

The Adventure Zone: Graduation – Ep. 11, You Can Call Me Al(thea)

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[theme music plays]

Gary: Hey, everyone! It's me, Gary. Let's see, what's been goin' on in The Adventure Zone: Graduation? Well, uh, Firbolg has been forgetting stuff, and going places and doing things, and it's really freakin' him out. So he told Fitzroy all about it. Now Fitzroy and Firbolg are workin' together. They're trying to figure that out.

Uh, let's see. Argo is trying to find out all the information he can about Fitzroy. Uh, an investigator from the Heroic Oversight Guild named Althea Song showed up, and she's askin' some questions. She showed up in the Thundermen dorm to ask them about it.

Uh, let's see, anything else? I mean, mostly, everything's just kind of weird and mysterious! No one trusts anybody. It's a whole thing. Let's see how it plays out, shall we?

[theme music plays]

Travis: So, you were able to convince the Heroic Oversight Guild representative, Althea Song, that her questions could wait 'til morning. Mostly, you did this through, y'know, Argo lying, and Fitzroy crying, and the Firbolg really not doing much of anything, and basically just kind of looking a little worn out. And she took pity upon the three of you and said she would be back tomorrow.

She also said that she would like to interview each of you individually. So, the other two are free to go about their business, but be sure to be back in time for your interview window.

Now, she has decided to begin the day with Fitzroy.

Griffin: Cool.

Clint: So do we need to come up with something that we're doing?

Travis: Well, we'll get to that. Right now, so that we are not, uh, too dispersed, we're going to focus on one scene at a time. But I will ask you what you've been doing here in a little bit, so if you want to be thinking about it, it's not a bad idea.

Justin: Hmmm.

Travis: Hmmm.

Griffin: They're probably gonna be playing Animal Crossing, if we're being honest.

Justin: I don't know how to have thoughts that aren't recorded anymore. I've been in the game too long.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: I understand.

Justin: What if I think something, and it's like, "This is somewhat entertain—this could pass for entertainment." And I'm not saying out loud. It's like, did anyone even hear it? If I think, and don't say it into a microphone...

Travis: That would be like, if you were a chef at a restaurant and you made a meal, and then just threw it away.

Justin: Right. [laughs] Thank you, yes.

Travis: I understand.

Clint: Or if a tree fell on you in the forest, and you screamed, and nobody heard it.

Travis: Well, Dad, that only fits the metaphor if you are a professional at having a tree fall on you. Like, if your job is like, "I'm here to have trees fall on me, and this time, it happened, and no one was watching." Which, don't get me wrong, Jackass exists, so maybe that is a job.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: We need them now more than ever, right?

Clint: Yes. Yes!

Griffin: Get out there, Johnny. Johnny.

Clint: Johnny!

Justin: No, get in there. Stay in there. I just—from your home.

Griffin: Johnny, I know it's gonna—just let a snake bite your nuts or something, Johnny. We need this now.

Justin: In your house. How does the snake get to his house?

Travis: In this current time, like, the Jackass guys, their dares could be like, "I'm gonna ride a public bus!"

Griffin: Yeah. "I'm going to Lowes."

Travis: Oh no! No, don't do it! For a non-essential product.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: [laughing]

Travis: Okay. So, uh, you are—Fitzroy, you're sitting at the little dining room nook in your dormitory, sitting across from the, uh, red-haired elf woman, Althea song. And she says...

Althea: Uh, you are, uh, Sir Fitzroy Maplecourt, knight in absentia of the realm of Goodcastle. Is that correct?

Fitzroy: That is so correct, and it sounds so nice to hear someone actually say the whole thing out loud. Um, I've only heard it in my own voice, which I find quite sonorous and pleasant, but um... to hear it slip between another's lips is, um... it is exquisite, and I appreciate the effort.

Althea: Well, we do our best at the Heroic Oversight Guild to be accurate and respectful. So, um, first, before we get to any kind of official questions, I'd like to get to know a little bit about you, Fitzroy. So what is it that brought you to this fine institution?

Fitzroy: Umm... well, fate, I guess you could call it. Destiny, maybe, if you prefer that name. Why does anyone... go anywhere, or do anything? If you want to think about it that way, Althea. Uh, if you don't mind me using your first name.

So... I mean, there was also a magical sort of... cataclysm that may have resulted in the dean of a particular knight-based academy becoming a... muck-dwelling fish, for like, a minute there. And it's like, not even a big deal. And we're so cool about it.

Althea: Yeah, excuse me, Sir Fitzroy. Let me go ahead and stop you there.

Fitzroy: Yeah.

Althea: Uh, I am aware of the events. You were a student at Clyde Nite's Night Knight School, and you turned, uh, the dean of the school into a catfish. I am aware.

Fitzroy: And it's funny. And like, we laugh about it now. Like, now, when we get together and talk about it, like, we laugh about it, because it's fun. Like, it's water under the bridge. It's so funny.

Althea: I've spoken to Sylvia Nite about it, and she doesn't necessarily find it as funny as you do. But...

Fitzroy: Inside joke, really. Like, an inside joke between friends and colleagues.

Althea: Ah. But what I was really asking is, what... not the events, but more, the motivation of what brought you to this school.

Fitzroy: Well, I had to go to some school, didn't I? Gotta get some learnin' in—

Althea: But why?

Fitzroy: So I can become a better knight, and serve the realm of Goodcastle to the utmost of my, y'know, my half-elven abilities.

Althea: I see.

Fitzroy: So, uh, yes. I—I mean, I guess I could've just sailed overseas, or over land, or... to—to—across the skies, or to another plane or planet. I'm not entirely sure where Goodcastle is, so secretive is its location, for its own safety and security. But um, I figured, y'know, why not make something of myself before then?

Althea: Well, uh, that leads me to my next question. You speak of 'make something of yourself.' Is this a family tradition? Does your family have a history of heroing, or villaining, or sidekicking, or...

Fitzroy: Oh, sure. Sure. Sure.

Althea: Really?

Fitzroy: Big—ohh, sure. Biiig history. Why—how do you think we acquired such vast sums of fame and fortune?

Althea: Well, because... I've been going through the Heroic Oversight Guild records, and I can't find mention of a Maplecourt—

Fitzroy: We're from the other Heroic Oversight Guild. The other one. Y'know how there's another one, like a competing guild?

Althea: No.

Fitzroy: Ohh. [laughs] Yikes, you may want to uh, hire a few more sort of investigators, uh, to your little group, because let's just say... there's some fierce competition out there! And the heroes and villains that they're churnin' out, baby, you would not believe how—and I'm sorry I just said baby. I don't—that's—I don't own that. That's not me. Um, but... you make me very nervous.

Althea: Why? I'm not here to judge, or to get anyone in trouble. I am merely gathering information.

Fitzroy: Okay. Well, uhh, yep. So, big family. Lots of heroes and villains, and... that's my... final answer.

Althea: I see. Now, uh, you are now on the villain track, I see in your records. And so, once you become a professional villain, I know that you will be registering with the Heroic Oversight Guild. Tell me, what do you know about HOG?

Fitzroy: Um... well, I mean, that is assuming I don't go with the shadow guild. Uh, which—oops, I've said too much already. But should I—should I go with HOG, um, I assume that I will be... instantly rewarded with vast sums of... fame and fortune? I'm not entirely sure, uh, how it works on your side of things.

Althea: Ah. Well, let me clarify that point, because I think that that is an important one. Uh, the Heroic Oversight Guild is not in charge of

compensation. That will be negotiated with whatever township or principality or whatever location you end up being hired as a professional villain for.

The Heroic Oversight Guild is there to make sure that you behave within, uh, the structures, the rules and legalities, of being a professional villain or hero, to make sure that, you know, you stay on the straight and narrow, as it were. Whether that means being the right kind of villain, or the right kind of hero. Uh, and should you stray from the path, uh, well, the Heroic Oversight Guild is there to gently guide you back, or in some cases, take slightly extreme measures, comparatively. But I'm sure that we will have no issues with you. And we look for—

Fitzroy: I mean... it sounds like you're trying to put the Thunderman in a box. And... Thunderman don't fit in a box. I believe you'll find that out about Thunderman. He is not... a uniform, box shape. So... we'll ha—

Althea: I'm so sorry. Thunderman?

Fitzroy: Yees. Oh, sorry, I was answering to you saying my powerful name.

Althea: Ohh. You are—you are Thunderman. Let me just make a quick note of that.

Fitzroy: Well, my friends call me Sir Fitzroy Maplecourt, knight in absentia in the realm of Goodcastle.

Althea: Speaking of friends, um... I know that right now, you are the registered villain at the school, and uh, that Argonaut Keene and Master Firbolg are serving as your, uh, permanent sidekicks while here at the school. Will they be, uh, traveling with you once you graduate as well? Have you made plans in that way?

Fitzroy: Uh, we like to keep it more fluid around here. More jazz-like, with our long term planning. I mean, right now, we've got a great thing going on. We have a fantastic thing going on. My CFO is always crackin' the books, trying to ink out every little bit of gold and copper and coin that we can

possibly squeeze into our coffers, and Argo is doing... something. Equally vital, I'm sure. And... but y'know, they understand this is a business, and the wheels of business are powerful and strong, and they will grind you up if you sleep on it for just even a second. They will turn you into jelly. And then you will become lubricant for the great machine. And we all know this! Like, we all know this.

Althea: Of course.

Fitzroy: Also, like, right now, it's great, but they do know if they slip up even for a second, bada bing, bada boom, they're business lube. So...

Althea: Well, you'll just want to make sure, once you begin your professional work, that you do register them as, uh, your sidekicks, or henchpeople, if you prefer, so that they will be afforded all of their rights and protections and all of that stuff. You understand. You know how the guild rules work.

Fitzroy: Uh, I think I actually just explicitly stated that I don't, but I am a quick learner, so... don't worry about that.

Althea: Excellent. So, now, down to business, Sir Fitzroy.

Fitzroy: This hasn't been bus—what has this been, if not business?!

Althea: This has simply been a getting to know you session.

Fitzroy: Okay.

Althea: What has your experience at the school been like?

Fitzroy: Awesome. Awesome. The... tutelage is top notch. Uh, there's... a lot of... there's not a lot of bugs. There's not a lot of bugs all over, and they do—there's working—the plumbing is just, works. And you can rely on that. And that's fantastic.

Griffin: I'm like, anxiously looking around as Gary—is there a Gary in this room?

Travis: Oh yes.

Griffin: Okay.

Fitzroy: Aw, and it's good, and I'm havin' a real good time. No real serious problems that I can think of. I'm surprised.

Althea: Ah, if I may...

Fitzroy: Mm.

Althea: I sense that, perhaps, you are worried about, uh, some listening in. You needn't worry about that.

Travis: And she taps, uh, a silver ring on the index finger of her left hand, and when she taps it, there is a slight, blue glow. And she says...

Althea: This provides just a little bit of privacy for these kinds of chats, so you needn't worry about anyone listening in.

Fitzroy: Cool. Can I get one of them? Do you have an extra one of them?

Althea: No, I'm sorry. These are Heroic Oversight Guild issued, only to investigators.

Fitzroy: Okay. I would looove to get my hands on one of them, though, if I can put in like, a request, or if there's like, an online order form...

Althea: Well, perhaps one day...

Fitzroy: Like a sort of Sharper Image.

Althea: ... you could become an investigator like me, and then you would be issued one as well.

Fitzroy: M'kay. My needs are a bit more immediate than that. Um, things aren't going so great at the schoool? Things aren't going so great at the school. Did you get—did you get, perhaps, a letter from a student here, um, requesting help, and then, maybe that student doesn't... live... anymore?

[music plays]

Althea: Well, the nature of my investigation, the details, uh... are not exactly for public consumption at this time. Suffice it to say that we—we did receive, uh, perhaps, a message with some concerns. But beyond that, I am not at liberty to share.

Fitzroy: Yes, I may have goaded on that said student to share said concerns, and may have led to said... extinguishing... of said student's... said lifespan. And so...

Althea: I see.

Fitzroy: That's where I'm at. Little bit—little bit—little paranoid. Wasn't kidding about the bugs and plumbing. That's all top notch, but the fear of my... being killed while I sleep, orrr... being brainwashed into, y'know, jumping into the Godscar Chasm, or a dragon's mouth...

Althea: Excuse me – brainwashed, you say?

Fitzroy: Yeahhh. Yeah, that's kind of the going... theory. Um... the going concern. Uh, yeah. Yeah, that's sort of where I'm at.

Althea: That's a very serious concern, Sir Fitzroy. That... that would break, mm, one of the most major tenants of the Heroic Oversight Guild.

Fitzroy: Don't brainwash. That's a good tenant. Yeah, for sure.

Althea: Well, the thing is... even the most villainous of villains is not allowed to compromise someone's free will.

Fitzroy: Um, yeah, I think there's maybe someone who's havin' a little bit of fun with the laws. With those rules. So, may want to look into that. Wow. Don't know about the shadow guild. Don't know about all the brainwashin'. I'm just saying, maybe you need to step up your investigation game a little bit, huh?

Althea: I see.

Fitzroy: That was rude. You make me so nervous. I'm sorry I keep talking to you like that.

Althea: You needn't be nervous, Sir Fitzroy. We are on the same side, it seems. Well, this has been very informative. Thank you so much. Uh, if you would, please, on your way out, be sure to send Argonaut Keene in.

Fitzroy: Okay. Are you going to like, leave after this, or—because as nervous as you make you, you do make me feel a certain level of security being here that I have not felt for... a few days now. So, I don't know if you're gonna be like, on campus investigator, like a sort of like, um... y'know, HR rep for the HOG, if you will. That would be fantastic. Um...

Althea: Well... if what you have told me is true, in combination with the concerns that brought me here, I think that my time here will continue for the foreseeable future.

Fitzroy: Okay, cool. Let me just... okay. Sorry. I just unclenched my butt cheeks for the first time in like, three weeks, and it's fantastic.

Althea: [laughs] I understand.

Fitzroy: Which one of those two knuckleheads did you want again?

Althea: Argo. But—

Fitzroy: Okay.

Althea: Sir Fitzroy, before you go... one last thing.

Fitzroy: Yes. Mm.

Althea: If you have any other concerns, if there's anything that bothers you, do not hesitate to talk to me about it. Do you understand?

Fitzroy: Um, yeah. Sure. Um... I'm trying to think, like... plumbing, bugs... they keep taking my cloak away, but that seems a little bit like, way below your pay grade. No yeah, everything else is great. I mean, they got crepes. Yeah, it's really just the brainwashing and murder. Like, that's it, really.

Althea: Well, those are fair concerns. Thank you so much.

[music plays]

Travis: Before we begin Argonaut's session... Firbolg, what have you been doing while Fitzroy has been meeting with Althea Song?

Justin: Uh, well, I wanted to talk to Gary.

Travis: Okay. Just to like, have a friendly chat? Like... what does this coffee remind you of? Ah, that little bistro in Venice. Jean Claude.

Justin: I want to talk—well, I mean, do I have to tell you what the conversation is gonna be about? Or should I have the conversation? Would that be better?

Travis: No, but I—there are—so there are multiple Garys, uh, throughout campus.

Justin: Doesn't matter, right? Shouldn't matter.

Travis: They are all—so, as a quick, brief reminder about the Garys, they are a hive mind. But they do have individual, uh, like, consciousnesses as well. They just share the information that they have, if that makes sense.

Justin: Yeah, um... I want to talk—what's the closest Gary to Higglemas' office?

Travis: Um, there is an outside Gary at the front.

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: Yes, there are inside Garys and outside Garys. It just depends on their potty training. [laughs]

Justin: Upstairs, downstairs... yeah. Got it.

Travis: Yeah. There is, uh, there is a Gary stationed at the entrance to the Henchperson and Sidekick Annex.

Justin: Yeah, let me talk to that Gary real quick.

Gary: Ayy, Master Firbolg! How's it goin'? It's me, Outside Gary. I'm the Annex Gary. Hi.

Firbolg: Uh... greetings.

Gary: Okay.

Firbolg: I... was wondering if I could ask... a... strange question.

Gary: Ayy, listen, buddy, no question is too strange! No strange questions, only strange answers! [laughs] Y'know?

Firbolg: This is not... uh...

Griffin: [laughs]

Firbolg: Worth... arguing about. [sighs] But... here... [sighs] Did you... see me?

Justin: Would this be yesterday at this point, Trav? Or—

Travis: Yes.

Justin: What's our timeframe? Okay.

Travis: Yes. So, yesterday, in the timeframe of the recording versus the timeframe of the game, yesterday was in the last session when you did approach Higglemas' office, and then, woke up sometime later, under a tree.

Justin: Okay.

Firbolg: Did you... see me... yesterday?

Gary: Yeah, I saw you.

Firbolg: There is, um... a magic... or... I don't know the word. But... I don't remember. Yesterday. This—this part. What... what did you see? What did I do?

Gary: Oh, uh... well, it was pretty straightforward to me. You kind of came wandering in. Uh, y'know. You went in, you were inside for... I don't know, uh, 15, 20 minutes, maybe. You came back out, and you kind of wandered away. And then, uh, you kind of went off in the distance there. I could just barely see ya. You laid down under that tree and took a nap.

Firbolg: Ah. Hm... I did nothing... strange? Did I have... a carry anything, or...

Gary: Well, I mean, you... you didn't say hi back when I said hi. I don't know if that's strange, or just rude. Um... you were kind of out of it, y'know? Your eyes half closed. I just assumed you were a real sleepy boy.

Firbolg: [sighs] Did I... hm. Well... I—did you notice anything else... strange yesterday?

Gary: Huh. Anything else strange yesterday. Um... I mean, I could check with the other Garies? Yeah? Give me two seconds.

Travis: And his little stone eyes close, and they pop back open, and he goes...

Gary: Uhh... listen, you didn't hear this from us, but uh... while you were in Higglemas' office, Higglemas' Gary was out of commission? Asleep? For that 20 minutes. So... we're not sure what y'all were talkin' about. Uh, but uh, he's not normally... we don't go to sleep. We're statues. Y'know, so we don't really require... a lot of sleep, per se. Sooo... yeah, that—I guess that's strange? Does that count?

Firbolg: Um... what do you mean?

Gary: Well, I mean, it would take some pretty powerful magic to put a statue to sleep, wouldn't you think? [laughs]

Firbolg: I have no frame of reference for this.

Gary: Oh, okay. Let me make it a statement, then. It would take some pretty powerful magic to put a statue to sleep. Period.

Firbolg: Yes.

Gary: Yes, that's it. That time, it was a statement of fact, rather than kind of a rhetorical question.

Firbolg: Yes. Hm. Hm... What do you think happened?

Gary: Well, I mean, I just figured you've had a pretty standard, y'know, appointment. You've come wanderin' in here, uh, and wanderin' out about every other day. So I didn't really think that much about it.

Firbolg: Every oth... every other day?

Gary: Yeah, thereabouts. I mean, sometimes it's every three days. Uh, but yeah, about every other day.

Firbolg: [pause] [clears throat] I have a... favor.

Gary: Aw, like a favor between buddies?

Firbolg: Ah, yes. A buddy favor.

Gary: We're buddies?!

Firbolg: Now we are forged in the fires of buddies.

Gary: Yeah!!

Firbolg: If you see me walk this way again... I need you to ask the other Garies... to find... Fitzroy.

Gary: Okay!

Firbolg: And make him stop me.

Gary: Ohh. Okay! Now, listen, if I do this for you, you need to do a favor for me.

Firbolg: What do you ask in return, the oldest form of currency from time in memorial, favors between buddies?

Gary: Could you get me a little hat?

Griffin: [laughs]

Firbolg: It would be my great honor...

Gary: Thank you. Something with a big brim.

Firbolg: To procure a...

Gary: It gets real bright out here.

Firbolg: A little hat with a big brim.

Gary: Yeah, that would be great! Or maybe like, some little sunglasses, or... just something. I don't want to be squintin' all day, y'know? The sun hits from about, like, ten AM to like, three. It's just right in my eyes.

Firbolg: I will do this for you.

Gary: Hey, you're the best, buddy. Yeah, I'll make sure, uh... tell Fitzroy. I'll pass it through the Garies. If we see you go in, get Fitzroy, make him stop ya.

Firbolg: Thank you.

Gary: Hey, no problem... buddy!

Firbolg: Yes. Buddy.

Gary: Yeees, buddy.

[music plays]

Travis: So! It's time. We're back in the dormitory. Argo, you have arrived for your questioning session. Now, tell me, what's, uh... how do you approach the table? You enter, you see Althea sitting at the table. She says...

Althea: Ah, yes! Argonaut Keene. Please, join me.

Argo: Um, certainly. Yes. Um, I would be happy to. I was just out... takin' a little stroll. Findin' out the news of the day. [laughs nervously]

Althea: Okay, well then, you're gonna need to walk over here to the table.

Argo: Oh! Well, yes. Okay. So...

Clint: He walks over to the table, and looks and says...

Argo: Um, may I sit?

Althea: Oh, yes please.

Clint: And he sits.

Althea: May I offer you something to drink? Some tea, perhaps? I don't know, a beverage of your choice. I can summon whatever you want.

Argo: Juice? Do you have any kind of juice?

Althea: Sure. What kind of juice would you like?

Argo: Um... do you have tangelo?

Althea: I do!

Argo: I love tangelos.

Travis: And she waves her hand, and a frosty glass of tangelo juice appears.

Argo: Ooh! Still a little frothy! I like that.

Althea: Yep. It's fresh.

Argo: I like that in a juice! Yes! Wait, let me try it. [sips noisily] Oh, good. Just the right amount of pulp.

Griffin: Damn, this is a rich tapestry.

Travis: Yeah.

Althea: So, Argonaut.

Argo: Yes.

Althea: I—before we get down to brass tacks, as they say, I'd like to get to know a little bit about you. I don't like going straight to business. I feel like it's cold.

Argo: Yeah! Sure, absolutely. What would you like to know?

Althea: So what is it that has brought you here to the school?

Argo: Uh, well, um... I just, uh—I have uh, had a dream, where I want to, uh... I've always wanted to work with The Commodore. The great naval hero. You know The Commodore.

Althea: Yes, of course. Yes, he is one of the Heroic Oversight Guild's prized heroes.

Argo: Yes, and to me as well. And uh... I've just admired him since the day I met him, and it's uh—

Althea: Oh?

Argo: It's just been a dream. Hm?

Althea: When did you meet him?

Argo: Oh, well, uh, he and my mother used to work together. They, uh... well, my mother kind of worked with him. For him, uh, in the past.

Althea: Oh, I see. Was she a sidekick or a henchperson?

Argo: Oh no, no no no. Uh, you see... ah, boy. You wanna hear the whole story?

Althea: Oh! Yes, please!

Argo: Alright. My mother, uh, Shebrie Keene, uh, used to work on a narwhaler. Y'know, the ships that go out and hunt narwhals.

Althea: That's a disgusting, disgusting job.

Argo: I know. It's a terrible job. And there was an incident, and uh, in—as the aftermath of that incident, my mother decided she didn't want to do that anymore. And she—and I say this with pride. I mean, it sounds bad, but I say it with a lot of pride. She, uh... she kind of led a mutiny.

Althea: Oh!

Argo: Onboard the ship. And they didn't want to hunt narwhals anymore, and uh, she was able to sway the whole crew, and um, we even convinced the former captain to join us. And um... my mother, from that day forward, was forever changed, and she uh... we became privateers, workin', y'know, for the crown. Actin' like pirates, but workin' for the crown. And in doing that, we kind of uh... we were workin' with The Commodore. He was kind of our official liaison to the Navy, and uh, that's how I first met him.

Althea: Ah, I see.

Griffin: Um, there's only one kind of incident that happens on a narwhal hunting boat, right? Like, somebody for sure got impaled by a narwhal tusk. I can't think of—

Travis: There might've been like... this narwhal was special. This was like a Free Willy level narwhal.

Griffin: All narwhals are special, Trav.

Clint: Well, actually, she fell in. His mom fell in.

Travis: [gasps]

Clint: Uh, to the water while they were hunting. While they were hunting the narwhals. And uh, he—Argo jumped in, 'cause he can breathe water, and his mother obviously couldn't. And before he could do anything, the narwhal surfaced, and there was his mom, standing on the nose of the narwhal, holdin' onto the horn, and she was just a changed woman after that. And she just couldn't bring herself to kill these beautiful creatures, so... [fake crying] They did have a little—it had a Free Willy thing to it.

Travis: It's not actually a horn. It's actually a specialized tooth.

Griffin: Get 'em, Trav! Brap brap brap brap! Get him!

Travis: It's a specialized tusk. But anyway.

Griffin: Burn that daddy! Scorch him!

Clint: Thank you, Jack Hannah.

Travis: You're welcome. Please, Jeff Corwin.

Althea: So, um... now, Argo, once you graduate, your plan to be, it sounds like, a professional sidekick to The Commodore?

Argo: Oh yes. That is the goal. That's the only thing I'm fixed on. And nothing else is gonna make me happy.

Althea: Well, that is a lofty goal. Um, good luck. Good luck in that. And uh...

Argo: Thank you.

Althea: As you know, I am a representative of the Heroic Oversight Guild. Tell me, what do you know about HOG?

Argo: Mm, uh... well, uhh... nothin'. I don't know... really. I'm sittin' here thinkin', and uh, I'm gonna do a um...

Clint: A knowledge check.

Travis: Okay. Uh, so give me a history check.

Clint: 'Kay. That's... a six plus three. That's a nine.

Travis: Okay. Well, not great. You know that the Heroic Oversight Guild, uh, is in charge of heroes and villains. And you know, like, the basics. You know that the Heroic Oversight Guild exists to make sure that no villain ever goes too dark, and that every hero stays in the light. Um, you also know that they have some kind of, uh, like, influence, and that they're in charge of sidekicks and henchpeople in some way, but you're not exactly sure what they do for sidekicks and henchpeople.

Clint: And I know their badges say HOG, which I think is rather unfortunate.

Travis: Yes.

Clint: That, y'know, in retrospect, maybe they should've changed. But uh... yes, I uh, tell her back what you just told me that I knew.

Althea: Well, I will tell you this, specifically for you, because you will need to know this. There are two ways that one can become a registered sidekick or henchperson for a hero or villain. Uh, way number one is that you would have some kind of connection with said hero or villain, and they would specifically request you as a sidekick or henchperson.

The other pathway is through placement, where you would register with the Heroic Oversight Guild. You would fill out a couple forms, you would do some questionnaires, and then a couple interviews. And you could request said

hero or villain, and we would see if the pairing makes sense for both parties, if the hero or villain was even looking for new sidekicks or henchpeople. But if your first choice wouldn't work out, we would then place you with another hero or villain that we think would be a good fit. But you would, of course, have the final say.

Argo: Um... okay. Fine. But um, I would probably say no to anybody else, because this is my dream. This is—listen, I have dedicated my entire life to achievin' this.

Althea: Well...

Argo: And so, y'know, I'm gonna do whatever I can. Can I pursue both routes? I mean, can I go both ways?

Althea: Certainly. If you would like... um, in fact, Argo, I respect your dedication and your hard work, and I would be happy. I actually know The Commodore personally.

Argo: Get out! You do not!

Althea: Yes. Yes. We have worked together before on cases and investigations. I would be happy to put in a word for you, if you'd like.

Argo: Uh, yeah. Y'know what, let's... Miss Althea—

Althea: Please, just Althea.

Argo: Althea, I really... y'know what? I want to earn this. I want to make this happen on my own. I don't want any special treatment. I don't want any favors. For the time bein', don't say anything to him. Let's see if I can become the kind of sidekick that a Commodore deserves. And if, then, if I do that, then I say we get in touch with him. Is that okay?

Althea: I respect that even more. I think that that sounds like a plan. Now, Argo, this has been such a pleasure chatting with you, but I do need to get

down to business and ask you a couple questions about the reason I came here to the school.

Argo: Sure. Sure.

Althea: First, how has your experience been here? Has it been satisfactory?

Argo: Yeah, it's been satisfactory. I'd say I'd give it a... y'know, a six outta ten? If that, y'know, makes any sense to ya. I mean, I've got some concerns, and some... y'know, there's—

Althea: Oh.

Argo: A lot of good stuff. There's more good stuff than bad stuff.

Althea: Well, I'm happy to hear that, but could you share with me some of your concerns?

Argo: Ah... well, there—listen. It's personal. It—I got me two roommates.

Althea: Uh-huh.

Argo: And y'know, they're great fellas. They're really... they're really good, and they really seem to have really kind of, y'know, connected. They've got... okay, they're both CEO and CFO of this... Thunderman thing, and I don't have a title. And it bothers me.

Althea: I see.

Argo: I—I—I kind of... y'know, I was kind of thinkin' CCO, which is, y'know, like, over communications? 'Cause I'm a—y'know, I fancy myself as a little bit of a writer.

Althea: Oh?

Argo: But I don't know, I'm kind of the odd man out. Y'know, with the two fellas. And it's, uh... y'know, like I said, it's not a big thing. It's just a fittin' in, y'know, kind of thing. I've never been one to make friends fast. But y'know, I feel a little left out. Especially at the meetings. Y'know, they all get to make official reports, and I just sit there, writin' all the stuff down. Eh, y'know...

Travis: She sits down her writing utensil for a moment, and she says...

Althea: Now, Argo, this isn't necessarily within my prevue. But... have you spoken with them directly? Have you told them that you feel left out, that you would like to be closer friends? Have you... opened up to them?

Argo: Well... here's the thing. I think Fitz thinks I'm kind of an idiot.

Althea: Hm.

Argo: And uh, Firbolg... I don't know what the hell he's sayin' most of the time. And uh, y'know, conversations with him tend to take a long time. Um, so... no, I guess I really haven't especially. I didn't want to seem like a baby. I didn't want to, y'know, be a whiny baby.

Althea: Oh, Argo... expressing yourself and opening yourself up and telling others how you feel... that's not whiny. That's not a baby. That's the thing that allows us to grow closer to others. And let me just say – I don't think you're a dummy, Argo. I think you are not giving yourself enough credit. But i—I'm sorry, we have gotten off topic. If I may, one last question.

Argo: Sure, sure.

Althea: Is there anything...

Argo: And thank you. Thank you, by the way, for the compliment. I appreciate that.

Althea: Oh, of course.

Argo: So far, all I've been complimented on is like, uh, like, stealing things, and killing. It's nice to get a compliment on, y'know... bein' smart.

Althea: This is—uh, I thank you for bringing this up, because this was another question I had, which was, do you feel that you, as a sidekick or henchperson, are being treated fairly here at the school?

Argo: Oh, yes. Oh yeah. Y'know, I uh... [clears throat] It's more than I, y'know, anticipated on some levels. And uh, less on others. So... but y'know what? Surprise keeps us alive. Y'know? Changin' up the speed, changin' up the action. It keeps it interesting, and by golly, I gotta tell ya, it's interesting here. But no, no, I think everybody's treated me, y'know, fairly well. No complaints.

Althea: Well, Argo, before I let you go, I do have one more question.

Argo: Mm-hmmmm?

Althea: I realize that this is going to sound very ambiguous, and I apologize for that. But it sounds that way because there is no wrong answer. There is no answer too small to this question, and that is... since you have arrived here, in your time here at the school, have you seen anything strange?

Argo: Everything I've seen at this school is strange. [laughs] They got skeletons bringin' drinks to people, and there's imps turnin' into bats and vice-versa, and... everything about this place is strange! [laughs]

Althea: Sorry. [laughs quietly] I do see my mistake there. Please, allow me to clarify. In an environment like this, with a school where magic is taught, and battles play out, and there is weirdness happening all the time... then, that becomes the baseline for ordinary. So then, I guess my question would become... what have you seen that you would consider, after observing what daily life is like here at the school... anything out of the ordinary?

Argo: Huh. [pause] Uh... no. I sure haven't. No, I uhh... no. Can't think anything, uh, above or below that baseline of generally weird and magic and

creatures and uh... no, I'd say it's uh, been pretty much, uh... straight, uh, straight down the line.

Althea: I see. Well, Argo, thank you so much. It's been a pleasure speaking with you.

Argo: Oh, my pleasure!

Althea: Now, I would ask that, if anything does come to mind that would be out of the ordinary, that you'd talk to me, uh, and tell me what it might be. This is very important. Do you understand, Argo?

Argo: Oh yes. Oh, I understand completely. I think—I think... I have a very, very good handle on what you're saying to me... and uh, and purpose for this conversation.

Justin: Narrator: He doesn't.

Griffin: [laughs]

Althea: Thank you so much, and would you please send in Master Firbolg when you see him?

Argo: Okay, but don't be in a hurry, because like I said, 15, 20 minute conversations at the least.

[music plays]

Travis: So, uh, Fitzroy. During this period of time, what have you been doing during Argo's question session?

Griffin: Um... I think I... hm. Um, I'd like to find out more about Althea, and I don't know, like, what that necessarily means. Whether it's like, doing some... doing some research in the library about HOG, or uh, talking to somebody who might know more about Althea. But like, this—I think that my paranoia, now that I have been away from this situation for, y'know, 15

minutes or whatever, has started to spike back up, and now I'm realizing like, "Oh Jesus, I just told this stranger everything." Um...

Travis: Well, who at the school do you trust enough to talk to about this?

Griffin: Oh, yeah, no one. Uh, so... hm. I mean, I don't even know who would know enough about HOG. Maybe, uh, Festo?

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: I mean, Festo is a tenured professor here.

Travis: Correct.

Griffin: So I think I would be... I think under the guise of like, going to like, work on some spell, and then trying to just sort of like... y'know, sidestep into it.

Travis: Uh, you arrive at Festo's office, and you find them asleep on their desk, underneath some—it looks like, possibly, like, student test papers, but that they have like, crumpled up into a little pillow, and maybe are using as sheets and stuff, and they're a little wrinkled.

Griffin: I'll come back later. [laughs]

Festo: Oh! Is that—is that you, Fitzroy?

Fitzroy: Uh, yes, Festo. It is I. I apologize for, um, interrupting your hard-earned slumbers.

Festo: Oh, that's alright. I was just sleeping it off.

Fitzroy: Yes, it's important. Uh, a little, uh... little hair of the dog. But sleep. That's nothing. Um, can I come in?

Festo: Well, no, I am extremely hung-over.

Fitzroy: Yes. Fantastic.

Festo: From partying! I didn't know if that was clear or not.

Fitzroy: No, it was clear. I'm worried that you... you are a little bit single-minded about your desire to sort of rage all the time.

Festo: I see you don't know much about the faerie folk!

Fitzroy: I clearly do not.

Festo: I am actually fairly restrained, as far as faeries go!

Fitzroy: [laughs] Good lord.

Festo: Yes.

Fitzroy: Okay. Well, I'll need to be even more careful out in those Unknown Woods, huh? Because I do not want to stumble into a rave that I will not survive.

Festo: Absolutely! They would... hoo! Oh boy, you wouldn't even make it one hour out there with faeries with no self-control!

Fitzroy: Yeah, tell me about it. Um...

Festo: That's why there aren't very many professional faerie folk!

Fitzroy: Uh, well then, I admire your tenacity.

Festo: Thank you!

Fitzroy: And it is that tenacity I have come to you today to employ, because I'm havin' some trouble with a spell, and that's why I came here. To work on that spell, and that spell...

Festo: Oh?

Fitzroy: Yes. Um... y'know, uh, let me see here... uh, *Disguise Self*?

Festo: Oh, yes!

Fitzroy: Yeah. Oh, it's a tough nut to crack, isn't it?

Festo: It can be a tricky one!

Fitzroy: Yeah, let's work on that. And while we're working on that – hey, do you know anything about Althea Song?

Festo: What an awkward transition!

Fitzroy: It felt normal to me.

Festo: [giggles]

Fitzroy: So yeah, do you know anything about her? Because she's, uh—I just noticed her today on campus for like, no reason, and...

Festo: Mmm.

Fitzroy: And it seems strange that someone—I mean, do visitors often stop by from the HOG?

Festo: Um, it's been a while. Y'know, when things are running smoothly, they let us go about our business!

Fitzroy: Okay. Um... uhh, so, do you know anything about her, like, specifically? Or what's up?

Festo: I know about Althea!

[pause]

Fitzroy: Okay. Uhh... next question – can you tell me those things?

Festo: Oh! You want to know a little bit about her!

Fitzroy: Yeah, like, what's the dish? What's the goss? What's the—

Festo: She is an investigator with the Heroic Oversight Guild!

Fitzroy: Festo.

Festo: Yes?

[pause]

Fitzroy: I know this.

Festo: Uh-huh.

Fitzroy: I'm talkin' about the goss!

Festo: Ohh!

Fitzroy: I want you to dish the dish! What's the skinny?

Festo: You want the hot goss!

Fitzroy: I want the hot, dripping wet goss!

Festo: I see! Well... Althea... is an investigator with the Heroic—

Fitzroy: Festo.

Festo: Yes?

Fitzroy: That's not goss! That's a fact! That's a fact. It's on her—look at this.

Griffin: And I pull out her business card.

Fitzroy: It's on her business card. If it's on a business card—

Festo: That's a beautiful business card! I like the embossing!

Fitzroy: It's incredible. But if it's on a business card, Festo, it's not goss. So give me the dish. What is the skinny? What is the scoop?

Travis: Uh, and they pull out a tiny little flask, and they take a big swig. A biiig, faerie-sized swig.

Griffin: Yeah.

Festo: Well... she is, uh, from what I understand...

Fitzroy: If you say an investigator for the—

Festo: No, no.

Fitzroy: —Heroic Oversight Guild...

Festo: That is on her business card, as you have pointed out. I'm not— Festo only does bits twice. No rule of threes for Festo.

Fitzroy: Sure.

Festo: Um, she is one of the prized investigators. She tends to be the one that they send on very important missions. Uh, she has worked her way up through, uh, the ranks of the Heroic Oversight Guild. Um... I've always liked her. She seems cool. She seems fun to party with. She's nice.

Fitzroy: Really? Okay. I guess—to frame this... are they here for... our benefit? The student body? Or are they like, your boss, checking in to make sure that *you're* doing the—

Festo: Do you mean Althea, or the Heroic Oversight Guild itself?

Fitzroy: I guess Althea, in this specific context. Is she here to make sure that you all are doing—when she stops in on y'all class, do you get a little bit nervous that you need to like, really crush it?

Festo: Yes.

Fitzroy: Okay. Excellent.

Festo: But I mean, Festo always crushes it.

Fitzroy: That's true, Festo. I'm always saying that.

Festo: Yes.

Fitzroy: Anyway, I think I got *Disguise Self*. You were right, the magic was in me all along, and... crushed. Did a good job.

Festo: It's... Fitzzy? [pause] Can I ask you a—

Fitzroy: What?

Festo: Fitzzy?

Fitzroy: Oh, no.

Festo: No?

Fitzroy: Mm-hmm.

Festo: How about just Roy?

Fitzroy: Uhh... oh, no.

Festo: FM?

Fitzroy: Sure.

Festo: FM, can I ask you a question?

Fitzroy: That's only fair.

Festo: Um, Festo is not always good at picking up on social cues.

Fitzroy: Mm-hmm.

Clint: [laughs]

Festo: But are you asking if you can trust Althea Song?

Fitzroy: Oh, yes.

Festo: Yyyes.

Fitzroy: You—somehow, you turned that into a two syllable word, which makes me think you didn't actually mean it.

Festo: In Festo's experience, Althea has always done right by Festo. She is kind and true. But... she is also committed to the Heroic Oversight Guild, and committed to doing her job. Festo does not know if Althea would put person first, or job first.

Fitzroy: That is helpful. Thank you, Festo.

Festo: Now—

Fitzroy: Abrakazam!!

Griffin: And I disappear.

Festo: [gasps] I still see you.

Fitzroy: I ducked behind a desk, yes.

Festo: Yes. But that was—it was good bit!

Fitzroy: Yeah, thank you.

[music plays]

Travis: Now, before the Firbolg's question session, the Thundermen have a date with the battlegrounds. As the three of you approach, you see the hero and villain trainer, Frostus "Crush" Crushman, sitting in the center of the battlegrounds.

All three of you, make a history check for me.

Justin: Sorry, my dice are frozen to my desk from disuse. There's a thick layer of dust on them I have to—

Travis: Hey, listen, y'know, some episodes are about action, and some episodes, you just need to do a little character building, okay Justin?

Justin: Oh, they disintegrated!

Travis: Oh no.

Justin: Oh no, the molecules! They've lost structural...

Travis: Roll the dice of your mind.

Griffin: I got a nine minus one. Eight.

Travis: Not great.

Griffin: Well, not a great brain.

Justin: [laughs] It's a fine brain. Uh, 16 plus zero. Which is a fancy way of saying 16.

Travis: Yes.

Clint: 16 plus three, which is a fancy way of saying 19.

Justin: Here he goes.

Travis: Okay. So, I'm going to say, uh, that uh, Argo and... well, actually, I know why Argo knows this. Because in the first episode, it was established that Argo was a fan of Jimson and Crush's time in the arena. And so, I assume that, uh, Argo has been talking about the trainers in the dormitory. So, all three of you know this.

Frostus "Crush" Crushman is a former arena champion in the heavyweight division. He is a silver Dragonborn, and he fought with unbridled ferocity and never lost a match. And you can be certain that he was undefeated, because every fight in the arena is to the death, and he is not dead.

After eight years, he was—

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Thank you, Dad.

Clint: That's some solid proof!

Travis: Thank you very much. After eight years, he was allowed to retire, and word on the street is that he was actually forced to retire, because everyone was too afraid to face the blood-soaked, silver-scaled monster.

Now, you know that, uh, Jimson was also an arena champion, but he was in the featherweight division. You also know that the two of them are married, and met during their time in the arena. But currently—

Griffin: So I'm guessing they never fought each other.

Travis: Correct.

Griffin: Or maybe that's a—

Travis: They were in different weight classes. Yes yes yes.

Griffin: A wild story. Okay.

Travis: And uh, so, uh, currently, Crush appears to be meditating. You also see, standing placidly to the side of the field, a young looking, silver-haired elf woman. And Argo, you recognize her as the same elven woman from the night you were initiated into the Unbroken Chain.

So, as you approach, Crush rises and says...

Crush: Ah. Well, well, well. If it isn't the fancy lad turned villain, and his two buddies. Hello, three of you.

Fitzroy: Sneak attack!

Crush: Okay.

Travis: You wanna roll against Crush and make a sneak attack?

Griffin: Yeah!

Travis: Okay, go for it.

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: 17!

Travis: No.

Griffin: What am I rolling—am I rolling—am I adding my, like, combat mod?

Travis: Uh—

Griffin: Yeah, that's a 23! Sneak attack! Hya!

Travis: Okay, roll damage.

Griffin: Fuck yeah. Sneak attack!

Travis: Wait, you don't have sneak attack!

Griffin: I mean, I just did it fast.

Travis: You were just doing a surprise attack.

Clint: [laughing]

Travis: He's always ready for attack. You don't have sneak attack. You're not allowed to sneak attack.

Griffin: Okay...

Travis: Um, he sees you try to sneak attack—

Griffin: I pull back—I pull back at the last second. I like, stop the maul, like, an inch from his face like...

Fitzroy: I could'a. Now who's the teacher?

Travis: And he doesn't blink. He doesn't flinch.

Fitzroy: Damn, that's cool!

Travis: Yeah, it's real cool. Everyone knows it's cool.

Crush: Well, okay. So, have you got that out of your system? Is that... you're good? Yeah?

Argo: Sneak attack!

Crush: Okay. I'm standing right here looking at all three of you, and you're saying out loud, 'sneak attack.' Um, so, this is going to be lesson number one. If you're going—

Argo: I was trying to encourage—I was trying to encourage Fitzroy to try it again.

Crush: Sure. If you're going to sneak attack – and this is just kind of basic 101 stuff – don't yell 'sneak attack' before you do it.

Fitzroy: You should whisper it.

Crush: No, don't—okay.

Argo: [whispers] Sneak attaaack!

Crush: See, this is what I wanted to talk to the three of you about, because I heard about your mission at the hospital with the imps.

Fitzroy: Say it.

Crush: [strained] The mission imp hospital.

Fitzroy: Oh!

Argo: [laughs]

Crush: Ugh. And...

Justin: That's really meta, hearing Travis be embarrassed of Travis' joke.

Travis: Thank you!

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: Really. Really took me there.

Crush: And I heard that, basically, y'all almost died. Soo...

Fitzroy: Argo technically did for like, a second.

Crush: Yeah.

Argo: Mm-hmm.

Crush: Yeah yeah yeah. So what we're gonna do today...

Argo: I saw this white light!

Crush: Okay. Nobody cares, Argo.

Argo: This bright, white light! Okay.

Crush: And the three of you are gonna square off against me.

Justin: Everybody in these realities—everybody's died a bunch. [laughing]

Travis: Yeah, right?

Justin: We've all been dead a little bit.

Travis: Listen, there's magic and shit. Y'know what I mean? It's fine.

Justin: We're only mostly dead.

Crush: We're gonna go two rounds, you three versus me, so I can get a feel for what you need to focus on. And I've invited Marie here...

Travis: And he gestures towards the silver-haired elven woman.

Crush: Uh, she is the school's physician, if you haven't met yet, and she is here to make sure that I don't kill you. So! Leeet's go!

Travis: Uh, so the three of you roll initiative.

Griffin: Ten plus two, 12!

Clint: Jiminy Christmas. Another 16... plus... six. That's 22.

Justin: I'm weighing my options.

Travis: [laughs]

Justin: Which is a fancy way of saying, I got a one. Plus two.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Mm, the master strategist. Watching the battle unfold.

Justin: Hmm. [laughs] I'm only watching the game. Controlling it.

Travis: [bursts into laughter] Okay.

Crush: Um, I will allow the three of you to go first. I will go last, so that I can get a good feel for what's going on.

Travis: So Argo, you are up first.

Clint: Um, Argo has a two-weapon attack. So... let me ask you something – I've got a belaying pin. A cudgel.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Clint: But I don't see any weapon stats on that.

Travis: Uh, I'm going to say that it has the same, uh, same stats as a club. Um... because that's what it is. So, uh, you would basically, uh... I assume you're proficient in it, as it's a simple melee weapon. So you're going to add your same bonus like you would to your sword, or anything like that. For the hit, and then, the damage is 1d4 plus, uh, your proficiency number, I believe.

Griffin: No, not for the second attack.

Travis: Oh, what is it? No, not for the second attack, right. If you attack with the second weapon, it is just the straight up 1d4.

Clint: Okay. So... I'm going to attack with the rapier in one hand, like, take a swipe with the rapier, and then... with a big sweeping arc, follow through with kind of a backhanded blow with the cudgel.

Travis: Okay.

Clint: The belaying pin, which is a nautical club.

Travis: Yes.

Clint: Okay. So, I roll... alright, that's ten, uh, plus six for the hit with the rapier.

Travis: That misses. He steps nimbly out of the way. Uh, I would say, impressively nimbly, for a Dragonborn of his size.

Clint: Okay. And then, with the belaying pin, that's a 15 plus six, so that's 21.

Travis: That one does hit.

Clint: Okay. And that's 1d4... and that would be... a whopping two.

Travis: Okay. So it makes a solid 'kunk' when it hits his scales.

Clint: Right up against his melon. Right off his melon. Bonk!

Travis: Yeah, it mostly bounces off. Yeah. I mean, it definitely hurts him a little bit. You feel like you made solid contact, but it doesn't seem to, y'know, phase him too much. And so, then, he turns and looks at you, Fitzroy.

Clint: Well, and I disengage.

Travis: Okay.

Clint: I disengage. That's my bonus action. Cunning action.

Griffin: Well, technically, taking a two-handed attack is a bonus action also. Sorry, I wanted to get in there and do that before anybody else did.

Travis: Okay.

Clint: Well, this is called Cunning Action. You can take a bonus action on each of your turns... to take the—

Griffin: Right, but when you use a two weapon attack, it also uses your bonus action.

Travis: Fitzroy, you're up.

Fitzroy: Um, can we use magic on you, or... is it just hitting?

Crush: Yeah. If that's what you've got, use it.

Fitzroy: Are—are you sure? `Cause I've got some pretty gnarly stuff, man.

Crush: Yeah, go for it.

Fitzroy: Okay... don't say I didn't warn youuu!

Griffin: I'm going to, uh, use *Chromatic Orb*. And I say...

Fitzroy: Hey, you're a silver Dragonborn. What's that, like—what element does that mean? Is that lightning or whatever?

Crush: Frost.

Fitzroy: Frost! Okay. So like, you're—would you say you're weak to fire?

Crush: I'm... I'm not really weak against a lot of stuff.

Fitzroy: Okay, well, that's what a person who's weak to fire would say.

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: And then I use *Chromatic Orb*, and I channel an orb of fire. I'm also going to use *Tides of Chaos*, which is my wild sorcery feature, to gain advantage on this attack roll.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: So we'll see how it goes. That is a 12 plus five, 17.

Travis: No.

Griffin: That is an 18 plus five. 23.

Travis: That one hits.

Griffin: Okay. That is 3d8 fire damage. Four... seven... uh, 15. 15 fire damage, or should I say, 30 fire damage! [laughs]

Travis: He's not... it's not—he's not weak to it.

Griffin: I also need to get better about this, every time I cast a spell, rolling to see... oh, it's a three. That's so close. If I roll a one on the d20 roll after casting a spell, then it—then shit blows up. But it hasn't happened yet.

Travis: Okay. Uh, so... up next is the Firbolg. And he turns and looks at you and says...

Crush: Yes, Master Firbolg. Your turn.

Fitzroy: It's not fire. It's not fire.

Justin: Am I correct in assuming that defensive spells are not necessary in this sort of situation? Like, that's what Marie is there for?

Travis: Correct.

Justin: Okay. I mean, I was gonna do something like, supportive, but um... I'm gonna cast *Hold Person*.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: I feel like targeting wisdom is my best bet here. Um, so you have to succeed on a wisdom saving throw.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: You have to beat my spellcasting modifier.

Travis: Which is?

Justin: God, why don't they just have it on the sheet?

Griffin: They do. If you click spells, it says 'save DC' at the top.

Justin: Yeah, I see it. It's on the sheet.

Travis: I rolled an 18, by the way.

Justin: Fuck me! Come on. Yeah, you're fine. [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: Didn't do nothin'. I'm like, "Stay there." And you're like, "Nope. I'd rather not." And Firbolg's like, [nasally] "Alright. Okay. Also, it went so bad, I talk like this now."

Griffin: [laughing]

Justin: [nasally] "This is my new voice. Also, I meant to tell you, my name's Jerry. It's been Jerry the whole time. Okay."

Clint: [laughing]

Justin: [nasally] "Sorry about trying to do a little bit of magic on ya, fella. That's real egg on my face. Alright."

Crush: Okay. Now it's my turn.

Travis: So now, I need all three of you to make a constitution saving throw.

Justin: Oh, that's something.

Griffin: Uh, 11 plus four. 15.

Justin: 16 plus one. 17.

Clint: Six plus one. Seven!

Travis: Oops! Okay. So, Firbolg and Fitzroy, you're going to take half damage.

Justin: Noice.

Clint: Half of, uh, half of what?

Griffin: Half of a million. [laughs]

Travis: Half of a million. No.

Griffin: You each take 500,000 damage. [laughing]

Justin: [laughing] All characters are dead. New arc begins in two weeks.

Travis: Uh, that is going to be, uh, 12 points of damage. So, the two who succeeded would take, uh, half damage.

Justin: Six points?

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Wow.

Justin: Not bad.

Griffin: Thought this guy was tough.

Justin: This is first of eight attacks.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Okay, so we're back at the top of the order, and it is Argo once more.

Clint: Hoi... um...

Argo: Sneak attack!

Crush: Okay. I feel like we talked about this, but okay.

Clint: Okay, he's using Florence. Uh, which, I believe, adds plus three? And... he's gonna deal an extra 2d6 damage to the creature hit with an attack with a finessed or ranged weapon.

Travis: Okay.

Clint: Alright, so there's a... 13... um, plus six. That's a 19, and...

Travis: Wait, hold on.

Clint: Plus—

Travis: How did you get plus si—okay, keep going. Yes.

Clint: And then, plus three for Florence.

Travis: Got it. Okay.

Clint: So that's 22.

Travis: That hits.

Clint: Okay. And then, I roll 1d8 plus four, ordinarily for Florence, correct?

Travis: Yes.

Clint: Alright. That's a three. And then, I roll 2d6s... that's a five.

Travis: So three plus four plus five. Okay.

Clint: Plus five... plus five. Two fives. Okay. So that's... okay.

Griffin: 17.

Travis: Yep.

Clint: 17.

Crush: Okay. Uh, up next is Fitzroy.

Clint: And I disengage.

Crush: Okay. Alright.

Fitzroy: I mean, that was sort of my big, nasty spell, and it seems like... did it—can you be honest? Did it even hurt?

Crush: Uh... I mean, listen – it did some damage.

Fitzroy: Okay... did it do a cool amount of damage, or...

Crush: Mmm, no. I'm a big, beefy boy.

Fitzroy: Oh yeah? Now who's a big—

Travis: Well I mean, at this point, you guys have hit him, collectively, for 44 points of damage, and he's not bloodied yet.

Griffin: M'kay.

Fitzroy: Well, let's see what I can do about that! Rage mode! Thun—
thunder strike! I don't know what to say yet. I'm working—I'm work
shopping it.

Griffin: And I go into rage.

Crush: Okay, yeah. Okay.

Griffin: Uh... which means... that's an eight. Sorry, I need to find my effects of Wild Surge. Uh, oh, okay! A beam of brilliant light lances from my chest in a five foot wide, 60 foot long line. Each creature in the line must succeed on a constitution saving throw, or take 2d8 radiant damage, and be blinded until the start of my next turn.

Travis: Oh boy!

Griffin: So, that's probably... I do not see any scenario where that beam does not include at least Argo.

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: As I Iron Man proton blast from my chest.

Travis: Uh, let's see... uh, I got a six plus seven, so a 13. So I did not pass.

Griffin: Uh, 13 is my save DC, but does that mean... does—in the case of a save, I think, actually, a tie saves.

Travis: Let me see... Yes.

Griffin: Oh. Okay. Argo, how'd you do?

Clint: Uh... which one do I roll?

Travis: d20.

Griffin: d20, plus your con save.

Clint: And add what to it?

Travis: Constitution sa—

Clint: I rolled an 18. 18 plus one, 19.

Griffin: Oh, you're good. Okay. Yeah, you both dive out of the way of my laser blast.

Fitzroy: Oh, shit! Wow! Okay!

Crush: Was that—what the fuck spell was that?!

Fitzroy: Yeah, dude! Yeah, man! Like... it was—yesterday, it was taco Tuesday yesterday, so I don't know if it was something I ate, but good lord! That was a new one! You haven't seen that one before, have you?

Crush: Fantasy Jesus, no.

Fitzroy: That was like a chest laser. That was radical. I haven't even—that wasn't even my action! Can you believe it?

Crush: Holy shit.

Griffin: And then I say...

Fitzroy: Oh, and dodge this!

Griffin: And I jump in with my maul to do a big, crushing attack with it. That is a 14 plus, uh... six. 20.

Travis: That does hit, yes.

Griffin: Fantastic. 2d6 plus six. Four. Uh, five. Nine plus six is 15. Wham-o.

Travis: 15 damage.

Crush: Ugh! That was a good hit.

Fitzroy: Yeah, thanks. I'm angry now. Wish the laser had gotten a little nip of ya too, but sometimes life—

Travis: Now he is bloodied! Good job, you guys!

Fitzroy: Yeah, let's see that teacher blood!

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, let's see. He—

Fitzroy: Now ya messin' with the Thundermen!

Justin: Is he blinded?

Travis: No.

Griffin: No, that missed.

Justin: That missed. Okay.

Crush: You're up, Master Firbolg.

Justin: Uh, bub bub bub bub bub... just gonna hit him with my best shot here. [makes several clicking noises] Uh, yeah. I mean, the best sort of like... I think my best chance at him is Moonbeam. So we're gonna go with that. Just uh, blaze him with a silvery beam of pale light that shines down in a cylinder. I'm gonna make it so that he's on the edge of the cylinder, so none of us get like, blazed.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: You don't have to center the cylinder on him. Um, it's not that wide of a cylinder actually, so I think we'll be fine. Uh, but you gotta do a, uh, constitution, I think... hold on. Um... yeah, constitution saving throw. Beat 14.

Travis: Uh, he rolled a nat 20.

Justin: Fuckin' holy shit!

Travis: Yeah, dude. He's an arena champion, you guys!

Justin: That did not affect your rolls. That doesn't make any sense. Think about what you're saying.

Travis: That's fair. I mean, I know that. But I'm just trying to give you a little bit of like, like, a little bit of word soup to explain why he's so good at it.

Justin: Little Bit-O-Honey. I gotcha.

Travis: Yeah, little Bit-O-Honey.

Justin: Let me roll a d10 here. Six, eight, 14... so you take seven, uh, incredible points of damage. [laughs]

Crush: Okay, now it's my turn.

Travis: Uh, and he is going to go into a rage as well.

Griffin: Whaaat.

Travis: And he is going to draw his, uh, radiant great sword.

Fitzroy: Uncle.

Griffin: Can we do that?

Travis: Uh... meh. And he is going to attack... uhh... let's see, who's done the most damage? Let's say he's going to attack Fitzroy.

Griffin: Say sike right now.

Travis: Uh, he rolled a 16 plus eight. 24.

Griffin: Say sike right now, Travis!

Travis: And that does 2d6 plus four plus three...

Griffin: [quietly] Oh, that's fine.

Travis: So that is ten, 14, 17 damage.

Griffin: What type of damage?

Travis: Yeah, so it's a radiant great sword, so I'm gonna say radiant and slashing.

Griffin: Well, I'm good with one of those. So I'll just take full damage. How much was it?

Travis: It was 17 points of damage.

Griffin: Yeah, that'll do it.

Fitzroy: Now who's bloodied? It's me.

Crush: It's you.

Clint: [laughs]

Crush: Alright. Can I tell you guys something? That was great. Why did those imps...

Fitzroy: You just cut me with a big sword!! Can I have like, a second!?

Crush: Right, right right right. Marie?

Argo: Are we done? There's no more fighting?

Crush: Marie, would you please?

Argo: I had a great move!

Crush: Well we're only gonna go two—I don't want to kill you.

Fitzroy: Yeah, let's call it. I think it's a tie, right?

Crush: Well...

Argo: I think we can take him! I do! Look at him, he's bloodied! Y'know, not as bloody as you. But he's bloodied! I think we can get him! Don't you think so, Firbolg? Come on!!

Firbolg: Surely, the goal cannot be to kill this person.

Crush: Yeahhh.

Firbolg: We have both shown, I believe, our levels of expertise.

Argo: Hm...

Travis: And Marie steps over and uses *Cure Wounds*, so you each are going to recover 2d8 plus three damage.

Griffin: [laughs] I rolled a two and a one.

Fitzroy: Wow, cool. Good heal. I feel so much better now. Oh, nice. Just a little bit of my blood scooped back in. Oh, there it goes back out again.

Justin: I don't want to go on one of my world famous rants here, 'cause we've all got a lot on our plates as a species. But the d8 is the least satisfying, uh, die to roll.

Travis: Yeah, get 'em!

Justin: Every time I roll it, it sucks. It feels like I'm rolling a slice of Velveeta cheese, or a small tree. There's just no satisfying way to roll the d8. I don't enjoy it.

Clint: Have you tried spinning it like a dreidel?

Justin: Like in uh, fuckin' uh... what's that Chris Nolan movie?

Clint: Inception! Inception, yeah! Try it!

Justin: No, Finding Dory. That's what I was thinkin' of.

Travis: Which one's your totem? So, now that you have healed a little bit, uh, Crush says...

Crush: Yeah, you guys did fine. Why did those imps kick your ass so bad? What was wrong? What was off?

Argo: Well... you weren't there! They didn't kick our ass, we beat every one of them!

Crush: Okay, you died.

Fitzroy: For like, a second.

Argo: Well, yeah. They kicked their asses, then.

Crush: Wait, who?

Argo: The Firbolg here, and uh, Fitzroy! They kicked their asses.

Fitzroy: Hey, you did a fair amount of ass kicking before you were—

Argo: Thank youuu.

Fitzroy: Before you were killed.

Crush: But imps should be easy.

Fitzroy: Hey, they turned into bats, and I'm afraid of those.

Firbolg: The difference is, there were so many of them, and one of you. When there is one, we can work together. But many? Is no good.

Fitzroy: There was also a big—a big monster guy who, um, said that he was responsible for all the imps. And so, they had a leader. They had a boss.

Crush: What?

Fitzroy: They had a evil boss.

Crush: Like a big imp?

Argo: He was an imperor.

Fitzroy: Yowza.

Argo: [laughs]

Fitzroy: No, he was made of something. What was he made of, boys? Do you remember? It was like—he was made of... nipples or some...

Firbolg: I—ichor?

Travis: Chains. Chains, guys.

Griffin: Oh that's right. Yeah.

Fitzroy: He was made of chains.

Firbolg: Chains.

Fitzroy: Yes, not nipples.

Crush: Oh, he was—like a chain demon?

Fitzroy: Yeah.

Firbolg: Ah, yes. This was the technical term.

Crush: Well fuck! That's way out of your guys' league!

Fitzroy: But we did it, didn't we? Vanquished him good.

Argo: We did vanquish him.

Crush: See, you should've led with that. Now I'm actually kind of proud of you guys.

Fitzroy: [gasps dramatically] I have been waiting... my whole life... for someone to say those very words! [choked up]

Crush: I mean, we're—we're still gonna train and shit, but... good job.

Firbolg: Thank you.

Argo: Thanks... a lot?

[music plays]

Travis: So, the time has come for the Firbolg's question session. But before that happens – Argo, what have you been doing during the other two's question sessions?

Clint: Well, y'know, he's supposed to be investigating Fitzroy for The Unbroken Chain, and he's... y'know, he doesn't feel real comfortable with this whole spy thing, so he's gonna change genres. He's gonna try being like, a private eye. He's gonna investigate. So, I think he wants to find out more about Fitzroy, so... I mean, I can remember you making the statement that the school has one of the most extensive libraries in our reality.

Travis: Yes.

Clint: So I think he's gonna go to the library...

Travis: Excellent.

Clint: And talk to the librarian, and see what he can glean.

Travis: Excellent. So you make your way to the library, uh, and you meet with Sabour, the Turtle. And also, a quick reminder – Sabour is one of the people who is in The Unbroken Chain with you. He was present at your, um, at your initiation. So you can speak freely with him, as long as no one else is around. And he greets you and says...

Sabour: Ah... hello. Hi. It's good to see you again.

Argo: Um, hello, friend.

Clint: And he slowly pulls up his sleeve and reveals his, uh, beautiful Unbroken Chain tattoo that he got at the Hedgehog Pin. And uh, which he has continued to have embellished. It's almost—it almost wraps around his whole arm. He's continued to have it added onto all the time, and he raises an eyebrow and kind of gives a very pointed look to Sabour. Hm hmm? Hmm hmm hmm hmm?

Sabour: Yeah. No one is here. Um...

Argo: Oh.

Sabour: We—yeah.

Argo: I was giving you a chance to admire my tattoo. [laughs]

Sabour: Uh, why don't we step into my office?

Argo: Does that—is that code for going into your shell? 'Cause I don't think I can do that.

Sabour: No. There's not like, a house inside my shell. This is—

Argo: Oh, you're kiddin'!

Sabour: This isn't a cartoon. Nooo.

Argo: Oh, I always thought there's like—y'know, like a little settee, and a recliner, and stuff.

Sabour: No. Come with me, into my actual office.

Argo: Good!

Travis: And he kind of gestures his head and shows you that there is a Gary out here.

Argo: Ah.

Sabour: Yes.

Clint: But not one in his office.

Travis: Correct.

Clint: Okay.

Argo: Um, okay. Listen, um, I'm uh... I'm checkin' out—I wanna check out things on uh, Fitzroy. Y'know, I'm on my secret mission, which I assume you know, so it's not that big a secret.

Sabour: Oh, yes. Yes.

Argo: I was thinking, like, any... like, a social register from Goodcastle, or uh, old issues of... Knights Illustrated. Especially the bathing suit of armor issues. [laughs]

Sabour: Yes. That's very funny. Um, I have to tell you, Argo, I'm... sorry to go ahead and dead end that investigation, but I thought of that. I've poured through every social registry of, y'know, rich families, bloodlines, knights... all of that, and I have not been able to find Fitzroy Maplecourt on any of them.

Argo: Well, I... I was just thinking like, a fresh set of eyes. Y'know, different perspective kind of thing. Maybe I—I figured you had already gone through this stuff, but... y'know, maybe I could uh, y'know, investigate it. Bring it from my viewpoint, it might come at it from a different angle.

Sabour: Well, what information have you been able to gather? Any specifics that might help narrow the search?

Argo: Um, let's see, um... his mom carried a big purse with gum in it. Uh... it's been really tough getting any info.

Sabour: Did you happen to catch her name? That might be more useful than what was in her purse.

Argo: Oh! Uh, yes. Sorry. Yes, it was um... Dindra, was her name. And um, she... like I said, she kept things in a great big purse, and she would give him candy that he thought sounded repulsive, but I thought sounded absolutely stunning.

Sabour: Dindra...

Argo: Mm-hmm.

Sabour: Dindra. Wait, hold on... I feel like...

Travis: And he closes his eyes for a minute and thinks.

Sabour: Yes, hold on.

Travis: And he goes over to a stack of books, and he picks one out, and it is, uh—you see it as labeled "MAL through MAR." And he starts flipping through.

Sabour: Uh, there is a listing here, but... it's not... it's not from a bloodlined fam—this is not—huh.

Argo: Okay, I'm... could I take a look at it?

Sabour: Uh, yes. But she's just listed as, like, a cousin four times removed. She's not... huh.

Travis: And he hands you the book. And basically, in the listing, it's just kind of a small footnote.

Clint: Well, let me do an investigation check. Can I do that? Would that—

Travis: Yeah, go for it.

Clint: Okay, investigation check. Um... that is a 14 plus three. 17.

Travis: That's very good. So yeah, in this volume he has handed you, it's basically just like a small blurb under, uh, Maplecourt. But it basically—she is listed... she is listed, uh, as being kind of many, many times removed from a bloodlined family. And you can see that it is not, uh... so, it does not seem

that she came into any wealth or power or anything through this that she, um, just was like, many, many, many times removed from this.

So you are able to glean from your investigation check that she was not, uh... her immediate family of any note, or uh, or wealth or privilege.

Clint: So, would that mean that Fitzroy really isn't royalty?

Travis: It would seem that way. You also see, uh, that it is listed that she was married to a man named Jerry Maplecourt. And Jerry lists his profession as, uh... long haul caravaner.

Argo: Wow. Caravan? Huh. So he was... a truck driver. [laughs]

Travis: Basically, yes.

Argo: Oh. [laughing] I'm not meanin' to laugh. Um... I... there's no way Fitzroy knows this, does he?

Sabour: Well, there is one more thing.

Travis: And Sabour points to, you can see, a mailing address for Dindra.

Clint: Oh! Okay, where is that?

Travis: Well I mean, I'm not gonna tell ya—there's—I don't know what the mailing address is, Clinton, but you could send her a letter.

Clint: Oh, okay. I could write a letter to the mom.

Travis: Yes.

Clint: To Dindra.

Argo: Hm, I'll have to come up with some kind of clever ruse. Um... you've given me a lot to think about there, friend Turtle. Um... anything else in there? Anything at all? Um...

Sabour: No, I'm sorry. I wish we knew more.

Argo: Well, this has given me a good start. I think what I'm gonna do is write a letter to the mom, and see where that takes me. Um... meanwhile, do you have any other books I might like to check out? Y'know, for entertainment purposes, or—you have anything on barbarians? I'd really like to find out, y'know, more about his magic and all that kind of stuff. Anything at all? Any resources?

Sabour: We have many books on barbarians. Uh, I will have some sent to your chambers. I will pick out the ones that I think will be most useful. Also, I wanted you to know that the book you requested, *The Adventures of Larry the Lime*...

Argo: Mm-hmm! Yes!

Sabour: That came in.

Argo: [gasps]

Sabour: I will have that sent to your chambers as well.

Argo: [laughs] I am in for a fun evening now! Thank you so much, Turtle! You are—Sabour, my brother. My friend! [laughs]

[music plays]

Travis: And so, uh, we have returned once more to the Thundermen dormitory. And the Firbolg has entered, and Althea says...

Althea: Ah! Master Firbolg. Hello. Um, please, would you join me at the table here? I just have a few questions.

Justin: The Firbolg comes in and sits down and props his feet up on the table.

Firbolg: So you uh, want to speak to the resident bad boy?

Althea: Oh. Is that you?

Firbolg: Can't believe I got called into the principal's office.

Althea: Oh, sorry, there must've been some kind of miscom—I'm not the principal.

Firbolg: Mmm... go ahead, teach. What did I do this time?

Althea: Oh, you're not in—you're not in trouble. I—I don't—I don't work here at the school. I'm a representative from the Heroic Oversight Guild? We're a governing body that makes sure that heroes stay on the straight and narrow, and that villains don't go too dark. We also make sure that henchpeople and sidekicks are taken care of.

Firbolg: Blah blah blah. Pretend I am lowering sunglasses I do not have.

Althea: Okay. I would like to ask you a few questions, Master Firbolg, but—

Firbolg: I am sorry. This feels terrible.

Althea: Okay.

Firbolg: Rainer—Rainer told me that it would be the proper approach for this situation.

Althea: Ah.

Firbolg: I have no frame of reference, and I feel very bad about this.

Althea: Yes. I think, perhaps, your friend Rainer might've been having a little fun.

Firbolg: I am not the resident bad boy.

Althea: No, I—I figured that out, yes.

Firbolg: I do not know what this means.

Althea: Actually, at the Heroic Oversight Guild, we respect all races and cultures, and I actually know quite a bit about the Firbolg, and I understand that Firbolgs do not lie. Is that correct?

Firbolg: Yes. I was, uhh... is very painful.

Althea: Ah. That's why you were squinting and crying the whole time?

Firbolg: I held my stomach.

Althea: Yes.

Firbolg: I tried to pretend it was a cool guy pose.

Althea: Yes, I did notice.

Firbolg: This is a great shame!

Althea: Okay. Well, as such, since I know that it hurts to lie, I will try not to press you on anything that you do not want to discuss. Is that okay?

Firbolg: Thank you.

Althea: You're welcome. First, I'd love to get to know a little bit about yourself. I have read in your file that you came to the school after, it says here, wandering for quite some time and arriving here. Is that correct?

Firbolg: This is true.

Althea: Now, I know that, usually, Firbolgs do not leave their clans. So what made you decide to leave your clan and wander?

Firbolg: [pause] This was not my decision.

Althea: Oh?

Firbolg: [pause] I am... in exile.

Althea: Oh, Master Firbolg, I'm so sorry to hear that. I assume that this is one of the things you may not want to discuss?

Firbolg: [pause] If that is... alright with you.

Althea: I understand. This is not germane to my business here, so I will not press you. I do not want to make you uncomfortable.

Firbolg: Thank you.

Althea: You know what? I think it'd be best if I just got to the matter at hand. How has your experience been here at the school?

Firbolg: Um... it is... very different... from the... home.

Althea: Ah. Yes, I imagine now. I imagine it would be quite different, being here, surrounded by non-Firbolg.

Firbolg: Mm, yes. So many... bathrooms.

Althea: Ah, yes. Have you enjoyed your time?

Firbolg: Eh... is very difficult. I... have... friends? I... enjoy... to study.

Althea: Mm-hmm.

Firbolg: I... I... [sighs] ... have... a strange experience.

Althea: Oh?

Firbolg: That I... [sighs] I can think of little else.

Althea: Master Firbolg, I do not mean to pry, but this is why I am here. Can you tell me about this strange experience?

Firbolg: [pause] I am being compelled... to do things. Things I... now have no memory of.

Althea: Ah. Well, that is very serious, Master Firbolg.

Firbolg: Yes. I am... not liking this feeling of... ah, not in control.

Althea: Yes, I imagine that would be the case. Thank you for telling me.

Firbolg: I... do not tell you to... unburden myself, or... for your investigation. I need... to know.

Althea: I see.

Firbolg: I... all of us... live by a code. And... I... think there is nothing more sacred to us. And for the first time, since I came from the forest... since I came from the mother... I don't know if I am following this code.

Travis: Make a persuasion check with advantage for me.

Justin: Um... let's see... 14 plus one, 15. And an eight plus one, nine. So 15.

Travis: Uh, Althea says...

Althea: I, too, believe that one must live by a code, Master Firbolg. And I... take this matter very seriously. May I... offer you something? May I loan you something which I think might help?

Firbolg: Mm... yes.

Althea: You say that, when whatever happens happens, you then have no memory of it.

Travis: And she kind of—you see her fold back her lapel slightly, and unpin a beetle-shaped brooch. And she says...

Althea: I use this as a recording device, to help me remember the things discussed in meetings, so that I don't miss any details. Perhaps this might be of some advantage to you.

Firbolg: Mmmmm... is this kingdom a two party consent state?

Althea: Uh, no. [laughs] We have no such... when it comes to the breaking of the law, and someone's free will being compromised, the investigation takes precedent.

Firbolg: So many small businesses like Thundermen LLC are tripped up in the early days by not being aware of local and federal regulations.

Althea: Well, I do understand that. But in this case, I think we'll let it slide.

Firbolg: I must tell... [sighs] This is a secret bug?

Althea: Uh, I...

Firbolg: This bug I wear for a secret?

Althea: Perhaps, if—

Firbolg: And I must not tell that I wear the secret bug?

Althea: Well, if you are asked, you should tell.

Firbolg: Ahh. But perhaps it is underneath my leaf shirt, ah?

Althea: Yes, I think that that would be the way to go. And I must ask, Master Firbolg – if you do discover anything, and if you need my help, do not hesitate to ask. Do you understand?

Firbolg: Ah, yes.

Althea: Thank you, Master Firbolg. It has been my pleasure speaking with you.

Firbolg: No. No no no. Thank you.

[theme music plays]

Argo: “Dear Dindra Maplecourt,

Greetings, salutations, and general huzzahs! We haven’t been formally introduced in the flesh so to speak, but I am Argonaut Keene, friend, roommate, and business associate of your son, Fitzroy. And let me just say right off the bat – your son is quite well. He is excelling in his classwork, wreaking a lot of havoc among imps, and making fast friends with many of his fellow students. Most notably, myself, his best friend, and our other roommate, a Firbolg named... Bud... Furby... Dr. Fungus. I tell you what, that can wait for another letter.

Actually, the friendships are the reason I’m contacting you. We’ve all grown quite fond of Fitzroy and would like to surprise him with a kind of social event. Here at the academy, they have a tradition called a roast – and no, it does not involve cooking of any kind. I had to explain that to the Firbolg...

It’s where friends gather and show their affection for a designated buddy by standing up and making speeches; most of them, good natured ribbing of

the honoree. I am organizing just such an event, and Fitzroy will be the honoree!

I was hoping, perhaps, you could tell me about Fitzroy's childhood, tell me about yourself, Fitz's father... any detail at all to help me come up with some facts about Fitzroy that he will be surprised to hear coming from me, his best friend in the world. Of course, it's all in fun, but the more personal, the deeper the secret, the more effective the japery will be!

Of course, I in return, vow to watch over Fitz and allow no harm to come to him here. That is a solemn promise that I do not make lightly, but to ease any concerns you have over the safety of your boy, my BFF.

By the way, this is going to be a surprise, so please, don't tip my hand. Don't let Fitzroy know that I'm planning this.

Looking forward to hearing from you, and in the words of Larry the Lime, don't be rickety!

Your humble and obedient Argonaut Keene, CCO (unofficial) of the Thundermen Corp.

P.S. If you have any of that hot mint gum, I would love to surprise him with some of that at the roast."