'know, relying on take out. Their menu is carefully designed and tested by test kitchen chefs. They have unique, specialty ingredients to bring chef-quality recipes to your dinner table. You get to pick what recipes they send you. They cater to a bunch of different diet types, and uh, yeah. I am

genuinely a big fan of Blue Apron. I would not be this effusive if I actually wasn't.

So, to start making delicious, brag-worthy meals at home without the hassle, try Blue Apron. Check out this week's menu and get \$60 off when you visit BlueApron.com/Adventure. That's BlueApron.com/Adventure. Blue Apron: a better way to cook.

Thank you to everybody who has been tweeting about the show using the #TheZoneCast hash tag. I think we're probably done with new characters for this season of The Adventure Zone, but boy, I sure do appreciate it still if you spread the word. It really means a lot, especially as we move toward the finale of Amnesty.

Thank you to MaximumFun.org for having us on the network. You can go to MaximumFun.org, check out all the great shows they have there. Shows like Story Break, and uh, uh, Friendly Fire, and Stop Podcasting Yourself, and Can I Pet Your Dog, and a bunch more at MaximumFun.org.

And we have a bunch of stuff at McElroy.family, which is our website for all of our shit. We have all of our podcasts, new episodes, news, uh, new merch. We got some new merch up on there, and tour announcements. Speaking of which, we have just added two new The Adventure Zone shows to our Become the Monster tour. And tickets for these are gonna go on sale tomorrow, Friday, June 14th, at noon local time to where the venues are.

And the venues are at San Diego – we're gonna be playing there during Comic Con on July 20th. Uh, I believe at the Balboa. And then on September 25th, we're gonna be doing a performance of The Adventure Zone in Washington D.C. We basically just added a TAZ show on the day before our MBMBaM show in D.C. So, that is July 20th, San Diego. September 25th, Washington D.C. Both Adventure Zone shows. Both tickets go on sale tomorrow, June 14th, Friday, June 14th, at noon, local to the venues.

You can go to bit.ly/becomethemonster for tickets and information about those shows. And I think that's it. I hope this episode's not weirding you out too much, and uh, we will be back with the next episode of TAZ: Amnesty in

two weeks. Uh, and that is gonna be on... let me run the numbers on that real quick... the 27th of June, so we'll talk to you then. Bye.

[background chatter]

Agent Hanes: There is a great deal you're telling me that wasn't included in Agent Stern's report, so either he's truly incompetent, or he has some reason to hide this from us.

Mama: [laughs] Agent Hanes, I'm sure I don't know what you're talking about.

Agent Hanes: Then maybe you can illuminate me about something else. The collapse of Mount Kepler wasn't the only supernatural activity in the area that day. The Green Bank Telescope also came under attack from an inhuman being. Conveniently, the security footage from that day has gone missing, but a security guard stationed there described the being as a gross ball of flesh, which eventually disintegrated to reveal a four-armed angel made of light.

This being came and tried to escape through holes that just opened up out of nowhere. Sounds fantastical. But so does the peak of a mountain being ripped from its base, so I'm willing to entertain any theories you might have about these beings.

[ambient music plays]

Mama: Y'know, I've killed me a lot of Abominations these past 30 years or so, Agent Hanes. And I'm sure, with the full weight of the United States government behind ya, you could take down a lot more. But these light people... [laughs] I suspect they're a little bit above your pay grade.

--

Eugene: Something has it out for Kepler's outdoor activity centers. You hear about what happened to H2Whoa? I got a theory, though. Don't nobody else want to hear it. I wondered if you might want to hear it.

Ned: Oh, of course. Yes, I live on theory.

Eugene: Well, it's aliens.

Ned: Mmm.

Eugene: Yeah, they're back here, back in Kepler. I had a little run-in with them myself. It was Tuesday night, November 15th, 1988. I was out walkin' my dog Braxton, got sucked up in this wormhole dealy. All these little ephemeral beings started investigating me. I told them to drop me right back down, or else I was gonna get my 12 gauge and fill their whole ass full of buckshot. And that must've scared them something fierce, because they complied, dropped me right back off. Ain't never seen hide nor hair of them since.

Now, 'cause I guess they're back, tearin' up our water parks, guess they need a reminder. So you uh... you keep a look out and come tell ol' Eugene if you see anything otherworldly out there.

Travis: [laughs]

Ned: Eugene, you know what is amazing to me?

Eugene: What's that, Ned?

Ned: That a 50 plus year old man can make a living tending bar in a ski resort. How do you do that?

Eugene: That's for me to know and for you to find out.

Ned: Eh, I'm not really that interested. I just was trying to make conversation.

Eugene: Alright.

--

Griffin: What you see floating in this water as you are descending down to the ground is what appears to be a humanoid being, made out of white light, about your size, with two legs and four arms and a domed head, all made out of this gentle, white light. And you actually see two small, black eyes appear on its face and meet your gaze, and you instantly know that this being, whatever it is, it means you no harm.

And then, finally, the mountain disintegrates completely. And now, you and this figure are just standing on the ground, right outside of the pool, and you see this figure sort of look at its arms one by one, just sort of examining its body. And as it does so, the light from one of its arms starts to break apart, just sort of disintegrating and floating away in the air.

And in its last moments, this white, humanoid shape, it looks back up in your direction, Ned, and then it slowly and cautiously nods. And then it evaporates completely in a cloud of soft, white particles of light, drifting upward and winking out of view one by one.

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Griffin: One by one, these three humanoid beings made out of this light just look at all of you and just solemnly bow. And very quickly after that, they all disintegrate into these just little beads of white light that float up and off into the distance.

--

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.

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. I was hoping y'all would have some ideas.

Aubrey: About... ideas... 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.

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...

Billy: [clears throat] Duck!

--

Indrid: This goat man is going to be in a lot of the futures that I see. He is, as far as I can tell, quite important.

Duck: A beloved character.

Griffin: He says...

Indrid: You are going to need to keep him safe, and you're going to need to keep him undiscovered, and you are going to need my help to do so.

--

Griffin: Like, you can read the emotion on this Bigfoot's face. And it is frustrated. And it is confused, and it is looking at the two people that it led here. And then it looks over, and it sees you, and it... smiles. And then, it steps backward and disappears.

--

Duck: You think it's trying to start a fight?

Aubrey: Yeah. I think it might be trying to... I don't know, destroy whatever, y'know, the anonymity, the peace that comes with it, between earth and Sylvain. 'Cause if you think about like... it's taken forms of things we know to make these attacks. It's setting us up.

Duck: I have a thought. Maybe it's trying to start a war between us and aliens.

Griffin: Uh, Barclay and Mama are just kind of staring at you.

Aubrey: Okay, um, it could be that. We'll put that down as A.

Duck: Yeah. Are you writing it up there?

Aubrey: Yep.

Barclay: Yeah, I'll write it.

Griffin: Barclay takes it and writes, uh, "A: Aliens?" And then in parentheses, "(I don't know why Duck got on aliens.)" And then end parentheses.

Aubrey: But B... how about B?

Griffin: He writes B.

Aubrey: It's a government facility, right? Like...

Barclay: Yeah.

Aubrey: I'm saying, if you wanted to start a war...

Barclay: This is getting a little Mars Attacks for my taste. I tend to deal with—

Aubrey: Duck said aliens. I didn't say aliens.

Barclay: Yeah, I know he said aliens! I'm dealing with local like, werewolves and stuff, I can't start talking about aliens starting a war with the government!

Aubrey: But I—no, I didn't say aliens. I want to make it clear. I want it on the record, right next to B, "Aubrey didn't say aliens. Duck said aliens."

Barclay: Alright.

Griffin: And he writes that in parentheses.

--

Justin: Uh, I think I'm gonna investigate the machinery, see what's going on with that.

Griffin: And as you get there, you actually realize that it is cast in like, bronze or something to be like, kind of a statue, or like, a memorial in the shape of this big pile of broken machinery.

Duck: Huh.

Griffin: And there is a stone plaque on the ground, and it reads, "Green Bank Observatory, 300 foot telescope. Collapsed November 15th, 1988."

--

Boyd: [slurred] I very rarely have the opportunity to actually speak to one of my targets. You've caused me some amount of trouble, but obviously, nothing I could not surmount. And you're being modest, Ned. It is not my actions entirely that led to this town being whipped up into a tizzy. I must say that, before I even got here, you set the stage very nicely.

I'm not here to fight, Ned. I was just curious. I guess I'll leave you to it. Good luck with everything. no spoilers, but you're going to probably need it. One last thing – the um... where's the partition? Where have you hidden him? The um... what was he... the goat man? Where did he end up? I figured out everything else in this town, but that was the one thing that eluded me.

Ned: Why? Why do you need...

Boyd: [slurred] Oh, God, Ned. You're just as difficult as you were back in the hotel. I don't know why I expected anything different.

Ned: Can you at least tell me why you're doing all this? Why would you stir up a fight that's gonna destroy so many lives? You said I was a target. Take me out, then. Take me out – but taking out the entire town and all these people? That doesn't make any sense.

Boyd: [slurred] Not to you, obviously. It doesn't make sense to the spider when you step on it, but some spiders need to be stepped on. I'm going to go now, Ned. This was really, um... if certain bodies found out what I was doing here, I would get in no short amount of trouble.

I—uh, I will... oh, God. If it doesn't—oh God, you're right. Okay. I'm sorry, Ned. This really was unnecessary. It was hubris, and um, please accept my sincere apologies.

Griffin: And he whips on his heels.

Clint: He pulls the trigger on the Narf blaster.

--

Griffin: What you're able to see, it is difficult to surmise. Not because it is so like, abstract and complicated; although, it super is. It is so bright inside of this rift that it actually hurts to look at it. But what you see is a facility. Like, this enormous, scientific facility, from what you can tell. And it is... it's largely comprised of like, this one massive, tall, cylindrical chamber.

And your vision, through this rift, it's at ground level. And at the center of the chamber, you see this shallow dome of light that is super wide. It's several dozen feet in circumference, and from it, actually, even from the distance that you are at from it, you hear the same kind of like, digitized buzzing language that this four-armed being appears to speak when you have hurt it and it has shouted out in pain.

And this dome is flanked by these rows of massive computers, and they're just roaring. You feel a tremendous amount of heat coming out of this chamber. But the displays on these computers have grown like, dark green and dusty with disuse. And the other thing that you see is, around the back wall of this chamber are these large, cylindrical pods. And most of them are completely empty, but a few of them have figures floating in them. And from your position, you can kind of only see silhouettes, but while you can't surmise what they are, their silhouettes look unnatural.

And in one of the pods, you actually see this mist coming out of these needles that are emerging from everywhere, and they are... this mist is like, stitching itself together to create one of these silhouettes. And then you look up from the ground floor, and your eyes can just barely take in what you see without just searing pain. You see beams of light. Countless beams, crisscrossing the walls of this chamber as it extends upward, beyond what you can see.

And each beam appears to be like, projecting out of a large, metal ring, and then just crossing the length of the chamber before landing in a ring like, directly across from it. And there's just hundreds of these beams, you assume. Although, they are far too painfully brilliant for you to count.

And you look over, and you see Minerva, who is seeing the same things, too. And then, this four-armed being manages to shake off the sword and start to run forward. And then, that dome at the center of the room, you see it like, bubble upward.

And then, this shockwave bursts out of it, and you see it blow the dust upward from the machinery surrounding it. And the entire chamber shakes as this dome just screams, and then the shockwave passes through the rift and collides with the four-armed figure and just cuts it in half. And its two halves just float upward and disintegrate instantly like vapor, and the rift instantly disappears.

And Minerva... her mouth is open, and she sheathes her sword, and she sits down and kind of puts her elbows on her knees, sitting inside of the telescope. And she has this huge smile on her face. And you see her starting to tear up. And she says...

Minerva: Have you seen that world before, Duck Newton? That world of light?

Duck: No. No, nothing like that.

Griffin: She looks up at you and extends a hand, asking for you to help her up.

Justin: I do.

Griffin: She rises to her position well above you, and she says...

Minerva: I am not quite sure what that was, my friend. But I assume that they know who we are. And hopefully, now, Duck Newton... now they know what we're capable of.

--

Aubrey: Alright, we got a few days before we gotta move. With a little luck, we'll have everything we need to roll by tomorrow morning. So tell me, and be completely honest. Are the Hornets ready for this?

Hollis: We're ready, Aubrey. You say the word, and we'll assemble right here at the Cryptonomica.

Aubrey: If I see anyone... If I see a single gun, it's over. Do you understand?

Keith: We know, Aubrey.

Aubrey: Fuck you, Keith. [sighs] I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Old habits.

Dani: [distantly] Aubrey, it's time.

Aubrey: Okay. I'll be in touch soon. Stay safe.

[door bell jingles]

Aubrey: Uh, Barclay, watch the door.

Barclay: I, uh... okay. Is this gonna work?

Aubrey: [laughs] Hell if I know.

Janelle: They seem determined. Overeager, even?

Aubrey: Well, can you blame them?

Janelle: I suppose not. Though, I worry you may share the same impulse, Aubrey. Your powers have waned since the collapse. We've been cut off from Sylvain for nearly two months now. Are you certain you're up for this?

Aubrey: [sighs] If there's a chance we can save them, then, yeah, Janelle. I'm up for this.

Janelle: Okay. I'm in no position to impede you, Aubrey. Let's begin.

[ambient music plays]

Aubrey: [strained] It's not working.

Janelle: Quiet. Aubrey, you've done impossible things before. Find that strength. Channel that strength. Remember the power that dwells within you!

Aubrey: Please... magic, please!

[music plays]

Mom: Okay, I have something for you. Something to keep us... y'know, in your heart, even when you're away.

Griffin: And she unclasps the necklace that she's wearing, and a beam of moonlight catches it perfectly, refracting a red light back up onto your face. And she says...

Mom: We have lots of jewelry in this house, Aubrey, but no piece is as precious to me as this. My mother gave it to me when I left home, as did her mother before her, and her mother before her for generations. It's kept our family safe through unspeakable hardships.

Some of your more imaginative ancestors gave it a name: Flamebright.

Griffin: And she scratches her neck, and she says...

Mom: I haven't taken this thing off for nearly 25 years, Aubrey. A doctor tried to remove it when I was in labor with you, and I bit him. I bit him good.

Aubrey: [laughs]

Mom: I was pretty doped up at the time, but I like to think I knew what I was doing. I was keeping it safe, because one day, I knew I would be giving it to my daughter on a very important night to remind her that she is, and always will be, loved.

Griffin: And then we see a car. An Imperial Crown Coup pull up just in front of your house with its lights off, with two figures silhouetted from within.

--

Griffin: And you see the Flamebright pendant, and it's got this just enormous, glowing, orange-red gem inside of it, and you see, actually, a few inches of like, silver chain that have just been plucked from it and are sitting on the pad nearby. Who grabs that?

Clint: [sighs] Y'know what? My temptation to retrofit things...

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: But I don't want to. No, Ned would grab it.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: I think it would—he would mull it over for a minute or two and look at it. And then he'd... [sighs] He'd stuff it in his bag.

Griffin: Your back is turned, but you don't see this young woman's body as it like, levitates up to a standing position. And her hair is... I think you turn around, because you see Boyd just awe-struck by something. And her hair is sort of just like, waving as if caught in a sharp wind that doesn't exist in this room, and her eyes are just these bright orange lights. And then you see her point up at Boyd in the art room, and she grips her hand into a fist, and then, there is a bright flash of light.

--

Griffin: You touch your finger to the back of the card, and what did you intend for it to happen?

Travis: Uh, the card, uh, like... flash paper goes up.

Griffin: It actually kind of explodes in a big burst of flame. Okay, with that in mind, I think uh, Randy sees that this fire is like, actually pretty big and scary, so he kind of drops the card and jumps off the stage. And Dr. Harris Bonkers also jumps out of the way, but this explosion... you've done this trick hundreds of thousands of times. This is not intended.

The burst of flame is actually enormous.

--

Aubrey: Um, so... I—I—I can magic—I magic... magic is real?

Griffin: She says...

Mama: Yeah, Aubrey, what you did up there tonight was real, actual magic. So I guess that's the first big thing... magic is real. Because there's a place that magic comes from.

--

Janelle: 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... like, 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 make any sense?

Griffin: She stands up from her desk, and um, uh, walks over to this uh, 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... 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 uh... she can see you getting frustrated, and she says...

Janelle: Let's start with brass tacks.

Griffin: 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 ours 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

beseeking 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.

--

Griffin: 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: Is everything okay?

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

Griffin: Uh, 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.

--

Griffin: She talks like, right over you, almost like she can't hear the words that you're saying. And she places a hand on your cheek, and you realize that you've been like, sobbing as she's been talking to you. And she says...

Janelle: Today, it is okay to take care of yourself, and to allow others to take care of you, and to mourn.

Griffin: And that's when you realize, she is dressed the way that she's dressed because you just came from your father's funeral. And then you realize... this is not your memory at all. This is the memory of Alexandra, the newly christened audience to divinity and Interpreter of Sylvain.

Travis: Oh, shit.

--

Griffin: And Dewey's form is floating in front of you, and he is motionless, but his wounds are gone. And then, floating on the other side of Dewey, a figure appears. And it has a hand extended and pressed gently on Dewey's chest, and this figure is a woman. And you get this like, feeling when you look at her. And it's the kind of feeling you get when you swear you've met someone before, but like, a thousand times stronger than that.

Like, this presence feels like it could be... it could be like, family. Like, it could be your sister if you had one. Um, and you feel this like, warmth and familiarity with this figure, this person who uh, so closely like, resembles you in a way. And they actually look a little bit surprised to see you, and she does a little wave. What do you do?

Aubrey: Magic? Are you magic?

--

Griffin: And it's taking shape, this fog is, as the keys get closer, and they go into the gate of the cell that you're in, and you hear the lock click. And the gate swings open, and this fog has fully taken form. It's Deputy Dewey, and he's a ghost.

--

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

Griffin: 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. 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.

--

Janelle: This is... this is Sylvain. This is the heart of her. This is the thing that sustains all life on this planet. It is the source of all magic that we know of. Um... it was the source of those things, I should say. Sylvain... the entity inside of it, the entity that sustained this world, is gone now. And as a result, this planet cannot sustain us.

The corruption beyond our city's walls, the same corruption that inhabits your Pine Guard chronicle, it is a reaction to Sylvain's disappearance. We call it the Quell. It is not a malevolent force, Aubrey. It is doing what it thinks it needs to do to salvage the planet. It is killing us before we can kill it.

Aubrey: Where did Sylvain go?

Janelle: Nobody's quite sure. She disappeared when we were attacked some centuries ago by humans from your world who found a portal and crossed over and shattered the crystal on the surface. They took shards of it home as souvenirs, Aubrey. I am still quite sore about it. But some people

think that Sylvain is dead. Some people think that she is just weakened because of the damage done to her heart.

Nobody is quite sure, Aubrey, but as a result, the planet is weakened. And yet, you are telling me that it seemed to respond to your human touch. Our world has... not long to live before the Quell overwhelms us; before Sylvain's light fades for good. And there are those among us who would absolutely destroy your world if it meant saving our own.

There are those among your people who would try to destroy our world if they recognized that threat. Don't you see? Aubrey, the tether that connects our worlds... it is built to lead to the death and destruction of both of our people if things escalate beyond our control.

If people here in Sylvain, Aubrey, find out that humans who touch the crystal will have their life drained from them to bring our planet back to life? That is not a secret that I would prefer to get out there, Aubrey. You can't say anything like that out loud here ever again. Do you understand me?

--

Griffin: You are holding onto the big crystal with one hand, and you're holding onto the Flamebright pendant with the other. And for a moment, the crystal in the center of Sylvain, it regains its color, just with a flush. And as it does so, you notice... it is the exact same hue as the Flamebright pendant. And both of them now seem to be illuminated by this just beautiful, spiraling light from within. And you would be able to appreciate this if you did not feel like you were dying.

Travis: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Griffin: And you feel like all of the uh, all of the magic that you have gained some mastery over, over the last year, you feel it just sort of draining out of you, and you feel yourself getting weaker and weaker. And then, you feel a furry hand on your shoulder who pulls you backward. And Vincent says...

Vincent: Aubrey, are you... are you okay? Aubrey, you did it.

Griffin: And you look around, and like, it's still like, dark out. It is still like, ominous and creepy, but like, the storm is not at the gates anymore. It is uh, it is—it looks like just any other sort of rain storm. It is not sort of the apocalyptic wall of death that it just was a few moments ago.

And you actually see everybody who was like, charging in after you. They have stopped, and are looking with awe, like, at your surroundings. And some of them look scared. Some of them are just like, cheering. And Vincent says...

Vincent: What's going on with your eyes?

Griffin: And you see, actually, in the glint of his armor, that they are both orange now.

--

Thacker: Why am I being kept here?

Aubrey: Thacker?

Thacker: Thacker is... the name of this one? He is an unintentional host.

Aubrey: Who... who are you, then?

Thacker: At this moment, we seem to be Thacker. [robotic stuttering] But that is not who we are supposed to be. What have we done wrong?

Aubrey: Oh man, where to start? Um... uh, are you from Sylvain?

Thacker: Sylvain can no longer sustain the life that [robotic stuttering] her surface. We are the counterweight that aims to bring the planet back into balance. Will you release us?

Aubrey: Um, you help me help you, and please don't attack me when I open this door.

Griffin: Are you opening the door?

Travis: Y'know what? No, I'm not.

Griffin: [laughs] Okay. Alright.

Travis: I'm gonna go fucking get Mama.

Griffin: Uh, okay. You turn to walk away, and you hear this voice say...

Thacker: Please release us. Sylvain has become [unintelligible]. Those living on her surface would seek to shatter her body entirely in pursuit of their own survival. Please release us. By impeding us, you hasten the arrival of Sylvain's end. [robotic stuttering]

--

Thacker: [inhales sharply]

[theme music plays]

Janelle: It worked!

Aubrey: Holy shit.

Thacker: I'm... Barclay? What... where am I?

Barclay: You're home, Thacker.

Aubrey: Now, let's get you up to speed.

[theme music plays]

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[music plays]

Justin: We are the hosts of My Brother, My Brother, and Me, and now, nearly ten years into our podcast, the secret can be revealed. All the clues are in place, and the world's greatest treasure hunt can now begin.

Griffin: Embedded in each episode of My Brother, My Brother, and Me is a micro-clue that will lead you to 14 precious gemstones all around this big, beautiful, blue world of ours.

Travis: So start combing through the episodes, uh, let's say starting at episode 101 on.

Griffin: Yeah, the early episodes are pretty problematic, so there's no clues in those episodes.

Travis: No. No, not at all.

Griffin: The better ones, the good ones? Clues ahoy.

Justin: Listen to every episode repeatedly, in sequence. Laugh if you must, but mainly, get all the great clues. My Brother, My Brother, and Me: it's an advice show kind of, but a treasure hunt mainly. Anywhere you find podcasts or treasure maps.

My Brother, My Brother, and Me: the hunt is on!

[music plays]

Renee: Well, Alexis, we got big news.

Alexis: Uh oh.

Renee: Season one, done.

Alexis: It's over.

Renee: Season two, comin' atcha hot.

Alexis: Three years after our season one.

Renee: Three and a half. Three and a half. Technically, almost four years.

Alexis: Alright.

Renee: And now, listen, here at Can I Pet Your Dog, the smash hit podcast, our seasons run for three and a half years. And then it's season two.

Alexis: We can match you with new, hot co-hosts named you. Hi, I'm Alexis. We also have a field trip, dog tech.

Renee: Yeah?

Alexis: Dog news...

Renee: Dog news.

Alexis: Celebrity guests...

Renee: Oh, big shots. Will not let them talk about their resume.

Alexis: Nope, only their dogs.

Renee: Yeah, only the dogs. I mean, if ever you were gonna get into Can I Pet Your Dog...

Alexis: Now's the time.

Renee: Get in here!

Alexis: Every Tuesday...

Renee: At MaximumFun.org.