

The Adventure Zone: Graduation – Ep. 3, Pursued by Bear

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Travis: Previously, on The Adventure Zone...

[theme music plays]

Travis: Hieronymous Wigenstaff's School for Heroism and Villainy.

Fitzroy: *Sir* Fitzroy Maplecourt.

Travis: He likes to eat crepes.

Griffin: He's a failure. [laughs]

Travis: And when you cast, floating in front of you is a glowing, magical familiar.

Festo: I want you to work with your magic!

Fitzroy: Well, then, it's a crab.

Firbolg: I... have no name.

Justin: I did choose accounting. You're right.

Bartholemus: What is the kingdom's equity in that property?

Firbolg: This is a splitting, hmm?

Justin: And he's grabbing his head, as though he's trying to keep both halves of his brain together.

Argo: Argo Keene, here!

Travis: And you realize that this must be the sneakery teacher, Jackle.

Jackle: You are not exactly what you seem.

Argo: Can we have this conversation in private sometime?

Jackle: We will discuss many things.

[theme music plays]

Travis: Another day has begun at Hieronymous Wigenstaff's School for Heroism and Villainy. We see the dorm room of the Firbolg, Argo Keene, and Fitzroy Maplecourt. It's a fairly serene scene as we visit it. The three I've mentioned are all asleep, or deeply meditating. In the lower bunk of Fitzroy's bed, we see a magical, shiny crab cuddled up with a hard-to-perceive cat. And we see some rapid eye movement happening in our three main adventurers.

They're all dreaming, whether in their meditative states or their sleeping states. So what are you all dreaming about? Whoever wants to go first.

Clint: Uh, bread. I'm dreaming about bread.

Travis: In what way? I'm not going to let you off with just that, Dad.

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: I'm going to need—you can't just say—like, you're dreaming about the concept of bread?

Griffin: Aw, you ain't never had the bread dreams?

Clint: This is really a scary dream, because y'know, he's remembering a voyage that he took on the sea, and they went to break open the stores to have some—eat some bread, and it was just full of mealworms, and it was gross. Uh, but they had to eat it anyway. It was just a horrible, horrible

experience, and I think that's what put him onto citrus fruit pretty exclusively, because the mealy worms in the bread was just nasty.

Griffin: I remember one time I ate some gross lima peas. Uh, lima beans for dinner one time.

Travis: No, I like the way you said it.

Griffin: One time I had lima peas for dinner, and they were so gross that I had to eat hamburgers the rest of my life.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: That is essentially the story that Dad has just told about Argo.

Travis: Now, how realistic is this bread dream? Is it playing out exactly the same way as you remember it?

Clint: No, um, oh no. I think it's like the typical dream. I mean, there's some serious fantasy. It's like the—y'know, he goes to take a bite of the bread, and the mealworms all start talking to him. "Hey, leave us alone! What are you doin'? Don't eat us!" And then—and it kind of gets into a very surreal discussion with your food that is very, very off-putting.

Travis: I see.

Clint: This is—this is—I mean, this is a terrible dream for Argo to have. He's really into it.

Travis: I see. What about you, Fitzroy?

Griffin: Uh, as we've established, Sir Fitzroy Maplecourt doesn't sleep in the traditional way. The way he does it is so cool, in that it's a half sleep, half trance, half elf, all erotic. Not erotic.

Travis: Whoa. Wait, what?

Griffin: No, it's not. He is... I mean, he sleeps with his eyes open, right? And it's only sort of a half asleep thing. So, what I envision is like, how the sort of chaotic energy inside him manifests is, when he dreams, he just sees what he sees in front of him. He sees literally what is in front of his open eyes, but there are things about what he sees that are obviously, like, fantastical. Like, maybe through the windows of just what's in front of him, he can see the Firbolg's asleep on the floor, but through the window, there's a, y'know, some sort of impossible storm happening outside. It's like, in the details are how he knows that it's not quite real life.

Travis: Is that a scary experience?

Griffin: I think it was. Before this, like, I don't think he had dreams before this. I don't think that the state of sleep trance that he got into was conducive for dreams. But since his, um... since his powers manifested, after that fateful night in Clyde Nite's Night Knight School, uh, this has started to happen, and it definitely freaked him out. But now, he has gotten a bit more acclimated to it.

Travis: Uh, and what about you, Firbolg?

Justin: He has the same dream that he has every night. He's at the fire, and he's with his clan, and he and he and her and he and her are all gathered around the fire. And then, his father stands and points into the woods. And that's always when he wakes up.

Travis: And as the Firbolg wakes up, there is a tiny, yet very distinct knock on the door.

[quiet knock]

Fitzroy: Snippers, attack!!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: My crab attacks! It can't attack, but it moves violent—when I do awaken from my half-trance, it is usually, um, fitful.

Travis: The crab approaches the door and starts tapping back on the door in the same rhythm that the knock is happening.

[quiet knock]

Fitzroy: Very good! Trick him! Trick him into thinking he's himself behind the door! This is great.

Travis: They start playing a little like, tap tap tap, tap tap, tap tap tap tap, tap tap tap tap tap tap tap diddly diddly doot.

Firbolg: For the love of god, please come in.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: The tiny tap stops, but the door doesn't open.

Argo: I'm terribly sorry. Let me get the door. I'll open the door. And let's see if there's another charmin' little crab in there.

Griffin: [laughs]

Fitzroy: I can't take care of two. Someone else is gonna have to take this second crab. Snippers is a real handful by himself.

Travis: You open the door to see the skeleton of a squirrel there, holding a note in its paws, addressed to Sir Fitzroy Maplecourt.

Fitzroy: Uh, yeah, Snippers, I'm for sure going to need you to fetch that for me. Thank you. Thank you, son.

Travis: Snippers picks up the envelope, and the squirrel kind of pretends to cough into its fist and hold out its hand for a second.

Fitzroy: Yeah, no, what—

Firbolg: I—I will help.

Justin: And I hand the squirrel one berry.

Travis: The squirrel nods and takes off back down the hallway.

Fitzroy: I mean, where is it going to even put that? In its skeletal digestive tract? Does it have a bone tummy? The physics of that thing, I hate—

Travis: Y'know what, Griffin? Maybe it's just the principle of the thing, that it worked hard and it was appreciating, like, being appreciated. Y'know what I mean? Maybe it's not going to eat it. It's just gonna sit it and know that it did a job well done.

Griffin: It is a grim mockery of God's rules for us on earth, and I will never like that squirrel. But I do fetch the note from Snippers.

Clint: And would it even have a tail if it was a skeleton? There are no bones in the squirrel tail. It could've been a rat skeleton, right?

Griffin: Are you sure there's no bones in there?

Travis: Now I gotta find out. Uh, squirrel tail bone...

Justin: There's fully bones in there. Can we move on?

Griffin: How does it move it? There's fully, definitely bones in there.

Travis: There's fully bones in there!

Griffin: Yes, okay. So there's bones in a squirrel tail.

Justin: Although, folks... we would not know it is a squirrel. I'm looking at this thing. It sucks. It sucks on ice.

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: Well, I'm going to say that you know it's a squirrel, because you've seen it around. This is definitely Rainer's squirrel.

Griffin: Sure, okay. I get the note from my crab. I make the crab bring me my note.

Fitzroy: Thank you, Snippers.

Griffin: I give Snippers a berry, because Snippers eats berries.

Travis: And it does eat the berry, and it's very cute. And it, y'know, at this point, you've spent some time with Snippers. You can tell, he's smiling.

Um, so you open the note, and it reads in a very fancy script, "To his royal highness, Sir..." And 'Sir' is written with like, eight I's and six R's. "... Fitzroy Maplecourt, her ladyship Rainer Michelle would be pleased if you would grace her with your presence at breakfast this morning. Sincerely, her high lord ladyship, Rainer Michelle. P.S. Of course, the Firbolg and Argo are welcome as well."

Fitzroy: Snippers, take a memo.

Snippers: Grrp!

Fitzroy: Rain—my friend, Rainer, comma.

Snippers: Skrrpaskrrpa.

Fitzroy: I... don't necessarily appreciate you making a mockery of my, uh, honorable title.

Snippers: Grrbaskrrpaskpa.

Fitzroy: But I suppose it's better than nothing.

Snippers: Rrpabebebe.

Fitzroy: I was supposed to meet some buds at Jamba Juice...

Snippers: Grrbaprrrrrp.

Justin: Fantasy Jamba Juice.

Fitzroy: But I suppose I can reschedule that for another time.

Snippers: Grrpababa.

Fitzroy: Spoke—did—dictated, but not written, by Sir Fitzroy Maplecourt.

Snippers: Rrrpepepe.

Travis: And at that point, you realize that Snippers has neither pen nor paper.

Fitzroy: Snippers, why did you—but, Snip—okay.

Justin: [laughing]

Fitzroy: I guess... y'all hungry? I was gonna go get some breakfast with Rainer.

Argo: I think that would be a great time. What do you think, Firbolg?

Firbolg: I will eat.

Travis: Okay! So you're heading to the dining hall. The three of you, walking together, a chance for three buds to catch up!

Firbolg: Have the classes been... good?

Fitzroy: Uhh...

Argo: Mmm...

Fitzroy: It depends on the metric that you're using.

Firbolg: Show me a magic.

Fitzroy: Yeah, so this is—watch this.

Griffin: And I make Snippers disappear and then reappear right next to me.

Fitzroy: It's sort of—my magic tutelage has been mostly crab-based.

Firbolg: But this is amazing.

Fitzroy: Thank you. Yeah, it's really just the one crab.

Firbolg: He was here...

Fitzroy: Mm-hmm.

Firbolg: And then, he was gone. And I thought, "Oh no. The crab." But then, he was... returned. This is amazing.

Fitzroy: I suppose so, yes. I was looking for a way to control the magicks that already dwell within—

Firbolg: This is a great pride. This is a great pride to you. And your clan.

Fitzroy: Uh... it's some way of—that's—that's a silver lining way of looking at it.

Firbolg: I will learn this... magic.

Fitzroy: Well, let's not—hey, let's not go crazy here, okay? It's a difficult spell. [laughing] Not anyone can...

Griffin: Sha fwa! Pshoo! It reappears in my hand.

Firbolg: This is... amazing.

Fitzroy: Yeah, and I can uh—I can read his thoughts, too. It's not a big deal. Anyway, how are your classes going? I hear you're making, uh, yourself quite the business man.

Firbolg: This is a great shame. For me. Iiii... am a... he says... dunce. What is this 'dunce'? I wear the cone on my head.

Travis: [laughs] Wait a minute, hold on! I don't know that I'm willing to let you force that upon my school rules!

Firbolg: I... I fashion the cone for myself. I hit. It is fair. With the accounting, I am... ah... dunce.

Argo: Hmm...

Fitzroy: Well, keep... keep hittin' the books. What about you, Keene?

Argo: Well, uh, I lied. And uh, told someone I stole a gold piece. And uh, fooled everyone, cruelly. I manipulated everyone's emotions, aaand... apparently got an A for it. Not... not sure I understand the educational process here.

Travis: Uh, you've arrived at the dining hall. You see a table, and Rainer is the only one currently sitting there. The rest of the seats have been kept open by various different, uh, y'know, woodland skeletons holding down the seats so no one else would come take them, so she could save them for your party. And she waves you over.

And as you head over that way, all the skeletons hop down, and squirrel themselves – no pun intended. Oh god, I feel terrible. Squirrel themselves—

Griffin: You fucking intended that. Shush.

Travis: I didn't! I really didn't. Squirrel themselves away in different compartments in her chair.

Argo: Lady Rainer, it's lovely to see you. You look like a beautiful kelp bed.

Rainer: Okay! Is that—I'm sorry—

Argo: So charming.

Rainer: Is that good?

Argo: Mm, oh yes. Yes. Kelp is a beautiful vegetable.

Rainer: Okay. Doesn't really translate. You wouldn't say like, "Oh, you look like beautiful celery!" But y'know what? I appreciate it. Thank you very much.

Argo: You're very welcome.

Rainer: Uh, Master Firbolg. Always a pleasure.

Firbolg: ... Yes.

Rainer: Okay. Uh, Fitzroy! I ordered something very special for you! Uh, hold on!

Travis: And uh, Stuart LaBeouf brings it over. Uh, sets it down, nods slightly to Rainer, and walks away. And it's a covered dish.

Fitzroy: If there is... let's discuss options. If there is a crab under there, you know I am going to be upset.

Rainer: There—it's not a crab. Don't be gross.

Fitzroy: If there is a bone skeleton, uh, rat, of some sort, I am going to be upset. That is also not ideal, Rainer.

Rainer: Why would that even—I mean, okay, that'd be funny. Don't get me wrong, that'd be funny. But no.

Fitzroy: Um, so what's under the—

Rainer: Open it!

Fitzroy: Okay.

Griffin: I open it.

Travis: And it's a sweet crepe, loaded with berries and cream.

Fitzroy: [gasps dramatically] Rainer, you knew! It's—these are some of my—

Rainer: You've been talking about for like, the last two weeks.

Fitzroy: How did you know, Rainer?!

Rainer: You won't shut up. Yes, you keep saying. [laughs] You talk about crepes every day.

Fitzroy: Rainer, this almost forgives you awakening me and my compatriots here with a bone skeleton monster from hell. That is not right for proper for this world that we walk in and live in.

Rainer: Should I have sent the raccoon? I felt like I should've sent the racc—

Fitzroy: You know I like the raccoon, actually. He's a scoundrel, but thank you, Rainer. This is very thoughtful.

Rainer: You're welcome! Have a seat!

Griffin: I sit.

Rainer: Okay!

Travis: [laughs] Oh wait, did you say that as Griffin, or as Fitzroy?

Fitzroy: I sit! I do sit. Thank you for asking. That sitting is one of my top things to do.

Rainer: I wanted to check in with you, Fitzroy, and see how you're... adjusting.

Fitzroy: Uhh, 'accepting' might be a better term. Coming to... coming to grips with. I have been sort of ping-ponging around the stages of grief. And it feels like—

Rainer: Which one are you on now?

Fitzroy: I'm on the one where, before you can control the magic that has destroyed your life, you first have to befriend a crab. So whichever one that is, I feel like maybe... I think it's maybe bargaining. But that's sort of where I'm at now. Uh, but y'know, there—I suppose there are worse places I could be as I... wait to continue my matriculation at Clyde Nite's Night Knight School.

Rainer: Oh! So that's still your plan, is to get a handle on this, and finish up there?

Fitzroy: Yyyes. I don't know why the... plan would... change?

Rainer: Well, I mean, they... sorry, kicked you out. And you got welcomed here. So why would you leave here to go back there?

Fitzroy: Uhhh... you... [laughs] You may not understand my reasons for being here at all. I need to finish my tutelage at Clyde Nite's Knight School. I am, uh, promised. I have made a vow to the kingdom of Goodcastle, where I must away once I finish my training at Clyde Nite's Night Knight School, which I cannot complete until I finish my training here at the—at the Wigenpoof's School for Bads and Goods. And so, once I do that, I will make my way to Goodcastle, where I shall serve in the Queen's guard, and live out the rest of my days. Uh... have you... hmm. I told you all this, yes?

Rainer: Yes. I just thought that, at this point, y'know, it's been a couple weeks. You've gotten used to the place. You've made some new friends. That y'know, you'd see that you're welcome here, and they didn't... welcome you there. They didn't appreciate you the way we appreciate you here.

Fitzroy: That might be true, but I was welcomed by the kingdom of Goodcastle! I received a letter from them, awarding me my knighthood, as long as I sent them a customary filing fee of 200 gold pieces.

Rainer: Hmm.

Argo: Wh...

Fitzroy: And they would give me my title of knighthood. And so, I—they were kind enough to do that for me, and then, after a few more customary payments to them, I got a little scroll saying I'm a knight, and now I have to make my way there. There was no map, and I don't really know where Goodcastle—

Firbolg: [quietly] Argo. Argo.

Argo: [quietly] Yes?

Firbolg: [whispering] Psst. Argo.

Argo: [whispering] Yes? What?

Firbolg: [whispering] This 200 gold... this is... very much? Or... very little?

Argo: [whispering] No. Oh, no, it's... it's a lot. And it...

Firbolg: [whispering] Ohh.

Argo: [whispering] It sounds a little shady to me.

Firbolg: [whispering] A great shame. This seems like a great shame.

Argo: [whispering] Should we say something to him, or... I mean, I assume we're at a big table, and we're on the other side, and y'know, sitting where the peasants sit.

Firbolg: [whispering] We are down here.

Argo: [whispering] Yeah. Oh! We're down. Oh.

Travis: Yeah, I just assumed you ducked under the table. [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Firbolg: We are under the table. I have upended it with my large frame.

Argo: Ohh, that's—that's—

Fitzroy: My creeepe!

Firbolg: It's a great shame.

Argo: Yeah.

Travis: The squirrel caught the crepe. Don't worry.

Fitzroy: Oh, thank you, squirrel.

Argo: We—we should say something to Fitzroy, don't you think?

Firbolg: This is... I do not think I am... the best forrr... finance advising.

Argo: Right. Right. Um... y'know what, though? Telling a pompous guy that he's been an ass... that's really right in my wheelhouse. I'm gonna tell him.

Um, so...

Fitzroy: And that's why I need to do this for my extremely sick nephew. Uh, yes, you were saying? Yes, Argo, yes. I'm sorry, I was telling a story about how my knighthood was going to benefit my extremely sick nephew, but...

Argo: Yes! Oh, absolutely. And that sounds wonderful. Just absolutely wonderful. But...

Fitzroy: So sick.

Argo: You never like... showed up and learned to swordfight, or y'know, how to—

Fitzroy: Oh, I—I studied for years at Clyde Nite's Knight School.

Argo: And then all you had to do was give them some gold, and they gave you a knighthood?

Fitzroy: No, I had to pay gold to the kingdom of Goodcastle.

Argo: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Fitzroy: The clandestine secret kingdom, whose location cannot be revealed, or else their enemies will come and crush them.

Argo: Ahh, I see. And... you don't think that's a little, um... weird?

Fitzroy: Uh, it is unusual, but uh... y'know, beggars cannot be choosers. I have sworn fealty to Goodcastle. Who am I to judge their secrecy?

Rainer: Just to check in... where is Goodcastle?

Argo: Yes, if they were attacked, where would you go to defend them?

Fitzroy: Ahh, beyond the seas, somewhere. So secretive is their nature, that they will not tell me until I have completed my tutelage at Clyde Nite's Knight School, and then I assume I will receive some sort of crow with a map.

Rainer: Um, one more question. Uh, Sir Fitzroy.

Fitzroy: Yes.

Rainer: When you received the first letter from Goodcastle, was it addressed to 'whom it may concern'?

Fitzroy: How did you know that?

Rainer: Okay.

Argo: Hm.

Firbolg: But this is amazing. How did you know this?

Rainer: Well... huh. So... that, um... that's—

Fitzroy: This crepe is incredible, by the way. I am having a love affair with it.

Rainer: Oh, I'm so glad you're enjoying it! Oh look, oh, it looks like Gary has some announcements! Oh, what an unfortunate interruption.

Gary: Eyyy everybody, it's me, Gary. Uhh, the gargoyle. Not a different Gary. Don't know if you all have met other Garys. I mean, not other Gary the gargoyle. Other non-gargoyle Garys. You get it.

Uh, so, I got an announcement here. This is just for uh, the three of you.

Travis: And he points to the Firbolg, Argo, and Fitzroy, and says...

Gary: Uh, very special day. It's y'all's turn. For the first half of the day, you're gonna take a turn in the test tavern with Dakota, and work on your people skills. Uh, and then, the second half of the day, you're gonna spend some time down in the dungeon with Jimson. Uhh, and in between there, Fitzroy... you do have detention. Uh, don't forget about that. This is the last one. Uh, so you're gonna be meeting with Higglemas up in his office today.

So uh, yeah! Any questions for ol' Gary? [pause] Okay, cool. Thanks for makin' me feel useful!

Griffin: [laughs]

Gary: You can head on down to that there uhh, to that there uhh, test tavern, and meet with Dakota whenever you're ready.

Fitzroy: Finish my crepe first. Okay, is that—is that okay with you, Gary?

Gary: Oh, I'm sorry, are you asking questions to ol' Gary now? Now is time—yeah, you can eat your crepe. Ehh, you've earned it.

Fitzroy: [gross chomping sounds]

Travis: Oh god. Oh god. I should ask, at this point, we know of Fitzroy's love of crepes. We know of Argo's strange relationship with limes. What does the Firbolg eat?

Justin: Um... I mean—'scuse me. The stuff he'd gotten used to in the forest was more like, um... berries, foraged stuff. He will—he's not a vegetarian. He will eat, y'know, small rodentia. I think at this school, though, he has probably been sticking closer to berries and produce. I think, uh, some of the fancier, perhaps saucier dishes, maybe are not to his liking.

Clint: Yeah, squirrel skeleton would put you off rodentia for quite a while. Eugh.

Justin: Sure, yeah.

Travis: Okay. Well, are you all ready to head down to that there test tavern?

Griffin: Sure, I could—I could use a bev.

Clint: A test beer. Yeah.

Travis: Excellent.

[theme music plays]

Travis: So, you head into the test tavern. At the door is Rhodes the ranger. Rhodes is going to be your hero for this session. And when you arrive, it's relatively empty – in fact, it's almost completely empty, except for one person, seemingly passed out at the bar.

Fitzroy: [whispers] Has the test begun, Rhodes?

Rhodes: Honestly, I have no idea. Uh... I have heard... uh. Okay. Between us, the teacher, Dakota? They like the beverage, y'know? So maybe that's them?

Argo: Ooh, that, uh... that's a mighty early start to, y'know, hoistin' a few. I mean, it's still mornin' isn't it?

Rhodes: It could be a late end.

Argo: We should check and see if they're okay, shouldn't we?

Fitzroy: Argo, I hope you don't read this as an insult, but you are the most degenerate of the three of us. Do you—

Argo: True. True.

Fitzroy: Do you mind taking the lead on this one?

Argo: No, oh, certainly not, no. Let's, uh... let me go up and see who it is and see if they're okay. Um... hello. Um... friend, unconscious person. Are you okay? Are you alright? Could you use some, I don't know, juice, or a cookie or something? Of course, that makes it sound like you just gave blood, so uh...

Fitzroy: [laughs] It is possible.

Argo: Maybe. Maybe they're all tired out from givin' blood. Are you—are you okay?

Travis: And they don't move.

Justin: I am going to do a Dungeons & Dragons move. Step back, everyone. I'm rolling dice. I'll do an investigation check of three.

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: You can't tell anything!

Argo: Okay, I'm going to reach up and put my fingers on their neck.

Travis: And as soon as you touch them, they turn around and go...

Germaine: Whaaa! Just kidding, it's me, Germaine!

Travis: And it's the skeleton from the practice dungeon, and a person all clad in dark black and red leather stands up from behind the bar and says...

Person: So, whaddya learned?

Fitzroy: Uh...

Argo: Uh... hmm...

Firbolg: Uhhh... you are very gifted pretender.

Person: Yes, that is a good lesson. But rule number one, when you're walking around the tavern is, one, never assume anybody is who's they say they are. And two, never assume anybody's drunk. That's someone you can use to your advantage. Drink water instead of beer, make it look like you're gettin' drunk. Make people see you as a drunk. Take advantage of that. But never assume someone else is drunk. That'll get you in trouble.

Argo: To be honest, we didn't think you were drunk. We thought you was dead.

Person: Fair, but you weren't on your guard.

Germaine: Okay, I'm gonna go back over to the dungeon! I'll see you guys over there later! Bye!!!

Fitzroy: So—bye. Uh, so, what was—can we do that test again? What was the—I wasn't quite—

Dakota: Oh, that wasn't the test. Oh no, that was just a little fun for me. Uh, my name is Dakota, by the way. I'm gonna teach you all here some people skills. Gonna teach ya how to interact with your standard tavern goers to get some information.

Now, here's the deal. I'm gonna set you up with some people around here that you're gonna ask some questions of. Now, you can use whatever methods you want to. But you are lookin' for a couple pieces of information.

Now, one of the folks in here is gonna have a map that's gonna lead you to a treasure-filled cave. You're trying to get that map from them. One of them—

Argo: Oh, great!

Dakota: Are you gonna let me finish, or...

Argo: Yeah, I'm just excited about the treasure!

Fitzroy: He likes treasure.

Dakota: It's not—okay. It's not real treasure, Argo. This is—

Argo: You people! You people offerin' money, and the—okay. Sorry.

Dakota: If someone says to you, "You have five apples and I take one away," you know they're not giving you apples, right?

Argo: Don't, don't. Don't talk like that.

Firbolg: Please. Please. Forgotten of...

Argo: Ohh.

Dakota: Okay, sorry. Sorry, Firbolg.

Firbolg: Please, for forest...

Dakota: Alright, so, one of the folks here is gonna have a map that you're trying to get to a treasure filled cave. One of them can sneak you into the castle for some, y'know, castle-based mission. And one of the people in here is a fence for stolen goods, and you're trying to find them out. But here's the catch – one or more of the folks in here might be undercover members of the city watch. So, watch yourselves, alright? Y'all ready to start?

Fitzroy: Uhh... no.

Argo: Ye...

Fitzroy: Yes.

Argo: Mm.

Firbolg: Yes.

Dakota: Okay, great.

Travis: And they reach underneath, and they pull a lever, and you see some runes light up, carved into the crossbeams of the room. And suddenly, the room is filled with illusionary NPCs.

Griffin: Fuckin' holodeck. Yes.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: That's radical. Is this our first time in uh... I know you said there's been a bit of a time jump. Is this our first time in the training tavern?

Travis: Yeah. This is your first time with the training tavern proper, when you weren't just like, hangin' out and drinkin'.

Griffin: M'kay.

[music plays]

Fitzroy: Uh... again, Argo, a lot of this seems like degenerate work. Is there any way that you know to tell a city watch by sight, or smell, or sound?

Argo: Um, y'know what? Usually, the people like, in dark glasses, and they keep holding their wrists up to their mouth and talking into it. That's usually a sign that they're, uh... they're a copper. So I think maybe that's who we want to avoid.

Travis: As Argo says that, you look around the room and realize, every illusionary NPC looks exactly the same.

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: Exactly the same?

Travis: Yes.

Justin: Delicious.

Griffin: Okay.

Fitzroy: Uh, well, okay, Rhodes. I suppose you're our boss or something. What's the—

Rhodes: Yeah...?

Fitzroy: What's the play here?

Rhodes: Okay, well, as I see it, we have to think about placement, right? That's the first key to figuring out who to talk to. So if you're looking for a fence, they probably wouldn't be, y'know, near a window or door, right? They'd probably be back in a corner?

Fitzroy: Unless that's what they want you to think.

Rhodes: Or maybe that's what they would want you to think that that's... what they want you to think.

Firbolg: I have a plan.

Rhodes: Oh boy!

Argo: Oh, yeah! What is it?

Firbolg: I will ask... who is city watch? Then... they say yes. We win.

Fitzroy: Uh... that might not... mm. That might not...

Argo: No, I think it's a fine idea. Let him do it. Pretend you're in trouble, and you need a city watchman, and—

Firbolg: I will not do this.

Argo: Oh, I thought you said you would.

Firbolg: I will not pretend.

Fitzroy: Uh, I—

Argo: Ooh.

Griffin: I'm going to take some of my most shiny and most clearly expensive kit. Uh, I reach into my bag. I put on several, uh, brooches. Brooches. With uh, y'know—

Travis: Breeches.

Griffin: Pearl, and breeches, and pearl, and platinum, and emerald. Just beautiful. And I got some uh, y'know, I slip on some of my best rings. And then I'm—I just want to kind of like, y'know, walk peacock a little bit, and see if I can attract any other rogues other than, uh, Argo.

Travis: Huh. Okay. Give me a performance check.

Griffin: Uh, that's a 12 plus two. 14.

Travis: Okay, yeah. You get some turned heads. It's hard for you to tell how many of them are like, interested in stealing the goods, versus how many of them are interested in what is going on. But you do notice, not

everybody turns. You get, uh, I would say about two thirds of the room seems to be interested.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Uh, Argo's going to stealth around the room and try to listen in on conversations of the characters around the tables.

Travis: Okay, great. Give me a stealth check.

Clint: Stealth. That is an 11 plus eight. That's 19.

Travis: That's so good. Um, you overhear, near, I would say, near the door to the kitchen, you hear someone say, "Yeah, I work in the castle. I do a lot of the cleaning, uh, but no one ever seems to pay a lot of attention to me."

Griffin: That's a fucking cop. [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Hey, guys. That one's the cop.

Clint: [laughing] Okay, I'm gonna go talk to the—Argo's gonna go talk to that person.

Person: Well hello, person!

Argo: Uh, hello. Listen, I just wanted to tell you – I was, uh... I was visiting the castle last week.

Person: You were?

Argo: Oh yes. Yes, um...

Person: I didn't see you there!

Argo: Well, no. I mean, I wasn't there for very long. And I have to tell you... it was so clean. Spiffy. Not a speck of dirt. I—I—I admire your work. Now, this was—this was in one of the chambers. I wasn't allowed in the main—

Person: Which chamber did you think was the cleanest?

Argo: Uh, 7C. 7C. It was—

Travis: You're gonna have to do a deception check here for me, ol' Clinton.

Griffin: Yeah, a pretty good one, because that's the fuckin' wildest thing I've ever heard.

Clint: Well, the seven seas, see.

Travis: No, I—yeah, that doesn't make the lie better.

Griffin: Oh, okay. You could've said bathroom. Or kitchen.

Clint: 13 plus four.

Person: Well, thank you so much! It's so nice to be appreciated!

Argo: Well, and I just wanted you to know that uh... 7C, I'm just guessing that was your work, because it was so clean.

Person: Oh yes. That's one of my favorite rooms to clean! So many nooks!

Argo: Is there one that is even cleaner that you're really, really proud of?

Person: Oh yes! There are inner chambers that I spend a lot of time on, because it's where the royal family lives!

Argo: Ohh, I would love to sneak a peek at your work. 'Cause I—I'm gonna tell ya... I'm a fan. I'm a huge fan. Could I—is there a way that you could

show me one of these rooms with all of the nooks? And would there be crannies? Would there be crannies as well?

Person: Well, there are crannies, but I don't know about all this. I'm not supposed to bring friends in.

Argo: Well, we're not friends, are we? We just met.

Person: Aw, that hurts my feelings!

Argo: No, this is how we would become friends!

Justin: [laughing]

Argo: I'm admiring your work. I want to—I want to see more. I want to know your work, and that way, get to know you!

Travis: Uh, you're gonna have to roll a persuasion check.

Clint: Good lord.

Travis: Yeah, this is a class. It's a test.

Justin: What is the long—what is the long—can I just—what is the long game here? What is the goal that you are trying to achieve, out of curiosity?

Clint: What, Argo?

Justin: Yeah.

Clint: He's trying to get into that room. He's trying to—that was one of the—one of the chores they were given, wasn't it?

Travis: Yeah. Correct.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Justin: So get into the room.

Griffin: We're playing spy party up in here.

Justin: Okay. Get into the room. That's one.

Travis: Yes.

Justin: Okay.

Travis: Somebody has a map to a treasure-filled cave.

Justin: 'Kay.

Travis: And somebody is a fence for stolen goods.

Justin: And we're just trying to find and identify those people, correct?

Griffin: Without getting busted by a cop.

Justin: Okay.

Clint: I rolled a ten plus two. That's a 12.

Person: I don't know... I would like to become friends with you, and I would like to show off my work, but... what if I get in trouble?

Argo: Oh, no. For showing something you're proud of? No, friend, that's what it's all about, is taking pride in workmanship. There's nothing wrong with that. That's nothing to be ashamed of. No one's gonna be upset, because you showed me something that you're proud to have accomplished. Let your light shine! Let your light shine, my friend!

Person: I don't know, I've been yelled at before.

Travis: Now, I will tell you, your persuasion check kept them on the hook, but you're gonna have to try a different tactic to fully lock it down.

Argo: Alright. Let me be honest with you.

Person: Okay?

Argo: And I'm not supposed to say anything.

Person: Okay...

Argo: I'm actually one of those secret inspectors.

Person: [gasps]

Argo: You know, the ones that uh, that inspect hotel rooms and they write reviews.

Person: Yes! Of course.

Argo: I'm with Castle Quarterly, and um, I—I just have loved what I've seen so far, and I would looove to give you a terrific rating. But I'm basically an honest journalist. I don't want to make something up, and I just—if you could like, get me in there, even just for a cursory look...

Travis: Give me a deception check there, Dad.

Clint: A dirty 20. It's a 16 plus four.

Travis: Nice.

Person: Okay! I've been waiting for this moment my entire life!

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, so that's a big—

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: That's a big—you hear Dakota say...

Dakota: Alright, that's a big check mark on that one. Argo, great work.

Argo: Thank you.

Travis: And Rhodes says...

Rhodes: Um, okay. So, while you were doing that, I was scoping around. There's an NPC near the back there, uh, in a booth, kind of darting their eyes around a bunch. Y'know, hunched over. Maybe... maybe that's the fence?

Justin: Is it—Rhodes said 'NPC'?

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: I mean, they're virtual—they're holograms. I'll give Rhodes that.

Travis: It's a non-person character.

Justin: I'll—[laughs] I'll talk to that, uh, person.

Rhodes: Okay. You do that, and then, if you get in trouble, uh, you do the blame taking thing, right? And then I'll come over and see if I can sort it out, right? So it'll be—you go. You go. You go.

Justin: Okay, where are they?

Travis: Uh, in the back corner, basically the corner opposite, uh, diagonally opposite from the door.

Justin: Okay. I'll approach them.

Firbolg: Greetings.

Person: [enthusiastically] Hello!

Griffin: [laughs]

Firbolg: I... need fence.

Griffin: [laughing]

Person: You—I'm sorry, I don't know what you're talking about.

Firbolg: You are fence?

Person: No, I'm a human!

Firbolg: I thought this was strange.

Person: Okay!

Griffin: [laughing]

Firbolg: You did not look like fence.

Clint: [laughing]

Person: I think we might be having a miscommunication, friend.

Firbolg: Which... is... fence?

Person: Why, I wouldn't know what you're talking about!

Firbolg: I am sorry to waste time.

Fitzroy: How'd it go, Firbolg friend?

Firbolg: This is a great shame.

Fitzroy: Ohh. It sounds like you really need a win.

Firbolg: This, uhh... the—one thing. This is not the fence. I have asked this.

Fitzroy: [laughing] Okay.

Firbolg: I try again.

Justin: I'll go to the closest person to the first person. [laughs]

Firbolg: I... [sighs] Need you to be fence?

Person: Excuse me?

Firbolg: I need you to be fence.

Person: Well, you should know that the selling or buying of stolen goods is illegal in this city!

Firbolg: Yes.

Person: So, you trying to find a fence could be seen as a criminal act!

Firbolg: It is for game.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Fitzroy: We are doing a—he's doing a scavenger hunt.

Firbolg: I will not buy or sell this. I have nothing. I find for game.

Person: I... I don't—uh... okay.

Firbolg: I give you... three berries.

Person: Are you trying to bribe me?

Firbolg: No, is buying. I buy the fence. You tell me you are the fence. I give you three berries. Is a good trade.

Travis: [laughing] Okay. Give me a perception check, Firbolg.

Justin: My strong suit. [laughs] Uh, that is a 16 pluuus... six! 22.

Griffin: That is your strong suit.

Travis: Uh, out of the corner of your eye—

Justin: Apparently, yeah.

Travis: You see the first person you were talking to, furiously waving you back over to their table.

Firbolg: Yes.

Person: Okay, you have to keep it down, or you're going to get me busted!

Firbolg: I will be very quiet.

Person: Yes. You can't keep speaking in such loud tones about a fence!

Firbolg: I am sorry. Do you know who is the fence?

Person: Jesus Christ.

Argo: He is?

Griffin: [laughing]

Travis: [laughs]

Justin: [laughs] This will be difficult.

Person: I am the fence. Duh.

Firbolg: No, no, no. This is not right. I ask. I ask you first. You say, "No, I am not the fence." I need the fence.

Person: I was lying!

Firbolg: You just want to play in game. Now you hear it is game. You want to play.

Person: Okay. Well, two can play at this game.

Firbolg: I will not accept this. I will ask again.

Person: Oh my god.

Firbolg: Um, uh, uh... Argo.

Argo: Yes? Yes?

Firbolg: I have ruled out two, and I am very tired.

Griffin: [laughing]

Argo: You're doing smashingly well, though! I'm really—I really admire what you've been doing so far. Y'know, two of them are not—are you actually looking for like, a structure when you ask someone if they're a fence?

Firbolg: This is—yes.

Argo: Ah, yes. That—we may have a slight communication problem. A fence is—

Firbolg: What is—what is—what is fence?

Argo: A fence, I think what they're looking for is someone who, uh, will exchange goods for you.

Firbolg: A seller.

Argo: Yes! All those accounting classes are really taking off, aren't they?

Firbolg: Yes.

Argo: They will take your goods, and sell them for you. They're like—

Firbolg: Entrepreneur.

Argo: Entrepreneur! Yes!

Firbolg: Entrepreneur small business owner. Yes.

Argo: That's—yeah! So that's what you're looking for.

Firbolg: Yes. Yes yes yes yes yes.

Argo: So go try again.

Firbolg: Ah, I will do this. Ahh... friend.

Griffin: [laughing]

Firbolg: This is a mistake. You are entrepreneur.

Person: Yes, that's how I like to think of myself.

Firbolg: This is noble. Is very difficult. 80% of small businesses fold within the first year. This is a noble thing.

Clint: [laughing]

Person: You sound like you really know your stuff!

Firbolg: I am trying.

Travis: [laughing]

Clint: [laughing]

Travis: Uh, give me a persuasion check.

Justin: Uh, 14... pluuus... one. 15.

Travis: Ah, he is moved by your hard work and your business knowledge, and he says...

Person: You seem like someone I would be happy to get in business with!

Firbolg: This is a great mistake for you.

Griffin: [bursts into laughter]

Clint: [bursts into laughter]

Firbolg: I am just beginning classes. I have, uh... two weeks accounting training. Hard worker. But... I must be honest. I am dunce.

Person: Okay. I just meant that i would buy your stolen goods, and then sell them for a profit!

Firbolg: I have no stolen goods, entrepreneur. I understand this very difficult. This, uh, starting small business. But I have no stolen good for you.

Person: Okay! Well, if you come upon any stolen goods, you know where to find me!

Firbolg: He—here.

Person: Yes.

Travis: And Dakota says...

Dakota: Alright, that was great! Uh, well... you went about it your own way.

Firbolg: I will lay down.

Dakota: Okay. Need a little nap? Alright, you worked hard. You got there. Uhh... proud of how you didn't give up. Alright, Fitzroy. This one's on you.

Fitzroy: Yes.

Dakota: Uh, go find yourself, uh, that treasured map.

Fitzroy: Sure, I've got a great plan.

Griffin: I turn to Rhodes, and I say...

Fitzroy: Rhodes, I have a plan. It's like a big lie I'm going to do, and it's gonna get us there.

Rhodes: Okay.

Griffin: But I need you to play along, okay?

Rhodes: Alright...?

Fitzroy: [loudly] Yeah, so anyway, I found this cave full—just chock-a-block full of treasure! And I cleaned it right out! And it was all this stuff. All these rings, and so many brooches and brooches and pendants and uh... I am—I am just—I am up to my gills in brooches! So uh, yeah, cleaned it right out. So you don't have to worry about that one, Rhodes!

Rhodes: Oh yeah, that explains all of your fancy goods and whatnot.

Fitzroy: Yeah. Like I sa—yeah. I just explained it to you.

Rhodes: `Cause you're wearing all the rings and brooches.

Fitzroy: [pause] Rhodes, are you... [sighs]

Rhodes: Yeah, you said play along, but you didn't say like, in what way.

Fitzroy: Just say like, "Oh, so you—" You're right. Okay, this one is also on me. But just seem impressed by how good I did.

Rhodes: Oh. Ooh!

Travis: And now, uh, give me a performance check. Or would you rather—I'll give you the option. Are you relying on your ability to sell this, or are you relying on the quality of the lie?

Griffin: Uh... I am relying on the quality of the lie, based on the prop work that I have already established.

Travis: Okay, great. Then give me a deception roll with advantage.

Griffin: Oh. That's a... 12 plus four, 16, and... a 15 plus four, 19.

Travis: Excellent! You see someone stand up and slam their hands on the table and say...

Person: Hey! You need to come over here and talk to me right now, mister!

Griffin: I mosey on over.

Fitzroy: Hey! How's it goin'?

Person: What gives you the right to clean out that cave? That cave's mine!

Fitzroy: Uhh, sorry, friend, but I stumbled across it. I was hunting a big elk. Took it down, me and some of my buddies. Uh, we're out in the woods, and I just walked head first into this cave! Bonked my head on a stalactite, and so uh, yeah. And then it was just chock full of treasures.

Person: Wait a minute! That cave only has stalagmites in it!

Fitzroy: I was upside down. I was doing a handstand, so...

Person: Okay. Well, then I guess... we have nothing else to talk about.

Fitzroy: Wait, so you—you're telling me—this is so funny. And it's a small world, and I love little coinky-dinks like this. But you're telling me that you actually—you had known about this, uh, this cave as well?

Person: Yes! I had just bought this very expensive map off of a trader! I hadn't gotten to go out and visit the cave yet, but he told me it was a beautiful cave full of stalagmites!

Fitzroy: Aw, that's bad luck, friend. That's bad luck. Yeah, cleaned it out. So, that's just a worthless piece of paper you got on your hands now. I need to go and shhh—have a... poop. And sometimes I get worried that they're not gonna have, uh, y'know, the TP that folks like you and me, y'know, folks who enjoy the finer things, crave. So why don't you—why don't you give me that, and I'll buy you a beer? The map.

Person: Well, it seems to me like it's not worthless to you. So let's make a deal. What about ten gold?

Fitzroy: Ohh, gosh. I mean, I have it. I have it. Look at my brooches. This is—this is—they scream “this is a man who has ten gold.” But again, I am—I do just need it for TP, and I'm sure I can find something else here to make do. I was just, y'know... [laughs] Trying to kill two birds with one stone.

Person: Well, why don't you trade me one brooch for the map?

Fitzroy: Ohh. These are uh... I've become quite attached to them. They make my outfit. I have more brooches at home. So I can bring you one of those next week, but... the map—I really have to go. It's getting kind of dire, now.

Person: Then it seems like this is a seller's market!

Fitzroy: Welp... I'll arm wrestle ya... for it.

Clint: [laughs]

Person: Okay! Sounds great! If I win, I get all your brooches!

Fitzroy: Well, okay. Sounds good. [laughs] But I gotta warn ya, I'm all—all state. Arm wrestling.

Person: Let's do it! I hope your need to shit doesn't distract you!

Clint: [laughing]

Fitzroy: No, I can—I can—

Person: Don't strain the wrong muscles!

Fitzroy: No, I'm half elf. I can pretty much make it go back up inside.

Person: Gross!

Fitzroy: Oh, well...

Travis: Okay, let's do us a opposed skill check here. Um... let's do just a straight up and down strength check.

Griffin: Okay. I'm good at these.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: But not when I roll a four. Plus three. Seven.

Travis: Well, I'm sorry, Griffin. I rolled a 12 plus three, 15.

Griffin: [laughs] My brooches!!

Person: I look beautiful! Look how they glitter and shine!

Fitzroy: [through gritted teeth] That's pretty... bad luck. Uhh... it's not luck, I suppose. I'm just weaker than you are. So...

Person: I feel terrible! You can keep the map so that your shit is better!

Fitzroy: [through gritted teeth] Thank youuu. Yes. Loving it. And when you sort of evaporate into thin air, I suppose I'll just pick my brooches up off the floor and go about my day.

Person: I'm going to take these back to hell with me!

Fitzroy: Oh no!!

Travis: No no no. That's not canon. And you hear Dakota say...

Dakota: Alright, man, that was great. Uh, you guys hit all three.

Travis: And they flip the lever, and all of the illusions pop out, and yes, yes, your brooches do fall to the ground. You can scurry to pick them up. Ugh. I'm a kind and benevolent DM.

Fitzroy: I lost at arm wrestling to a hologram. This is a great shame, to quote a friend.

Argo: [whistles] Hmm.

Dakota: Now, how did you all feel you did there? 'Cause I got some thoughts. I got some feedback. But it's really about, how do you think you all did?

Firbolg: I... win?

Dakota: Well... yeah, technically, you did accomplish all three tasks, but...

Firbolg: This is important.

Dakota: It wasn't the smoothest path there. You can see that, right?

Firbolg: Uhh... I... [sighs] Did not understand 'fence.'

Dakota: Okay.

Firbolg: This is, uh... not my fault.

Dakota: You are gonna do well from some real world experience, ain't ya?

Firbolg: I, uh... am learning so much.

Dakota: Yeah. Next time, you might try – and this is just a suggestion from me, the teacher – uh, lying.

Argo: Mmm.

Firbolg: I uh... I cannot do this.

Dakota: Well, that's what you're here to do. You learn—learn how to do it.

Firbolg: I... will not do this.

Dakota: Okay.

Firbolg: I cannot. Firbolg... cannot lie. Cannot.

Dakota: I see.

Firbolg: Keep secret. This is... I cannot do this.

Dakota: Alright, well, can I tell you what I saw? Let me give y'all three some feedback here. Uh, first of all, Rhodes, you barely participated. Now, as a hero, I do think it's not a bad thing to stay back and make sure you have, y'know, plausible deniability. But next time, maybe try to mix it up a little bit.

But here's the thing I look at here, fellas. There were three tasks, right? A map to a cave, sneakin' into a castle, and a fence for stolen goods. Now, you're the rogue of the party, Argo. Why didn't you look for the fence?

Argo: Well, I figured sneaking into some place would uh, involve a lot of... stalking, and a lot of stealthy sneaking in. Um, and so, I naturally led more towards that. Dealing with the fence just seemed so obvious, to me. And besides, he's the accounting expert, and I figure, y'know, in a situation—

Firbolg: This is not—this is not accurate. I am the dunce.

Travis: Uh, and Dakota says to you, Argo, in thieves' cant...

Dakota: You need to make sure to use all the skills at your disposal, not just your first thought.

Travis: And then, they turn to Fitzroy and say...

Dakota: You seem like the obvious choice to sneak into a castle. You're dressed all fancy. You look like you belong there. Why didn't you use your influence to get you in? You look presentable. That should be your lead-in.

Fitzroy: Well, we're here to learn, aren't we?

Dakota: Yeah. Learn to use your strengths.

Fitzroy: No, I'm saying, I could—I can already do that. I could walk into a castle tomorrow and, y'know, do whatever I need to do in there. But y'know, it—

Justin: I bet this guy's genetic inability to eat shit on something makes him a real delight in class.

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Dakota: Listen, here's the thing. At the end of the day, the biggest take away all three of you should have is, you need to work together on stuff like this. Like, divide and conquer is fine, but if you got a Firbolg who can't lie, and if you want a rogue who doesn't want to go for the easy option, and you got a noble over here who's looking to expand, you gotta support each other, or you're making it so much tougher on yourselves.

Firbolg: Which was the special test for me?

Dakota: It's the treasure-filled cave. You're an outdoorsy friend. You could've said, "I can guide you. Is anyone looking for a nature guide?"

Firbolg: I cannot—this is... this is good. [laughs] It is would have been very good.

Griffin: [laughs]

Argo: Let me say something here. I... this is all on me. I take total blame for our performance. Mostly because I... I made the first move, and I obviously chose wrong. So—

Dakota: Man, you're really good at blame taking! Riveau was right, this is a skill!

Argo: This is—it just makes sense. It just makes sense. You—Firbolg, you did—you were awesome. And Fitzroy, you were—

Firbolg: This is inaccurate.

Argo: No, no, I'm telling ya! Eye of the beholder, friend. And Fitz, you were so adequate. I just—I'm the one that, uh... I dropped the ball, and I apologize to you fellas.

Fitzroy: Noted. Thank you. Yes. Uh, so... are we... done? I suppose we got good grades? Are the grades good?

Dakota: Well, I mean, yeah. You passed. You're ready for some real world experience, I guess. Uh, I'm just saying – next time, make it easier on yourselves, y'know?

Fitzroy: Love hearing that from a teacher. Fantastic.

[music plays]

Travis: Hi, everybody! It's me, your best friend and dungeon master, Travis McElroy. Thank you so much for joining us for another episode of The Adventure Zone: Graduation. I sure hope you're enjoying it, and you're in for a whale of a second half! But first, some important announcements.

Oh... this one. This one I'm leading off with, folks. This is a big one, and I'm so excited to tell you about it. In case you missed it, we are working on a new cooperative storytelling card game with Together Studios, based on The Adventure Zone: Balance. It expands the world of Balance, allowing you to

make your own stories with friends and family. Fun to learn. It's rules light, and it takes about an hour, and there's no need to DM.

And here's the thing – preorders launch Wednesday, December 11th. So if you want to check out more, you can go to TheAdventureZoneGame.com. So excited about it. I've already played it, and no exaggeration, I think it's the greatest thing ever created by human beings. So, if you want to learn more about it, TheAdventureZoneGame.com.

And speaking of preorders, preorder for The Adventure Zone graphic novel, *Petals to the Metal*, is open now. You can go to TheAdventureZoneComic.com and preorder now, and then you won't have to think about it 'til it arrives in your hands in July, and you can enjoy what I think, and all the McElroys agree, is the best Adventure Zone: Balance graphic novel to date. Uh, so, you're not gonna want to miss this one. TheAdventureZoneComic.com.

Also, I'm going to be incorporating my own, like, fantasy store into the game. It's not going to be Fantasy Costco, but it's going to be something, y'know, along those lines. So, if you would like to submit an item for consideration, you can send it to AdventureZoneCast@gmail.com.

Now, here's some things to think about. One, remember that this series has a bit of a different tone from Balance, so the items should feel a little bit different. And I'm wanting to make sure nothing is too overpowered. Listen, we all love the Flaming Raging Poisoning Sword of Doom, but in this kind of—in this universe, where they're all like, sidekicks and henchpeople, I don't know that it would work out so well.

So, if you have an idea that you would like to submit, remember, you can send it to AdventureZoneCast@gmail.com. And make sure you put 'item submission' in the subject line so that I don't miss it. Also, uh, only one new NPC this week, if you can believe it. Dakota is named after Dakota King, so thank you very much. And remember, if you would like your shot at being named as a character on Adventure Zone: Graduation, make sure you're tweeting about the showing using the hash tag, #TheZoneCast, and sharing a link to the episodes doesn't hurt.

Now, it's time for the ad zone, which I don't know if we've ever called it that before, but now I'm doing it. So here we go. I want to tell you about Squarespace. "Wait," I hear you saying, "Travis, I already know all about Squarespace." Listen. You may think you do, but you don't. And okay, listen, you listen to podcasts, so at this point, yes, you probably do. But have you really internalized it? 'Cause it's probably a thing that you hear about all the time, and you think, "Oh, I know about this."

But here's the thing – we've all got big ideas for websites. Listen, I do. My brothers won't let me do most of them for legal reasons. But... and y'know what? They're not wrong. Those websites should never see the light of day. But... maybe you have, let's say, the next Twitter. The next Google. The next, I don't know, insert funny name for a website here. So why not showcase your work, blog or publish content, sell products and services of all kinds, and more with Squarespace?

They do this by using beautiful, customizable, mobile-optimized templates, created by world-class designers, built-in search engine optimization, and analytics to help you grow, and they have 24/7 award-winning customer support. So make it stand out, and stand out with a beautiful website. Go to Squarespace.com/Adventure for a free trial, and when you're ready to launch, use the offer code 'Adventure' to save 10% off your first purchase of a website or domain.

Go now. Why are you waiting? Squarespace.com/Adventure for a free trial, and use offer code 'Adventure' to save 10% off your first purchase off a website or domain.

And now, back to the episode!

[music plays]

Travis: And so, now, it's the second half of the day. You guys have all had lunch. What'd you have for lunch, huh?

Griffin: I was in detention, so I had gruel. 'Cause that's how they do it here.

Travis: Now, did they make you eat gruel, or was that just like, an optional—

Griffin: They made me eat it off the floor like a dog. This school sucks.

Travis: I don't think that's true. No, they wouldn't have done that.

Griffin: They're so mean at this school! I don't know why they made me eat gruel off the floor!

Travis: This sounds like a letter you're writing home from camp to me, your dad. "Dad, you have to come get me!"

Griffin: I am writing this letter home to my extremely wealthy family about the detention they made me do and the floor gruel.

Travis: I see. What about you, Argo? What'd you have for lunch?

Clint: Argo's trying to expand his uh, his palate, and I think he gave, uh, he gave bread another chance.

Travis: Whoa! What a big turnaround from that morning!

Clint: He wants to face his fears. So he uh, he ordered a nice bread, and found out that not all bread is hard tack like they have at the sea. It was a real nice, uh, pumpernickel. And he found out he really likes pumpernickel! And so, he had a—he just had a pumpernickel and a side of lime.

Travis: What a great lunch.

Griffin: One of these days, Argo is gonna learn that you can eat things that is more than just one thing. Like, a sandwich, or a pizza, and it's gonna blow his fuckin' mind.

Clint: Yeah. Well, that'll be episode five, probably.

Griffin: You're gonna put a lime on a piece of bread and be like, "What the fuck is this?"

Clint: Ooh.

Travis: Um, and Firbolg, what did you do during the lunch break?

Justin: I ate a peach.

Travis: Ooh!

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Nice.

[music plays]

Travis: So you've reached dungeon class. You see Jimson at the door, and he says...

Justin: Hey, I got a question.

Travis: Uh-huh?

Justin: When we gonna—we have been in school for two weeks, actively learning shit. When are we gonna level up?

Travis: Well, let's see how you do in this fight!

Justin: Aw, yeah!

Travis: Uh, and Jimson greets you at the door and says...

Jimson: Uh, yeah, come in.

Justin: Roll for initiative.

Griffin: [laughs]

Jimson: Well, not—no.

Travis: We'll—like, let's say that in, uh, game mechanics to real world conversion, it's you like, reaching for weapons. [laughs]

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: Just like...

Jimson: Nope. Whoa. The fight's not with me. I'm going to pair you with Rolandus, but this class is for you, so I expect you to not just rely on his battle techniques, but also your own. We're gonna start out pretty slow, here. So, let me know when you've got everything equipped, and we'll get going.

Rolandus: Yes, hello. Oh! Hello. Fancy lad. Fancy friends. Good to see you again.

Fitzroy: I don't think that that band name is gonna catch on.

Rolandus: Oh, I—sorry. I was talking to Argo. Argo's fancy lad. And you're the fancy friends.

Fitzroy: Now, hold on a minute! His brooch game is wack!

Rolandus: I heard you lost an arm wrestling match to an illusion. [laughs]

Argo: [hisses through teeth] Wow. Scuttlebutt really gets around in this school, doesn't it?

Rolandus: Well, Buckminster told me right after you told him, so... we were sitting at the same table. It wasn't like, a weird secret thing. Let's not turn this into a big deal, alright? I expect you all to keep me from getting hit, or at the very least, don't let me do all the work. Uh... I've been through this dungeon so many times. It's the three skeletons. It's going to be nothing. Just don't embarrass yourselves, or me for that matter.

Fitzroy: We'll do our best, bud.

Travis: Um, so, are we ready for the battle?

Griffin: Do we know what's in—like, expl—are we standing behind a closed door, or can we actually see, like, what we are up against?

Travis: You are. You are standing behind like—there is a dungeoned door betwixt you and the room.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Well didn't he just say that it was three skeletons?

Travis: Three skeletons. Yeah. He's been in there. It's the skeleton crew.

Clint: Yeah, okay.

Travis: It's Germaine, Victoria, and Rattles.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Aw yeah.

Argo: Well, let's go kick their ass!

Rolandus: Alright, well, I'm not going in first, so...

Travis: Roll for initiative!

Griffin: No.

Travis: Okay. [laughs]

Griffin: That's a five total.

Clint: 11.

Justin: Three, pluuus... one. Four.

Travis: Okay. As you open the door, the room is dark, and suddenly, the torches on the walls flare, and the skeletons get a sneak attack on you, because they rolled like a 19 for initiative.

Griffin: You dick skeletons.

Travis: Okay.

Germaine: Hey, that hurts my feelings! Why would you say that?

Victoria: Yeah, that's not very nice!

Rattles: Blarararararar!

Griffin: That bit's never gonna get old.

Travis: I know. That's just Rattles.

Griffin: Yep.

Clint: Ohh, Rattles.

Travis: So, they're going to... let's see, they're gonna take a swipe at, first, you, Fitz.

Griffin: Good luck.

Travis: Okay. They roll... oh, not great. It's an 11. There's no way, right?

Griffin: There's no way. I bat it away with my buckler.

Travis: They take a swipe at you, but miss. And they all have, y'know, kind of rusted swords and axes and that kind of thing. Victoria's gonna take a swing at you, Argo... uh, ooh, that's a 14 plus five. That's a 19. Oh, excuse me, it's an 18. Does that still hit?

Clint: Yes.

Justin: He's level one. I hope to god it hits. [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Yeah. And they hit you for five points of damage.

Clint: Eeuugh.

Travis: Uh, and the last one takes a swing at Rolandus.

Griffin: Please hit.

Travis: And they miss by a country mile.

Griffin: Damn it.

Travis: Rolandus dodges coolly out of the way. Clearly, this sneak attack thing is something that the skeletons have done before, uh, so he is not surprised by it. Uh, and next up is Argo!

Now, as you look around the room, now that you're in and the torches have flared, there's some like, crumbled columns that might provide cover. Uh,

there's some uneven, broken ground over in a corner over there. You see, there's some falling water in one corner where it seems to fall directly into a grate. Um, but otherwise, the—y'know, the room is pretty much empty. Except for another door on the other side of the room where the three skeletons came in.

Clint: But they've already seen us, right? So—

Travis: Oh yes.

Clint: It's not like I can sneak around very much, right?

Travis: Not right now, while they're looking directly at you. But there's cover in the room.

Clint: Okay, I think uh, yeah. How about if he, uh... he moves stealthily but quickly to kind of hide behind one of those tumbled, crumbled columns?

Travis: Uh, is there anything you can do to create some kind of distraction? Because otherwise, it's going to be hard to do that without them seeing you.

Clint: Hm. Uh, uh, y'know what? I tell ya what, he's going to take the initiative. Because being a rogue, when you lose sneak attack, it's really, y'know, it's kind of tough. So—

Travis: So let me remind you... you don't have to be hidden to use sneak attack.

Griffin: Right.

Travis: You just need to have advantage on them. Which means, if someone is flanking them... so, if you move behind them while Rolandus is in front of them, you can sneak attack them.

Clint: He uh, loosens up his sling, and has a number of ball bearings that he carries. And he spins it over his head and lets fly in a way that it uh,

bounces off a wall on the far side of the room, and that will distract the skeletons long enough for him to take cover behind one of the columns.

Travis: Okay. Do a—roll me a stealth check to make that happen.

Clint: That is a... 13 plus... eight.

Travis: Oh yeah. So that happens, and maybe some of them click off of, uh, y'know, torches on the wall. The lights flare a little bit. There's lots of noise. Uh, they turn and look, and you are able to slip behind the column. Up next is Fitzroy!

Griffin: Okay. Uh, i... I think instinctively, like, reach for a weapon, but then I remember I'm supposed to be here for magic lessons. Uh, and I... say...

Fitzroy: Stop me if you've heard this one!

Griffin: And I put my hand on the skeleton that attacked me and cast *shocking grasp*. Uh, that is a 19 plus four! 23!

Travis: Hell yeah that hits!

Griffin: Hell yeah. Uh, so, that's 1d8. Uh, six points of uhh, lightning damage.

Travis: Okay. Ooh boy.

Fitzroy: Get zapped! That's my new... thing.

Travis: And let's say that that one was, uh, Germaine.

Griffin: Damn, Juice, it's really hard to not say a catch phrase every time you cast any spell. Like, I get why you rode that so hard.

Justin: It is. Yeah. It is. It's tough. It seems like... it almost seems like the verbal component of spellcasting.

Griffin: Yes, exactly. [laughs]

Justin: Is to say dope shit. Yeah, you can imagine why, uh, yeah. That got a little bit, um, taxing a few years in. [laughs]

Travis: Uh, so, up next is—

Griffin: Wait, let me check—let me try another.

Fitzroy: I hope you're up—I hope you've, uh, brushed up on current events! Like electrical current. Zap.

Travis: Ehh... that was okay. Up next is the Firbolg!

Justin: I am going to cast... *shillelagh* on my quarterstaff.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: And that just lets me, um, use my spellcasting for like—for melee attacks. So, I'm gonna—I'll do *shillelagh*, and I'm gonna... so there's Rattles. Who are the other two?

Travis: Victoria and Germaine.

Justin: I'm gonna attack Germaine, uh, with two—

Travis: Okay. He's already been injured, so that's a good way to go.

Justin: Yes. I'm going to hit Germaine with my incredible... *shillelagh* staff. So that is a 15... plus my spellcasting modifier... what is—where did—what is it?

Griffin: Your spellcasting modifier is, for you, it's your wisdom modifier plus your uh... plus your proficiency bonus.

Justin: Proficiency bonus. Right. Yes. Six. 21.

Travis: Damn. Yeah. You hit him real good.

Justin: Excellent. Now comes the real magic, when I roll a d8! 'Cause that's the damage that *shillelagh* does. It's a seven!

Travis: Yeahhh! He explodes to pieces! And his skull says...

Germaine: 'Ey, good job! I'm so proud of you! I'll just sit over here 'til you're done!

Firbolg: Tha—thank you.

Travis: And Rolandus is gonna take aim, uh, at... let's say... Rattles. Uh, and he rolls a 17, plus whatever, but he definitely hits. And he is then going to invoke, because he is bored, *divine smite*. When you hit with a melee weapon, you can expend one spell slot to deal 2d8 extra damage.

Griffin: Alright, Rolandus...

Travis: Uh, yeah, he's showin' off. So uh, he brings his scimitar smashing down upon Rattles' clavicle, and Rattles explodes into pieces.

Rattles: Aaarghblarghblargh!

Travis: And the pieces go flying all over the place. So left, you have one skeleton.

Fitzroy: Is anyone feeling particularly educationally enriched right now? 'Cause it seems like Hulkamania is kind of running wild over these skeletons.

Jimson: Uh, what do you mean?

Travis: Says Jimson.

Fitzroy: He just exploded him in like, one swing. And he turned his staff into magic and exploded Germaine. I mean, I loosened that particular pickle jar lid, but... it just doesn't seem it's especially educational, is all I'm saying.

Jimson: Oh. I see. Well, I would hate for you all to feel like you weren't getting, y'know, a lesson out of this. What do you think, Rolandus?

Rolandus: I am incredibly bored.

Jimson: Oh. Uh... I see. Well, then, let's move to phase two.

Travis: And he pulls a lever on the wall, and the second door opens again.

[door opening sound effect]

Travis: Um, and entering the room is a large, angry, brown bear.

Fitzroy: See, now, yeah. A brown bear? Let's—yes.

Jimson: This—this is Susan, uh, the brown bear. She is also very magical. She feels no pain, uh, and will heal up immediately, so do not worry about harming her. No animals are to be harmed in the workings of this school. In fact, after the battle is done, she won't remember any of this. So treat this as if it were just a battle out in the woods.

Fitzroy: Kind of sad existence Susan leads if you ask me.

Jimson: Well, she's well taken care of, and she's fed three meals a day, and she's immortal. So, I don't see... where the issue lies.

Argo: Does a bear do battle in the woods?

Fitzroy: Very good.

Jimson: Yes, and usually dies. But not here.

Fitzroy: Do we still need to beat up the one other skeleton, or can we just say that we've advanced beyond that?

Jimson: No, you still need to fight Victoria and Susan.

Fitzroy: Okay. No offense, Victoria.

Victoria: No, none taken. I understand. You don't want to fight me, and that's fine. Or you didn't want to fight me. Y'know, I can be tough, too. Whoaaa!

Travis: And she kind of sticks her dukes up. Uh, so, up next is the bear!

[bear roar]

Travis: And the bear is gonna take a big old swipe, very angrily, at you, Fitzroy. Uh, that is a ten plus six. 16.

Griffin: That ties my armor class.

Travis: Then it hits!

Griffin: Yep.

Travis: Uh, and Susan does eight points of damage.

Griffin: Whoa!

Travis: Uh, and she is also—sorry, that was with a bite. And she's also gonna take a swipe with her claws at Rolandus.

Griffin: [laughing]

Justin: That's a flexible bear.

Travis: Yep. And she hits the shit out of Rolandus, and does 11 points of damage. Uh, and up next is Victoria, who is going to take aim at the Firbolg, and roll a 16 plus four, a 20.

Justin: Wow, absolutely.

Travis: Okay, great.

Justin: That's a very palpable hit. I do confess it.

Travis: Uh, and uh, she does five points of damage to you, Firbolg.

Justin: Alright.

Travis: Uh, and up next, it's Argo's turn!

Clint: He's gonna sneak attack around from the column with his rapier at the bear.

Travis: Okay, great. So uh, you are going to roll with your rapier.

Clint: Okay, so that's 18 plus six!

Travis: Yeah!

Clint: For the sneak attack.

Travis: You hit that bear real good. So now, you're gonna roll 1d8, and then 1d6 and add four.

Clint: 1d8... ha! It's an eight.

Travis: Nice.

Clint: And the d6 is a four. So that's twelve plus four, 16.

Travis: Uh, excellent. A great hit, and you have drawn the attention of the bear.

Clint: Welp.

Travis: So, up next...

Clint: That was my intent!

Travis: Up next is Fitzroy!

Griffin: I just got bit by a huge bear. And so, like, that's gotta—that's really gotta take it outta ya, I feel like. Uh, and—

Clint: What, blood?

Griffin: Yeah, the blo—it's taken a lot of blood out of me. If I were playing any other class, I feel like I would be down on the ground right now. Um, and so, I feel like it's only appropriate to, uh, completely unintentionally and completely reflexively, go into a rage.

Travis: Ooh boy. So now, you are a special kind of barbarian. So what happens when Fitzroy Maplecourt goes into a rage?

Griffin: Well, I think it's like rage in name alone, where it's not like—and we had talked about this sort of when we were coming up with characters and stuff, that he's not like—he doesn't turn big, bulking, muscly Kratos-like rage for him. It's like, again, uncontrolled magic. So I think of it like in uh... like in Kiki's Delivery Service, whenever she flies on her broom, just like, all of the grass on the ground moves away from her, as if like this—well, I was gonna say a wind is coming out of Fitzroy, but then, somebody's gonna make a fart joke, and this is an emotional moment for me.

Uh, but it's like that. Like, I think things just move away from him. Uh, and a lot of the time, I think, really bad stuff happens when he goes into a rage, but this is a particularly minor one. And he looks kind of panicked when he realizes what's happening. And he's like...

Fitzroy: Is everyone cool? Is everyone cool?

Rolandus: Yes?

Fitzroy: Okay, sometimes things explode when I do this, and it's a accident, and I've done that enough already since I've been here, and I don't want to get—I don't want to be expelled again.

Travis: So now, Griffin, also mechanically, what happens? In game mechanics, when Fitzroy rages.

Griffin: Uh, he gains advantage on strength checks and saving throws. He gets plus two melee damage with strength weapons, resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage. Uh, but, I cannot cast or concentrate on spells while I am raging.

Travis: Okay. Excellent.

Griffin: Uh, and it will end if I'm knocked unconscious, or if my turn ends, and I haven't attacked a hostile creature, or if I haven't taken damage since my last turn.

Travis: Okay, great.

Griffin: So, I realize what's happening, and I try to gain faculty of my senses, and am grateful that I haven't exploded or turned anybody into a catfish or anything like that. And... in an attempt to still do something magical, I pick up Snippers and just try to throw Snippers at the bear. I don't think I'm thinking straight, necessarily.

Travis: No, I would have to say you're not. I don't even know what that roll would be? Uh...

Griffin: It's a cool, magical, strong attack. I throw my magic crab at the bear. I don't see what's so hard to understand about that, Travis.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: Yeah, it sounds very cool and magical to me, for the record.

Travis: Make the attack roll, I guess.

Griffin: I throw my immortal crab at the immortal bear! I don't see what's wrong with that!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: You wanted me to use the crab!

Travis: Not like this!

Griffin: They wanted me to use the crab, y'know? They wanted me to get good at magic, and this is why I'm—

Travis: I guarantee you, when Festo was like, "Hey, here's a sack of flour to take care of," it wasn't like, "Throw that sack of flour at a bear." [laughs]

Griffin: Well, they should've thought about that before they gave it to a barbarian. So, for hand axe, which is another thing I have which I'm *not* throwing for some reason instead of throwing Snippers, my magic crab, uh, it's a plus five attack. Sooo... that is a... 23 total.

Travis: Well, hell yeah, that hits. And Snippers goes flying across the room.

Snippers: [crab sounds]

Travis: Now, tell me—

Fitzroy: Snippers, I choose you!!

Snippers: [crab sounds]

Travis: Tell me, what is the desired effect here?

Griffin: Hitting the bear enough to hurt it or kill it, potentially. That would be sick. If I could get a kill out of this, and start that kill streak goin', that would be rad. But mostly, it's damaging attack. Again, I wasn't thinking straight.

Travis: Okay. I'm gonna say, since Snippers is all claws and pincers, uh, that—

Griffin: And chitin.

Travis: And chitin, that it's gonna be a d6 plus six.

Griffin: Fuck yeah. Oh—plus six?

Travis: Well, 'cause of your enraged form, I assume you're chuckin' the hell out of him. And because your attack was so good, you're getting it in the face.

Griffin: Okay. Well, alright. I'm going to abuse this mechanic, Travis. Thank you. Just so you know.

Travis: Oh no.

Clint: And Griffin, don't feel bad – you don't have nearly as much battle experience as Justin and I do, so...

Griffin: That's fair.

Justin: That's true.

Griffin: Uh, I rolled a three plus six, I guess. A big niner.

Travis: Okay. That hurts the bear very much.

Griffin: I'm gonna say that, uh—I'm gonna say that my crab, Snippers, probably doesn't qualify as a quote "strength weapon," so I won't take that bonus damage.

Travis: Yeah, that's fair. Uh, now, the bear is very bloodied at this point. And so, bear is not looking great, all things considered. And up next is the Firbolg.

Justin: Ooh. I hate this. Don't want to attack a bear.

Griffin: There's a skeleton, too.

Clint: Yeah, still a skeleton.

Justin: Yeah, I'm gonna attack the skeleton with my *shillelagh*. I'm gonna—I'm—yeah, he's not a creative fighter at this point. He's just gonna attack the skele—it worked last time. So, he's just gonna go with that. Attack, uhh... Susan? No, not Susan. Susan's the bear. Valerie?

Travis: Victoria.

Justin: Victoria. Thank you. So, that one probably is not gonna land. It is a seven plus six, so, 13?

Travis: That ties the hit, so yes.

Justin: Heyyy! Six points of damage.

Travis: Okay! Nice. Uh, so, up now is Rolandus. Oh, I should say – I don't know if a skeleton can be bloodied? Like, maybe the marrow is leaking out?

Griffin: Marrowed? Yeah. Yikes.

Travis: Sure. Marrowed? Uh, but Rolandus is going to actually step back from the bear, uh, and touch, uhh, let's say, your shoulder. How low are you on health? How many are you down, Fitzroy?

Griffin: Uh, I am down eight.

Travis: And what about you, Argo?

Clint: Down five.

Travis: Okay. Uh, he is going to touch both of your shoulders and *lay hands*, and heal you back up to your full amounts.

Griffin: Fuck yeah!

Travis: And then, then, he is going to dash away, and run away from the big bear.

Griffin: Now, he would take an attack of opportunity from the big bear. And I'm only saying that 'cause I don't care for Rolandus very much.

Travis: Yeah, so the bear does miss. Rolled a three. Um, so, he is able to dash away and get behind that crumbled column.

Griffin: Daggone it.

Travis: Now back up is the bear! I mean, he did heal you before he ran away. That was cool.

Griffin: Yeah, that was nice.

Travis: Uh, the bear is going to... now, let's see... go for a chomp with the bite on the Firbolg.

Justin: Ugh.

Travis: Oh, no. There's no way. That's a two plus six. An eight? Uh, gonna go for a bite—

Justin: No. Avoided masterfully.

Travis: Yes. And like the wind. Like wind through leaves, you avoid. Uh, and she's gonna take a swipe with her claws at you, Fitzroy. Five plus six, an 11 against AC?

Griffin: Absolutely not.

Travis: Uh, so she misses with that. And then, uh, Susan is gonna keep the chain going and aim at you, Argo. Uh, that is a seven—

Clint: [interrupting] Absolutely not! Oh. I'm jumpin' the gun.

Travis: Okay, wait, hold on. Uh, seven plus four. 11 versus AC?

Clint: So my armor class is 15.

Travis: Okay, then you avoided all three of those attacks. Good job, everyone. Uh, and we're back at the top of the order, or at least, the hero, henchperson, sidekick order for—with Argo.

Clint: While the bear is distracted, Argo is gonna jump up on its back and try to take his sling and jam it deep in its jaws.

Griffin: Whoa.

Clint: Like a bridle.

Justin: Eugh.

Travis: Okay.

Clint: And try to at least get the bear to rear up, which, I would think would expose its soft underbelly for attack from his friends.

Griffin: Love that.

Justin: Noted weak point of bears.

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: Thank you bearologist, Clint McElroy.

Griffin: Hey, there's a big eye down there! What the fuck!

Clint: I'm Marlon Perkins...

Justin: I told you that zoology minor would pay off, Mac.

Clint: I learned it from Jack—Jack Hannah taught me that.

Travis: Hey, thank you for letting me use this skill check for what I have to imagine is the most literal use of it. I'm gonna need an animal handling check, here.

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: Okay. And that is a... [laughs] It's a 19 minus one, 18.

Travis: Yes, okay. You are able to—y'know, okay. Here's what I'll say. We'll use that roll for an acrobatics check to get onto the bear's back. Because that in and of itself is up there.

Griffin: Oh, I don't think he's—I don't think he's riding the thing. He's just trying to... right?

Travis: He said he leaps on the bear's back.

Griffin: Oh okay.

Clint: Yeah.

Travis: And now, make me another animal handling check to see if you're able to control it.

Clint: So, animal handling. That is a 17. Dang, I'm gettin' some rolls.

Travis: There you go. Now it works.

Clint: Minus one.

Travis: Yeah! So you're able to make the bear rear up, uh, distracting it, and I guess—

Argo: Whoaaa!

Travis: Opening its soft underbelly. And up next is Fitzroy!

Argo: Shhh. Here.

Travis: Oh, I also should've said... Snippers did take damage and poofed into nothingness.

Griffin: That's fine, I can resummons Snip—Snippers is gonna be aight. Snippers is a spectral crab that I can summon at will and cannot be harmed or killed. So don't try and plan any big, emotional beats around me losing my fuckin' crab, 'cause it can't happen.

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: He's got plot armor. So uh, I'm gonna fully pick up on what Argo's puttin' down. Uh, I don't think I would carry a sword with me, necessarily? Because I am kind of on this like, "I'm a magic boy" thing now. But I'm gonna pick up one of the swords that the skeletons had. Right? You said they had rusted stuff?

Travis: Yep.

Griffin: Uh, and I'm going to try and ram it right into this bear's exposed weak point.

Travis: Okay. Give me, uh, an attack roll with advantage.

Griffin: That is a... uhhhh... 11 plus five?

Travis: Yep, that hits.

Griffin: 16. Cool. Now, this one...

Travis: Well, you got advantage, so if you want to roll again to see if you crit?

Griffin: No, I don't get—oh, that's right! That's right.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Uh, no, I got a 12 plus five. 17. Uh, so, that is 1d8... uh, that is a five. Plus three, plus two, 'cause I'm ragin'! I'm ragin'! So that's a ten total.

Travis: Um, so yes, you finish the bear off. Uh, and she collapses to the ground. You slide off, Argo. And then, she immediately rises back up, and now she's more like Winnie the Pooh. Seems pretty happy, and heads back into the room, and you see in there... y'know, there's a big pool to swim in, and a big jar of honey. Gets a smackerel out of it.

Griffin: We get it, Trav. It's good. It's a good set up for the bear.

Travis: It's a good set up! She has plenty of room to move around. But, still, you're face to face with Victoria, who is not looking great, but is still kickin'. Uh, and up next is the Firbolg.

Justin: I have a special attack for this. I want to hit the skeleton with my stick.

Travis: Ooh!

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: We're level one, folks. We got a very shallow quiver.

Justin: Level one, folks. Yeah, not a lot of options, here. 16 is that one, plus six. 22.

Travis: That hits. Oh, that hits real good.

Justin: Oh, 1d8 plus four! Okay, great! Well, that—that other one's extra dead, then. The one that I killed before is super dead. He's like dust.

Travis: Uh, the Firbolg crashes that staff down on Victoria. Victoria shatters into... I was about to say a million bones, but we know that's now how many bones are in the human body! We all know what that number of bones is, and there's no reason for me to say it now.

Griffin: It's one hundred. It's a round one hundred.

Travis: And she flies into exactly that many bones.

Clint: And 62.

Travis: Well...

Justin: It's 206, guys.

Travis: Some people... well.

Justin: Guys, it's 206.

Travis: Agree to disagree. And uh, you've defeated this temporary dungeon, and you feel yourselves grow warm with the pride of your accomplishment! You know you've learned some things, not just this day,

but in the past fortnight at the school. And what that means is, you're all now level three, and we'll worry about leveling your characters up later.

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: Hell yes.

Clint: Yeah!

Griffin: I just want to say, Fitzroy, when he comes down from his rage, just looks at himself covered in immortal bear juices, holding a sword, and just... is so disappointed in himself.

Jimson: You, all three of you... well, all four of you, I should say. Rolandus, you did a good job not taking over the fight and letting them carry their own weight.

Argo: [laughs] Yeah. Nice job, yeah.

Jimson: The three of you did great. I'm very proud. Your training has come along well. Uh, I look forward to you all receiving your real world assignment, and venturing out into the world to make us proud next week.

Travis: And you hear a slow clap begin, and Hieronymous Wigenstaff walks into the dungeon and says...

Hieronymous: I am also proud. I must say, the three of you are quite talented at destruction. [laughs]

Firbolg: Mmm yes.

Fitzroy: Does anyone have like a handy wipes? Or a wet—a wet nap?

Hieronymous: Oh, don't worry, Fitzroy. We've all been there when, in the midst of battle, getting dirty, getting down in the grunge...

Argo: No, let—no no, let me, let me help.

Clint: I cast *shape water*, and the water from the nearby waterfall blasts into Fitzroy, cleansing him of the goo.

Fitzroy: Thank you. Um... thank you.

Hieronymous: Ah, it's nice to see students working together!

Argo: Yes, it is nice, isn't it? [laughs]

Hieronymous: And I hear all three of you have been working so hard. Argo, I hear you've been excelling in the world of sneakery and blame taking. I hear Fitzroy, your magic is coming along nicely.

Fitzroy: Clearly.

Hieronymous: And you, Firbolg, I hear that you just won't give up on accounting. Very nice.

Firbolg: I have asked to transfer.

Clint: [laughs]

Hieronymous: You'll get it. Don't be afraid. Do you have anything you need from me? I just like to do rounds and make sure I check in with students from time to time.

Fitzroy: Oh gosh, you're gonna hate this. Those hours, though. What's up with those? Those credits, though. What's up with those? They're transferring?

Hieronymous: I promise you, Fitzroy, I will take that into account as you move forward through your time here.

Fitzroy: Great. Great. Heard it before, but still nice to get a quick sort of update. Does anyone have a dry nap, now? I hate to be a bother. A dry towel. Some sort of dry... can you cast a spell that will make dry things happen?

Argo: Hmm... nope.

Fitzroy: Unfortunate.

Hieronymous: Well, I need to be moving along. Many other classes to oversee and students to check in with. But I just wanted to say, uh, for all three of you – my door is always opens. So if you ever need help, or if you ever feel like there's something here that we can improve on, or y'know, if you ever have any issues you need addressed, you can come talk to me any time.

Argo: Is it ever open when you're not in the office?

Hieronymous: That's a strange thing to ask.

Argo: School paper. I'm working on a story for the school paper.

Fitzroy: I don't see why that would still... [laughs] I don't see why that would make him want to let you into his office—

Argo: Well, I'm just really—just making conversation.

Hieronymous: Okay.

Travis: And he eyeballs you strangely for just a second before returning to a smile and saying...

Hieronymous: I'll be moving along. You three stay out of trouble.

[theme music plays]

Travis: It is late. Far later than it should be. The sky is bright with the full moon, but there's plenty of darkness if you know where to look. We see a figure move through said darkness. Every so often, a glint of blue scales in the moonlight. He moves quietly. So quietly, to the front door of the school. He moves up the stairs, making not a sound. He reaches a door. Through the door, he finds a balcony. Sitting on the edge of the balcony is Jackle.

[music plays]

Jackle: Argonaut Keene...

Argo: Yes. What?

Jackle: Were you able to obtain it?

Argo: Aye... I obtained it. It was right where you said it was gonna be.

Travis: And Argo reaches out his hand and hands a leather-wrapped package, small, about the size of his palm, to Jackle.

Jackle: Ah! Excellent! And did anybody see you?

Argo: No. It was... in and out. No muss, no fuss. No trace. Just like a... good little thief would do.

Jackle: Excellent.

Travis: And as the moonlight glints off dark, oily feathers, the night gets a little bit colder.

[music plays]

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