

## **The Adventure Zone Balance: Petals to the Metal, Chapter One**

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**Griffin:** Previously, on The Adventure Zone...

**Director:** The seekers look out for any information that can aid in the finding of these Relics, but they are forbidden from claiming them themselves. That's where you come in, the Reclaimers. Your job duties will just include following up on any promising information that our seekers and spies find for us. We will send you out on missions and you will do what you did in Phandalin... ideally, without involving the destruction of an entire city and the loss of thousands of souls.

**Magnus:** Well... I mean, ideally, yeah...

**Griffin:** The three of you can see, in the sky, for just two seconds, the sky is filled with thousands of bright white eyes.

**Clint:** Magnus immediately assumes he got a hold of some bad unicorn dick.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Announcer:** Come on in! Come to the place where fun never ends! Come on in, it's time to party with... Garfield and Friends! [laughs] It's The Adventure Zone!

[theme music plays]

**Griffin:** Are you ready to start a new storyline? A new grand adventure.

**Justin:** Yes, yes.

**Clint:** A new chapter!

**Travis:** Please, Griffin, please start. I'm so hungry for it.

**Griffin:** In the... in the Blood—in the Blood Eagle saga. Which is what I'm calling this, this whole storyline, is the Blood Eagle saga.

**Travis:** The Blood Eagle sausage.

**Griffin:** Uh, this Blood Eagle sausage chapter... begins... right... now!

**Travis:** [guitar solo sounds]

**Griffin:** The three of you are fighting. You're in a fight and you're in—

**Travis:** Like with each other? Like we're in a disagreement? Like, "You drank my milk!"

**Griffin:** You're in combat.

**Clint:** Hitting the ground running!

**Griffin:** No, you are in the icosagon, the training dojo for the Bureau of Balance and you are squaring off. The three of you are fighting against a three-strong team of formidable combatants. You're fighting against Killian, you're fighting against Avi—

**Clint:** And Mobius!

**Griffin:** And you're fi—who?

**Clint:** I'm sorry.

**Justin:** [laughing] I think he meant to say Morpheus.

**Griffin:** Did you mean Morpheus?

**Clint:** No, Mobius, as in the guy that invented the strip.

**Griffin:** The Breathe Right strip.

**Travis:** And the—and the fight is taking forever. [laughter]

**Griffin:** The fight is going on for long time. You three are fighting against Avi, Killian, and Robbie. It's a friendly sparring match.

**Travis:** And then we killed Robbie.

**Griffin:** Well, no, you can't kill Robbie. I have big franchise plans for Robbie. But you are... you are doing some friendly sparring, you're doing some training. Robbie is, is throwing some cocktails at you, Killian is doing some acrobatic evasion, and firing off some dulled crossbow bolts your way.

Avi seems like he's holding back a little bit. Maybe he's too nice to actually do any damage. He's too friendly to take an honest-to-god full-force swing at you.

**Justin:** You drop us in the middle of the fight—I don't know the stakes. Are there any babes that I'm trying to impress?

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah, sorry. Circling the ring, there are dozens of Bureau of Balance employees that are there to see what these three Reclaimers that have brought back two Grand Relics, they wanna know what these three people are capable of. And so, yeah, I guess there are a few women in the audience, Taako. If, if—

**Justin:** But, okay, Griffin, there are women in the audience, but are there *bubs*?

**Griffin:** There are no more than four—no less than four *behbs*, and—but no less than 16 belbs.

**Travis:** Oh, I know this one! And one of them has a birthday in May and only wears red hats—

**Justin:** Somebody draw me a matrix.

**Travis:** Okay, I've got this.

**Justin:** [laughing] Y'know, remember, The Matrix starring Mobius?

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** Oh, you just sat back and waited for that one didn't ya? Just waited.

**Justin:** Just waited. Step into my web!

**Clint:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** The fight is interrupted before you can do anything impressive, by the voice of—

**Travis:** But I was just about to. I want to let the record show...

**Griffin:** Yeah, it sure sounds like it. The voice of the Director booms through the uh, the danger room, and requests your presence in her office for an urgent matter. Killian says...

**Killian:** Aw man, I was just about to put the hurt on y'all. I was just about to use my limit break. Y'all don't even know what I'm capable of.

**Clint:** Wow. She sounds like Holly Hunter.

**Travis:** She sounds like Griffin.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** She basically sounds like Griffin, yeah.

**Griffin:** I mean, she was the first voice—she was the first voice I ever did, so it was—

**Travis:** Ditto, at this point, are we lining up to high-five and say good game and stuff?

**Griffin:** Oh yeah, yeah. It's all very, very cordial. There's a special Bureau of Balance handshake that you do, and it's basically the handshake, the secret handshake from Big. That's sort of the greeting for members of your order.

**Travis:** [laughing] So when we show up a half hour later to the Director's office she's like, "What were you guys doing? Was it the handshake again? Ugh!"

**Griffin:** "Ugh! Thank you for coming to my—" She says, "Thank you for coming to my office. Shimmy shimmy cocoa puff." And does the whole thing.

**Travis:** [laughing]

**Justin:** So, should we go to her, like, office, or whatever?

**Griffin:** Yeah, you're there.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Travis:** Whoa! Oh, hey.

**Griffin:** She is speaking to Davenport, going through some papers when you enter into her office, and looks up at you with a start as you enter into her room. And she stands tall with her white oak staff and addresses you and says...

**Director:** I have an urgent mission for you. You'll need to depart posthaste—

**Magnus:** Well, hi. Hello.

**Director:** Oh, sorry. Hey. Shimmy shimmy cocoa puff, listen to me now—wait, no that's Country Grammar...

**Merle:** How ya doin'?

**Director:** I'm doing just fine. Uh...

**Magnus:** Say hello to my fish.

**Director:** You want me to—

**Merle:** That's Steven.

**Director:** You want me to addr—oh, look at that. Yes, I see you've got a little friend there. Does he do anything?

**Magnus:** He swims around in his tiny ball. And he loves me.

**Merle:** And right now he's doing his trick of swimming upside down on the surface of the water.

**Magnus:** Steven is not dead! Steven is eternal.

**Merle:** He's in a sphere! He's not in a fishbowl. How do you feed him? How do you—

**Magnus:** [interrupting] Steven is eternal!

**Merle:** [groans]

**Director:** If you're quite done, I have a job for the three of you. It should be quite, uh, much easier than your last job; although, your last job entailed you literally going to a train station and getting a thing out of a box...

**Magnus:** Well, there was a little bit more to it than that.

**Travis:** I just remembered to do my Magnus voice.

**Director:** Terrific. I have a job for you. I need the three of you to report to the city of Goldcliff.

**Magnus:** Mm-hmm.

**Director:** Certainly, you've been? Certainly, you're familiar with Goldcliff?

**Magnus:** Very.

**Taako:** We actually have only been to three places.

**Merle:** And they're no longer there.

**Taako:** And most of them aren't there anymore. [laughs]

**Director:** Goldcliff, certainly, you've heard of. It is the financial seat of power in all of The Realm. It's w—it's where the money lives.

**Magnus:** Of course.

**Director:** There's a Grand Relic one of our seekers have found in the city of Goldcliff, and it is in the possession of a master criminal known as The Raven. We've been unable to apprehend The Raven.

**Magnus:** Ugh, that is so Raven. [laughter]

**Director:** It is...

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Merle:** First blow! Magnus!

**Director:** The first, the first of many, I assume. The Raven is named for the black feathered mask that she wears. You—you will need to apprehend her and retrieve the relic that she has been utilizing to wreak havoc all around Goldcliff. This time, I can actually give you some helpful information as to the nature of this Relic.

**Magnus:** Sweet. I—is—just out of curiosity, this Raven, is she, like, evil, chaotic neutral... like, is she kind of a Catwoman-esque figure or...

**Justin:** I can't imagine that people in this universe refer to other people as chaotic neutral.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Like, that cannot be in fiction.

**Director:** I'm almost certain that that sort of information—how... how should I say this—should be developed throughout the course of your story. Life is like a story, I guess, if you want to think about it like that.

The Relic she has used to up her criminal game is called the Gaia Sash, which gives the wearer control over nature. It gives them immense control over the powers of wind and thunder and flora.

**Magnus:** And heart and fire!

**Director:** Um... and what makes this so curious is that The Raven has taken up residence in one of the biggest cities in all the land, and not in the forest, where she would be a god.

**Merle:** Hmm.

**Taako:** Hmm.



**Director:** She has been impossible to apprehend, thanks to the powers lent to her by the Gaia Sash. You will need to go to Goldcliff, work with the Goldcliff Militia to bring The Raven in, and secure the sash while still acting under the sort of level of discretion that we require from you, without too many, uh, too many people catching on what you're going for.

**Taako:** That sounds pretty easy. It sounds better than the train.

**Magnus:** Yeah.

**Taako:** I mean, it's harder because there's a whole city... But if we just work at it, I'm sure we'll figure something out.

**Magnus:** If we just work together and stay positive!

**Taako:** Yeah, like he said.

**Merle:** Guys, we suck. We suck!

**Taako:** Speak for yourself, homie, I'm level six.

**Magnus:** [laughing] I'm chaotic good!

**Director:** I've been very impressed with the three of your job performance, but you sound—this level of confidence, I've never heard this from you three before.

**Magnus:** I think it—a lot of it has to do with, uh... our yearly review is coming up pretty soon, and we're all hoping for a pay bump.

**Director:** Oh, I see. It's like The Secret. You're acting confident because you want money. Which is the—that's the secret, right there.

**Taako:** Law of attraction, y'know?

**Director:** One st—one step forward, two steps back. We get together... [pause] She hates cigarettes and I like to smoke.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Taako:** Okay. Let's go see, um... do we need any relevant equipment for this, or should we just like, get moving?

**Director:** I mean if—that's up to you, homie.

**Taako:** Got any leads?

**Director:** We have a seeker on the ground that you can get more information from, that you'll need to regroup with. He's also acting discreetly, because his position is fairly high up, and he doesn't want anybody knowing he works for a shadowy cabal like ourselves.

**Taako:** Does he—is he with the militia? Do we have a way to get in contact with him?

**Director:** I'm sure you'll figure that out.

**Magnus:** How 'bout a name? Can we have a name?

**Taako:** Something? You've met us, right? Like, you've met us? Right?

**Director:** Uh...

**Justin:** On this week's Adventure Zone, the third one in this series, they're still looking for the guy! Also—

**Director:** He's the captain of the Goldcliff Militia. His name is—his name is Captain Bane.

**Taako:** There we go.

**Magnus:** Is "Captain" his first name?

**Director:** Captain Captain Bane, yes, it's—

**Clint:** [gruff voice] I am a captain!

**Griffin:** Who was that?

**Clint:** That was Bane. Sorry.

**Travis:** We'll work on it later.

**Clint:** Why don't you call him Captain Benny? 'Cause I do a great Jack Benny.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I mean, I'm naming it after a real person, so I can't just change the real person's—

**Clint:** You know a real person named Bane?

**Griffin:** Yeah. I don't know him. He's on Twitter. He listens to the show. Is—are you new?

**Travis:** Not anymore!

**Clint:** That's not his name, is it?

**Justin:** That's probably not his Christian name. Listen, uh...

**Taako:** We're gonna get going, okay? Unless you have anything else to impart. Any other leads, hot leads...

**Magnus:** Any road snacks.

**Director:** Yes.

**Taako:** Yeah, got any road snacks?

**Director:** I've brewed you up a phial of GORP, and I think you're gonna love my special blend. Do you wanna know the secret?

**Merle:** Mm... love?

**Taako:** Don't, don't say raisins.

**Director:** It's not raisins. Those are a shoe-in for GORP; I think that's what the R in GORP stands for. No, my secret...

**Griffin:** She says...

**Director:** Come in, lean in close.

**Justin:** I lean in close.

**Travis:** I lean in far away.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Director:** [whispering] Pistachios.

**Griffin:** She says.

**Magnus:** [gasps]

**Justin:** [laughing]

**Merle:** Shelled?

**Director:** Yes, I leave the shells on them. Gives you stronger, sturdier teeth. Now get the hell out of my office.

**Magnus:** You're a loose cannon!

**Taako:** Are you saying to me right now you made GORP-P?

**Director:** I made GOR—I actually call it PGORP. Please leave. You have stuff to do.

**Justin:** [laughing]

**Clint:** Leave your badge and gun.

**Taako:** GPORP.

**Director:** You don't have guns. Please go. Please go, you're going to lose the trail.

**Taako:** Do we need to go see Avi?

**Griffin:** Yeah, you go see Avi at the launch pad. He's still a little sweaty from his workout, he's wearing uh, he's wearing a tank top and just get—

**Merle:** Hey, did you like it when we kicked your ass down at the omaga-braga-maga-fran?

**Griffin:** The what?

**Taako:** The... omega...

**Merle:** The omaga-braga-splaga-fran.

**Taako:** The omega sphere?

**Griffin:** If any one of the three of you can tell me what a 20-sided shape is called, I will mail you a check for 200 dollars.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** Round.

**Justin:** Uh... a...

**Griffin:** Alright, that's fine.

**Justin:** Dodecahedron?

**Griffin:** Nope, that's a 12-sided shape, but thanks for playing.

**Avi:** Oh, are you talking about the icosahedron—

**Griffin:** I—oh, shit, I can't even do it.

**Travis:** Oh! Do you know?

**Avi:** Are you talking about the icosagon? Yeah, uh, I don't think that fight—I think you're misremembering it. I got in quite a few good blows on you guys! I love you guys though, you—

**Magnus:** Listen, we don't wanna talk about who blew who. We gotta go!

**Avi:** Oh, I see what—you're taking—you turned my words on me. You got me again!

**Taako:** It's classic. Can we go?

**Merle:** Classic Magnus!

**Magnus:** Can we please start an adventure now?

**Avi:** Yeah, hop in. Hop into the fun ball.

**Griffin:** He says.

**Taako:** Isn't there some sort of anti-nausea medication that we've received before, or am I misremembering that?

**Magnus:** Okay, bye! Launch!

**Griffin:** What are you talking—you want some fantasy dramamine? You're worried I'm gonna ca—inflict—

**Justin:** I need a dram of dramamine.

**Clint:** It's dragamine! It's a dram of dragamine.

**Griffin:** Okay, here's a dram of dram—he says...

**Avi:** Oh yeah, happens to the best of us, buddy, don't even worry about it.

**Griffin:** Uh, he says.

**Justin:** Oh, y'know what I think I'm thinking about? The last time we did this, Travis was high.

**Travis:** I was drunk, thank you very much.

**Clint:** He was drunk.

**Justin:** Drunk, okay.

**Clint:** He does have his mug, y'know. He could be like Mr. T on The A Team. He can't fly unless he's medicated.

**Griffin:** Avi pulls a flask out of his jacket and he says, uh...

**Avi:** Actually, if you guys remember, I keep this on hand for when new folks show up, if they are having trouble getting acclimated. Give 'em a li'l nip of hooch. So if you guys want a nip of hooch to help you on the way down, uh, that's fine.

**Justin:** Oh, we've been down this road.

**Avi:** But I'm worried—I'm worried if you make it a habit, then it's a problem.

**Taako:** They should come up with a name for that, making a habit out of drinking.

**Avi:** So, why don't you guys hop right in that fun ball and I'll get you going.

**Justin:** I do that.

**Travis:** We do that.

**Clint:** I do that.

**Griffin:** I'm gonna get T-shirts printed that just say "I do that."

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Okay, he shuts the door to the glass cannonball.

**Travis:** [makes various strange sound effects]

**Griffin:** [laughing] ... And it depressurizes and you die, I guess?

**Travis:** [inhales]

**Griffin:** Oh, no, it re—it has re-pressurized.

**Travis:** [exhales]

**Griffin:** Now it's at about half pressure so you're j—

**Travis:** [breathing heavily]

**Griffin:** Now the ball is breathing?

**Travis:** [exaggerated sigh]



**Justin:** Oh my god, it's sentient!

**Griffin:** You're inside of the living glass ball! No, it's not living. You get inside, it rolls down a chute into the cannon chamber, and you hear the muffled voice of Avi from outside yell...

**Avi:** Good luck! Uh, have a good t—have a good time down there on the b—in the... world.

**Griffin:** And with a start, you are fired off! This time, in a totally different direction than the direction you went towards Rockport on your last adventure. This time, you're flying east. I think you went west last time. And you're flying through the sky. One of you is at the tiller, I'm guessing. The till? What's it called? The thing. The handle? For flight!

**Clint:** The steering mechanism.

**Griffin:** The steer—well, it's more of a brake. You're not—you're not really flying this thing, but you can slow its descent by pulling this lever.

**Clint:** I'm not touching it. Last time I did, we crashed in a swamp.

**Justin:** That's true.

**Griffin:** Last time, you destroyed some unicorns, if memory serves. And those are endangered, and you were billed. You were fined heavily for that.

So you're flying down for a few minutes before you part through the clouds, you pass through the cloud layer. And this trip down is the most scenic one you've taken yet, largely in part of the—to the natural beauty of Goldcliff. It's, as its name suggests, it's situated on the edge of a cliff, and it's sort of carved out of this bleak landscape by these two wide, crystal blue... crystal clear... Crystal Gayle rivers.

**Clint:** [singing] Don't it make my brown water blue...

**Travis:** That's icky.

**Griffin:** Gross. And so uh... so it's surrounded by these rivers, and they sort of split at the end of the city and surround it, and then, just flow freely over the cliff, forming these two large, breathtaking waterfalls.

The city itself is largely comprised of these towering buildings that are kind of shimmering in the unrelenting sun in this sort of desert-like area around this oasis. And despite the fact that the land outside the rivers is sort of a bleak wasteland, the city itself is kind of lush and green.

Outside of those rivers, it's sort of just this blasted, featureless land, which sort of makes the city itself look all that more impressive. In that wasteland, outside of the city limits of Goldcliff, you see something peculiar. You see these long lines of dust clouds, and they're just carving a straight path through this bleak scenery.

And as you watch them, and you get a little bit lower to the ground, you realize they're actually extending and following a path that is marked by these large pylons, these large black pylons. And as you get even closer, you realize that the clouds are being whipped up by wagons that are speeding through the wasteland, and you see some occasional bright flashes of light moving between the wagons.

**Justin:** They're heading towards the city or away?

**Clint:** Yeah, towards or away?

**Griffin:** They're not even heading towards or away from the city. They're almost circling the city. They're pretty far away. It doesn't look—this is not—nobody's mounting an assault on Goldcliff. You see these lines just sort of racing out in the desert.

**Clint:** Is it a race?

**Travis:** Good question.

**Griffin:** From—with the untrained eye—with your six untrained eyes – eight if you count the goldfish – it kind of looks like it a little bit.

**Clint:** Hmm.

**Travis:** Hmm.

**Griffin:** But you pass over, uh, you pass over that scene and you are finishing your final descent into Goldcliff.

**Justin:** I'll start pulling the brake.

**Griffin:** Okay. You pull the brake and uh, your descent begins to slow, giving you a closer vantage point of appreciating the city. And you are just gob smacked by the largest building in town, which is this 20-story-tall golden tower with a sort of gaudy golden statue on top of it, holding a wreath emblazoned with the words, 'Goldcliff Trust.'

**Clint:** Is it made out of gold?

**Griffin:** It's all gold.

**Justin:** Is it gold? I love gold.

**Griffin:** It's—a lot of this stuff is very, very gold. And as you are trying to figure out how much you could hawk a statue of that size for, you realize that this building is actually slowly being swallowed up by these gigantic, thorny vines that are growing out of the ground at the bottom of the building.

And there's a lot of activity just in front of the building, with like dozens and dozens of... you can make out some, some people and some wagons just sort of surrounding the entrance to the Goldcliff Trust that's being enveloped in these vines.

**Clint:** How high up are they?

**Griffin:** They are climbing up. I mean, they are about halfway up the structure at, at this point.

**Travis:** Now, Griffin, should we assume that these might be relevant to the story?

**Griffin:** No.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Okay. So you land, and then you are, you're—you land, and then you go to Mark's house—

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** —and you just kick it there for a while, and he's like, "What do you need? Grand Relic? Gaia Sash? I got that for you right here. See you later, dawgs." And—

**Clint:** Alright, let's level up!

**Griffin:** The end, time to level up. You guys are level eight now.

**Justin:** Another great adventure!

**Griffin:** Your sphere comes, uh, lands with a thud in an alleyway just about a quarter mile away from the Goldcliff Trust. And as you emerge from it and look around, you realize that nobody has really seen—taken any notice of your entrance into the city. And as you exit, the door automatically shuts behind you, a balloon pops out of the top of the ball, and your vehicle floats away.

**Taako:** My wallet!

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Merle:** I left my Kindle in the seatback!

**Magnus:** We all left shit.

**Justin:** Dad's—dad's third Kindle. Lost another one.

**Griffin:** You left your Zune charger in there and now it's as good as dead. See, that's a real—

**Clint:** You talked me into buying that Zune!

**Griffin:** Well, listen, it was 2006. I said a lot of shit back then.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Clint:** Good point.

**Justin:** What do we see immediately in front of us?

**Griffin:** You see a couple of vagrants. They're in some shabby, sort of makeshift dwellings in this alley. There are some kids playing—playing hoop—hoop and stick.

**Justin:** Where are we in relation to the trust?

**Griffin:** You're pretty close to it. It's uh, it's around the corner.

**Travis:** Well, now, hold on, I wanna hear more about these vagrant kids.

**Justin:** That seemed like a promising thread.

**Travis:** Did they seem to like... like, love is the true value kind of thing, like they're poor but they're happy?

**Griffin:** Yeah, like, they get—this is a very one percent town, um, and these vagrant kids are also in the one percent, but on the other end. But

they are just so—they have found a fulfillment with this hoop and stick that all of the tea in China couldn't make you happy, and so, I guess the moral of the story is... love was the real treasure all along, and—

**Justin:** I'm like, I'm like, already at the building. I'm like, I'm there.

**Travis:** So, Ditto, at the Fantasy Costco, I bought the Lens of Straight Creepin', which, uh, when looked through, highlights the footprints, tracks, or markings of any person or thing that traveled through the area recently.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** I think that's gonna come in handy finding The Raven.

**Griffin:** I mean, you can use it right now and see if you can pick up on The Raven's tracks.

**Travis:** Okay, I use the Lens of Straight Creepin'.

**Griffin:** Okay, all you see are straight line tracks, and you try to deduce exactly what these could possibly be, and you realize... it's a ring! It's a ring and stick. It's from the ring. And these kids have been playing ring and stick for a long time.

**Travis:** Oh. No, see, I didn't use it. That was a trick. I can't believe you fell for that.

**Griffin:** It's all hoop tracks. And—but god, there's so many hoop tracks, you think these kids must have been playing hoop and stick for like a thousand years.

**Justin:** Okay, I've been at the building for like five minutes. What's happened to me since then?

**Griffin:** Uh, you are at the—are you all at the Goldcliff Trust?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Clint:** Yes.

**Griffin:** You're at the Goldcliff Trust. There are some police wagons... sorry, militia wagons. You understand when I'm saying "militia," I'm talking about fantasy police, right?

**Justin:** Yeah. You can just say "police."

**Griffin:** We got a few fantasy police in our—in our listenership who are like, "Mm, elevators? I don't think so!"

**Justin:** "I noticed that you used this one skill when I was... farting in my hand and smelling it." Get outta here. Doofus.

**Griffin:** [bursts into laughter]

**Clint:** We love you guys.

**Travis:** We love 99% of you.

**Griffin:** Just not you hand-sniffers.

**Travis:** Not you hand-sniffers.

**Griffin:** Uh, there are a few militia wagons surrounding the entrance to the building. There—the building is now almost completely enveloped in these vines. And uh, the vines have also started to sort of spread, almost like carpeting the street around the Goldcliff Trust, and so, these militia people are giving it a pretty wide berth.

There's about a dozen or so militia folks surrounding the entrance to this building, and in the back of the crowd, near a particularly large wagon is a, uh, broad, mustachioed man in his late 60s, you would think, who is yelling gruff orders at his, uh, at his underlings.

**Travis:** Is he bigger or smaller than Magnus?

**Griffin:** He's big. He's brick-shithouse big, and you are like a... I don't know, like an oak shithouse. And that's not a—

**Travis:** Mm-hmm. The rustic value is very charming.

**Griffin:** Yeah, for sure. But it's not advisable because it soaks up the... smell.

**Justin:** I wander over to him.

**Taako:** Hail and well met and stuff. Uh, I'm Taako and we're from, well, you know...

**Justin:** And I wink seven times.

**Gruff Man:** Hold on, shit, stop. Hold on, wait, wait, wait. Barry! Get, get Private Barry out of the vines! Oh my god.

**Travis:** Wait, wait, did you tell Barry to get Barry out of the vines?

**Gruff Man:** Listen—

**Travis:** Barry H.!

**Gruff Man:** Sergeant Barry, get Private Barry out of those vines! He's getting all swallow—

**Clint:** B-A-R-R-Y and B-E-R-R-Y.

**Travis:** Ahh.

**Gruff Man:** Sorry, what were you saying? I—my Sergeant Detective Strawberry... he's got a lot of different titles. Who the hell are you three? What are you doing? I'm busy here.

**Taako:** Are, are you Bane?



**Bane:** Yeah I'm Captain Captain Bane. What of it?

**Magnus:** We're, we're from the wink and the nudge sent us. Hm? Hm?

**Clint:** And we're wiggling our eyebrows.

**Travis:** And leaning in suggestively.

**Taako:** Let's put it this way... You can understand us when we say the words "Voidfish."

**Bane:** Yep. Yep, that does it.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Bane:** Good stuff, good stuff. Let me see your arms though.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Travis:** I flex.

**Bane:** No, not—

**Magnus:** What do you think?

**Justin:** I hold out the arm that—I hold out the arm that doesn't have a bracer on it.

**Bane:** Okay—

**Clint:** I hold out my leg.

**Taako:** Check out that meat.

**Bane:** And it looks like you've got an ankle monitor on it there, dwarf man. What's that all about? Anyway, alright, you seem like trustworthy folks.

**Merle:** [laughs]

**Taako:** Can I just compliment you on your judge of character?

**Magnus:** You're a great police captain guy.

**Taako:** Good policing, captain.

**Magnus:** So what are we looking at here? What's—what's the, what's the sitch?

**Bane:** Listen, I'm more big picture, kind of, uh, y'know, direction. A lot of producer... credits... on this.

**Magnus:** Listen, we're not hiring. What's the situation here?

**Bane:** I mean we, we are co-workers already, so...

**Magnus:** I guess that's true.

**Bane:** Here's the situation. The Raven is in the building, I'm guessing stealing all the gold. I'm just gonna go out on a limb. There's a lot of, uh, a lot of people's finances are all tied up in the Goldcliff Trust, and so... she's in there. We managed to evacuate a lot of the building, but as you can see, we're having trouble gaining access to it 'cause of—what on account of the vines.

**Taako:** Do you think... do you want us to go in and get her?

**Bane:** That would be ter—that would—can I tell you something? That would be terrific.

**Taako:** Let me ask you this follow-up—

**Bane:** Hit me.

**Taako:** Do you think we're high enough level to do that? I don't know how high level those vines are.

**Magnus:** We're only six. Does that sound good, sound bad?

**Taako:** We are si—we're this many.

**Bane:** You're six? I'm about to send three 6-year-olds into a building?

**Magnus:** Well, we've seen a lot of shit. We're 6-year-olds who have been around the block, y'know what I mean? Like, this isn't our first rodeo. It's our second.

**Bane:** I'm familiar with your rodeos. You guys are legends.

**Magnus:** Wow.

**Merle:** Ahh...

**Taako:** Go on.

**Magnus:** Say hello to my fish.

**Bane:** You're legends in some small circles. I host a podcast—a fancast about you guys.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Taako:** Oh. Okay, a narrow, narrow but impactful fan base. I'm into it. Well, listen, we're about to turn this shit into our hidden temple, we're wan—these legends are wandering right in there.

**Magnus:** How many uh, how many civilians are left in the building?

**Bane:** We uh, we think we cleared them all out.

**Merle:** Oh, too bad. We're pretty good at offing civilians.

**Magnus:** Yeah.

**Bane:** I gotta say, that's an upsetting thing to hear. I'm an officer of the law, I...

**Magnus:** Well, they usually turn out to have been bad in the first place. But we don't know that when we do it.

**Taako:** Through pure, stupid luck.

**Justin:** Griffin, when I look at the building, do I see an entrance on a level we would be able to get into? Have the vines like, made, made egress—and ingress—impossible?

**Travis:** [quietly] Nice.

**Griffin:** So, the vines are not completely covering every single square inch of the building, but they are completely wrapped around. So you can make out sort of where the entrance of the building is. It's right in front of you. They are parked out in front of the main entrance of the Goldcliff Trust. But yeah, you get the impression that these vines are going to make getting into the front door pretty tricky.

**Travis:** I run up and start blithely attacking them. Just hackin' and slashin'. Giving it a couple chops of the ol' axe.

**Griffin:** Captain Captain Bane yells...

**Bane:** Well, okay, see you later. Boy, you guys sure are rude at ending conversations.

**Travis:** Oh, no, I'm still talking to him. I didn't stop the conversation.

**Griffin:** Okay, you're a good, you're a good 60 feet from the entrance of the... of the building...

**Travis:** I'm at the building.

**Merle:** Then let me point out, Captain Captain—

**Bane:** Please, call me Captain.

**Merle:** Captain, um—

**Bane:** Just one. If you just call me one, I assume you're just using my first name.

**Merle:** Okay, One, uh... Magnus and I kinda have the gruff voice thing kinda staked out, so... if you could kinda change that...

**Bane:** Do you—sorry, do you wanna have a gruff-off?

**Merle:** [laughs] Oh yeah, let's roll gruff!

**Bane:** Okay, Taako, you're the only non-gruff individual here. I want you to give me a word.

**Taako:** Don't have to make a big federal case out of it...

**Bane:** And then we're gonna go around in a triangle and say the word and see who does the gruffest job with it.

**Merle:** [aggressively] Yeah! Bring it! Bring it, copper!

**Taako:** Okay, your phrase is "Taako rules."

**Magnus:** [distant] I feel like I'm really making some progress!

**Bane:** Taco rules.

**Taako:** [laughs] No, try again!

**Merle:** He only gets one shot at it!

**Taako:** Okay, you just—

**Bane:** No, you're right. I fucked up. You're right, I had one chance and I fucked it right up.

**Taako:** You're gonna have to change it—well, let me hear the other two and I'll be the final judge—

**Merle:** [terrifying growl] Taako rules.

**Bane:** What the hell?!

**Merle:** [same voice] Yeah, that's gruff, baby!

**Justin:** [laughing] Oh, oh no, Lobo ate my dad.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Magnus:** [far away] I could really use some help over here with the vines!

**Griffin:** Magnus is over there getting David Alan Grier'd in Jumanji.

**Justin:** Why did he rush in? Oh. Well, stupid me.

**Clint:** Yeah...

[theme music plays]

**Griffin:** Hey everyone, this is Griffin McElroy, your dungeon master and your best friend. How are you doin'? You doin' okay? Thanks for listening to episode 18 of The Adventure Zone, the first part of a story arc that I just for the life of me cannot come up with a name for. But hopefully, by the time

this is published, I will have a name for it, and it'll be really clever and you'll read it and just get really hypey about hearing the rest of it.

The Adventure Zone is sponsored in part this week by One Month. One Month is an online service you can use to learn how to code, which is basically the only thing that you're gonna need to know in the future when we all subsist on protein slurries and gamma food. That's food that is shot into your body with radiation.

One Month students learn to code by building real websites and apps, growth hacking their businesses and websites and building payment systems and security solutions. Their courses are the easiest way to learn new tech skills, and it only takes 15 minutes a day for 30 days. Hence the name, One Month.

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We're also sponsored in part this week by Casper. Casper makes super comfy mattresses that they send directly to your house, and then you can sleep on them. Travis sleeps on one, and he sure does... Travis sleeps on one, and I haven't heard any complaints. Nay! Nay, I tell you! I have heard nothing but non-complaints. Anti-complaints. Whatever the opposite of those are. Celebrations.

Casper is an online retailer of premium, obsessively engineered mattresses that you can get for a fraction of the price of a non-Casper mattress. They have a risk-free trial and return policy. You can try sleeping on a Casper mattress for one hundred days with free delivery and painless returns.

Adventure Zone listeners can get \$50 towards any mattress purchase. You can go to [Casper.com/Adventure](https://casper.com/adventure) and use the promo code 'Adventure' at check out. Now, terms and conditions do apply, so I don't know what that means, but stay frosty out there.

Got a personal message here from one listener to another, or maybe one listener to... a non-listener, in which case, they're just kind of shouting into the void. If you want to shout into the void, you can go to [MaximumFun.org/Jumbotron](http://MaximumFun.org/Jumbotron), and that'll tell you how to get a personal message on the show.

This message is for Lindsay Iserman, and it's from Arthur. And Arthur says, "Happy birthday to the only person that could talk me into listening to a D&D podcast! Now a romantic evening means a bottle of wine, a synth-heavy score, and the sultry voice of that sweet, sweet dungeon master. Love you, sweets." Not sure if that last part is directed at me or not. But... just in case it is... I love you too. [laughs]

One last message here, a commercial message, which you can also pick up at [MaximumFun.org/Jumbotron](http://MaximumFun.org/Jumbotron) for your small business or your creative works. I want you to go check out [ElderwoodBoxes.com](http://ElderwoodBoxes.com). Elderwood Boxes makes pocket-sized, artistic, wooden boxes to transport your Dungeons & Dragons dice in style.

They personally select the finest woods to hand-craft pocket-sized dice boxes with a unique, hexagonal look. With literally thousands of combinations of engraved art and wood type, no two boxes are the same. If wood carving, dice, and Dungeons & Dragons is your thing... and it is... go check us out at [ElderwoodBoxes.com](http://ElderwoodBoxes.com), and customize the right box for you. P.S. We miss Barry Bluejeans.

We all miss Barry Bluejeans. He was a beloved character that appeared in like, two episodes, and then he died. It was the name, wasn't it? I kind of—it's like, the best name, and I just sort of... wasted it on a... on a red shirt.

Hey, if you could do us a favor and maybe tell a friend about The Adventure Zone, we sure would appreciate it. We don't market or advertise the show in any way. We rely entirely on word of mouth. We just made, about a month or so ago, we made episode one point five, which is the super pared down version of our pilot episode that just gets to the story stuff and the chuckles that is a way easier way to onboard people onto the show.



So yeah, even if your friends maybe aren't big D&D fans, like—we weren't either before we started doing the show, so... Uh, if you could just try and spread the word, we would really appreciate it. Leave a review on iTunes and do all that good stuff. We thank you. Thank you.

Also, go listen to the other shows on the Maximum Fun network. There's a ton of really, really good shows on there like Pop Rocket, Jordan, Jesse, Go!, Judge John Hodgman. We do other shows on the network like My Brother, My Brother, and Me, Sawbones, and Bunker Buddies.

Justin does a YouTube show called Things I Bought at Sheetz, and Travis does a podcast with his buddy Brent called Trends Like These. We got our fingers in a lot of pies, but there's infinity pies at MaximumFun.org. Go check 'em out. They're all free. Free pie. You're gonna love 'em.

Also, last thing – if you want to get on the show, be a character on the show, uh, just tweet about the show using the #TheZoneCast hash tag, and you might end up in the show, much like Captain Bane, who is named after Vinton Bane, who is @FleshEater on Twitter. Got a few more characters. Uh, few more open spots for this story arc, so get those toots in now.

Alright, I'm gonna let you get back to the show. Thank you all very much for listening. I really do appreciate it. Uh, I'm excited to start a new story arc. I'm excited for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Um, that's neither here nor there. Uh, next episode's gonna go up on July 16<sup>th</sup>, so I'll talk to you then!

[theme music plays]

**Justin:** Okay, so what—what is Magnus actually doing, Magnus?

**Griffin:** Um, Magnus said he was hacking at the vines.

**Travis:** And slashing.

**Griffin:** Oh, okay, well, that was—you solved my puzzle, because slashing was the real secret.

**Travis:** I'm just trying to do my best here, Griffin, y'know what I mean? Every day.

**Griffin:** As you are hacking and slashing at these vines, I'm guessing using Railsplitter?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** You are managing to get some... get some meat off the bone... plant—plant meat?

**Justin:** You should be able to cut through any of them, right? Instantly.

**Clint:** Well, they're not necessarily just a tree.

**Justin:** That's true.

**Travis:** And not until I push the button on the handle.

**Griffin:** I-Is there a button the—okay. Uh, no it's just trees only, and you can only do that once per day. Um, so... or else Magnus could single-handedly deforest the entire planet. [laughing]

**Clint:** I have a spell called *blight*.

**Griffin:** What's that do?

**Clint:** It's a necromantic energy that washes over a creature of your choice, but it can also be used on a plant creature or magical plant.

**Justin:** That is—this is fourth level in necromancy. You aren't level four. You can't do level four spells.

**Clint:** Oh... I know! I was just saying that, eventually, I'll be able to cast it.

**Justin:** Eventually, he'll be able to cast *blight*!

**Travis:** Wouldn't that be cool, you guys? Anyway, back to reality.

**Clint:** So if you can stall—if he can stall...

**Justin:** [laughs] Let Dad squash some bugs.

**Griffin:** Let Dad, let Dad run outta town and go kill some level one goblins...

**Clint:** Yeah, I'm gonna go grind. I'm gonna go grind, and then I'll come back.

**Travis:** He's gonna go take out some kobolds.

**Justin:** Dad's gonna buy, with microtransactions, another level.

**Griffin:** Gonna pick up and turn in some crushbone belts.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughing] That was the nerdiest reference I've done on the show so far, and this is a Dungeons & Dragons podcast.

As you cut them down with Railsplitter, which Magnus has been doing fruitlessly now for like, 10 minutes. You're knocking some plant matter, you're knocking some meat off of these vines, but they are re-growing back in just as fast as you can cut them, even thicker than they were before.

**Justin:** [groans]

**Clint:** I, uh... no, can't do that...

**Travis:** Oh, wait, no, I've got this.

**Magnus:** Vines, vines, go away. Please let me through... I can't think of a rhyme.

**Griffin:** The vines part. And—nope.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** They do not.

**Clint:** I have *channel divinity, charm animals and plants*... If I present my holy symbol – which I think you all know, I have my Extreme Teen Bible – then invoke the name of my deity, which I’m sure you remember is Pan...

**Griffin:** Did you pick Pan just because it was the shortest and easiest to remember?

**Clint:** Oh yeah, yeah.

**Griffin:** Do you even remember the name of the deity you had before Pan?

**Clint:** Of course I do, Griffin. Malodorous... something or other. “Each beast or plant creature that can see you within 30 feet of you must make a wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it’s charmed by me for one minute. And while it is charmed, it is friendly to you and other creatures you designate.”

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** So, I could actually ask it to part, right?

**Griffin:** Yeah, I mean you are—you can command it. Um, I’m not gonna make a saving throw for a vine, ‘cause...

**Travis:** Does Steven need to make a saving throw?

**Griffin:** Yes, Steven actually does need to make a saving throw.

**Travis:** Okay. He rolled a 13. I don’t know if he has any plusses...

**Griffin:** I think I would do it, but that's fine, 13 is not—so, right now, Merle has command over your goldfish, and I don't even know—I don't even know what that means! I don't know what that means in the context of the game, the context of the story. I don't know what that means.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** I could make it poop.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It does. It poops in the ball, and then the poop immediately dissolves in the water, so stop asking me how—where the poop goes. There were a lot of tweets last week, "How does it poop?" It just—the, the water is magic—

**Travis:** It's a magic fucking fish.

**Griffin:** It's a magic ball and it dissolves poop and it turns the poop back into air, *okay?*

**Clint:** Wow. You gotta back off that T-level medicine, it's really making you anxious.

**Griffin:** You're right, I'm sorry.

**Clint:** Alright, so what do I roll?

**Griffin:** You don't. You just talk dirty to these plants.

**Merle:** [sultry] Hey, baby, I love your tendrils.

**Griffin:** [bursts into laughter]

**Justin:** Grossarooni.

**Merle:** Lemme see your pistils and stamen.

**Justin:** Grossarooni! I'm two feet from you!

**Griffin:** Oh, man.

**Clint:** You started it, McElroy!

**Justin:** My knee is basically touching your knee, please don't do this anymore.

**Clint:** I didn't move!

**Griffin:** The vines enveloping the front door begin to flower and bloom.

**Justin:** I die.

**Travis:** And jerk it.

**Clint:** Which ought to be a lot easier to cut.

**Justin:** I die in fiction. And remove my headphones. And go to Gino's Pizza Pub and Family Fun Center.

**Clint:** Ooh, onion rings!

**Justin:** And play skee ball for two hours.

**Clint:** Bring back onion rings!

**Justin:** I will. Will do.

**Griffin:** The flowers start to wilt and kinda fade...

**Merle:** [sultry] Hey there, vines...

**Justin:** Can I leave?

**Merle:** Y'know what? My buddies over here are gonna sing a little, uh, sexy music.

**Magnus:** No, we're not—

**Merle:** Sing some—help—come on! Sing something!

**Magnus:** No—they've already parted, you pervert.

**Griffin:** Oh, oh, wait! But the vines, the vines begin to flower sort of curiously...

**Merle:** Uh-huh, see? Come on! Come on, sing something!

**Taako:** [hesitantly singing] Let's... let's bloom together...

**Merle:** Oh yeah... y'know what? I'm lookin' at you, vine.

**Magnus:** [singing] Here is my penis...

**Merle:** I got here a few minutes ago, and I cannot take my eyes off of you. I looked at you across the square—

**Travis:** Eww!

**Merle:** Sixty feet away, and I said, "Do not be choppin' on this baby!"

**Travis:** Ewww!

**Griffin:** [laughing uncontrollably]

**Merle:** "Look at that sweet, sweet pollen sac! C'mon, let's go over there." So, uh, anyway, y'know, it'd be really, really good if you would, like, spread your vines...

**Travis:** Ewww!

**Justin:** [crying] I can't— I just wanna die! Is this ASMR?

**Travis:** This is the worst!

**Merle:** And, uh, and open up and let us... walk in through your door, if you know what I'm talking about...

**Griffin:** The vines, the vi—

**Justin:** Statistically speaking, at least one of our listeners has just discovered that they are in possession of the world's worst fetish.

**Griffin:** [laughing]

**Clint:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** The vines, uh, flower. The flowers—there's a jubilant puff of honeysuckle dew, and the—

**Clint:** Ewww.

**Travis:** Oh, *now* you're grossed out.

**Griffin:** —the vines part, allowing you entrance into the building, and I think I just described a plant orgasm.

**Travis:** Yep.

**Clint:** And I hold my thumb and little finger up in the universal symbol of "I'll call you."

**Griffin:** [laughs] Okay, and this has been Fifty Shades of Green, starring four idiots.



**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** I-I am in the door.

**Travis:** Oh, I've already left.

**Clint:** I wink at the vines and I go in.

**Griffin:** The vines wink back, which is weird.

**Merle:** Mm-hmm...

**Justin:** That was very unpleasant.

**Merle:** Yep. Once you've been cultivated by Merle, you've been cultivated for life.

**Travis:** Oh. No. No. Nope. Nopenopenopenopenopenope.

**Griffin:** As you enter in the door, one of the vines rears back and just whips your butt, just like *wa-pow*.

**Merle:** Thank you!

**Griffin:** The vine shuts the door behind you.

**Justin:** Hey, if you're thinking of making some fan art for that last scene...

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** ... dooon't.

**Clint:** Please do.

**Justin:** [whispering] Please don't.

**Griffin:** You, uh... the three of you are standing—

**Clint:** [whispering] Please do.

**Griffin:** —in the posh lobby of the Goldcliff Trust. There is a regal carpet that you're standing on as you enter in, uh, atop a marble floor. Jutting out of it are these massive white columns that are surrounding this grand fountain in the center of the room. And in that fountain, there's something that looks like a gigantic tree that is growing out of it sort of unnaturally.

And you get the impression that that tree wasn't there before, because it has sort of displaced a lot of the water from this fountain, so the floor is a little bit wet. Some of the vines have started to like, creep in through the foundation of the, of the building, but not very many. Other than the tree, this foyer is sort of still in its undisturbed, lovely state.

**Justin:** Do we hear anything?

**Griffin:** You hear a—it's funny you ask that, Justin. There is a shrill alarm that is causing—

[phone rings]

**Clint:** I just heard it.

**Griffin:** Yeah, that was crazy. There is an alarm that is piercing the silence... that's not there, because of the alarm in the room. The alarm is ringing out, unanswered.

**Justin:** Real vivid word picture of just, there's an alarm.

**Griffin:** There's an alarm. And the alarm, if there was silence, would be ruining it, is basically what I just said.

**Justin:** So you're saying there's not not silence.

**Griffin:** That's exactly what I'm saying.

**Travis:** There is the absence of silence.

**Griffin:** Uh, it's loud. It's a loud room, because of this alarm that's going off, but nobody seems to be doing anything about it.

**Justin:** Wait, if there's an alarm going off, how is it silent?

**Travis:** Oh, good question, Justin!

**Griffin:** So uh, on the far end of the room, behind the fountain, from where you're standing, are a row of booths, like uh...

**Justin:** Teller booths?

**Griffin:** Yeah, teller booths. A row of booths there, with a pretty secure door dividing the main lobby from them. And then, on the left side of the room from where you're standing, are a few doors.

**Travis:** Griffin, does the tree—is the tree doing anything other than—like, is it going up through the roof, or is there anything on it? Does it seem to have a purpose aside from just being a tree in a room?

**Clint:** Is it checking out my ass? Anything like that?

**Griffin:** Strictly platonic from this point on.

**Justin:** I can't—please. Please.

**Clint:** Do I have time to smoke a cigarette?

**Griffin:** You absolutely do not. [laughter] Um. You could make a check, Trav.

**Travis:** Yes, I would like to do that, please. Is that perception?

**Griffin:** Probably investigation.

**Travis:** Investigation... Yeah, I rolled a 17.

**Griffin:** Okay. You don't notice any sort of obvious, like, movement or anything from the tree, but it's—some of its leaves are falling off, which is curious, because there's not, like, a breeze in here. There's not like a stiff breeze, you're indoors. But this tree is shedding some of its leaves.

**Travis:** Hmm...

**Justin:** He's really deciding whether or not he wants to use that 'ol—

**Travis:** That is correct.

**Justin:** Okay. Is the tree blocking our way to anything?

**Griffin:** No, it is—you are about 40 feet away from it, and it's sort of in the center of the room. The only obvious exits are those doors to the left side of the room.

**Clint:** Is it climbable?

**Griffin:** The tree?

**Clint:** Yes.

**Griffin:** I mean, it's a tree, so it's as climbable as trees get.

**Travis:** Okay, now I would like to use the Lens of Straight Creeping now.

**Griffin:** You look straight down. You are basically standing right in front of the entrance. And you use the Lens of Straight Creepin'. You see a lot of footprints moving out of the building, originating from all around this room, probably the evacuees of this building.

But you detect one pair of footprints that is really curious, because they start right there at the front door, and then they vanish for like... a good 15 feet,

and then they reappear, and then they vanish again for another 15 feet, and, and so on and so forth.

Yeah, it is not the usual sort of footprint pattern that people leave. Pretty cool sentence. And they lead directly to the middle of the room, into the fountain, and then, they lead to the left side of the room through one of the doors over there.

**Travis:** Wait. Before we head through the door, is there any loot?

**Griffin:** I mean—

**Travis:** Is it—we're in a bank, is it—

**Justin:** Yeah, like, do we see any—is there—that's actually not a bad question. Is there, is there like, any sign of money or anything, like, obviously like, stolen or destroyed or anything?

**Griffin:** Nothing, like, obviously stolen or destroyed on this floor. But y—again, you only have access to about half of this lobby, unless you get into those booths in the back of the room.

**Taako:** Magnus, you wanna go look at the booths, or go through the door?

**Magnus:** I mean... let's check out the booths first.

**Merle:** Booths!

**Taako:** Merle? Okay, let's go check out the booths.

**Merle:** Booths!

**Taako:** We go to the booths.

**Griffin:** Okay! As you walk towards the booths, towards the booths on the back side of the room from where you're standing, you walk forward. And as you begin to approach the fountain in the center of the room, between you

and these booths, the tree awakens and turns toward you, and you can make out some knots and features in this tree, which is not a tree at all my friends... it is a treant!

Part tree, part ant! [laughs] Can you even imagine anything more terrifying than a treant? And his name... is Trent. That's not a listener. I just thought it would be a fun joke. And as it turned out—

**Justin:** [laughing] You were right.

**Griffin:** I was right, it's a really fun—

**Travis:** His name is Trent Reznor.

**Griffin:** His name is Tre—nope, just Trent. Doesn't have to be a reference. Just a fun joke I made.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Does it look as though he's rolling for initiative?

**Griffin:** No, it looks like he's gonna do a surprise round, because y'all just, just walked right up on him. He is going to rear back, and he's got one sort of big limb, and one sort of small limb with some sharp barbs on it, and he's gonna go ahead and swing in a pretty wide arc at all three of you with his big limb. Why don't you make a dexterity saving throw to try and get out of the way of his attack? He rolled a 16.

**Travis:** I rolled a four plus two... a six.

**Justin:** Uh, 14 here. No dice.

**Clint:** 17.

**Griffin:** 17! Okay—

**Justin:** Do you have a dexterity bonus, Dad?

**Clint:** No, mine's zero.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Merle, you duck outta the way and shout, "Hey guys, look out!" Maybe give a fair warning to your, to your compatriots, who do not acknowledge it. This massive limb smashes directly into Magnus and Taako, and hits you both for...

**Travis:** Negative three damage!

**Griffin:** 14 damage.

**Travis:** Whoaaa.

**Griffin:** Picking—and picks you up and slides you back toward the entrance of the room about 30 feet away. And now we're gonna get into initiative.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Clint:** And it says, "Groot!"

**Justin:** Oh my God, it's Groot.

**Griffin:** It's Groot from the hit movie, Groot and His Buds!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** 14. 14.

**Travis:** I got, I got a 12.

**Clint:** I have a 14 and a four... so I'll take the 14.

**Griffin:** Are you sure? Can I sell you on that four? Wh—yeah, you are going right now, Taako.

**Justin:** I cast *blink*.

**Griffin:** Okay. You blink and your eyes get moister than they were before, and you feel relieved.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It had been—you—this—you guys realize, in the whole time we been doing this podcast, you've never blinked because you never said you did it. This is crazy.

**Justin:** The world is new.

**Travis:** I swallow.

**Justin:** No, I cast, uh, *blink*. That's one of my new third-level transmutation spells.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** Welcome to the show, *blink*! So here's how *blink* works. I roll a d20 at the end of each of my turns. And on a roll of 11 or higher, I vanish from this plane of existence and appear in the ethereal plane, uh, and—

**Griffin:** What the shit?

**Justin:** I know! And at the start of my next turn when the spell ends, I transport back to the physical plane within 10 feet of where I was before. And while I'm in the ethereal plane, I can see and hear what's going on in shades of gray, but I can't affect anything and nothing can affect me.

**Griffin:** [incredulous] So you can—you can fucking Nightcrawl now?!

**Justin:** Yeah, I can bamf.

**Clint:** Bamf!



**Griffin:** That's radical!

**Justin:** Yeah, I know, it's really cool. I work—I was very proud of that selection.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** So, yes, I cast *blink*.

**Travis:** I also have that, according to my sheet here. I've written it down.

**Griffin:** Interesting. [laughter] Everyone, everyone's blinkin'.

**Justin:** My turn is over and I roll... 'kay, 16.

**Griffin:** Okay, you blink into the ethereal plane... and... do you disappear from sight from Magnus and Merle?

**Justin:** Yes.

**Travis:** And Magnus loses his goddamn mind.

**Justin:** They have no clue what's happening.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Magnus:** What the—huh?!

**Griffin:** You blink into the ethereal plane, and suddenly, your vision goes gray. You blink out of view from Merle and Magnus. And the scene in front of you, other than the, the color swap change, stays relatively the same. But for a split second, for a flash after you enter this ethereal plane, you see three gray figures with bright white eyes.

**Travis:** What the fuck?

**Griffin:** Standing all around the room, sort of positioned around the room, sort of surveying the scene. And as soon as you appear in this ethereal plane, you can see 'em for just a second. Before you can even discern what they are, they blink out of view.

**Justin:** Oh man.

**Travis:** Nothing weird here!

**Justin:** Are they in the physical realm now?

**Griffin:** No. Magnus and Merle, you see nothing.

**Travis:** They just changed the channel they were on. They all switched to 5.1.

**Justin:** Not this idiot.

**Griffin:** And that's it for your turn. Next in the order is Merle.

**Clint:** I wanna cast *prayer of healing* on Magnus.

**Griffin:** Oh, okay, yeah, he took a hit.

**Clint:** Yeah, he would regain hit points equal to 2d8 plus my spellcasting ability modifier.

**Griffin:** Which is, I think, six now?

**Clint:** It is.

**Travis:** Nice.

**Griffin:** Can you—is that a touch spell? Is that a ranged spell? Does it say the range on it?

**Clint:** Anyone that I can see—

**Griffin:** Okay, you can see him.

**Clint:** —within range.

**Travis:** Uh, seven—oh, are you doing it? Yeah, you're doing it.

**Griffin:** Merle, you are still standing right next to the fountain with the, with Trent in it. Are you gonna kick it there or are you gonna back up?

**Clint:** Yeah. No. I'm not.

**Griffin:** Hell yeah.

**Clint:** I'm not going to. So I roll my eight... so that's eight, and that's twice that, correct?

**Griffin:** Well, you roll a second time.

**Clint:** Okay, eight, and... one, so that's nine, plus six... so I heal him all the way, right?

**Justin:** Wait, why's this—wh—how do you figure out the spellcasting modifier again? I'm sorry, this is the one that always—I always forget. These are hit dice, by the way.

**Griffin:** It is your, your spellcasting modifier is your... so, for clerics, I think your wisdom modifier, plus your...

**Travis:** Proficiency bonus.

**Griffin:** Your proficiency bonus.

**Clint:** Which is three, correct?

**Griffin:** Right. So—

**Justin:** Three plus three...

**Griffin:** Three plus three.

**Clint:** Three plus three is six.

**Griffin:** Plus your... Actually, plus one, 'cause you have your Extreme Teen Bible, and that's plus one.

**Clint:** So I heal him for 16.

**Travis:** But I can't go above my base number, right?

**Griffin:** No, no, no.

**Travis:** I'm about to—

**Griffin:** There's a mechanic called temporary hit points—I actually don't know if 5th Edition has temporary hit points. Probably.

**Travis:** It does.

**Clint:** And I would just like to point out, for the first time in this history of this podcast, I think I actually cast a healing spell.

**Travis:** That was nice.

**Justin:** That was a healing spell, confirmed.

**Clint:** Ha ha!

**Griffin:** That was a good one.

**Justin:** You had, you had 17 fucking episodes in... but cool.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Next in the order is Magnus.

**Travis:** I'm gonna run up to the tree, push the button on Railsplitter, and chop it in half.

**Griffin:** Okay. You run up to the tree...

**Clint:** And you're welcome, by the way.

**Travis:** Yep.

**Justin:** That ain't gonna work. The treant.

**Griffin:** You click the, the button on Railsplitter. [makes a power up sound effect] It powers up and you rear back, and with a mighty swing cut through it like a hot knife... through... water. And you hear it emit a, "Uuugh!"

**Travis:** [laughing] "Oh, my butt! You chopped my butt!"

**Griffin:** And it topples backwards away from the front door, and topples and falls backwards into the booths in the back of the room, which sends up paperwork and receipts, and ledgers go flying up into the air as you fell Trent, the treant, who uses... who uses his two giant, meaty tree branch arms, and he rears himself up and looks square at Magnus in the face, who's standing in the fountain, looking very proud of himself. He rears up his bark-like face—it's bark-like because it is bark—and he screams at you very loud with sap pouring out of his mouth.

**Travis:** What's he saying?

**Clint:** "Bleeerhegrh!"

**Griffin:** Yeah, it's some, some sort of tree language, which Merle understands, I guess, maybe.

**Merle:** Yeah, I do. I do.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Merle:** So let me, let me translate. That means he aggressively is going to retaliate against you and cause you some kind of harm.

**Travis:** But... I chopped him in half!

**Griffin:** And he did take some damage for that.

**Travis:** Yeah, I should hope so!

**Griffin:** I think cutting in half counts as a crit. So it's 16... and then some falling damage...

**Travis:** And some halving damage.

**Griffin:** [laughs] Extra... uh, 14 damage, so 30 damage altogether.

**Justin:** That's a pretty good hit.

**Travis:** I would like, I would just like to point out that if I were fighting a human being and I did an attack that chopped them in half, cleanly, like, as I believe you said, a hot knife through water, I don't think we'd be rolling for damage.

**Griffin:** Well, it is a magic tree and not a human, so...

[theme music plays]

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[music plays]

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**Speaker 1:** I went to my brother's place in Beaverton, and he has a swimming pool, and I pressurized the suit and sat down there underwater for about ten minutes. The thing that I built was supporting my life. That felt really good.

**Julie:** What does it sound like when you play a polka record through a Styrofoam cup?

[tinny polka music plays]

**Julie:** And what happens when an airport carpet gains a cult following?

**Speaker 2:** Oh my goodness. The carpet has an Instagram.

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