

The Adventure Zone: Amnesty – Episode 35

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Griffin: Previously on The Adventure Zone...

[theme music plays]

Griffin: Minerva finds herself uncharacteristically unprepared for what she sees through her portal. It is not Sylvain. What Minerva sees is light. Pieces of a puzzle that she's been solving her entire life begin sliding slowly closer together.

He holds out this black case, and inside, you see that orange brick, the explosive Semtex.

Aubrey: One of the three of us is known to spontaneously catch fire, sooo...

Duck: Yeah, that's not great.

Aubrey: I'm gonna hand it to the adult, Duck.

Voice: [many voices at once] What is it that you hope to accomplish?

Thacker: Peace. I'm lookin' for peace.

Griffin: Everybody seems to be like, re-energized.

Janelle: You can hear the Interpreter's unspoken pleas. You have powers beyond anything I've ever seen, Aubrey. You've restored life to the *dead*. Aubrey... you're not *from* Sylvain. You... *are* Sylvain.

[theme music plays]

Aubrey: So, when you say I am Sylvain, do you mean that in the way of like, if like a lieutenant said to like, a loose cannon cop, like, "I'm taking you

off the street!” And the loose cannon cop said, “You can't take me off the street, I am the street!”

Griffin: You say this, and your voice is just like, echoing throughout this massive, subterranean chamber as the elevator reaches the observation floor below. And like, right now, Aubrey, everybody is just looking at you. And Janelle responds, and she says...

Janelle: Yyyes? Only, in this example... you would be literally correct. You—you would be the street.

Aubrey: Wha—okay, but like... I—okay. Janelle. Um, I don't mean to poke holes, because listen, I love—I love fan theories, and you've got yourself a great one there. But like, I—I was a kid. Uh, in, y'know, Earth. I have parents. Uh, I, y'know, had a first kiss. And then the same night, a second kiss. It was a good night. And I've, y'know, I grew up in a hou—I went to school. I'm not a planet. [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, you're interrupted by a voice you hear in your mind as Alexandra is now speaking to you, and she says...

Alexandra: Miss Sylvain, I, uh, humble myself before your blessed presence and beseech thee to intervene for the sake of your children—

Aubrey: Alexandra, shh—

Alexandra: I offer up my spirit to receive your—

Aubrey: Ah, ow, ow, quiet! Quiet, quiet, quiet, too loud, too loud, too loud.

Alexandra: [pauses, then louder] I offer up my spirit to receive your voice as my forbearers did before me—

Aubrey: Alexandra! Alexandra!! I hear you. Cool. I guess your spirit's mine now. I'm trying to talk to Janelle. Janelle?

Griffin: Vincent grabs your hand as he's kneeling to the floor, and he says...

Vincent: Sylvain, my protector, I'm—I would like to—

Aubrey: Whoa, stop!

Vincent: I would like to confess my sins and vices, my most brilliant light.

Aubrey: ... Okay, I do kind of want to hear your sins and vices, but we'll do that later. Janelle? Um, how do you mean? Am I like, possessed by Sylvain?

Janelle: I'm not entirely sure of how your relationship works, Aubrey, but when you look at what you are capable of... when you look at what you can do, there is no other answer.

Aubrey: You do magic, too. What are you ta—like, I'm not the only person who does magic.

Janelle: I've never revived anyone as a ghost. I've never brought... I've never re-energized my cohorts, Aubrey. I... I feel it now. I feel your energy flowing through me, making me—

Aubrey: Gross.

Janelle: --stronger. I—Aubrey, I don't know how to talk to you right now! I've just discovered that you are divine planet upon which I walk! So, this is weird for all of us!

Aubrey: Okay, but you just said those words—Janelle, you said those words out loud. Like, you know how sil—I am not—I'm not—you're not walking on me! I'm—I am a person, standing over here, talking, and I'm—I have, y'know, hair! Planets don't have hair!

Griffin: Uh, you hear a rumbling from below as you peek over the edge of this observation platform, and you see below you... you see, y'know, beneath this massive crystal, this void that just stretches down as far as your eye can see, and you see faint, red light sort of flashing through it. And down there, you hear... The Quell. And obviously, like, it is hard for you to

tell by these noises what it is saying; what its intentions are, but you can tell that it is... it's angry.

And Janelle says...

Janelle: Aubrey, listen to me. Has my wisdom ever led you astray?

Aubrey: No... well, you kind of fucked up with the mountain thing.

Janelle: That was my—that was—yes. That was my bad.

Duck: Everybody gets one.

Janelle: Everybody gets one. Thank you.

Duck: I don't want to get in, but... I mean, everybody gets one.

Janelle: We will figure out the hows and the whys and the whatfors after we have saved our planets, but... Aubrey, you need to trust me. You hold Sylvain within you. You hold Sylvain within you, and the Quell is furious, and attempting to destroy both of our worlds, because the Quell thinks that Sylvain is gone forever. The Quell is the counterpart to the light of Sylvain. They are two halves of one whole. They are the force that holds this world together. And right now, it's raging, because it thinks Sylvain is gone, but it's—you gotta show it, Aubrey. You need to show it that it's in you.

Thacker: The Quell loves you. Quell's crazy about ya.

Aubrey: O...kay.

Griffin: And uh, Vincent speaks up. He says...

Vincent: Okay, wait. If—if she's supposed to show the Quell that, um, that she's Sylvain, why don't we just go back upstairs and, y'know, find one of those weird bug monsters or whatever, and she can just say it. Like, "Hi, I'm Sylvain. Um, nice to see you again."

Thacker: Um, I'm not... I'm not sure it works that way. What do you think, Janelle?

Janelle: These monsters are just mere projections. You... you will need to, as corny as this sounds, speak to the heart of the Quell.

Aubrey: It—it feels dangerous, though, right? Like, this seems...

Thacker: Oh. [laughs] Oh yeah.

Aubrey: Okay.

Thacker: Yeah. [laughing]

Duck: Yeah. On our world, you can get sick from like, cell phones. I can't imagine it's a good idea to be close to the Quell.

Aubrey: Okay. I just wanted—listen, I'm fine with that. There's an element of danger in basically everything we've done for the last, like, forever. And so, that's cool. I just wanted to make sure we were all on the same page about how heroic the thing I'm probably going to end up doing is. Okay. Cool.

Thacker: It's gonna be epic. It'll be an epic story.

Aubrey: Oh, cool. Thanks, Thacker. Okay. Onward and downward, I guess.

Duck: He's picking back up on the lingo, I guess.

Aubrey: Oh, I see.

Thacker: [laughs]

Aubrey: Okay.

Duck: Yeah, we don't want to do an epic fail.

Aubrey: Oh, now he's flossing. Oh, no.

Thacker: Yeah!

Griffin: [laughs]

Aubrey: Thacker's flossing.

[music plays]

Griffin: Um, you all hear a gasp from behind you, and you turn to see Alexandra, and she's leaning over one of the sides of the viewing platform. And she shouts...

Alexandra: Um, uh, something's coming!

Griffin: And... from below, you hear this deep, amplified whistling. And you look over the edge and downward, off this viewing platform, and you just see... gray. The red light that was flashing below is just gone, and now it's just gray. Dark gray, at the bottom of this chasm. But the whistling, it continues, and it gets louder and louder, and you realize that this gray is moving toward you like water boiling over a pot.

And then, it's... it's right on you, and it stops, just at the edge of the viewing platform, and there's like, wisps of it just rolling over your shoes. It stopped right there. And it's that same sort of cloud that you saw in the archway room. It's the same, like, smoke that you saw in the main drag outside. And it's just rushed upward to meet you, and stopped just shy of like, consuming this entire chamber that you're standing in, and it's just formed this sea of gray fog at your feet.

It's silent in the room, and Vincent says...

Vincent: This is going to be very bad, isn't it?

Duck: Yeah, that would be my guess. What—what the fuck is this?

Griffin: Something answers your question, and it's not any of you all. You see a small spire form in the fog, just as something shoots upwards through it. You see just a small, red shape just pop, pop right up through the smoke. Um, and as that appears, Vincent takes like a step back from the edge of the platform, and he's holding his cheek with surprise. And when he pulls his hand away, he's got a little bit of blood. He has a small cut on his face.

And then, you see... dozens. Hundreds more of these holes form in the mist as other small, red, bird-like creatures begin flying around the room, uh, encircling the crystal in a flock. And as they go, you also see just like, crawling up the walls, you see these red tubes. Almost like—almost like veins, like branching off one another, and just encircling this entire chamber.

And some of them, like, the tallest of them start reaching with like, sickly arms across the void, toward the crystal. And you also notice that a few like, stalks of these like, red tubes have started to encircle the edges of this viewing platform that you're standing on, just wrapping around its heavy supports, just creeping in your direction.

What do you all do? Who wants to go first?

Travis: Uh, so you said there's like a swarm of things, right?

Griffin: Yeah, it's like a, uh... it's like one of those coordinated swarms. Like a murder of crows, or a—

Travis: Like a murder of crows, you say?

Griffin: Or a conflagration of...

Travis: A flamboyance of flamingos.

Griffin: Yes. Uh, and they are just like—they are picking up around the edge of the room, and starting to circle back towards the platform.

Travis: I am going to do a blast of magical flame, young wizard!

Griffin: [laughs] This is just an attack, right?

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: Okay, let's see it. Kick some ass. Ooh, that's a good ass kickin'.

Travis: That's a nine, uh, plus two. 'Cause currently, I'm still down one, right?

Griffin: You are still down one, yes.

Travis: So that gives me an 11.

Griffin: Okay. What uh, what extra effect do you want to do in addition to your damage?

Travis: I'm going to put it, uh, move it where I want it, to keep it from flying at us.

Griffin: Oh, interesting. Okay. Uh...

Travis: So like a big enough blast that I both do damage, and probably the heat is like, gonna sear some of them away, y'know?

Griffin: Okay, I like that, yeah. How much damage does your—'cause I know you've like, upgraded your nasty magic.

Travis: Yup. It is, uh, four damage total.

Griffin: Holy shit!

Travis: Yeah. Two harm for fire, and two harm, uh, for blast.

Griffin: Okay. Um, I mean, with that, like, uh, like three quarters of the birds, as they like, all swoop and dive down at your party, uh, are just incinerated instantly, and they just turn into this red mist that you see just get sucked back down into the cloud. Uh, and the rest of the birds, like... you have your hand outstretched, and a few of them like, zip by it, and your hands get cut up a bit for, uh, for two harm.

But as they fly away, you notice that you have just, like... you have obliterated pretty much all of them at this point. Uh, and just a few... a scant few birds are now beginning their loop back around the room.

Umm... Thacker, what do you do?

Clint: I think Thacker... jumps off... the observation platform... into the gray mist.

Griffin: Okay. [pause] Thacker's gone. Uh, Duck, what do you... [laughs]

Justin: [laughs] That... that was a chill run. Dad, you got a third character lined up there, or what's up?

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: What's Kirby been up to?

Clint: I always have another character lined up!

Griffin: Do you just do it? Do you say any dope shit before you do it, or do you just do it?

Justin: [laughing] Dad's just trying to fill out our fuckin' action figure line.

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: Make the show a little bit toyetic.

Justin: This is the one... do you remember, he did this for two episodes, Lightning Boy. It's weird. So weird.

Clint: [laughing] He's watching all this going on. He sees Aubrey, y'know, fighting off the birds. He sees Duck, y'know, planning whatever he's gonna do. And I think he just stares down into this pit, that giant, gray mass, remembers that that's where he had the big confrontation with the heart, and... and says...

Thacker: You asked me if I was comin'. Here I come.

Clint: And he just leaps off the observation platform, headin' for the mist.

Griffin: Okay. As Thacker 'phoons off the edge of the viewing platform, uh, he sends just a cloud of this mist just like, shooting upwards as he leaves like, almost a cartoonish Thacker-shaped hole in the cloud.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: And you... you see him fall. Thacker, why don't you act under pressure for me?

Clint: Uh, there's an eight, plus... minus one.

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: Because you wouldn't let me do the other things.

Griffin: Right.

Clint: Oh, wait, wait, wait, wait! Just Another Day! "When you have to act under pressure due to a monster, phenomenon, or mystical effect, you may roll plus weird instead of plus cool."

Travis: There you go.

Griffin: Okay!

Travis: That counts.

Clint: Plus weird to eight is a ten!

Griffin: Thacker, you feel like... you've felt this before. You feel this cool, uh, mist, like, blowing across your face as you dive into the platform. And um... you feel it trying to take you over. You feel it trying to take you over. And as you are like, resisting it, you feel this mist get angry, and you suspect that like, you are the only one in the room who can pick up on that.

And you also see, like, red streaks soar by you as more entities, like, climb up the walls of this room to attack the people coming in from the top. And you manage to, for whatever reason, not just get completely, y'know, demolished by one of these things. And uh, let's just leave Thacker falling for a little bit.

Duck, what do you do?

Justin: Uh, I'm gonna start, uh, hacking at the things that are trying to ensnare the viewing platform.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, there's basically like—there's some on the left side of the platform, where uh, Vincent is standing, and then there's some on the other side of the platform where Janelle and Alexandra are standing. Janelle like, ran over there to pull Alexandra away from the edge.

Justin: I'm gonna head on over to Vincent's side, 'cause I think that those other two have it handled.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, you're just gonna—you're gonna do—you're gonna kick some ass?

Justin: Yeah, kick some ass. Whatever the ass of weird pipe vines are. I'm gonna kick their asses.

Griffin: Listen, we learned this from the expansion children's book for this game, Everything's Got an Ass.

Travis: [laughs]

Justin: [laughs] That's 20d6, which is 66.

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Whoa!

Clint: Wow!

Griffin: It explodes!

Travis: You really got it!

Justin: [laughs] No asses are left.

Clint: You rolled a 66!

Griffin: Oh, that's—that's pretty close.

Justin: 11 plus two is a 13.

Griffin: Jesus Christ.

Justin: And I have an advance move.

Griffin: Ooh!

Justin: I'll kick some ass. When I leveled up, I took Advanced.

Griffin: What does it do now?

Justin: I can pick an enhanced effect on a 12 plus, which is what I have.

Griffin: Oh my god.

Justin: I'm going to... my attack drives the enemy away in a route.

Griffin: God.

Justin: So that is what I'm gonna do.

Griffin: Okay. Uh...

Justin: 'Cause that's all I need it to do.

Griffin: Uh, what's this look like?

Justin: Uh, I kind of feel like he's frantically sort of like... like, watching someone chop at vines. Y'know, growing on the side of their house in a rage. I think that Beacon is so excited to have something to hit repeatedly that it's almost kind of a blur, just him swinging Beacon over and over again, just hacking them with what appears to be, from the numbers, a real intense brutality.

Griffin: Yeah, sure. Uh, okay. You... I think with that extra effect, like, the harm is no longer important. Like, this thing... you just sever it, and it like, sprays this red mist up and into the air as it, uh, unspools from where it was holding onto the platform, and it falls down into, uh, down into the mist. And you see, like, the other arm that was holding this, like, spasm in a panic and also fall back down.

And some of these veins that were like, all around the walls, uh, also kind of start to slink—the ones that were reaching out towards the crystal, like,

these long, uh, sinewy, red arms, they just... now, they droop down and like, splash down into the mist.

Justin: And then Duck says...

Duck: Looks like that time... Sword Man had the edge. Guys, I'm thinking about Sword Man.

Aubrey: Ooh!

Duck: How's that? Is that anything?

Aubrey: Uhh, it's close.

Thacker: If you go with Swordman...

Aubrey: You're in the pit!

Thacker: Oh. [distant, muffled yelling] Swordmaaan!

Griffin: You see Janelle and Alexandra take a step back from where that other tentacle just kind of got destroyed. Uh, and you see them, like—as they take a step back, the edge of the viewing platform that they were standing on, uh, like, completely collapses from where this tendril started to smash against it. Uh, and... you can tell that Janelle's like, mind is reeling about what to do, and she turns to the two of you, and she says...

Janelle: I know you haven't known Thacker all that long. I haven't either, but um... [sighs] Should we trust him?

Aubrey: Oh, with the jumping? Um, y'know, it's pretty shitty up here, and... it's probably a little shittier down there, but... it's just gonna get shittier up here, so... yeah!

Travis: And Aubrey jumps.

Griffin: Okay. Duck, you are now standing on the platform with Vincent, who looks like, shit-his-pants terrified that everybody's jumping off the platform. And Janelle shrugs her shoulders, and uh, Alexandra looks kind of nervous, but like, grips her hand tight, and the two of them jump off the platform. And now it's just you and Vincent. And Vincent says...

Vincent: Um... someone should stay up here and defend the elevator... I think.

Duck: Are you volunteerin', or did you—were you hopin' I would, or...

Vincent: I'm just saying, they could get up the elevator and hurt all the people up in the castle, and so, I'm gonna... I'm gonna protect the survivors.

Griffin: And he goes, and he stands on the uh, on the elevator, and uh, y'know, strikes a combat pose, holding his spear. And he says...

Vincent: Um, and uh... you've got an appointment, I think, at the center of the world. So um... good luck, Duck.

Duck: Yeah, you kind of volunteered me to jump off the elevator, huh?

Clint: [laughs]

Vincent: I wish you... the luck of the ancients, Duck.

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Duck: That's... that's... nothing. Uh, but listen—

Vincent: I wish you the luck of... the stars...

Griffin: And the birds like, swoop down, and he like, eviscerates a couple of them, and like, kind of weaves around them. He says...

Vincent: Okay, uh, this is fun, but uh... it's pretty bad up here, so...

Duck: You don't have to... goat me into it.

Justin: And then I fall off the edge.

Travis: Ahh!

Clint: Ahh! [laughs]

Duck: That's a Sword Man originaaal!

Griffin: [laughs] Duck, you are falling. Y'know what? Aubrey wouldn't need to. Duck, why don't you roll to act under pressure? God in heaven!

Justin: 11!

Griffin: That's another 11!

Travis: Roll 20 knows when we're in finale territory. It knows.

Griffin: Yeah. Um, Duck, you felt this way, like, slightly when you were in the, uh, the room in the FBI headquarters where the archway was. But now, you like... now that you're closer to the core, like, you feel like this thing is trying to take a hold of you. Um, and it's—it's like nothing. It is like nothing. You shrug off the Quell's influence, uh, just effortlessly.

Justin: Plus my two, I rolled a 13.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: So my other Advanced one that I got was act under pressure. So I'm gonna add, you may either do what you wanted and something extra, or do what you wanted to absolute perfection. I want to do—I want my something extra to be, I want 'em to be afraid.

Griffin: You want the monsters to be afraid?

Justin: Of me.

Griffin: Okay. [laughs]

Travis: He's dodging so good.

Justin: I want them to wonder what I am. I want them afraid.

Griffin: You step off the viewing platform, and the world just disappears. And you feel this quiet, cold mist just whipping past your face. And you're falling through this dense, opaque cloud for... what feels like ages. And you don't see anybody else who leapt off until, as quickly as this cloud enveloped your senses, you pass through the bottom of this... this strata of fog.

And now, you're falling down through just this gargantuan cavern. Bigger even than the one you were just in. And you're going downward, closer to the core. And... you... you see things in this room, on the walls, climbing up through the passage you just fell through. And you see it by this pulsating, red light.

And the pulses are like, slow, and you see these things, like, just nightmarish, enormous insects. And um, these huge, like, snakes, and these fast kind of like, creepy, twitchy apes, and all of these different, like, beasts made out of this red material, all just like, clambering up towards the surface.

As you fall and you get closer to the core, that pulsing, Duck... it starts to pick up. It starts to get a little bit faster. Uh, almost like there is something happening to the Quell where uh, it is... you are doing something that it did not anticipate. And you see all of these different beasts start to react. You see these like, apes that were like, clambering all over each other to get upward. Uh, now they're like, fighting each other to jump back down.

And you see one of the snakes, like, this huge, bullet train sized snake, just like... fuckin' nope right back down the hole from whence it came. Uh, and then, right below you, you see the rest of your party, also falling. Y'know, several dozen feet in front of you.

Travis: Aubrey waves.

Griffin: Uh, Aubrey waves at you. Thacker is at the bottom. And you see Janelle and Alexandra, all just like, falling. And while like, a lot of these, you've turned away a lot of these beings, you see some of them... begin to strike. You see some, like—you see a mass of these insects sprout wings and start fluttering toward you, and you see a few of these apes like, howl and point at you and coil their legs and spring towards you like a bullet.

And then... the wall that they leapt from explodes, and they disintegrate. And the insects disappear in this cloud of debris, sending this red mist spraying in all directions. And as the chaos settles, you see two enormous eyes appear as all of you land gently and neatly in a ten-foot-wide paw.

Travis: Aw!

Griffin: And you see Heathcliff effortlessly swatting away these beasts, and he's smiling.

[music plays]

Aubrey: Who's a good boooy?

Heathcliff: Y'know, I don't like that, but right now, Aubrey... it's me.

Aubrey: Yes you are!

Thacker: [laughs]

Griffin: A world away, the town of Kepler, West Virginia continues its unlikely battle against a would-be cosmic conqueror. Ranger Juno Devine races through the cramped hallways of city hall, a crashing wave of Quell

terrors close behind. She slides beneath a makeshift barricade into the city council chambers, leaping over rows of folding chairs with track star grace and ease.

The horde, several dozen strong, barges in behind her, annihilating the defenses hastily built by the combined strength of the West Virginia Forestry Service. Juno vaults a wooden railing, leaps off of a counselor's desk, and onto the stage at the far side of the room. She takes a beat, and surveys the size and ferocity of the coming storm.

Then... she looks to her side and nods. A thick fire curtain drops inches in front of her. She dives backwards as the Quell terrors collide with the thick, reinforced fabric. She smiles.

Juno: Little secret about the forestry service, gang. We confiscate all manner of stuff trying to prevent forest fires.

Griffin: The beasts scratch at the curtain, their fury mounting.

Juno: And unfortunately for y'all... I'm a packrat.

Griffin: The doors into the chamber slam shut. Juno shouts a command from behind the curtain. Objects rain down from the gallery above. A gas canister. A propane tank. Crackling projectiles from a roman candle. The West Virginia Forestry Service cheers in unison as the otherworldly horde burns in a deluge of flaming contraband.

[music plays]

Griffin: East and down the river, Keith leads a squadron of loyal Hornets against the nightmares pouring from a nearby rift. The stunt crew has been routed, driven to the flimsy roof above the skeletal remains of their former headquarters. As his companions throw bricks, boards, and buckets at their emboldened attackers, Keith's mind races with fear. He looks for a way out. He looks for hope on the horizon.

He finds hope flying down the side of Mount Kepler.

[music intensifies]

Griffin: Hollis leads the remaining Hornets, biking in formation, down the drag from Cliffside, brakes sliding into the dirt lot surrounding the Hornets' Nest. The beasts turn to face them, but Hollis pays them no mind. Through the visor of their helmet, Hollis grins and nods at Keith. Keith smiles with relief, on the verge of tears. Hollis holds up a hand, and their squadron revs their engines in unison.

The terrors charge, and the bikes peel off. They snake in a perfect line, a furious circle around the battlefield. Dust whips up, mixing and overtaking the Quell's supernatural storm. The beasts wail in protest. On the roof, Keith dons his helmet. The others do the same. One by one, they leap down, back into the storm. Back into the fray.

And atop Mount Kepler, Minerva and Leo Tarkesian stand back to back, their blades cleaving air and Quell flesh in a synchronized, psychic dance. Leo growls, ramming his broadsword through the gut of an enormous vulture, grimacing with effort as he slams it to the ground in a shower of red mist. He kicks the terror off his blade and gasps with exhaustion as he turns to check on his fellow warrior.

Minerva stands in a readied crouch, her blade held above her head and outward, her other hand outstretched in a fencer's pose. A knee-high pile of quickly decomposing Quell invaders lie at her feet. She is completely motionless, even her breathing indiscernible. Leo catches a glimpse of her expressionless face in the moonlight.

Leo: Uh, Minerva, not to, uh... not to... y'know, quibble when we're fighting for our lives and all, but you, uh... you are all there now, right?

Griffin: Her apprentice's words do not register at all. Minerva battles on pure reflex and instinct. Her mind is sunken into a contemplative trance. She ponders the world of light, seen just beyond the archway. She ponders her own fallen home world, and the world she destroyed. Outside of her mind, she strikes down another foe. Within, she knows it to be a hollow victory.

Minerva pays little heed to the battle at hand. She is, as always, thinking of the battle to come.

[music plays]

Griffin: We see a tranquil scene, deep below the surface of Sylvain. An enormous, open temple with pillars of white stone sits in the middle of a shallow pond. Small streams of water fall from cracks in the ceiling above, raining down into this pond, framing the building where small, green beds of flowers have sprouted up through ancient tiles.

And the scene is peaceful and still, until Heathcliff Kool-Aid mans it...
[laughs] From a wall behind this temple, sending boulders crashing down into the his pond. And he wriggles through this makeshift tunnel that collapses behind him, and deposits you all at the entrance to this temple.

And it looks a lot more like, verdant and lively than anything else you've seen on the surface. And um, Heathcliff says, like—he's preening now. He's like, trying to get all the dust and debris out of his fur. And he says...

Heathcliff: Boy, you all just... y'all have to come up with better plans than that. You just—you just jumped into a jagged, craggy cavern! Were you at least thinking happy thoughts?

Aubrey: Well, my mom always said, "If your friend jumped into a smoky cavern, would you?" And it turns out, yes.

Thacker: So it all comes down to peer pressure.

Aubrey: Yeah.

Thacker: Is that what you're sayin'?

Aubrey: Yeah, but you didn't—

Thacker: You're blamin' peer pressure?

Aubrey: You didn't even put the peer pressure on. You just went. You didn't say shit.

Thacker: I did! I said—he asked when I was comin', blah blah blah blah blah, and now I'm comin'!

Aubrey: You didn't say it to us! You weren't like, "Hey, here's why I'm gonna jump. I know something you don't." I just assumed you knew something we didn't!

Thacker: But that's the whole cool line thing! You don't want to have to explain 'em!

Aubrey: I think next time you jump into a pit, you should give us, like, a one-sentence synopsis of why.

Thacker: Well put. I accept your criticism.

Aubrey: Okay. Yeah, so anyways, we didn't really have a plan. But it all seemed to work out.

Heathcliff: You know I'm going to make you pay for this, right? Not in like an intimidating way, but monetarily speaking.

Aubrey: You mean like, literally?

Heathcliff: I guess I do mean it literally, yes.

Aubrey: Like literally, we're gonna pay for it.

Griffin: Uh, Janelle and Alexandra are looking around this big, stone temple. And you see... uh, you see Janelle, like, spark this green—

Travis: Doobie.

Griffin: Small, like, doober in the middle of it. And she smokes out, and it's fuckin' funny. It's like Family Guy.

Justin: [laughing]

Griffin: Uh, no, she sparks this green flame and like, makes a small camp fire in the middle of this chamber, which is actually like, kind of cold. Um, and Alexandra's like, looking around with wonder in her eyes. And you all see like... this is obviously some sort of like, ancient, uh, y'know, holy place. And there are also like, dirty, big, Heathcliff paw prints all over it. So you can tell that like, Heathcliff chills in here for whatever reason.

Uh, and he says...

Heathcliff: Uh, yeah, I'm sorry. It was the only place I could think to take you where I knew it was safe. Um... so... I got some dead fish.

Aubrey: Ooh!

Justin: [laughs]

Duck: I love that. Where are we right now in relation to the... to the Quell?

Griffin: Alexandra is like, looking around, and as she is looking, you see Janelle like, kind of smiling at her. And Janelle says...

Janelle: Tell them, Alexandra.

Griffin: And she turns, and she says...

Alexandra: I think we're right above it.

Griffin: And she walks towards the rest of you, all around this green fire, and she says...

Alexandra: [sighs] So, if I'm right about this, when an Interpreter comes of age, they make their pilgrimage to, um, to this place. It's called the source. And it's the nearest that a Sylvan is allowed to approach the core where, y'know, Sylvain dwells, or I guess where the Quell dwells as well. That was unintentional.

Thacker: [laughs]

Aubrey: That was nice, though.

Duck: Yeah. Very nice.

Griffin: And Janelle says...

Janelle: And I'm guessing from the paw prints that mar every inch of this sacred place, that Heathcliff has been helping himself to this temple's font of arcane energies. Is that right, Heathcliff?

Griffin: And he makes like an 'ain't I a stinker' face.

Aubrey: And that would explain all the big cat doodies around.

Duck: Hey, Heathcliff, did you used to be a normal cat? And then you got hit by these gamma rays or whatever, and now you're like a wild giant smart cat?

Griffin: He puts his pinky claw up to his mouth, and he's like...

Heathcliff: I'll never tell!

Aubrey: Okay.

Heathcliff: Yeah, that's—

Duck: Okay, well, something happened.

Heathcliff: Yeah, that's what I did.

Travis: Aubrey steps up, uh, into the green light. So it's really dramatic looking, y'know? Like, really cool.

Griffin: Yeah.

Aubrey: Um, everybody... if we have a second here, I need to like... take a moment of Aubrey time. And like, breathe and think for a second. I'm gonna go like, step over there.

Travis: And she just kind of generally points somewhere else.

Aubrey: Um, so, just give me a minute. And Alexandra, please, don't, like, think any thoughts at me, please.

Alexandra: Um, o—uh, okay. I'll go over there and like, sing a little song or something to distract myself.

Aubrey: Okay.

Alexandra: Does anybody have any puzzles or some—small puzzles or games? Probably not. That was stupid.

Aubrey: Duck, you always have puzzles.

Duck: Alright, so... if the man had seen the sawdust... he wouldn't have died. It's a lateral thinking puzzle. You can now ask me yes or no questions.

Aubrey: But that was like a—now, that's a thinking puzzle, Duck. Just like a—

Duck: What is invisible...

Aubrey: Okay.

Thacker: Is it animal, vegetable, or mineral?

Duck: It's—no, listen. It's invisible. And it doesn't—you can't see it. You can't smell it. You can't taste it. But if you put it in a barrel, it'll make the barrel lighter.

Travis: Aubrey walks away.

Thacker: Helium. Helium. It's helium.

Duck: That's incorrect.

Griffin: Aubrey, you walk away, leaving them entertaining Alexandra in the distance. Uh, what are you doin'?

Travis: Um, so Aubrey's gonna kind of do a little meditation thing to try to talk to the magic like she has before.

Griffin: Uh, okay.

[music plays]

Aubrey: Um, okay, so... magic? It's me, Aubrey. Um... any guidance at all. Anything, um... any explanation? Um... over and out?

Griffin: I think it takes a while, and... as you are meditating in this otherwise serene place, except for all of the riddles happening nearby, and even the sound of that is drowned out by the water falling, eventually. It takes a while for you to like, get in a place where you are able to have this conversation. And it's not really like before. You—you... you can't see her. You've seen her before, but like, right now, you cannot.

But you can... you can sense her, in a way. And then, you can sense, like, her... her experiences. You can sense her memories. And you did this once before with Alexandra, but this time, it is obviously more powerful, because you are remembering something from a deity's perspective.

You are in the center of the planet. And just like, looking all around at creation as you are just sort of constantly in a state of just always doing, and um... the Quell is there, too. And the two of you have these like, shifting forms. You don't necessarily have just this one, actual, tangible form. And you're just sort of like, marveling at the world.

And then, something happens that's actually happened a few times as of late. You sense the, um... the fear and the, uh, the anger and the aggression of your people. And you leave the Quell behind, and you go upwards. You just go—you go up, and into the crystal where, y'know, you usually interface with your people.

And now, you see them like, in their battle attire, standing in defense around the castle, some of them charging down the main drag at this platform at the edge of town where the archway appeared. And through that archway, you see humans coming in, and you see them pushing a... a small, like, metal... it looks like a tube, from a distance. Um, and it wheels on wheels towards you, and you see somebody light a fuse at the back of it. And it explodes, and then... you are shattered.

It glances the side of this crystal that you were in, and now, like, for the very first time ever, you are disconnected from it. You are contained within a shard of it, and you see others. You catch your reflection in other shards as you fall to the ground. And with that explosion, you hear more, and your people retreat, and you're just lying on the ground, looking upward, until a hand picks you up and whisks you away, back through the archway.

And when you finish that memory, you like... [sighs] You get the sense that it's not complete. It's like a friend telling you a story, but you can tell that like, they are not telling you the whole version of it. You get the sense that like, there are some walls up between the two of you. That's... that is what happens during your meditation.

Travis: I mean, is she still... can I still feel her presence?

Griffin: You still feel her presence in the same way that you always have. But now, you realize that like, the reason that you don't think you are

Sylvain, the reason that, y'know, the reason that you don't feel like you have the powers of a goddess necessarily, are because you have, like... you have this separation between the two of you, even though she's like, still within you.

Aubrey: So... you want to go back, right? I don't want to make you do anything you don't want the do.

Griffin: You feel so badly like you want to go back. Back to the center of this planet, and be restored.

Aubrey: Okay. I—I will do this. But I have one question. What will happen to me?

Griffin: You hear a voice, and it is so muffled that you cannot make out what it is saying, but it is saying something in this divine tone. This warm and loving tone. You can't quite make out what it says, but it says something that is... reassuring.

Aubrey: Okay. I trust you. I'll get you back. But I need your help. I need you... to fix whatever happened last time I touched the crystal. Help me. I'm... I need to be back at full strength.

Griffin: Hm. I think if you were trying to like, forge this connection again, if you are trying to like, make this thing—make this connection as strong as it once was, I think roll to use magic.

Travis: Ooh, yes. A ten, plus two. 12.

Griffin: I think communicate with something that you do not share a language with absolutely applies here.

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: You see her a little bit clearer now, and still not all the way there. You still know that there is something separating the two of you, but she is...

she is showing you more of her grace, and it feels unbelievable. And you can faintly see like, a smile forming on her face.

And as you do, you see another memory of hers – you see yourself in this crystal, and you're being passed around. Sold from like, curiosity shop to curiosity shop, or held as treasures throughout these different families. And you see other wars on this planet. You see all of these events happening. And you are just powerless to do anything. You are completely dormant, but aware of your surroundings inside of this crystal, and y'know, horrified at what must be happening back home.

And it's a terrible place to be, until you end up in the possession of a family. And this family seems like, really... genuinely, like, good hearted, unlike a lot of the people who have tried to possess you in the past. And you start to feel yourself, like, becoming closer with this family, and you are handed down through generations and generations and generations. And then Aubrey, like, you are now aware that you are being shown this memory, uh, for a reason.

You see your mom in the delivery room, and she is wearing this crystal as a pendant. And she is—she is pushing, right? She's trying to deliver you, Aubrey, and you see one of the nurses reach down to try and take the pendant off, and your mom just like, leans over and bites her hand to keep her from doing that.

And then, Aubrey, you are born... and... Sylvain is with you.

[music plays]

Duck: It's a hole! A fuckin' hole! If you put a hole in the barrel... somebody give me a fuckin' stick so I can draw on the fuckin' dirt! If you put a hole in the barrel, the barrel gets light! You can't put gas in the barrel, doesn't make any fuckin' sense! Put a hole in the goddamn barrel, Thacker!

Thacker: Ohh! A hole!

Duck: Yeah!

Thacker: Okay, alright!

Duck: A hole! Jesus Christ!

Thacker: No, no, I—[laughs] I... yeah! Well, when you say it like `at, it makes perfect sense. I understand completely.

Duck: [mumbling] When I say it like that...

Thacker: Put a hole in the barrel. Does it matter how big the hole is? Could it be a little hole?

Duck: Fucking go. Seriously. Don't. Beacon, get him.

Thacker: Alright. [laughs]

Griffin: [laughing] Aubrey, you are awakened from your trance by this interaction, and... you feel... powerful again. You feel, uh... you feel like you did before you touched the crystal. You catch a glimpse of yourself in the water. Your eyes are still orange. But you don't feel... you don't feel drained.

Travis: Yeahhh!

Griffin: In a way, you feel whole again.

Travis: Yeahhh! Both of her hands ignite in flame! Yeahhh! Woo!

Justin: Alright, now, Duck steps over to the same place that Aubrey just was.

Aubrey: Oh, your turn?

Griffin: Okay.

Aubrey: Okay!

Justin: And he stands in silence. And then you guys hear, distantly...

Beacon: Dear sword Jesus...

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Beacon: It's been so long since I—

Duck: Oh, fuckin'—you promised me you had something real! Never mind! Sorry, guys, he said he had a real thing he had to do. I didn't realize he was just bein' a dipshit.

Griffin: This whole time, Janelle has been like, walking around the temple, and just like, poking at things, and uh, trying to just get the lay of the land. Uh, and eventually, you see her walk over to the edge of this temple, and...

Justin: [laughing] She walks over to the edge, and he's like, "So what do you hear?"

Griffin: Yeah, what's up?

Justin: "You got the vertigo?"

Travis: "I've been waiting."

Justin: [laughing]

Travis: Celebration!! Wait, that's Bono.

Justin: "Where's Bono? You promised Bono was here."

Travis: "He's coming, he's coming! I promise, he just stopped, uhh, for gas! He'll be here!"

Griffin: "My dad knows Bono, I'm telling you!"

Justin: [laughs] "Edge?"

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: My dad, Edge Senior.

Justin: [laughing]

Griffin: Uh, she takes a step off the edge of the temple into this pond, and this land, like, beneath the water rises up to meet her foot. And she just walks like that, with this land rising up, keeping her out of the water, until this stone platform rises up. And uh, you all can see it.

She illuminates it with the same sort of green torches, and it is just this large, stone, like, diamond-shaped plate in the ground, and it's surrounded on all sides by this like, barricade of white rope that is tethered to these poles in the ground surrounding it. And uh, Heathcliff walks over curiously to it, and he says...

Heathcliff: Oh, you've... you've found it. Okay. Well, I'm sorry. I should've told you about that. Part of me hoped that I could still like, continue wheezing the juice, as it were. But um, yes, that's... that is where it is.

Griffin: And Janelle looks annoyed. Janelle says...

Janelle: [sighs] This is, um... this is a door. Or, it's a well, to be precise, that goes straight to the core. A straight shot. No... no resistance. This will get you there, if...

Griffin: And she looks at you, Aubrey, and she says...

Janelle: If you are ready to face what you will meet.

Aubrey: Sure. That did—I know that didn't sound very definite, but like, yeah, okay. If you had asked me yesterday? Probably no. But... here we are. And so... yeah. Sure.

Thacker: Were you askin' all of us, or just...

Griffin: Yeah, she looks at the two of you, too. She says...

Janelle: [sighs] Duck, Thacker... are you ready?

Duck: I mean, I'm damn near impervious, so... I feel like in for a penny, in for a pound, right?

Thacker: And I'm real old, and I really have been countin' on, y'know, us not survivin' this anyway, so... yeah, what the hell?

Justin: [quietly] Character three.

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: Move onto a young, sexy ingénue with a talent for daggers and a love for trouble.

Clint: Well now I can't use it, Juice. Thanks.

Griffin: You spoiled it.

Justin: That's mine now.

Griffin: Uh, Heathcliff says...

Heathcliff: Um, just a heads up – gravity starts to fail, um, the closer you get down there. It's gonna feel super weird, actually, but um—

Aubrey: Oh, cool!

Heathcliff: Yeah, it should keep you from just splattering against whatever's down there.

Duck: Yeah, I was gonna say. We're gonna need gravity to fail. [laughs]

Heathcliff: Yeah.

Duck: Or we're gonna fail.

Griffin: You all step up onto the plate, and Janelle says...

Janelle: I will shut the door behind you to ensure that the Quell does not invade this sacred place. I... Aubrey, I don't... [sighs] I have loved Sylvain as... as all of us do. All of us on this planet. All of us are born doing. But I... uh, I care for you, Aubrey. Not just the goddess that shares your form, but for you, child. So please come home safe.

Aubrey: Oh, okay. Now that you've said something, I was just gonna die, but now... no, of course I will, Janelle. Of course. Come on.

Janelle: I know I shouldn't be saying this to the divine heart of my planet, but you can be a real butt sometimes.

Aubrey: [laughs] I know, buddy, I know.

Griffin: She raises her hand, and as she does so, you start to see these lines form in the plate below you. And the three of you are like, lifting up slowly from this platform. And this diamond platform, it like, splits into quarters, which start to rotate away. And as they do, they split further and further, and they just fracture into these perfectly symmetrical polygons that form a ring around you, and they're just crackling with energy as they rotate faster and faster.

[music plays]

Griffin: And then, that energy dispels, and you are... shot downwards like from a cannon, surging through ley lines and through the mantle of the planet.

[music plays]

Griffin: Hey, everybody. This is Griffin McElroy. I'm your dungeon master, your best friend, and... the starting quarterback for the 1997 Miami Dolphins. Thanks for listening to The Adventure Zone: Amnesty, episode 35. Uh, so, the next one, episode 36, is gonna be the finale of The Adventure Zone: Amnesty. We're wrapping it up in the next episode. And that's a wild thing to say. It's a wild thing to be true in my life right now. Uh, and it means that we're gonna be movin' onto the next story very soon, and we're gonna be telling you about it very, very soon.

Gonna take a little break where we're gonna put up some of our wild live shows that we've done recently, which have been, uh, other games, other worlds, other short stories. They've all been so fantastic, and I'm really excited that you all are going to finally hear them, and then excited that, uh, we're gonna be able to tell you about what we're doing next. But yeah, the next episode is uh, episode 36, is gonna be the final episode of Amnesty, and uh, I... I cannot tell you how much your support has meant to all of us, and to me this season as we tried out this new thing.

It's been great, and I hope that you have enjoyed this story, enjoyed your time in Kepler, and uh, Sylvain, and everywhere else this season. We had to push this episode back a week, so the goal is to have the finale episode, 36, up next Thursday, September 19th. If you remember from Balance, the finale for that one was quite late, because we wanted it to be, y'know, good. We wanted it to be, y'know, special, and deserving of, y'know, the conclusion of the story we were telling. That won't probably happen again here, but we will keep you in the loop as to when the finale is going up. And yeah, I am excited to get there.

But first, let me tell you about some of our sponsors for this episode. Our first sponsor is Quip. Quip is toothbrush. That's a little pneumatic device that I use. They are toothbrush, and they uh, look really slick. It's a slick looking neo-futuristic toothbrush that I use. It vibrates, which is real nice,

and it gets your teeth real, real clean. It's gentle on my delicate gum meat, and it's got this cover.

It's got this multi-use cover. You can use it as a stand, it sticks right to your mirror, uh, or it can be like, a little travel case. If you just flip the little toothbrush around, stick it right in there, now it's a travel case. You can take it with you on the go, which I do every time I travel, which I do a lot.

Also, you can sign up to get new brush heads automatically delivered on a dentist recommended schedule every three months for just five bucks. And uh, it helps you keep your brush fresh and helps you stay committed to your oral health.

So, Quip is perfect for getting back into a good toothbrushin' routine. Quip starts at just \$25, and if you go to GetQuip.com/Adventure right now, you can get your first refill pack for free. That's your first refill pack free at GetQuip.com/Adventure.

Also want to tell you about Stitch Fix. Stitch Fix is an online personal styling service that finds and delivers clothes, shoes, and accessories to fit your body, budget, and lifestyle. We all use Stitch Fix. It's helped get our fashion game right, helped us look slick, helped us look stylish. Uh, y'know, whenever we do the red carpets now, whenever we're hanging out with Chris Pratt, we wanna look good.

So we go to Stitch Fix, and we get our clothes from there. We work with a personal stylist, they tell—we tell them what kind of sizes we wear, what styles we like, what our budget is, and then we get a personal stylist who hand picks items, and they send them right to our door. And y'know, I get to try them on, I pay for what I want, and I can send the rest back.

Shipping, exchanges, and returns are always free. There's no subscription, and the styling fee is just 20 bucks, which is applied towards anything you keep from your shipment. It's a really great service, so get started now at StitchFix.com/TAZ, and you will get an extra 25% off when you keep all the items in your box. That's StitchFix.com/TAZ to get started today. StitchFix.com/TAZ.

Thank you to everybody who has been tweeting about the show using the #TheZoneCast hash tag. Uh, and y'know, you're not gonna end up as a character in Amnesty. I'm afraid the doors are closed on that. But who knows? Who knows what comes next? Regardless, we really appreciate your support, and you all have been coming out in a big, big way for us as we move into the final episodes here, and uh, yeah.

I mean, we're gonna gush and gush and gush all over the place. That sounds gross. But we are, as we finish up Amnesty, and... yeah, anything you can do to help, uh, y'know, get your maybe geeky-adjacent friends interested in the show. It means a lot.

We've got a bunch of stuff at McElroy.family, including, y'know, live show announcements and a bunch of merch. We got a whole bunch of stuff, like fanny packs and pins and shirts and whatever the hell, man. I don't know what's on there. I don't have access to the internet. But you do! All at McElroy.family.

We have other shows also that we are aligned with spiritually and emotionally at Maximum Fun. That is the network that we are a member of. Go to MaximumFun.org, check out all the great shows there. Shows like Story Break, Beef and Dairy Network, and a whole lot more.

That is gonna do it for the ads. I'm gonna let you get back to the rest of the episode here. The penultimate episode of The Adventure Zone: Amnesty. Like I said earlier, episode 36, the next one, is going to be the finale. Right now, the current plan is to have it up Thursday, September 19th, but... we haven't recorded it yet, so god only knows if that is actually a realistic delivery date. We will keep you in the loop, though, as to when the finale is going to go up, and uh... yeah.

Next time I talk to you will be on the final episode, so... see ya then. Bye.

[music plays]

Griffin: The momentum catches you off guard as all of your senses return. You're standing on a small, grassy island, and it's about 20 feet in diameter, and there is a warm wind blowing all around you, disturbing the grass on this small, lush plane. And then, an object shoots by overhead, spun about by the breeze. It's another island, similar in size to your own, moving in a slightly faster orbit nearby.

You stand in the core, and your body is light. You feel like you could drift away from this island at any second. But for whatever reason, your feet remain planted to the ground. And all around you, chunks of land from seemingly different biomes are all circling the center of this just like, mile-wide chamber.

As you survey all of these islands around you, you realize where they come from. Every surface, every wall of this chamber, is just full of life. It's full of like, trees, and grass, and rivers, and lakes, and sand dunes, and canyons. Just all these reminders of the land that used to exist up on the surface, all just stored here around the perimeter of the core of the planet.

[music plays]

Griffin: And then your island, that you're standing on, it begins to rotate. And as it does, the heart of the Quell dawns over its horizon. It is a perfect sphere; the most perfect sphere to ever exist. Just flawless and reflective and deep red. And it's casting this warm light off of itself in flashes, in pulses. It is completely motionless, and yet, it is seething. And you can't figure out like, how you know that – it just is.

And all of you feel your teeth grit reflexively as it comes into view. There's no smoke, there's no cloud, there's nothing to obscure your vision. You stand in the core of the planet, with the heart of the Quell in the distance. What do you do?

Aubrey: I'm Sylvain! Hi!

Griffin: The sphere rolls. And it's like—it's far away enough that you can't really figure out just how big it is. But when you like, look at all of these islands in its orbit, you discern that it is, um... like, cosmic horror big.

As it rolls, just faster than your eyes can decipher, there is a new light that comes into view. At the center of the sphere's surface now, facing you, peering at you, is a hole in this flawless sphere. You see one of these huge islands like, lose its orbit as the heart shifts and crashes into this enormous eye, and is consumed and destroyed by it.

And just instantly, a red tendril shoots out of this eye and crashes into the side of your island, just instantly branching to form a loop around it. Just lassoing it, and beginning to retract it towards the center of the room. And it's howling as it does, and it's letting out this deep, reverberant wail that rattles the walls of this chamber, forming cracks across the biomes.

You see it drain a lake and just topple a forest, and you feel these reverberations in your bones. And in your inner ear, and you're able to make out a voice that says...

Voice: So, you've returned.

Aubrey: Yes?

Thacker: I think she's talkin' to me, Sparky.

Griffin: Uh, the Quell says...

Quell: Indeed. [robotic stuttering] I was not addressing you, Aubrey Little. You refused to free me in the basement. You will be punished for that. How did you elude me, Arlo Thacker?

Thacker: Well, the last time, I kind of just give into ya. I just kind of let you do that... magic that you do, and I didn't fight ya, and kind of rolled with the punches. Kind of opened myself up to ya. You `member, before, I told'ja – if there's any way to avoid us havin' to slug it out, I... I think we oughta try to do that.

Quell: It is nice to have you back, even now, at the end. [robotic stuttering]

Griffin: And the eye turns back towards you now, Aubrey.

Aubrey: I—um, I'm sorry. You probably didn't hear me before, 'cause I was a little far away. But I'm Sylvain, so there's no need for the end.

Griffin: Act under pressure.

Travis: An eight. Plus zero, so an eight.

Griffin: Small, wiry tendrils whip out of the side of the larger tendril that is wrapped around your island. And they all whip at you, Aubrey, and you reflexively—you are able to dodge out of the way of them. But uh, two of them whip across your stomach as you dodge away, and you take two harm.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: And you hear the Quell say...

Quell: This is heresy.

Griffin: And the eye shifts at you, Duck. And you hear the Quell say...

Quell: I do not know this one.

Duck: Uh, yeah. I'm the only one you don't have a history with, huh? [laughs] Y'know, you're probably wonderin' why I'm here, and uh... yeah, I mean, I can wonder the same thing, honestly. Uh, but um... I guess we're just tryin'a get things a little calm. Seems like both our worlds are gettin' torn apart, and we're just hopin' that you'll, uh... kind of pump the brakes a little bit.

Griffin: Uh, the eye, like, now unfocuses from all of you, and opens wider. And it starts to retract this island deeper towards it, even faster now. And you hear the Quell say...

Quell: It is... centuries too late for us to find peace. I tried to warn you. You should've stayed where you were, to perish with the rest of them.

Travis: I'm going to do some big magic.

Griffin: Jesus. Okay.

Travis: So, Aubrey is gonna close her eyes and say...

Aubrey: Okay, uh... Sylvain. I need—I need—this—it's time. This is, uh—it's time to do... our stuff.

Griffin: This is—this is big magic, right? You are trying to conjure up Sylvain?

Travis: Correct.

Griffin: Uh, I am going to say... I get to decide what the requirements are for this big magic.

Travis: Correct.

Griffin: Uh, I am going to say... you need two people to help. Clearly.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: And in the context of this, I think that just means keeping you alive as you are attempting to do this. Because the other thing that I am going to say that this requires is... uh, the spell will take a long time to cast.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Duck and Thacker, you see Aubrey close her eyes in the same sort of meditative state that you saw her upstairs. Uh, and the eye like, whips towards her as she does this. And uh, does not slow its retraction. You are now, like... you are now getting close enough to this thing that like, the heat from it is getting a little bit... a little bit unbearable. And Aubrey does not seem to respond to it.

Clint: Alright, then I think that this is where Thacker would use psychic event, and maybe do that to try to calm it down.

Griffin: Okay. Roll, uh, I guess plus weird.

Clint: Ten, plus two for weird. That's a 12.

Justin: Very weird.

Travis: Really weird.

Justin: That's like, Weird AI levels of weird.

Clint: Extremely weird. Lotta weird.

Travis: Not the weirdest it could be, but definitely weird.

Justin: Extremely weird.

Griffin: You gain a definite impression about something important. Here's what I'm going to give you. As it is right now, the Quell is... furious beyond reason. The Quell is as single-minded as anything could possibly be. And right now, you are standing in the way of its, like, unimaginable violence. That is what the Quell is operating on right now. All of your pleas for peace or whatever are just not being heard whatsoever.

But the thing I will also give you is that deep, deep, deep inside there, you sense a... a small bit of sadness, at just the mention of Sylvain's name. It's not enough to like, make the Quell, y'know, change its mind right now. It's

not enough to like, derail its mission, its crusade. But it is... it is there. Um, but it is behind this wall of just raw, violent power.

Duck, what do you do?

Justin: I'm just gonna try to talk to it.

Griffin: Okay.

Duck: Hey, I know you don't know me from Adam up there, ego. But uh... can you just like, calm down? What is the rush right now? I'm—I'll be honest with you, man. I'm barely hangin' in there, in terms of comprehension, alright? I'm a forest ranger by trade. I'm extremely out of my depth. Can you just like, walk me through what you are pissed off about right now?

Maybe you're right. That's something we learned in the—we had to take a conflict mediation class last year, and it used up half my damn day, and I was pretty pissed at the time. But I did learn, like, sometimes it's just about... like, fuckin' listenin', y'know what I mean? Like, where are you at right now? Maybe you're right. I have no clue.

Griffin: Have you told it your name? Have you said it out loud?

Duck: My name's Duck. It's a nickname.

Griffin: You hear it say...

Quell: Duck. I do not need a reason to destroy, Duck. I am destruction, Duck.

Griffin: And you see tendrils start to whip out of the, um... out of the larger tendril that is holding onto your island; the same kind that struck Aubrey.

Duck: Now, wait a minute. Hold on. If you kill me, I can't tell you my real name. I know you're curious. You're curious, aren't you, you big, crazy planet?

Griffin: Uh, act under pressure, Duck. [laughing]

Justin: [laughing] Ohh, it is a six.

Griffin: Uh, plus what?

Justin: Cool. Eight.

Griffin: Uh...

Clint: Okay. Can I help out?

Griffin: Well, you would only bring him up to a nine. I don't think there's any way to do that, unless Aubrey could help, too.

Travis: I'm busy.

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: I'm going to—I don't usually deal with this one, but uh... hell, it's finale season. I'm gonna give you a worse outcome. Uh, these tendrils are like, raising up in the air, like cobras about to strike. And then, you all hear the wind next to you, just whistling. And you look over, just in time to see another island collide with your own. And both of them shatter, and the three of you go flying.

And now, you are just caught in the orbit of this thing. Aubrey, you are still in this meditative state. You are just limp, flying in the air, and Thacker and Duck, you are no longer standing on anything. You are just sort of floating around the orbit of this planet, of the Quell, with these islands all around.

You are meditating. What does this look like? What does this big magic look like?

Travis: Um, so, I think... it kind of looks like a conversation a little bit. I think she's trying to communicate with Sylvain, and I think it's mostly right now going like...

Aubrey: Listen, I know that you were hurt. You showed me you were hurt, and that that is scary, and it took you a long time to even trust us enough to even connect with me like this. But this—it's time. Let's fix it. Right?

Griffin: You are talking to this silhouette of Sylvain, and you feel it trying to... open up to you. You feel it trying to like, give you the power that you need right now, to give you what you need to stop the Quell. But it is... she's just incapable of doing so. As you are in this meditative state, you feel yourself become somewhat vulnerable, psychically. And... as you are having this conversation in just this void, you see... flecks of red start to float upwards from the floor. I need you to act under pressure.

Travis: A nine.

Griffin: Plus cool.

Travis: Plus cool is zero, so a nine.

Griffin: Mixed success.

Clint: What if—okay.

Griffin: I mean, she's in a psychic vision. I don't know how...

Clint: And I have psychic powers.

Griffin: Ooh, that's a good point! Uh...

Clint: Could I help out?

Griffin: Yes, absolutely. Why don't you roll, uh, roll to help out? Plus cool.

Travis: Damn!

Griffin: Wow, that's double sixes, folks.

Clint: 12. 12 minus one... 'cause the minus one cool...

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: So that's 11.

Travis: Thacker ain't cool.

Griffin: Alright.

Justin: That's generous.

Griffin: That bumps Aubrey up to a complete success.

Justin: Complete success!

Griffin: Here is what happens.

Travis: Alright.

Griffin: We're—guys, we're in the finale. It's gonna be dramatic. Please, no more Borat.

Justin: Okay, that's your opening offer is no more Borat. I'm gonna come in at three Borat. [laughs] And we'll see where we end up.

Travis: Now, I'm willing to do two Borat and a Napoleon Dynamite.

Justin: [laughing]

[music plays]

Griffin: Aubrey... you feel this space where you are trying to talk to Sylvain, you see it drift away. And... then, you hear the Quell's voice.

Quell: Interesting. Aubrey Little, I did not know. The guilt that you have carried with you since that night must be... unbearable. You harbor such hatred, and such shame. I can take that away.

Griffin: And then, Aubrey, you are standing in the living room of your old house. And... it's night time, and there is soft moonlight spilling in through the windows that are... it's illuminating the familiar trappings of your youth, and... whatever like, brief moment of warmth or whatever you may feel is interrupted when you notice your father's unconscious body laying at your feet, with a trickle of blood coming from his head.

And at the top of the stairs, you catch a glimpse of a strange man up in the collections room with a flashlight in hand. And... in front of you, you see yourself. And you're on the ground with your eyes closed, and there's a burly silhouette kneeling over you, checking your vitals before nervously returning to the foyer. You see Ned. And he's panicked, and he's angry, and... he runs up the stairs, and he's shouting for his partner's attention, just begging him to leave.

And you see yourself lift up off the floor. And you float behind Ned, and you point at the man upstairs, who looks at you just agog, as Ned does, as you see your hair begin to float up and your eyes turn bright orange. And you hold the fist up in the air, and a ball of flame erupts at the top of the stairs. And... then it freezes.

In this moment where you are trying to forge this connection with Sylvain, you left yourself vulnerable, and you start to see this scene, like... crackle and turn red. And you feel just rage, external rage, coursing through you. And then, you hear Thacker shouting at you, as if like, from down like a long, a long corridor.

What does he say?

Thacker: [echoing] Aubrey! Don't give into it!

Aubrey: Thacker? Are you in my house?

Thacker: [echoing] No, no. I'm—huh? In your house?

Aubrey: Yeah, I'm in my—this is my house when I was a kid.

Thacker: [echoing] No, come back! Come on! [claps] Wake up! Wake up! [clapping and snapping] Did it work? Did it work? [snapping] Aw, hell.

Griffin: As you are like, distracted by Thacker's tomfoolery, you see like, this red crackling start to drift away, and you feel this rage start to subside.

Travis: I think she walks over to herself.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: I think she gently lays a hand on her own cheek, and says...

Aubrey: It's not your fault.

Griffin: The scene starts to move now, very slowly. You see this ball of fire detonate in just this bright flash of light. And as it fades, you turn, and you see... Sylvain, with Alexandra standing at her side.

Duck. You are floating in orbit around the Quell, and its eye is following you. You are surrounded by these shards of earth and stone, uh, and you see some of them like, get caught in the orbit and slam into other islands and just get destroyed. You are floating through space. What do you do?

Justin: Am I able to control my... my...

Travis: Trajectory?

Justin: Thank you, that is exactly the word.

Griffin: Um...

Justin: At all?

Griffin: What do you try to do to control your trajectory?

Clint: Is there stuff floating by? Flying by?

Griffin: There's like, shards, and like, planks of stone and stuff.

Justin: Alright, here's what I do. Are there some within reach?

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Justin: Alright. While I'm floating in space, I see a bit, sharp looking log fly above me. And I pull out Beacon, and I whip, y'know, make it go cord... cord... corded.

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: Uh, I go whip-shaped. And uh, whip around it, and spin around in the air as much as possible, and try to chuck it at the Quell.

Griffin: Uh, okay. Uhh, why don't you...

Justin: I don't even know if the physics of that fucking make sense, but that's the only thing I can do—think to do.

Travis: We're in a magical land, Justin.

Griffin: Yeah, I mean, the physics can be whatever you want them to be. Uh, are you trying to hurt the Quell? What are you trying to do?

Justin: Distract it.

Griffin: Okay. Uh...

Justin: I hope that the Quell cannot be damaged by some hastily flung logs. [laughs]

Travis: Turns out, drift wood was his one weakness.

Justin: His one weakness. He's like a space Dracula.

Griffin: Um, then I think this is kick some ass.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: Or if you're trying to distract it, I guess it could be act under pressure.

Justin: Yeah, I feel like probably act under pressure makes more sense. Even though that's a...

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: They're the same stat, so.

Griffin: Sure. Go ahead and act under pressure, Duck. That—holy shit, guys!

Justin: Ten plus... two!

Griffin: That's a twelve!

Justin: Right there when I need it.

Griffin: You can take the advanced move. You may do either what you wanted to do and something extra, or you can do what you wanted with absolute perfection.

Justin: I want to do what I wanted with absolute perfection.

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: What is it?

Justin: I—I want to chuck that piece of wood, and it's spinning end over end, and it just like... jabs in at the wildest, most improbable angle. I want this thing to be afraid of me. I want it to wonder what the fuck I am. 'Cause it doesn't have any relationship to me, and I just want its attention. That is all I'm trying to get to, is I just want it to focus on me, so Aubrey can finish her business.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, you... [laughs] You chuck this huge log into its side, and it just spears into the Quell.

Justin: Ahh! [laughs]

Griffin: And the room like, vibrates. You—like, the flawless surface of this sphere, you send like, a ripple through it. And that ripple, like, turns sharp as it goes. Like, you see little cubes appear in the ripple as it is injured in this way. And it roars, and you see it. As you like, sort of come around the circle, you see that it was reaching towards Aubrey with just this like... like a splash of red fluid that is just sort of like, emitting from its side, trying to just envelop her.

And as you stab into it, you see that splash like, spasm and fall limp and get sucked back up into the surface.

Duck: Now, see, you see, now, this is why it's so important in a conflict to keep focused on everybody else's needs. 'Cause if you had been focused on my need right then, you would've totally seen that big, stupid log comin' at your dumb ass!

Griffin: Its eye turns towards you, and it was just... it was kind of a bright yellow light before. Now, it is furious red like the rest of it. And uh, parts of its body, just like splashes of red fluid begun to whip out of it towards you, Duck, uhh, trying to envelop you. Thacker, it's your turn.

Clint: How close is Thacker to Duck?

Griffin: Um... you were standing on this—

Justin: Well, they don't know each other that well. It's only been a few weeks, but...

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: There's sparks.

Griffin: You are in the same orbit. So I would say, like, you are fairly close to Duck. You could get to him.

Clint: Okay, I tell you what. I think Thacker's gonna continue this same strategy. He wants to distract the uh, distract the Quell, too.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: So he throws his spiked walking stick at it.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: It's act under pressure. It's the same thing he did, isn't it?

Griffin: I mean, I will give that to you. You are not going to hurt it at all.

Clint: I know. Just distract it.

Griffin: Okay. Oh my god, guys! That's a ten!

Travis: Holy shit! [laughs]

Griffin: What the fuck's going on?! Uh, okay...

Travis: It's the power of love, Griffin.

Griffin: Oh, but wait! It's a nine, because you acted under pressure, and you have minus one cool.

Clint: Except...

Justin: There he goes.

Griffin: Here he goes.

Clint: When you have to act under pressure due to a monster, phenomenon, or mystical effect, you may roll plus weird instead of plus cool.

Travis: This is about a monster, if you think about it.

Griffin: Um, okay. Yeah. You set out to—

Clint: So it's a 12.

Griffin: It's a 12. You set out to do what you want to do. What happens, Thacker?

Clint: Uh, hopefully, it'll distract it enough that the tendrils will move towards me instead of Duck.

Griffin: Uh, okay. Yeah, you throw your walking stick at it. Uh, and you throw it like, near where this huge log has pierced into its side, and you're—

Clint: It's just like Jason Statham in Meg! "Hey, over here! Over here!" And smacking the water so the—

Griffin: I can't believe you just referenced fucking Meg on our podcast.

Travis: If only there was a more well-known shark movie you could've referenced.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: You—you throw your spear, like, near where the log jabbed into its side, and because it is so, so much smaller, I think it just kind of like... it gets in there a little bit, and sort of, “Dink!” And you watch it fly off, back into the orbit. Uh, but it does enough to make the Quell turn back towards you, Thacker, and there’s something about you that is just like, inherently distracting to the Quell. Um, you are—

Clint: And everybody else, really.

Griffin: Yeah. You are a mystery to this thing. You figured that out when you just got inside its head. You are the only thing to ever be under its influence, and then not be. Uh, so, it turns towards you, Thacker, and sure enough, its tendrils just kind of curve in the air, and...

[music plays]

Griffin: They—they start to wrap around you. Uh, Aubrey. Aubrey, this scene of the night of the robbery is moving in slow motion. The fire has just started to spread upstairs. You see both of the men in this room react to it in slow motion, and... there is Sylvain. She... takes a step toward you, and Alexandra does, too. And then, Alexandra kind of like, shakes out of it a little bit, and then looks up at Sylvain, and then looks at you. And she says...

Alexandra: She... dwelled within you your entire life, Aubrey, up to this moment. And... she watched you grow up, and she loved you, and loved who you became. And then, in this moment, Aubrey, when you were in danger... she finally managed to wrest control of the wheel. And in an effort to protect you, Aubrey, she destroyed your life.

This is why she went into hiding, Aubrey. From the world, from the Quell, from you. She couldn’t bear what she did to you and your family.

Aubrey: Y'know, for an all-powerful god of creation and love, you're pretty dense.

Griffin: Both of them look horrified. Well, no. Alexandra looks horrified. Sylvain looks... kind of in shock.

Aubrey: Listen. Hear me out, okay? You've been with me, right? So for the last... however long it's been. Year? I don't know, it all blends together, right? Me and Duck and Ned, and now Thacker and Mama and Barclay, we've all been trying to help people, right? And sometimes you fuck up. Sometimes people get hurt. Sometimes you can't... [sighs]

Sometimes you act, and you do things, and you're wrong. And if you let the fact that you fucked up stop you from trying to help again, that's... that's the real mistake. I've fucked up so many times! You can't be afraid to help. Because yeah, you might hurt. But you also might help. You just have to keep helping. Don't be afraid. I'm not. I trusted you.

You said... I don't know what you said, but it made me feel like it would be okay. And I believe you. And now you have to believe me. It's gonna be okay. We can do this. Don't be afraid.

Griffin: As you are talking to her, as you are saying these things, the scene continues, and you see the two men run down the stairs by you as you're speaking. And you see Sylvain truly take her form. She looks like you, Aubrey, and that may just be an effect of how she came back into the world. But she looks like you. Her hair is like this radiant, shifting color. She has these bright, orange eyes that are starting to well with tears.

And... she walks up to you, and she clasps her hands around one of your hands, and she smiles. And... she gives you a kiss on the forehead. And... I mean, it blows your mind. [laughs] She's a deity, and it's a wild thing that nobody has ever experienced before. And she takes a step back, and then... she kind of cocks her head and grins, and she points behind you.

You see the house beginning to give way to the flames. There is, y'know, some of infrastructure has started to collapse in the flames, and framed in

the doorway, cast in this wild, orange light, you see Ned dragging you and your father to safety as the embers drift past him and up into the quiet night air.

And Aubrey, you are awake. You see Thacker enveloped in the Quell's form, starting to pull him in. You see Duck furiously trying to free him. What do you do?

Aubrey: [echoing] I don't think you heard me. I said... I. Am. Sylvain.

[music plays]

Griffin: Instantly, the Quell retracts its tendrils, and Duck and Thacker go flying. And the eye whips toward you, Aubrey, and you can tell, it is... terrified, and overjoyed, all at the same time. And those three words boom through the chamber. And Duck and Thacker, as you're flying around, you're catching glimpses of Aubrey, and she is... just this bright, orange flame.

And you see this flame, as she yells this phrase, just radiate through the chamber. And now, like, the gentle earthquakes that were sort of tearing apart the biomes around this room, they go ballistic, and everything is shaking violently, and you see just like, parts of the chamber just like, ripping off the walls.

You see trees and rocks and rivers just slowly migrating toward the Quell in the center of this chamber, and there is a large fissure in the ceiling that is spreading further and further apart, and slabs of rock are just falling through it into this like, increasing cascade of things that are now caught in the orbit around the Quell. And its tendril is close to you.

Travis: Aubrey reaches out her hand.

Griffin: And as they touch, light spreads from your finger. It spreads from the tendril. And everything goes silent.

From the fissure above, all of you see the crystalline heart of Sylvain, now filled with searing, brilliant, orange light as it falls into the chamber like a heavenly spear, and the Quell's eye gently closes.

[music plays]

Griffin: When your senses return, the chamber that you were just in has changed dramatically. The three of you are still just kind of floating, but you're no longer swirling around in this violent orbit. In front of you, instead of seeing this perfect, red sphere, now all you see is Sylvain. She's floating in front of you with Alexandra at her side, and you also notice that like, the chaos that had overtaken this room, all of these pieces of earth, and all of these chunks of those biomes all around the walls have slowly started to move back into place like pieces of a puzzle.

And Sylvain takes a step towards you, and she is just surrounded by these like, orange sparks, almost like fireflies, with Alexandra at her side. And she just looks at the three of you, and she flashes this big, toothy grin.

Aubrey: He-hello your... planet... ship.

Justin: Uh, I think Duck takes a knee, um, and kind of puts Beacon in front of him in sort of a knightly, uhh, pose.

Griffin: [laughs] Uh, Thacker, what do you do?

Clint: Well, this is basically someone he's devoted his whole life to. I mean, well, studying.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Clint: Sylvain, and archiving all the things, and... I think he's just kind of stunned. I think he just, like a single tear runs down his cheek, and he's just... overcome. He's just stunned. I don't think he says a damn thing.

Griffin: Uh, Sylvain kind of like... like, eh, grimaces a little bit, and Alexandra says...

Alexandra: Oh, gosh, none of that's necessary. Oh, gosh. Uh, I mean, thank—thank you. And it's... it's really good to see the three of you alive and well. I don't know what—thank you, obviously.

Aubrey: You're welcome. How about that? Yeahhh, huh?

Travis: It's—I think for Aubrey, this is probably like, at least the way that... it probably feels like suddenly talking to an older sibling.

Griffin: Right, yeah.

Travis: That like, you've both always had and never known, and like, feel connected to, but also like, don't really know all that well. And like, it's gotta be both, like, bizarre and comforting at the same time.

Griffin: Yeah. Uh, she actually like, flies very quickly towards you, Aubrey, and kind of like, pushes you back in the air with like, just a big hug. She has watched you grow up your entire life, and now like, she can touch you. And it is... like, it's all she wants to do is give you a big hug.

Justin: Does Aubrey feel any better? Or not better, but does Aubrey feel any different? I'm curious, as a listener and outside observer. This is not necessarily Duck asking, because this is all way fuckin' out of his pay grade. But I'm curious if like... Aubrey's been kind of a vessel, I guess, for so long. Like, do you feel different with her not being... inside of you?

Travis: That's a good question. Griffin, do they still feel connected? Does Aubrey still feel magical?

Griffin: I'm not gonna answer that. I think that, um... she pulls away from you, and uh, she like, cups your face in her hands and looks at you, and kind of pulls away a little bit, and she says... and Alexandra says...

Alexandra: So, uh... Aubrey, what is this... what does this mean for us?

Aubrey: Are you breaking up with me? [laughs]

Alexandra: No, you—Aubrey, you've never known a life without my presence dwelling within you. But you've... you've finally brought me home. So what's... what's next?

Aubrey: I... I mean, I have enjoyed... wow, I was gonna say working with you, but that doesn't even begin to scratch the surface. Um... I like being connected to you. We have done... a lot of cool things, and a lot of good for people, and... I mean, listen, I'm open to staying... staying in touch, as it were. Staying connected. But I don't want to take you away from your home. Are we—

Alexandra: Aubrey. Aubrey! When was the last time someone asked you what *you* wanted?

Griffin: And as she says that, you realize that that was the thing that she said to you that you couldn't quite understand when you were in the temple above.

Alexandra: What do you want, Aubrey?

Aubrey: Wow. Um... I'll be honest with you, Sylvain. That is a big old question. Right? 'Cause right now, on like, kind of the low end, is like a sandwich. Like, I'm really hungry. We've been doing a lot of shit today, and I haven't eat—I had like, a breakfast bar. Other than that, since basi—ugh.

Thacker: I offered you GORP.

Aubrey: I'm not eating that disgusting shit, Thacker.

Griffin: She says...

Alexandra: No, Aubrey... I can be with you and be with my world and my people. I can keep you with me, and work with you from within. Tell me what you want, Aubrey. Your destiny is no longer bigger than you, Aubrey. What do you want?

Aubrey: I'd like to be able... I want to be able to explore, and to experience, and to make my own decisions... but I don't want to do that without you. I—listen, can I be honest with you? I like having power. I like being able to help people and protect myself and protect my friends, and I like that. I don't want to lose that. But I also want to be able to live a life where I make decisions, and sometimes take a day off when I need to, and sometimes just stay in bed and watch cartoons if I need to. So like...

Griffin: She kind of like, rolls her eyes back, like, "Oh, yeah."

Aubrey: Right? And just like, eat pizza without having to worry if me taking a day off is like—is going to destroy the world.

Griffin: Uh, Alexandra says...

Alexandra: I think we're both owed that.

Griffin: And she nods at you, and kind of hovers away. And then she looks over at you, Thacker, and sees you with this tear in your eye. She floats over to you, and Alexandra says...

Alexandra: The three of you saved this world, and saved me. But Thacker, it's... it's because of you that the Quell was spared, also. I thank you, Thacker. Thank you.

Thacker: It... it... it was my honor to—to do this. And I... thank you for giving me a purpose in my life.

Griffin: She grins, and Alexandra says...

Alexandra: You've got more going on than just that, Thacker. Know this, though – the path that the Quell walked is not so easily traveled in reverse. The threat is ended, yes, but... I pray that one day, the Quell will return to me.

Griffin: And she bows. And then she floats over to you, Duck, where you are kneeling on the ground, and just kind of uh, looks down on you gracefully.

Duck: We don't really need a thing. I know you and I don't really... know each other, but we don't need to do a... don't feel like—I don't feel like, short changed if we don't do a thing. Thank—hey, thank—this is all cool. This is all great, though. I'm all—I'm very pleased. Don't think that I'm like, not. I'm thrilled. I just... don't feel like we have to do a... y'know, "and I'll miss you the most of all, Duck." 'Cause we're not... it's fine. It really is fine.

Griffin: She smiles and just kind of shrugs, and she just puts a hand on your shoulder for a second. And uh, it is the wildest feeling you've ever felt in your entire life. And then, she walks backward towards Alexandra, and she nods at Alexandra, who walks towards the three of you and stands near you, and light starts to fill this chamber.

Aubrey: Wait—wait, hold on. Um, I—

Griffin: Okay, light goes away from the chamber.

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Aubrey: Listen. Sylvain, I... I don't know how many opportunities the three of us are gonna get to like, speak face to face to, y'know, a god. Um... there's been so much destruction, and anger, and we've lost friends, and... is... what... [sighs] What happens now? What happens?

Griffin: She smiles, and... floats over to you, and... just points at you. And... she places a hand on your heart, and she just grins. And Alexandra, at your side, says...

Alexandra: We'll figure it out together.

Griffin: And then... the chamber is filled with light, and your vision fades.

[birds chirping]

Griffin: Aubrey and Thacker, the two of you awaken in a bed of flowers. And the sky above is a pale blue. There is a flock of birds, actual birds, not monster birds, that fly overhead. And you track them, uh, while laying on the ground. You track them until your vision is obscured by a towering, orange crystal that is symmetrical and sprawling outward like the crown of a tree.

And as the two of you sit up, you... you see the city of Sylvain as you never have before. You see it in daylight. And you see the survivors that were inside the castle, that, uh, they've moved outside. They're moving the barricades away, into the courtyard here, and they are seeing to the Sylvans that are beginning to awaken on the street.

Uh, Aubrey, you see one of them nursing a bruised, very badly kicked hand. Uh, and all of these people waking up on the street are just like, shaking their heads. They're bleary-eyed, as if they're awakening from a long slumber.

And near you, you see Vincent, who is tending to Alexandra and Duck, both of whom have yet to awaken. And Janelle is sitting with her back against the crystal, just so, so weary. She looks at you as you sit up, Aubrey, and Janelle says...

Janelle: Aubrey? I have great news. You can touch the crystal whenever your heart so desires.

Aubrey: [laughs] Uh, y'know... I'm—I'm cool for right now.

Griffin: She smiles, and she says...

Janelle: I know it's time for celebration, but... do you think they'd let us take a nap, first?

Aubrey: Oh my god, you read my mind. Ohh. Y'know, I'm gonna say, as saviors of an entire planet, maybe even dimension, not sure how it works... I think we can probably take a nap whenever the fuck we want?

Griffin: Uh, she laughs, and she says—

Aubrey: Also, a sandwich. If I could get a sandwich. I'm so hungry.

Janelle: I'm not your—your maid?

Aubrey: I'm not asking you, Janelle!

Janelle: Okay.

Aubrey: You can have a sandwich too. If someone could bring us just a big party platter...

Griffin: Uh, as you're looking for a party platter, you hear a voice booming from the entrance to the courtyard that says...

Voice: Hear me, voices of evil! Your—oh.

Griffin: And you look over and see Agent Stern, uh, with just like a big baseball bat that he's holding. And he says...

Agent Stern: Oh, is it done?

Aubrey: Yeah.

Agent Stern: Oh, y'all were gone for a while. I thought maybe we could come—we should come help.

Aubrey: Do you have a KIND bar?

Griffin: [laughs] And uh, in walks with him, uh, Mama, and Minerva, and Dani. And Mama's like...

Mama: Yeah, I think you... You missed your hero window there, bud.

Griffin: And Dani is just beaming. Just like, from being back home, and seeing that you survived, Aubrey, she's like, looking all around. And when she sees you, she runs and just like, tackles you to the ground, and uh, she picks you up and looks at you and she says...

Dani: So I have a super weird story to tell you, um, that you are... not going to believe.

Aubrey: Oh, me too! Oh man! This is—

Dani: No, trust—no, trust me, mine's gonna—mine's gonna blow your mind.

Aubrey: Oh, really? Because like, mine too. Like...

Dani: No, like, seriously. Okay.

Aubrey: You want to say it on three? We'll say it on three.

Dani: Okay. One...

Aubrey: One... two... three.

Dani: Two... three. Dr. Harris Bonkers walks—

Aubrey: [simultaneously] I had Sylvain living inside of me, and then she—wait, what did you say?

Dani: What did you say?

Aubrey: I had Sylvain living inside me. What about Dr. Harris Bonkers?

Dani: He... like, walks on two legs and stuff now. Uh...

Aubrey: Huh.

Dani: You... had Sylvain inside of you?

Aubrey: Yeah. Apparently, this whole fuckin' time. Like, since I was born, Sylvain, the goddess of, y'know, your planet, was like, inside this one.

Travis: And she does like, the two thumbs.

Aubrey: And then, we went downstairs, and jumped down a pit, and then, I talked to Sylvain. Uh, she popped out, stopped the Quell, and then like, we hugged. What's up, I hugged your god. And then, she like, was like—we totally chilled for a bit, and then, we're back here, and I saved your planet. Um, but I'm not going to like, play down your thing, 'cause I would like to hear about my bunny that apparently is now like, the white rabbit from Alice in Wonderland.

Dani: So can I like... can I still like, hang out with you?

Aubrey: Oh, absolutely! But do know – hey, I want you to know. 'Cause she's not, like—we're—now we've got kind of a timeshare thing going on. But...

Griffin: [laughs]

Aubrey: I want you to know, when we kissed, you were kissing a god! What's up?

Griffin: She like, falls backward and like—

Aubrey: I know!

Griffin: Is like, about to faint. She's like...

Dani: Alright, can we slow... slow, slow it down. Let's slow it down.

Aubrey: Yeah, I know! Hey. What's that like, huh?

Dani: [laughs]

Aubrey: You were kissing a god! And every time I ate burritos, a god was eating burritos!

Griffin: [laughing] Uh, Mama walks over to you, Thacker, and helps you up to your feet, and she says...

Mama: So uh... just like, uh, old times, huh? Kinda?

Thacker: Uhh, I don't know there, Maddie. I don't know if I ever had any old times quite like 'at. Um... I'll tell ya, though... it was really cool. And I got—I got so much to write down. I got so—we got a lot of work to do. We got a looot of work to do.

Mama: Alright, okay. Hey, easy. Easy there, partner. Why don't—how about—

Thacker: Are you—are you feelin' alright? Are you doin' alright?

Mama: Oh yeah, I feel, uh, top notch, bud. But I think maybe let's... let's put a brief hiatus on the work we have to do. I think it's probably time we celebrate maybe our retirement from monster huntin'? [laughs]

Thacker: Aw, screw retirement! It ain't—retirement's not for me. Nooope, nope. I got a lot of stuff to do. Maybe a little break. How about a hiatus?

Mama: Yeah. What do you say we go celebrate the old way down at Brewster's Pub, eh? Assumin' it's, uh, y'know, assumin' it's still standin'.

Thacker: Shuffleboard and wings? Yeah!!

Griffin: Duck, finally, you wake up.

Duck: [inhales sharply] Next time I'm gonna be unconscious, let me know, man. I'll go hit the HED, or get a power bar or something.

Griffin: You glimpse around to see what your cohorts saw a minute ago. You see the planet beginning to revive, and you also see Minerva, and her battle robe is uh, slightly torn, and she is towering above you, blocking out the sun. And she says...

Minerva: Welcome back, Duck Newton.

Duck: Oh, uh... man, thank you. How did you hold up? How was the... [blows raspberry] Fightin' and everything?

Griffin: She nods and she says...

Minerva: We did very well. It... it seems you did, also.

Duck: Yeah. I didn't actually end up beatin' a lot of ass. I mean, I'm glad I got to see it and everything, but uh... I don't know. I hope I played my part.

Griffin: She kind of grins and looks to the side, and bends over and uh, a few feet away, she picks up Beacon out of grass and hands it to you. And she says...

Minerva: You've done the impossible, Duck Newton. You did what I could not. You... you saved two worlds. Remarkable.

Duck: I don't know much—I don't know about that. That seems very generous, but um... if I'm anything at all, a little part of this, I'm... uh, I owe it all to you. Thanks for... I never said this, but... thanks for pickin' me. I know it was kind of random and stuff, but... thanks. Hey, what's—what's goin' on? You seem kind of preoccupied.

Griffin: She... she sits down, now. And she looks over at you, and she says...

Minerva: You know what's wrong, Duck Newton. The Quell... it wasn't the one who orchestrated the attacks on your world. We missed something, Duck Newton.

Duck: I mean, it's... I'm not gonna say it's not in the back of my head. But... I—I don't know, 'Nerva. What do you want me to do about it? I mean, I—I'm in there fighting with gods, and I'm a strong guy with a sword, and y'know, pretty good constitution. I mean, can't we just leave well enough alone?

Griffin: She says...

Minerva: I don't know if we're going to have the option.

Griffin: And you hear a faint whining noise in the distance, miles away. You start to see, like... a line forming in the sky, in the distance. And she says...

[ominous music plays]

Minerva: Duck Newton... That—that archway... it's not a rift, Duck. It is a tunnel. I believe it's a tunnel through—

Griffin: And then she looks around in a panic, and she says...

Minerva: Duck Newton... you—you have been conscious for 134 seconds.

Griffin: And she leans in close, and she grabs your shoulders, and she says...

Minerva: You have 134 seconds to stop them.

Griffin: And then the sky is torn in two. Roll plus weird.

Justin: Six... five.

Griffin: Shit.

Justin: Y'know what? I'm gonna use a luck point. I don't even know what the fuck this is.

Clint: Whoa!

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: But y'know, we ain't goin' that much longer. I'm gonna use a luck point.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Jack that up to 12.

Griffin: The sky is torn in two.

[music intensifies]

Griffin: A rift miles long appears in the distance, and through it, Duck, you see stars. More vividly than you've ever seen them before. And there is a bright light through the rift, too, and a... and a heat. An unbearable heat. And... then it comes into focus. This rift empties into outer space. Into an unsurvivable orbit with a nearby bright, white star.

And the heat hits first. Miles away, the land beneath this scar in the sky is just evaporated. And then, ripped from the ground. And you see just the surface of this world in the distance peeled upward, just shattering and flying upward into the scar.

And then, Minerva looks at you, and Minerva says...

Minerva: It's time to confront—

Griffin: And then she's gone... as is everyone around you. They are just ripped from Sylvain's gravitational pull in an instant. And the castle nearby breaks apart into the vacuum, just burning as it flies into space. The whole

of the city flies into this scar. It devours everything in sight, leaving only you, Duck. You are weightless and floating as you survey the destruction.

You survey this beam of white, hot light that is pouring through the rift, just immolating everything in its path. And that's when you remember... you've seen this vision before. This is what you saw the night of your first vision, of your first encounter with Minerva. This was the first revelation you were ever granted about your destiny.

It's a dream no longer. It is here.

And then, that scene is gone. Now, you are standing by the archway in Sylvain. The opaque, white light inside of the archway begins to fracture.

And then you open your eyes, and you see Minerva standing above you, blocking out the sun. And she says...

Minerva: Welcome back, Duck Newton!

Duck: We're out of time.

Griffin: She... opens her eyes with shock, and then... lowers a hand to pick you up from the ground.

Duck: We got 128 seconds.

Griffin: She nods, and she says...

Minerva: What do we do?

Duck: We gotta close the gate.

Griffin: She looks over, down the main drag at the hill with the archway standing on it, and she says...

Minerva: I'll... clear the way.

[music intensifies]

Griffin: And she begins just charging. Charging down the main drag, just knocking everybody out of the way in almost a football play, just barreling through, making a line for you. What do you do?

Justin: Uh, I'm just charging after her, just following in her wake as we run to the gate. And I'm screaming...

Duck: Anybody, please, for the love of god, come on! Anybody, we gotta close the gate, now! We have 108 seconds!

Travis: As soon as Duck and Minerva started running, I'm gonna say that Aubrey just goes.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: And Thacker follows.

Griffin: Mama does too, for sure. Mama follows, and uh, Agent Stern follows after. Vincent also like, stands up from where he was standing over Alexandra, and begins like, charging after, yelling, like...

Vincent: Clear the way! Move, move!

Duck: 98 seconds!!

Griffin: You charge down the main drag, and hearing Vincent's voice and seeing this enormous woman charging towards them, people start to like, jump out of the way as your group charges upwards, up the stairs, up to the plaza with the archway. Minerva says...

Minerva: What did you see, Duck? What did you see?

Duck: They're opening a fissure, and it's gonna suck everybody the hell out into space. It's bad. It's real bad.

Aubrey: What do we do, Duck?

Duck: We gotta close this fucking gate!

Aubrey: Vincent, is there like, a spell? Is there a way to close the gate?

Vincent: If there was a way to close the gate, Aubrey, we would've done it long ago.

Duck: You guys ever tried C4?

[music intensifies]

Vincent: C-what?

Duck: Boom block. Come on. C4. Bomb. Explode. Boom, boom, boom!

Griffin: Agent Stern speaks up, and he's like...

Agent Stern: Uh, Duck, that's uh, that's—that is pretty dangerous stuff. I uh...

Duck: You want to see dangerous stuff, chill out another 78 seconds!

Aubrey: Okay, listen. Pro and con, real quick? Con, uh, we'll close the door, we'll probably be stuck over here. Uh, pro, I trust Duck. So... plant that shit.

Justin: I'm already planting it. I'm like—I'm getting the bomb and planting it on the gate.

Aubrey: Everybody—

Thacker: How we gonna deton—how we gonna detonate it?

Duck: We'll figure out something.

Aubrey: Everybody, scoot back, scoot back, scoot back!

Thacker: Yeah, take cover! That stuff's gonna be potent!

Griffin: Yeah, everybody starts lining up behind the columns, just stacking up to find shelter from the blast.

Duck: Aubrey, you already been a god today, you think you can handle being a fuse?

Aubrey: Sure. Yeah, why not.

Travis: And Aubrey closes her eyes and starts like, y'know, magicking.

Griffin: Duck, you're right next to Minerva who is grinning. She is surprisingly excited for what's about to happen. And she puts a hand on your shoulder and looks down at you, and she says...

Minerva: I'm with you to the end, Duck Newton!

Justin: And Duck leans in real close.

Duck: [whispers] You can call me Wayne.

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

Aubrey: Abracadabra.

Travis: And shoots the blast of fire.

[music fades to ambient sound]

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[wolf howl]

April: Hello there, ghouls and gals. It is I, April Wolfe. I'm here to take you through the twisty, scary, heart pounding world of genre cinema on the exhilarating program known as... Switchblade Sisters!

The concept is simple – I invite a female filmmaker on each week, and we discuss their favorite genre film. Listen in closely to hear past guests like the Babadook director, Jennifer Kent; Winter's Bone director, Debra Granik; and so many others, every Thursday, on MaximumFun.org! Tune in if you dare!
[spooky laughter]

[thunder clap]

April: It's actually a very thought-provoking show that deeply explores the craft and philosophy behind the filmmaking process, while also examining film through the lens of the female gaze. So like... you should listen. Switchblade Sisters!

[music plays]

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: It's a podcast that we do as uh, we uh, we are married, and how's the ad going so far? 'Cause I think it's going very good.

Rachel: [laughs] We talk about things we like every week on Wednesdays.

Griffin: One time, Rachel talked about pumpernickel bread. It was so tight. You cannot afford to miss her talking about this sweet, brown bread.

Rachel: We also talk about music, and poems, and y'know, weather.

Griffin: There was one—weather?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: One time, Rachel talked about Baby Beluga, the song, for like 14 minutes. And it just really blew my hair back.

Rachel: [laughs] So check us out on MaximumFun.org.

Griffin: It's a cool podcast with chill vibes. Amber is the color of our energy, is what all the iTunes reviews say.

Rachel: They will now.