

## The Adventure Zone: Graduation – Ep. 13, Apple for Teacher

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**Gary:** Hey, everyone! It's me, Gary. Let's see, what's been happening on The Adventure Zone: Graduation?

[theme music plays]

**Gary:** Well, the Firbolg had been forgetting a bunch of stuff, and he couldn't remember why, 'cause that's how forgetting works. So, the Thundermen went and confronted Higglemas Wigenstaff, and it turns out, Higglemas and the Firbolg have been working together to obtain items to cure Higglemas' brother, Hieronymous, who had been turned into a dog, and had been replaced by a mysterious fake Hieronymous. Oooh!

Well, this was the night before a real world assignment, so the boys are about to head out to go help some centaurs with an apple. But they're worried that Althea Song, the Heroic Oversight Guild investigator, might've been able to hear their entire conversation using the listening bug she gave to the Firbolg.

So, let's see how this all plays out, shall we?

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Despite the shocking revelations of the night before, you woke the morning of your assignment feeling well-rested and refreshed. Your muscles and mind feel like they are stronger than ever, and ready to face any challenge.

[pause] You've leveled up. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Oh, okay. I was about to say...

**Clint:** Ah, okay! Yeah. Woo.

**Travis:** No, you feel great. Y'know, you've been lifting and doing math, and you're like, "Wow, I think I could lift and do more math today."

**Griffin:** It was leg day in my dreams.

**Travis:** And so, now you're ready to level up! You're all level five now!

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Clint:** Super!

**Travis:** You're becoming beefy boys!

**Griffin:** Glad to be here. Boy, uh, my mind is so keen now. It's become, uh, slightly keener. Because I—

**Travis:** Tell me about it, stud!

**Griffin:** Uh, I actually took a sorcerer level.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Justin:** Hmm.

**Griffin:** Uh, so now I'm barbarian three, sorcerer two. Uh, sorcerer kind of pops off at three... but two is where you start to get some of the flavor that makes it different from a wizard, which is, I have gotten sorcery points.

**Travis:** Ooh!

**Griffin:** Which is another resource that I can use to, at later levels, kind of add some flavor to my spells.

**Travis:** Like?

**Griffin:** Whether it's like—uh, like, uh, there's like a twin spell option, where I can aim it at two different people.

**Travis:** Ooh!

**Griffin:** Or there's a, uh, a caution ability where I can like, weave it around, like, friendly party members. But—

**Travis:** So basically, a sorcerer is like a more skilled caster than a wizard. Right?

**Griffin:** Yeah, it's called Metamagic, these abilities. So, there's—I mean, not skilled in that like, my spell book is way more limited than a wizard's, but I can do sort of different stuff to it. Right now though, I don't have a—

**Travis:** Accurate.

**Griffin:** Right. I don't have Metamagic right now, though. Right now, I just have what is called Font of Magic, which lets me basically convert my spell slots into sorcery points and vice versa. So, uh, that's gonna come in handy, y'know, once I am able to spend it on more stuff. But right now, basically, I just got more spells, and because of this, a lot more spell slots.

**Travis:** What about you, Argo?

**Clint:** Um, kind of... nothin' as big and sweeping as that. Got plus three to proficiency bonus.

**Travis:** Oh, wow.

**Clint:** My acrobatics has gone up to plus ten, and my stealth has gone up to plus ten.

**Travis:** No way! It can't go any higher than that, right? Surely, that must be the highest.

**Clint:** I don't know! We'll see! Um, uh, and—

**Travis:** You have just become like, a flipping shadow.

**Clint:** And Sneak Attack now is 3d6 damage. Not just 2d6 damage.

**Travis:** Ooh! Look at you!

**Clint:** But the thing I'm really excited about is, at level five, the rogue gets an ability called Uncanny Dodge.

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Clint:** Which means, once per turn, when an attacker you can see hits you with an attack, you use your reaction, and the attack damage is cut in half.

**Travis:** Oh! That's pretty good, too! Excellent.

**Clint:** Well, since I'm a weenie in hit points, that'll come in very handy.

**Travis:** Ah, but so finesseful, a word I've just made up.

**Clint:** So, I'm finessious.

**Travis:** There you go. What about you, Firbolg?

**Justin:** Fuckin' nothin', dude.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Justin:** So wack. I don't get anything. Got some—

**Travis:** You don't get anything?

**Justin:** I can like, learn a couple of new spells, but other than that... jack. Shit.

**Travis:** Are they fun new spells, Justin?

**Justin:** No, I got boring ones to make your show worse.

**Travis:** Like what?

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** What?

**Travis:** Like Prolonged Fart?

**Justin:** No, like—like, um... uh, *Super Listening*. Not hearing. *Super Listening*.

**Clint:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** [laughing]

**Clint:** That makes you a good conversationalist, right?

**Justin:** I got hyperactive listening. The person knows I'm like, super dialed in.

**Travis:** Oh.

**Justin:** *Receipt Finding*. I got *Receipt Finding*. It's a—I summon an orb that helps me find a receipt that I lost.

**Clint:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** I think we should—I think we should level up twice. So Justin gets fun stuff.

**Justin:** I don't... I don't need your charity.

**Travis:** Well, maybe we'll just make Justin six.

**Griffin:** Yeah. And I'll—

**Travis:** What if just Justin is six?

**Justin:** I spent a lot of time leveling up to five. I don't need the pressure of, on the fly, deciding if I'm gonna be—I—I don't know if I can... church of the moon goddess or whatever dumb stuff druids do.

**Griffin:** Sure. Every scene, me and Firbolg are gonna do 50 push-ups to try and really juice it up to level six as fast as possible. Argo, you can get on this if you want. You seem to have, uh, really prospered in the last level up. And y'know, you're already cut, y'know?

**Clint:** Yeah. I mean, look at this. Look. I'm flexing right now.

**Griffin:** I'm looking. I see it in my mind. And it looks good.

**Clint:** Yeah! Woo!

**Travis:** After receiving the details of your assignment, but before heading out, you had a chance to collect your items from the bursar – the cloak, pocket Gary, the glue, et cetera – and you stopped by Barnes and Nobles to do some quick shopping!

[music plays]

**Travis:** Once again, you have been extended a line of credit for 200 gold pieces. And I have sent you a new shopping list, uh, of things to choose from. So did anything stand out? Anything you guys had your eye on?

**Justin:** I can start.

**Griffin:** Please.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Maybe we should take turns, actually, by picking up items, so in case—so nobody like, yoinks all the things that the other people want to get.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Yes, that's a good point.

**Justin:** I will—uh, since I'm the oldest – sorry, Dad – I will, uh...

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs] I will uh, take the Navigational Yarn.

**Griffin:** [whispers] Goddamn it.

**Travis:** Okay! The Navigational—

**Justin:** It's a very good item that I think, personally, is probably underpriced, in the dark things I'm gonna use it for. And you're deeply going to regret selling it to me for the 50 gold pieces that you've agreed to.

**Griffin:** That old chestnut.

**Travis:** Uh, so! The Navigational Yarn was crafted on a loom of fate by Fiona Carvanes. And it's a magical ball of golden yarn that helps the user find their way. The user simply holds onto the end of the string, tells the yarn where they're going, and drops the ball while holding onto the string. The ball of yarn will speedily roll in the intended direction, leaving a trail for the user to follow.

Once said location is reached, the yarn will coil itself back into a ball. The yarn can be used once per day. The yarn cannot be cut, but it can be tangled. If tangled, it cannot be used until it gets untangled. If the user is trying to reach a location that is hidden magically, has no entrance, doesn't

exist, or is in another dimension, the yarn will zigzag around the area until it is tangled.

I will also say, um, that uh, this before you buy it... I am going to limit its use to like, concrete locations. Like, you could say, "Take me to that cave." But you could not say like, "Take me to wherever the treasure is hidden."

**Justin:** Got it, it has to be a geographical location that one could put a thumbtack in on a map.

**Travis:** Correct.

**Justin:** Fair. Okay.

**Clint:** But not necessarily a place you've been to before, right?

**Travis:** Correct.

**Griffin:** Uh, Justin snatched up the, uh, tool I wanted, which was the Navigational Yarn. That was top of my list. But that's fine, 'cause I'm going to continue my dream—

**Justin:** Sawr—wait, hold on. Sorry. Like Gilly?

**Griffin:** Like Gilly from uh...

**Justin:** Gillyyyy?

**Griffin:** I love that.

**Justin:** Sorry.

**Travis:** Topical.

**Clint:** [laughs]



**Griffin:** I'm gonna continue my dream of becoming a sort of in-game Pokémon master by uh, by snatching up the Trapper Keepers, which is small enough to fit in a satchel.

**Travis:** Oh!

**Griffin:** This box can contain a creature up to size small. So that is bas—

**Travis:** Now, I'm surprised. 'Cause I was sure you were gonna go with the Early Bird 5000, created by Jordan Noelle. All you have to do is put on this thick leather gauntlet, and a spectral black bird will be summoned to you, bringing one item to your aide. The item's usefulness is determined by a skill check of the DM's choosing. One use per day.

On a one, the bird becomes disgusted and will not return.

**Griffin:** I'll make you a deal. I will actually buy that if the bird can be Leon.

**Travis:** Huh. Okay, yeah.

**Griffin:** I don't know what that—we may have to narratively figure out why Leon would answer to my beck and call to this magic glove. Uh, maybe it'll take some tweaking of the copy, here. But the idea of Leon being—becoming my avian squire is very exciting to me, from a gameplay and a story perspective.

**Travis:** So, how about this? We'll make it the copy that, instead of a spectral black bird, it's like, you can pair it with a... with a, uh, bird of your choosing.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** And you have paired it so that you can signal Leon. Because I think that that is... a cool mechanic.

**Griffin:** The first time I use it, though, I check with Leon, like, "Are you good? Are you good with this? I don't want to insult you, but do you like cracker—"

**Travis:** [makes a bird noise]

**Fitzroy:** Do you like crackers? I don't know if you liked them in—

**Leon:** [bird noise]

**Fitzroy:** Okay.

**Travis:** That's yes. That's bird for yes.

**Griffin:** Okay. Well then, I'm cashed.

**Travis:** You want to hear bird for 'no'?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** [makes a slightly lower bird noise]

**Justin:** This is taking too long. [laughs]

**Travis:** [laughs] Okay, fair.

**Justin:** Just buy it. We're at the store. I'm summoning the listener's voice now. This is taking too long. You're still at the store.

**Travis:** Fair enough. Clint, your turn!

**Clint:** And keeping with the tradition of paying it forward to steal whatever the thing is that the next guy wanted... 'cause I really wanted that bird. Um, I'm going to actually make a logical choice.

**Travis:** Ooh! Weird! Hold on, let me brace myself.

**Clint:** I know. I want to get the Slapsidian.

**Travis:** Ooh, I thought you'd like that. Yeah yeah yeah.

**Clint:** It's an obsidian blade with a beautiful onyx gem in its hilt, woven together by a powerful enchantress. When the wielder hits their wrist with the flat of the blade, it will wrap itself around, resembling an ornate bracelet. The weapon counts as a dagger for proficiency – rogue – and offers an additional plus one to hit and deals damage 2d4 plus dexterity modifier.

**Travis:** And that was, of course, forged by, uh, the arcane blacksmith, Jake Zalasko.

**Clint:** Yeah, Jake Zalasko. And since—I figure we'll do this like, um, like a snake draft.

**Travis:** Oh yeah, we'll do it. Yeah yeah yeah, a snake.

**Clint:** Okay. Then I also want a—

**Justin:** [mumbles something unintelligible]

**Clint:** I also want to get the Monocle of Misdirection. Uh, Dan Carrigan sent that in the last one. Once per day, you may use this item to gain advantage on deception and insight checks. Requires attuning. So, that's—

**Griffin:** You can't make us start caring about attuning now, Dan.

**Travis:** [laughs] Good try, Dan!

**Clint:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** Nice try, Dan, trying to make us care about only having a certain number of magic items that we can use at one time! This is The Adventure Zone! We are unto gods!

**Clint:** So that brings me up to 175, so I will donate my other 25 to the community pool, if you guys need another 25.

**Travis:** Okay. So, Griffin, you're up.

**Griffin:** I mean, that was all my money. If I can use that 25... I don't know man, we need more glue?

**Travis:** Well, you could get a piece of Ian the Imp's Artisanal Cheese.

**Griffin:** No, I'm lactose intolerant.

**Travis:** A piece of—ooh. A piece of artisanal cheese made by the reformed imp, Ian. It tastes delicious, because he is a natural in the art of cheese. It is lightly touched with demonic energy. Consuming the cheese gives its user 1d8 plus three temporary hit points, as well as a warm feeling in their heart. And that is, of course, delivered by the supplier, Kyle McIlwraith Black.

**Griffin:** Thanks Kyle, but I don't want that. I'll be taking an ink eraser, which erases ink from scrolls, paper, et cetera by storing it in the eraser, and it can reveal hidden messages with a perception check in walls or stones or wherever by using the eraser on the area of choice, releasing the ink it has stored in the eraser.

**Travis:** Cool.

**Griffin:** That's from Felix. Thanks, Felix.

**Travis:** Uh, that is—now, it's up to you, Justin.

**Justin:** Uh, yeah. I want the Pocket Watch of Second Chances.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Justin:** That's from Jen Holub. It's a pocket watch. Once per long rest, it can be rewound to provide any creature with one use of Indomitable. Which is a trait that lets you reroll a saving throw.

**Travis:** Perfect. Any money left, anybody?

**Justin:** Uh, hold on. I believe... yes. I want to use that last 50 I have on... oh man, I had it. Um...

**Travis:** The Jar of Bees?

**Justin:** The Jar of Bees! Yes, thank you.

**Travis:** Yeahhh! Jar of Bees, created by Ivan Albert. A clear glass jar labeled 'bees.' When opened or broken, it will release a swarm of insects – bees – which attack the nearest creature. It's a jar of bees.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** I love it. Extremely good.

**Travis:** Okay. Now, make sure that you have taken detailed notes on all of your new items, uh, so that we definitely don't forget them. Um... cool cool cool. Great!

[music plays]

**Travis:** Kale, the professor in charge of placement and real world assignments, gave you this briefing before you left.

In the dead center of the great southern meadow grows an apple tree. Its trunk is gnarled and gray, but its leaves are a most perfect green. Too perfect, in fact. Every single leaf is exactly the same size, shape, and color. The effect is, at once, beautiful and unsettling.

Once a year, this tree yields only two fruits. Two perfect apples that are exactly half ruby red, and half gold. The tree is surrounded by a magical

barrier created by two herds of centaurs to make sure the fruit remains untouched.

At the appointed time of harvest, the two herds make their way from their respected homes. When both parties are present, they use their combined magicks to lower the barrier and collect the fruit.

The centaurs of the valley believe that, by splitting the apple perfectly along the red and gold divide, they can read the future in the shape and placement of the seeds.

The centaurs of the woods believe that, by burning the apple in a ceremonial fire, they will please the spirit of the Scarlet Woods and have bountiful hunts and protection for another year.

When the two herds meet, it is tense, but without conflict. It has been this way for as long as anyone can remember. This year, however, for the first time in recorded history, the tree has produced only one apple.

The centaurs of the valley feel that they are the ones who need the apple most. Without it, they believe that they cannot prepare for the changing of the seasons, and their survival is uncertain. The centaurs of the woods believe the apple should be theirs, lest the spirit become enraged and drive them from their home.

This assignment is meant to teach you that being a villain or hero is not always black and white. One person's champion is another's malefactor. Fitzroy and party, you will be on the side of the centaurs of the Scarlet Woods. Rhodes, the ranger, along with Mimi the gnome, and another sidekick you have not met named Moon, are on the side of the centaurs of the valley.

However you choose to handle the situation is up to you. Whether it ends in peace or bloodshed, your goal is to make sure your side feels satisfied with the outcome.

**Griffin:** Fat chance of that in this particular scenario. 'Cause we gonna get that apple and turn it into whatever kind of magic applesauce our boy Higglemas needs.

**Travis:** Now, you are on your way to meet Malwin the Strong, the leader of the centaurs of the Scarlet Woods. For the majority of the trip, you rode horses rented for you by the school. However, you were told to be sure to dismount at the last town before the great southern meadow, and to leave the horses there, lest you offend the centaurs.

You are now walking—

**Clint:** Which half?

**Travis:** [sighs] The horse half, Dad.

**Clint:** Okay.

**Travis:** They're the same—they're not—it's not Catdog, Dad! Listen, before we get there, I need you to understand that centaurs are not Catdog. There is not a human half and a horse half with two different brains. They are of one mind, father. You get that, right?

**Clint:** I've seen the Geico commercials with the guy who's half motorcycle.

**Griffin:** Those are so funny.

**Clint:** Yeah, I get the concept. Yeah.

**Travis:** Oh, yeah, I get that too. I like the pig one, where he cries 'wee wee wee' all the way home.

**Justin:** Wehadababy Eetsaboy.

**Travis:** They're all good.

**Griffin:** Love that.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs] Very good, sir.

**Travis:** Now, where was I? You are now walking the remaining two miles. It appears you have some time on your hands, so—

**Griffin:** [groans dramatically]

**Travis:** Now might be the perfect time for a little scheming and discussion.

**Griffin:** [groans again] Two miles!

**Clint:** But we can't scheme in front of the Firbolg!

**Justin:** Yes. I am going to insist that, if you guys want to scheme... I thought this would be fun. If you guys want to scheme, you have to do it out of earshot, and I will literally take my headphones off.

**Griffin:** Oh yeah, that is fun.

**Travis:** Or you could just like, give the Firbolg like, some ear—like, earplugs, and take the headphones off. Like, he could stay with you. Leave him in sight.

**Justin:** I mean, I don't have to go that far, but sure, Trav, whatever fantasy bullshit you want to say.

**Travis:** [laughs] Okay. Justin, how about, uh... I will text you whenever they need you back, okay?

**Griffin:** Uh, what are you—before you go, Justin, what are you physically do—like, what is Firbolg doing to not hear this?



**Justin:** He's, um, uh... just, uh, putting his fingers in his ears and singing a old Firbolg song.

**Clint:** [laughing] Is it bawdy?

**Justin:** No.

**Griffin:** I have a dice set. We could probably jam some dice in there. Does that sound good?

**Justin:** Yeah, I mean, we don't really have to game this out too much.

**Griffin:** Well, I was just—

**Justin:** It's easy to fictionally not hear stuff.

**Griffin:** Well, I was looking at my inventory for stuff that we could use as earplugs, and Justin, I'm sorry, all I got's the dice set. So are you okay with dice in there, or...

**Justin:** [laughs] Yeah, I'll just put some dice in there. Fine.

**Griffin:** Okay. Yeah, oh yeah, it's perfect. You got cube shaped sort of ear cone situation in there. So it's... it's a great fit.

**Justin:** Okay, great. [pause] Are you guys gonna scheme?

**Griffin:** Yeah, let's start scheming.

**Clint:** Yeah, we're gonna scheme!

**Justin:** Okay, alright, taking my headphones off.

**Argo:** [sighs]

**Justin:** I can't hear you, but I'll interject stuff from time to time.

**Argo:** You know you can never use those dice again, right?

**Fitzroy:** Um...

**Griffin:** Are we in character? 'Cause that's not what you sound like.

**Argo:** Well, I know, but I...

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Argo:** Alright. So, is there any way possible for us to pull this off and make everybody happy? I mean, help the guys, the woods guys... get the apple, but still take the apple... without them knowing? There's really no way, is there?

**Fitzroy:** Well, from what I understand, they want to sacrifice it to appease some sort of spirit. So we have lots of options available to us. Um... some more villainous than others. Like, y'know, I could pull a pretty cool trick on them, making them think they have the apple, but really, it's, uh... y'know, a pinecone that I've done a magic trick on.

**Argo:** Right.

**Fitzroy:** But as soon as I get out of sort of like, y'know, earshot of them, it is going to turn back into a pinecone. And then they will be very cross, I imagine.

**Argo:** Could we convi—Hiero—uh, Wigenstaff said that them not getting the apple was not really gonna hurt them, right? He said there was—I mean, it's all... theological in nature, right?

**Fitzroy:** I would deign to sort of shit all over their sort of beliefs system, if that's what you're getting at, Argo, but...

**Argo:** Well, no. I'm just saying, they won't really suffer any harm if we take the apple. Right?

**Fitzroy:** I mean, it depe—I guess so? I guess so. It depends what you mean by harm. It's not a great thing to take the apple from them, but it sounds like it's for the greater good. So, we gettin' that apple.

**Argo:** Could we steal it and then substitute something for it, and maybe convince them that whatever we give them is better than the apple...?

**Fitzroy:** I mean, you're on my sort of pinecone wavelength right now, which I appreciate.

**Argo:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Fitzroy:** So, yeah, it's gonna—it's gonna—I imagine it's gonna be something like that. Or... uh, maybe we kill the spirit of the forest. I doubt they're gonna enjoy that, from a just sort of Fern Gully perspective.

**Argo:** Firby is not gonna let us do that anyway.

**Fitzroy:** Well, he doesn't need to know.

**Argo:** Well, if he's—I mean, him knowing about it ahead of the fact. But if we kill the spirit of the forest, and he's there, he'll know, right?

**Fitzroy:** He will know. Okay. I don't think we possess enough information to come up with a perfect scheme right now, so let's sidebar this. You keep an eye out for sort of apple-shaped pinecones, though, while... in the meantime.

**Argo:** Okay. Sounds good.

**Travis:** You hear a rustle behind you from some brush at the edge of the path, and a polite throat clearing. [clears throat] And a satyr steps into the clearing with one hand raised in a diffident wave.

**Satyr:** Ah, ex-excuse me. Excuse me, gentlemen.

**Firbolg:** [yells] What?

**Fitzroy:** Oh, sorry. Hold—can you wait like, two seconds?

**Satyr:** Oh, yes, of course, of course.

**Fitzroy:** I gotta get some dice out of this guy's ears. And it may take a bit.

**Satyr:** Yes, yes. Mm-hmm.

**Firbolg:** [yells] What are we talking of?

**Argo:** Firby! No, hold on, it's okay! Everything's okay!

**Firbolg:** What?

**Argo:** It's o—shh, it's okay. Let him help you with the ears.

**Fitzroy:** I need you—plug up your nose for me and try to breathe out. 'Cause we need some pressure—

**Firbolg:** [makes an elephant noise] This is improved.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Firbolg:** I... do not think these dice will be... usable again.

**Fitzroy:** Uh, yeah, I'm gonna go ahead and use, uh, a handkerchief. And... I'm just gonna set these on the ground, and I'll get a new dice set.

**Firbolg:** [quietly] This is wise.

**Fitzroy:** Uh, so yes. Yes. What was your... what was your thing?

**Satyr:** Oh, yes. Sorry to trouble you. It's just, I... ohh, am just a lowly, hungry satyr who has fallen on hard times. Uh, might you be able to spare... any food, or... coin? You seem... like such fancy gentlemen.

**Fitzroy:** Why thank you! Um...

**Satyr:** Could you spare a coin for a hungry satyr?

**Griffin:** Can I spare an insight check?

**Travis:** Of course you can.

**Griffin:** To see what his deal is? Uh, that is a nine plus... jack shit.

**Travis:** Uh, you are unsure of his motivations. He seems sincere to you.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Fitzroy:** Uh, yeah, I mean, I got some Combos or something for the road. Some road snacks. What do you like? What's your preference?

**Satyr:** Oh, just some food, and perhaps a coin for a shelter over my head, just for one night.

**Firbolg:** I have... berries.

**Fitzroy:** He's got berries.

**Argo:** And maybe you could find a nice tree? Hang out under a tree? We're very big into trees.

**Satyr:** Oh, but a warm bed would do my old satyr bones well.

**Justin:** Do we have money? As far as I know, I had 200 gold pieces in the world, and I spent them on bees and yarn.

**Travis:** Seems like you answered your own question.

**Clint:** I had 25 left.

**Griffin:** I spent that 25.

**Clint:** Oh, that's right, you did.

**Fitzroy:** Um, yeah. So I got some rations for ya.

**Griffin:** I throw him some rations from my pack.

**Satyr:** Mm, why—

**Justin:** Griffin, make sure you mark down how many rations you have now, so we can be sure to keep track of that.

**Griffin:** I think that was my only rations.

**Satyr:** Mm, this is lovely, thank you. And while you're at it, I'll also take your cloak, and any jewelry you have, or... y'know, just anything of value, please.

**Fitzroy:** Oh my goodness! Are we being robbed?

**Firbolg:** Oh, this is fun.

**Travis:** He draws a short sword from behind his back and levels it at the three of you.

[music plays]

**Fitzroy:** I mean, we've all got weapons.

**Travis:** So what do you do?

**Fitzroy:** I mean, we... I don't want to get robbed, right?

**Firbolg:** Mm... I don't understand what is happening.

**Fitzroy:** Oh.

**Firbolg:** He needs... he needs... what we have?

**Fitzroy:** Um...

**Firbolg:** We should give freely, then. Eh?

**Fitzroy:** I don't... do you—sorry. Hey.

**Satyr:** Yes?

**Fitzroy:** Do you need this stuff, or is this like a, you want this stuff?

**Satyr:** Uh, oh, that's so hard. It's so hard to determine the difference. Let's put it this way—

**Fitzroy:** Are you actually—

**Satyr:** I'm going to take this stuff.

**Fitzroy:** Right, but are you actually poor and in need, or is this like a... like a, you just sort of want the money? So you're taking it with a sword?

**Argo:** Y'know, like a loaf of bread for your family. That kind of thing.

**Fitzroy:** Right. That's great. Yeah, are you like a Jean Valjean type? Or are you just sort of a dastard?

**Satyr:** Okay, well, this has gone on long enough.

**Travis:** And he whistles. And I need all three of you to make a dexterity saving throw, please.

**Justin:** But my children played with my dice.

**Travis:** Oh no!

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** No, it's okay.

**Griffin:** Uh, is this an effect—is this an effect I can see, Travis?

**Travis:** No.

**Griffin:** Oh. Okay, well, then, it's a 12.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Clint:** 18 plus seven. That's 25.

**Griffin:** Christ alive!

**Justin:** Uh, sorry, what was the check?

**Travis:** Dexterity saving throw.

**Justin:** Uh, yes. That will be a 14 plus two. 16.

**Travis:** Okay, great. Um, so, after he whistles, what you had taken to be a tree in the shadowy darkness moves, and a large boulder comes smashing down. Luckily, all three of you are able to dive out of the way, but you, uh... Fitz, you are now prone.

**Griffin:** `Kay.



**Travis:** But the other two of you were able to dodge out of the way as an ogre, uh, tromps loudly into the clearing. And I need all three of you to make—uh, to roll for initiative!

**Griffin:** Uh, I critted on my initiative.

**Travis:** Oh!

**Griffin:** That's a 22.

**Clint:** Um... 18 plus... six. That is... 24.

**Justin:** 18 for me, please. Thank you.

**Griffin:** Damn, these were some good initiative rolls.

**Travis:** Okay. Uhh... since Fitz critted, I'm gonna have him go first, I've decided as a bonus for the critting. And then Argo, and then... the satyr, and then... Firbolg. And then... ogre.

Okay! Fitz, you are up! So you have the satyr on one side of you, and the ogre on the other. So they are flanking you. Sandwiching you, if you will.

**Griffin:** Uh, okay. Um, I'm going to... uh, I guess use my move action to stand up, as I was prone. And as badly as I want to go into a rage, uh, I think I hold that shit down. And I... say...

**Fitzroy:** Just, I guess, team meeting, real quick. Next time somebody says they're robbing us? Less deliberation. A little more action.

**Argo:** Yeah.

**Fitzroy:** Okay.

**Firbolg:** This is fair.

**Fitzroy:** Lesson learned, y'know? You can't make an omelet.

**Griffin:** And I hurl a Chromatic Orb at the satyr. Uh, thinking very carefully, what would a satyr not like? Um... is he dressed well, or is he like, sort of a Pan type? Y'know, nude from the waist up?

**Travis:** Uh, he's like a Pan type.

**Griffin:** Okay, then I'm assuming he won't like being very cold. So I'm going to throw an orb of icy goodness right at him. That is a 19 plus six. 25.

**Travis:** Oh yes, that definitely hits.

**Griffin:** Yeah, that's good stuff. So that's 3d8 ice damage.

**Travis:** Ooh boy!

**Griffin:** Three... uh, ten... uh, 12. 12 ice damage.

**Travis:** Pretty good.

**Griffin:** [groans] Every time I cast a spell, I roll to see if I do my, uh... my freak out thing that happens, 'cause of my wild magic, and it hasn't happened yet.

**Travis:** Okay. Uh, so... up next is Argo!

**Clint:** Hmm... well, um... I think dual attack with the rapier. And uh... and uh, Florence.

**Travis:** Okay. Who are you attacking?

**Clint:** I'm going to attack the uh... the satyr.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Clint:** Okay. [clears throat] So... that is a ten plus seven. That's 17.

**Travis:** That hits.

**Clint:** And the rapier has 1d8 plus four. That is... a seven plus four. Do I also roll for Florence as well?

**Travis:** You have to roll again. Two separate attacks.

**Clint:** Okay. That also is a ten plus seven, so that's 17. And... that's a one plus three, so that would be four.

**Travis:** Well, you don't get the plus three. You don't get the additional on your second attack. So just a one?

**Clint:** Yep.

**Travis:** He is looking rough.

**Clint:** Plus four. I'm sorry, so it's five altogether.

**Travis:** No, you don't. You don't get the additional bonus on your second attack. You just get the dice.

**Griffin:** Yep.

**Clint:** Oh, okay.

**Griffin:** That's how bonus attack—or, second attack works.

**Travis:** So, uh, he is looking rough, but it is his turn now. And he is going to... [clicks tongue] He is going to, uh, swing that weapon attack, the short sword, at you, Argonaut. And that's a 19 plus five. 24.

**Clint:** Yeah, that hits.

**Travis:** Yeah, I suspected that that might be the case. And then... let me roll for my damage... three plus... three. Six piercing damage, Argo.

**Clint:** I'm going to use that new, uh, escape ability.

**Travis:** Go for it.

**Clint:** Use a reaction to halve the attack's damage. So it's three. Okay, three.

**Travis:** Oh. Wow, you can just do that whenever?

**Griffin:** Well, once per turn.

**Clint:** Yeah, dude.

**Griffin:** You have to use your reaction, which you only get one of per round.

**Travis:** Okay. Cool cool cool. Uh, so, up next is—oh, and then, the satyr is going to move away from you to try to get, uh, out of reach of a sword. So he's gonna move about 20 feet away.

**Griffin:** Wouldn't he take an opportunity attack for doing that, Travis?

**Travis:** [sighs, annoyed] Yes, Griffin, he would. And he takes an opportunity attack from... we'll say Argo, since he's the one he just engaged with.

**Clint:** [pause] So what do I do?

**Travis:** You're just gonna make a straight up and down attack with, y'know, your rapier or Florence or whatever.

**Clint:** Okay. Uh, nine plus seven. 16.

**Travis:** That hits.

**Clint:** And 1d8 plus four. That is a six plus four. That's ten.

**Travis:** Well, he attempts to sprint away to move to safety, and you skewer him, and he falls, dead.

**Fitzroy:** You give us your cloak!

**Travis:** He's dead.

**Firbolg:** Take his cloak.

**Travis:** He doesn't have a cloak.

**Fitzroy:** Is this our first murder murder?

**Argo:** Did he have a weapon?

**Fitzroy:** I mean, yes, he stabbed you.

**Argo:** I'm gonna take it. I'm stealing it.

**Fitzroy:** Well, we got the ogre—okay, yes. There'll be plenty of time for looting.

**Travis:** The ogre is just like...

**Ogre:** Oh nooo! Ogre mad! Wait, that's my sword! I gave it him for birthdaaay!

**Argo:** Well come and take it!

**Ogre:** Okay.

**Travis:** But it's the Firbolg's turn.

**Justin:** Uh, I am going to cast... uh... [pause] Is an ogre humanoid?

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Travis:** Uh, it is a large giant.

**Justin:** So... alright. Now, walk me through positioning.

**Travis:** So, uh, it was the satyr on one side, you guys lined up on the road between him and the ogre, but now, uh, with the satyr dead, it's the ogre and the three of you along the road, facing him. So you're all side by side, facing him.

**Justin:** `Kay. I'm gonna cast, um, *Charm Person*. Uh, on the ogre.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Justin:** And you have to make a wisdom saving throw.

**Travis:** Well, this might surprise you... that's not his strong suit.

**Justin:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Uh, that is... [laughs] Unless a four beats it?

**Justin:** No, it does not.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** So what's the result of *Charm Person*?

**Justin:** Um, it regards me as a friendly acquaintance.

**Ogre:** Ohh, it's so good to see—

**Travis:** Wait, that's not his voice.

**Ogre:** It good to see you.

**Firbolg:** I wish no more bloodshed.

**Ogre:** Ohh... but blue one killed satyr friend!

**Firbolg:** This was unfortunate. But... we were threatened. You understand.

**Ogre:** I do understand, but still mad. And if honest, sad.

**Firbolg:** What... what is your name?

**Ogre:** Ogre.

**Firbolg:** Ogre... why do you pursue this life of crime?

**Ogre:** Oh...

**Firbolg:** Don't you know that shrinkage can be incredibly damaging to any small business? We have loss prevention measures enabled, such as killing that satyr.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Firbolg:** But why crime? Why not take this entrepreneurial spirit and start your own small business?

**Ogre:** Ogre like hurt things.

**Firbolg:** Mmm, there could be market for this.

**Ogre:** Oh?

**Firbolg:** Yes. Um, perhaps a tae bo class to instruct.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Firbolg:** Perhaps sparring and training others to punch.

**Argo:** [whispers] Exterminator! Try exterminator!

**Firbolg:** Yes, exterminate small rodentia.

**Ogre:** Could ogre exterminate big things?

**Firbolg:** Mmm... this is a more specialized market.

**Clint:** [laughing]

**Firbolg:** So you must understand that the demand for these services, and how the markets needs are being met.

**Fitzroy:** If you want to sell exterminating big things, I think you might have to go onto the dark Gary, which we have ways of navigating dark Gary.

**Ogre:** Oh. Dark Gary get too dark for Ogre.

**Fitzroy:** Ohh, you're telling me, yeah.

**Ogre:** Get weird on there.

**Firbolg:** In the meantime, uh, we must be on our way. But thank you for uhh... being so pleasant.

**Ogre:** Is it okay with you if Ogre eat satyr body?

**Firbolg:** Hm. Let me think on the morality of this for a moment. [pause]

**Fitzroy:** Uh—



**Firbolg:** Waste not, want not, I suppose.

**Ogre:** Okay.

**Fitzroy:** Do we have to watch, or can we turn—

**Firbolg:** I would like to not watch.

**Fitzroy:** I would also like to not watch that.

**Ogre:** Is up to you. Ogre don't need audience.

**Argo:** Fitz, do we have cards? Do we have Thundermen business cards? You could leave one with this fellow. Y'know, like, for a reference.

**Firbolg:** This—let me take you aside. This is spell.

**Argo:** Ohh!

**Griffin:** [laughing]

**Firbolg:** When it wears off, uh, I do not want to give him a great means to get in touch. There will not be a follow up interview to this networking session, eh?

**Griffin:** [laughing]

**Argo:** Got it.

**Fitzroy:** Uh, yeah, just look us up. Look us up on um... Fantasy LinkedIn, I guess, and good luck with all your enterprises, and... how long's this spell last?

**Firbolg:** Mm, we got like, 55 minutes left.

**Fitzroy:** Oh, that's plenty of time. But anyway, if you wouldn't mind, after you eat him, just sort of walking in the opposite direction that we walk, just to give us as much of an advantage as possible...

**Ogre:** Ogre head towards town.

**Fitzroy:** Oh, god, actually, um... maybe just sit right down. Really make a meal of your old friend here. What do you say?

**Ogre:** Okay!

**Argo:** And leave a nice Fantasy Yelp review on how he was.

**Ogre:** On how eating my best friend was?

**Griffin:** What are you—can we step—Dad, what do you think Yelp is?

**Justin:** [laughs] It's where you review the flavor of your best friend. As they *yelp* for mercy.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Travis:** Uh, so, I guess you guys are probably heading on down the road?  
[laughing]

**Justin:** Hell yeah, man.

**Griffin:** Yeah, man.

**Justin:** Get out of there.

**Travis:** With the sound of gross crunching and squelching going on behind you.

**Argo:** [yells] Thanks for the sword!

**Ogre:** Oh—oh yeah.

**Travis:** It's fine. It's just a regular sword.

[music plays]

[advertisements play]

**Travis:** A couple quick announcements, friends. Hi, it's me, Travis McElroy. You may have already heard my voice several times this episode. But these announcements are important, so stick with us.

Uh, first, Max Fun is rounding a survey to help figure out which advertisers are a good fit for our audience. We're still primarily audience supported, and that will always be the case. But advertising can be a helpful source of income, especially right now.

The results of this survey will help us talk to some new advertisers and convince them to give us a shot. The survey is short and shouldn't take more than ten minutes, so just go to [MaximumFun.org/AdSurvey](http://MaximumFun.org/AdSurvey) to fill it out. Please, that would be great, and we'd really appreciate it.

Also, uh, y'know, go to [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org), check out all their other amazing shows. Go to [McElroy.family](http://McElroy.family), check out all the McElroy products there. You can go to [TheAdventureZoneComic.com](http://TheAdventureZoneComic.com) to preorder Adventure Zone graphic novel book three, *Petals to the Metal*. It's gonna be amazing, and you're not gonna want to miss it, so make sure you do that.

You can check out [McElroyMerch.com](http://McElroyMerch.com) to see if there's any fun merch there. It might be a little slower than normal getting to you because of, y'know, the everything in the world, but still worth checking out.

Uh, and that's all the announcements I can think of. Thank you for listening!

[music plays]

**Travis:** As you head down, coming down the path, and you've put some distance between you and the ogre at this point, you hear some hoof beats coming down. And you think horses, but you're wrong! Occam, take that! It's a centaur!

**Griffin:** I would not think horses.

**Travis:** Oh, you wouldn't?

**Griffin:** No. Knowing that we're going to a sort of—we're on a sort of, uh, primarily centaur-based adventure, I think I would, in this case, connect the dots.

**Travis:** Okay, but then I can't make my Occam's razor joke.

**Justin:** You already did.

**Travis:** [whispers] Fuck.

**Griffin:** You already did.

**Travis:** Okay. Um, you are greeted by Diana, who you know is Malwin the Strong's second in command, who has come to greet you and lead you the rest of the way.

**Diana:** Greetings! It is I, Diana! Come with me, adventurers!

**Fitzroy:** Um... yes, Diana. We're delighted. Thunderman LLC here. Just three envoys from the school. You were expecting us, I hope?

**Diana:** Yes! We were told that you would come and help guide us to success!

**Fitzroy:** We excel at that. Um... I just want to, just from the jump, kind of apologize for the mini breaches of etiquette that we will sort of stumble into. Uh, what with our sort of nascent understanding of your culture. But I hope

we—we will do our best, and beg just so much forgiveness. So, so, so much forgiveness.

**Diana:** I'm sure it will be fine. We are not as uptight as the centaurs of the valley. [laughs]

**Argo:** [laughs] Those people... oho.

**Diana:** Malwin the Strong has sent me to both guide and protect you. There have been brigands on the road! A satyr and an ogre making trouble for travelers!

**Firbolg:** Well, some good news on that front.

**Diana:** Oh?

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Firbolg:** They have pursued other opportunities.

**Diana:** Okay!

**Fitzroy:** We killed one of them, and he got eaten.

**Diana:** Oh!

**Fitzroy:** Yes, the ogre ate the satyr, and um...

**Firbolg:** I should warn. There is decent chance ogre will still be problem.

**Griffin:** [laughing]

**Diana:** Yes, if I'm being honest, if I'm given the choice, I would've chosen you maybe killed the ogre. But y'know, one or the other.

**Firbolg:** If you have any pressing travel, I would conduct it in the next 50 minutes.

**Diana:** Okay. Uh, as we head back towards camp, if you have any questions, I am happy to answer them to the best of my abilities, so wishes Malwin the Strong.

**Argo:** Well, would this be a good time for us to see the... the tree? To see the apple?

**Diana:** I will lead you to the tree. This is where our camp is established.

**Argo:** Oh, okay. Okay, good. We just have heard a lot about it, and kind of wanted to scope it out a little bit.

**Diana:** Yes, it is the mission you've been sent on, so I would hope that you've heard about it!

**Argo:** Yes, thank you.

**Fitzroy:** Uh, can't wait to help y'all get that apple. Let's uh, let's... let's move on down the road!

**Diana:** Yes. Follow me, adventurers!

**Travis:** Do you have any questions that Diana may attempt to answer for you?

**Fitzroy:** Can you sort of outline exactly what you need to use the apple for? We got the sort of bare bones, brass tacks stuff. But, um...

**Diana:** Ah. Yes, as you know, we centaurs of the woods hail from the Scarlet Woods! This is where we make our permanent home, where we return to when not on a hunt or a pilgrimage such as this! And so, once a year, we come here to the great southern meadow so that we may sacrifice this gold and ruby red apple to the spirit of the Scarlet Woods, so that we may have successful hunts and mild weather!

**Argo:** What is it about this apple that's so special?

**Diana:** It is unique! It comes from this magical, sacred tree! Nothing but the best and the most special for the spirit of the Scarlet Woods!

**Firbolg:** Did you ever eat the apple?

**Diana:** [gasps dramatically] We would never! 'Tis a sacred item, befit only for consumption by the spirit of the Scarlet Woods!

**Fitzroy:** Yes. Olmec. That's all great, but you gotta at least—you have to have thought of eating the apple at some point, right? It's in a—listen.

**Diana:** Well, who wouldn't dream of such an honor? But we... we are not as important as... the spirit... of the Scarlet Woods!

**Fitzroy:** Of the Scarlet Wood. Yes, fantastic.

**Argo:** As a fruit fancier myself, uh, I understand completely.

**Diana:** Oh, you subscribe to the magazine, Fruit Fancy?

**Argo:** Uh, there's a magazine?

**Diana:** [gasps] Yes! And if you sign up using one of my codes, I will get a discount on next year's subscription!

**Fitzroy:** Bro, don't do it. Trust. Trust me.

**Argo:** Hot damn. No! I'd love it! No, are you kidding me?

**Fitzroy:** Oh man.

**Argo:** Get a reduced rate on a magazine about fruit? Yeah, I'd love it! Um, tell me a little bit about the Scarlet Spirit of the woods.

**Diana:** Well... the spirit of the Scarlet Woods!

**Argo:** Spirit of the Scarlet Woods, yes.

**Diana:** Well, I do not know the spirit—no one *knows* the spirit of the Scarlet Woods. And yet, we see their workings in our everyday life! Be it the gentle rain upon the leaf, or the stag who comes just as we are in need of nourishment! In thus, we see the workings of the spirit of the Scarlet Woods!

**Argo:** So you don't actually see it eat the apple?

**Diana:** No, we burn the apple in a ceremonial fire!

**Argo:** ... Okay.

**Fitzroy:** Okay. There's something we can work—uh, there's a lot there that sounds totally cool and sacred. And we would love to help—

**Diana:** Indeed it is!

**Fitzroy:** We would love to help you out with that. Um... are we close, or...

**Diana:** Oh, we have reached the encampment!

**Fitzroy:** Oh, look at that.

**Travis:** And uh, what you see before you is that, very clearly, be it marked by banners, you can see that there are two camps set up equidistant from the tree.

[music plays]

**Travis:** Now, this tree, just as it was described in your briefing, is both stunning to look at, but also difficult, because it is too perfect. It stands out



on the landscape between the dark gray of the wood, and the bright green of the leaf. It, in and of itself, seems to be at a contradiction.

And you can see that there is a circle set up around it with one camp on one side, and the camp you have just approached on the other, with plenty of scarlet tree banners everywhere. And the other side has got a sun rising behind a valley remarked on their banner.

I don't know if remarked is a word, but here we are.

**Griffin:** [laughs] I'm pretty sure it's just marked.

**Travis:** Yeah, I think it's just marked, but... remarked on their banner.

**Diana:** Now, you should know, as you see, we have set up a guard, a sentinel, who keeps watch over the tree in shifts, 24 hours a day. And across the way, you will see that those dastardly centaurs of the valley have done the same! And you may be wondering, and the answer is, no, we have not been able to raise the barrier once more, because we do not trust those centaurs of the valley. And they do not trust us!

But, I will let you know... since you are here on our side... we have set up a few magical tripwires to let us know if they approach the apple. Though, we fear that they may have done the same. Those dastardly centaurs of the valleyyy!

**Fitzroy:** I mean, it's all a matter of perspective. You literally just said that you did the exact same thing.

**Firbolg:** Hm.

**Diana:** Yes, but our cause is just. They believe in seeing the future in the apple's core. We have the much more logical approach of feeding it to the spirit of the Scarlet Woods!

**Fitzroy:** Yeah, that's uh... that makes—I mean, that makes a lot more sense to me. Um...

**Argo:** And usually there's two apples, right?

**Diana:** Usually two apples. We can each collect an apple, and then go about our business!

**Firbolg:** Do you, um... [clears throat] Speak with them other times of the year?

**Diana:** From time to time, we are forced to trade, or... [sighs] Partner to fight off some larger threat. But mostly, we try to avoid any contact with those dastardly centaurs of the valleyyy!

**Fitzroy:** Why—why do you talk like that?

**Argo:** Yeah, you go up on that last... "Valleyyy!" That last syllable. That's kind of weird.

**Fitzroy:** You're really projecting. Like—

**Diana:** Why do you talk the way that you do? Maybe you are the one that is weird!

**Argo:** Well, my kids make me, so y'know... that's kind of the thing.

**Fitzroy:** Um... do you know why only one apple came this year? What—when there's—

**Diana:** Who do you think we are, those egghead scholars of the valley centaurs?

**Fitzroy:** Of the valley centaurs, yes yes yes yes.

**Diana:** No. We believe in action and strength!

**Fitzroy:** That's the best idea I've heard all day. Let's get busy, 'cause you are—you make me ti—you make me tired to talk to.

**Travis:** You see a group approaching you from the opposite side, and you immediately recognize Rhodes the ranger, Mimi the gnome, and this new sidekick that you have not met yet named Moon. And uh, they all three approach you. Y'know, not in like a threat—just like a, “Hey, what's up? Oh, you're here too. Cool cool.”

So you see them approaching, and Rhodes says...

**Rhodes:** Well, here we are. Uh...

**Justin:** Are we sort of in competition with them? I mean...

**Travis:** Yes. So, the way that this circumstance is set up, there is, uh, perhaps a way through that you could figure out where both sides were satisfied. But, your goal is to just make sure that your side is satisfied, y'know what I mean?

**Griffin:** Right.

**Travis:** So you can handle that however you wish. This is a very open-ended kind of thing, where you are in competition, but you do not need—they do not need to lose for you to win, is perhaps the way to think about it.

**Justin:** Gotcha.

**Fitzroy:** Um... hey, how's your side doing? 'Cause ours is very, uh... loud. And...

**Rhodes:** Yeah...

**Fitzroy:** Kind of racist, I guess? A little bit, against valley centaurs?

**Argo:** Kind of weird inflection.

**Rhodes:** I think it's more ster—like, stereotypes.

**Fitzroy:** Yeah.

**Rhodes:** They talk a lot over here about you guys. Like, this side being meatheads and stuff. And they are also – let me say – *very* loud. Very loud.

**Fitzroy:** Cool. Um...

**Rhodes:** Um, should we establish like, some ground rules?

**Fitzroy:** What are you thinkin'?

**Rhodes:** Well... maybe no like, *direct* sabotage of each other. We can agree to that, right?

**Justin:** Uh, I'm gonna do, uh... an insight check.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Justin:** On their motivations. Um... that is a... 14 plus four. 18.

**Travis:** Yeah, so you know Rhodes pretty well at this point. She's, y'know, straightforward. She's a stand up person. You guys have hung out multiple times. You've, y'know, worked together on class assignments and things. This seems pretty straightforward, that she is just trying to establish some kind of baseline of like... we have enough to deal with without having to like, directly sabotage each other.

**Justin:** Hm, okay.

**Argo:** Uh, do you know—Rhodes, do you know how they use—how your folks use the apple? When they—in better times, when there's two of them, what do they actually do with their apple?

**Rhodes:** I will be happy to answer that, Argo, but you did kind of not respond to my thing about not directly sabotaging each other. So how about we address that first... and then I'll start giving you information.

**Argo:** Well, I won't sabotage you.

**Rhodes:** Okay, cool. I'm looking at you, Fitz?

**Fitzroy:** Yeah, no, it's totally—I'm not gonna—why are you looking at me?

**Rhodes:** Well, because he just answered, and I trust the Firbolg.

**Fitzroy:** Oh. Yeah, no, I'm not gonna sabotage you. I think that there's a way out of this where the apple, and what happens to it, who it ends up with, ultimately, its final fate, is not even important. And we won't even pay attention to it. So...

**Rhodes:** Okay. Uh, and y'know, Mimi and Moon, you guys are down, right?

**Travis:** And Mimi, they shake their head, and Moon, he shakes his head yes.

Now, Moon... this is your first time seeing him. He's a little bit on the smallish side, a little pale. And I think the word you would use for him is 'solemn.' His hair, y'know, hangs down over his face, and he's not really making a lot of eye contact. Not like, shy or anything, but just kind of like... starin' at the ground.

**Griffin:** Is he new to the school, or have we like, seen him around?

**Travis:** Uh, you have not seen him around, so you believe that he is maybe a new transfer, or started this semester. He was definitely not there first semester.

**Griffin:** Okay. Uh, I introduce myself to him.

**Fitzroy:** Hey, by the way, we have not met. I'm Sir Fitzroy Maplecourt, knight in absentia to the realm of Goodcastle, and also, CEO of Thunderman LLC, and these are my associates. The master Firbolg and Argonaut Keene.

**Moon:** [quiet and solemn] Hi. It's a pleasure to meet you. Thank you... so much.

**Firbolg:** Whatever is the matter, Moon?

**Moon:** Oh, uh, nothin'.

**Firbolg:** Hmm... I can respect this.

**Fitzroy:** ... Cool. So, uh, what's uh... what are y'all thinkin'? What's the plan of uh... what's the plan of attack?

**Travis:** And Rhodes says...

**Rhodes:** Well, to answer your question, the apple, they—so y'know, it's—

**Travis:** And she points. And you can see it. You can see it hanging on the tree. And it is perfectly, half of it, 50% of it is a perfect ruby red. And the other half is a perfect golden. And she says...

**Rhodes:** Uh, y'know, they take it, they do a ceremony thing, and split it right down the middle. And then they look at, y'know, the placement of the seeds and the shape and y'know, the—all that. And then they divine from that, like, what the next season—what the year is gonna hold so they can plan appropriately. Y'know, for like, storing and all that stuff.

**Fitzroy:** I mean...

**Argo:** And then, what do they do with it? I mean, after they do that?

**Rhodes:** Uh, well then, they bury it back at the root of the tree, so that it feeds back into the tree, and gives more strength for next year, and more truth to the prophecy.

**Argo:** Hm. Okay.

**Fitzroy:** Um... man. I really wish there was two apples, though. I mean, I know that that's not very helpful in this circumstance, but god almighty, it would make things much easier for us. If there were just the two apples.

**Rhodes:** Well, I did want to pitch. I've been thinking about this, and maybe you guys... y'know, you think about it, you let me know. Um, maybe we could – and this is gonna be tough, 'cause the two of them do not trust each other or like each other at all. But maybe we could arrange something where, y'know, they split the apple, and then, like, the centaurs of the woods get to burn it?

**Fitzroy:** Right, yeah.

**Argo:** I was—that's what I was thinkin' when I was askin' ya. If they do their divining thing, split it in half, do the divining thing... and then we give it to our guys, and they can burn it. And everybody's happy!

**Rhodes:** Yeah, I mean, that'd probably be the most straightforward, win win. I mean, if we could talk our sides into it, y'know? Like I said, it might be a bit of a tough sell. We'd probably have to get Malwin and Arturis in the same, uh, in the same camp to talk about it, and those two have not spoken in like, 50 years.

**Firbolg:** Hmm... seems like we could heal this divide.

**Rhodes:** Yeah, I mean, maybe in the long run, it might be a good thing that there was just one apple? I mean, like I said, it's a long road, but I think that if we, y'know, work together, one apple, literally split between the two sides...

**Fitzroy:** Yeah, I mean, I think some third party arbitration is uh... is called for here. Let's arrange a good old fashioned summit.

**Rhodes:** Okay. Well then, you talk to Malwin, I'll talk to Arturis, and we'll see what we can do.

**Fitzroy:** Let's do the old, uh, you tell them that they already agreed to do it, and I'll tell them—

**Argo:** Oh, that's good. Yeah.

**Fitzroy:** That's good stuff.

**Rhodes:** Uh, I mean, I'll try. That didn't work on my parents when I was trying to go to a sleepover, but I'll see if I can convince the centaurs that that is what's happening.

**Fitzroy:** M'kay. And I do realize we've just revealed the ruse to the, uh, to the master Firbolg, so maybe go—

**Argo:** There's no ruse! That's not a ruse!

**Fitzroy:** It's a—

**Firbolg:** It is a ruse to say that they already agreed.

**Fitzroy:** Right.

**Firbolg:** I will wait in the car.

**Griffin:** [bursts into laughter]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Fitzroy:** Well, master Firbolg, maybe you can, um... y'know, talk to the tree, or... y'know, do what you do to find out why... it's only sort of turning out half the product. Right?

**Firbolg:** I will talk with the tree.



**Argo:** We can go talk to this... Malwin person, right?

**Fitzroy:** Uh, I think that's a good plan. You don't have to lie to the tree, so, uh... I see no problems.

**Clint:** Can I have a little convo with Fitz before we actually go talk to the...

**Travis:** Sure can. Yeah, go for it. So, now that you have established this plan, Rhodes and Mimi and Moon head back towards the centaurs of the valley. You guys make your way back over, and as you near the tents, split off so that the Firbolg might go interrogate a tree. Um, and uh... Fitzroy and Argo, you guys are now on your own, leaving Firbolg behind and moving towards Diana.

**Fitzroy:** Scheme update? Quick scheme sidebar?

**Argo:** Yes, scheme sidebar.

**Justin:** I'm taking my headphones off.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** Okay.

**Argo:** Okay, so look, I think we can more or less straight up follow this plan... up until the very last step.

**Fitzroy:** Right. [laughing]

**Argo:** And then, if I can—I can substitute. I can use sleight of hand, and swap the two halves of the apple for, y'know, something else.

**Fitzroy:** Yeah, a sack of dirt or something of a similar weight.

**Argo:** Well, I mean... don't you have something that'll go fetch things? Could you not send your bird to go fetch another apple or something?

**Fitzroy:** Um, mine and Leon's relationship is just sort of in its, uh, infancy, and so... I haven't really dialed it in that much. I can say like, "Hey, go get me an apple," and then, maybe he'll bring me back like, a rock. Or, um, some worms. Um, maybe an apple, but it might be a green apple. Do you know what I mean? It's—he—

**Argo:** Yeah.

**Fitzroy:** It's unreliable. I do—I can do this.

**Griffin:** And I, uh, use *Mage Hand*. Just like, pick a stick up off the ground.

**Fitzroy:** So like, I could do like, uh, y'know, wait for the fire to get roarin', and then, y'know, snatch it out of there at the last second. We have lots of ways to do a trick here.

**Argo:** Okay.

**Fitzroy:** I guess, also, we could just go and dig up the other half of the apple? So...

**Argo:** Yeah, but it sounds like what's his name needs a whole apple, right?

**Fitzroy:** I mean, one of us has glue.

**Argo:** Ohh.

**Fitzroy:** I mean, that's nothing. But... it could work. Did he—

**Griffin:** Did, uh—Travis, I am now asking you. Did Higglemas say, like, he needs the apple, untouched?

**Travis:** The whole apple. Yeah. Needs the whole apple.

**Griffin:** Right. But does the—

**Travis:** All he said was the whole apple.

**Griffin:** Does that mean we can bring him two halves of the apple glued together?

**Travis:** [laughs] I mean—

**Clint:** Or just the two halves of the apple.

**Travis:** In the briefing of it, he did not specify that the apple needs to be intact. So I think it is safe to assume that he just needs all of it.

**Griffin:** Okay, perfect. Yeah. Okay. Great. Wisdom of Solomon, baby. Let's get to choppin'.

**Travis:** You have reached, uh, back to Diana, and she says...

**Diana:** Now! Wait. Where is the Fir—wait. Where is the Firbolg?

**Fitzroy:** He's...

**Argo:** [sings] He talks to the treeeeees!

**Diana:** Okay?

**Argo:** Sorry, Broadway reference. My bad.

**Fitzroy:** He's a uh—yeah, he's sort of a tree specialist. So he's doing a little bit of arboreal research, um, for you. For free. And that's a service we provide for free as a sort of sample, um, of what we're capable of.

**Diana:** Ah.

**Travis:** And she kind of gets the attention of the sentinel, and the sentinel goes to accompany the Firbolg. No one's allowed to go to the tree by themselves.

Uh, and so, Firbolg, let's cut over there. The sentinel has joined you, but is staying a slightly respectful distance away as you approach the tree.

[pause] Oh. I should tell Justin to put his headphones back on.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** And I'm back.

**Travis:** Okay. Uh, so, Diana sent a sentinel over to join you as you approached the tree. The sentinel is staying back, uh, y'know, a respectful distance, but still close enough to make sure that you don't fuck with anything.

**Justin:** Where—where am I? What am I—am I by myself?

**Travis:** Yes. At the tree.

**Justin:** `Kay. Um, I am gonna start... with... a nature check.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Justin:** And I'm gonna—I'll probably have to follow this up with some other ones, `cause it's not necessarily my strong suit, but... oh, 19!

**Travis:** That's pretty good.

**Justin:** Dang, alright! Thank goodness. What do I—what do I—what can I divine about this tree?

**Travis:** Um, well, what you know about this tree is, it is definitely not naturally occurring. In your travels in the woods and forest, you've never

seen an apple tree, or, for that matter, any tree like this. It seems like, perhaps, this was artificially created via magic, or uh...

Basically, what you are able to divine is that, at some point, uh, for as long as people can remember, somebody created this tree to serve this purpose of, create these apples for... maybe they were created for these herds, or to do this.

Now, whether the centaurs found it after its original purpose was done, or it was created for the centaurs, you have no way of knowing. But this is definitely, while it is a living tree, it was artificially created for the purpose of growing these apples.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** Okay. Is there... are there any like, um, bugs on the tree? Or is it like, pretty clean and—

**Travis:** It is clean. It is, uh... you would say, abnormally pristine. Once again, it looks very much like um... almost like you said to someone, draw a tree without looking at it. And so, they drew like, a tree. With no reference and nothing like that, so there's not nearly enough like, color variance in it. There's not nearly enough like, dirt or moss or detail or anything.

**Justin:** Okay. Um, I'm gonna do—I'm also gonna do an arcana check to see if I know about any sort of like, magic that would make this sort of thing. And that is a... [laughs] Two plus... doesn't matter. Three. Five.

**Travis:** You don't know shit about shit. [pause] It definitely—I will say this. Um, this does not... it is not, uh, immediately come to mind any kind of school of magic that you've experienced, that has this kind of impact. It does not seem like—you can't look at it and say like, "Oh, this is illusory!" Or, "This is transmutation!" It is not a familiar kind of magic to you.

**Justin:** Okay. Um... [pause] Uhh, one other thing... I'm gonna do... an investigation check. Like, around the roots, just to see if anything looks weird. And that check is a... god. It's a two plus zero.

**Travis:** Nothing looks weird.

**Justin:** Nothing looks weird. Nothing looks weird.

**Travis:** Just roots.

**Justin:** Just roots. Okay. Uh, I believe that concludes my investigation of the tree.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs] Really flexin' the little gray cells.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Hey, Justin. Justin. Justin. Would you say that that investigation was... fruitless?

**Griffin:** Mm!

**Justin:** I guess I would, Trav. I guess I would.

**Griffin:** That's good, Trav.

**Justin:** But then I'd be so mad at myself that I'd quit podcasting forever.

**Travis:** Fair enough.

**Justin:** And I'd retire into obscurity.

**Travis:** Um, and so, back at the camp, Diana has led Argo and Fitz to the tent and says...

**Diana:** This is where resides Malwin the Strong! Enter, and converse with her!

**Travis:** And she draws back the tent. The tent flap.

**Griffin:** We step inside.

**Clint:** Yeah.

**Travis:** When you enter, the tent is warm, aglow. And it has, I would say, a pleasant, earthy aroma. Right? It's very hearty, but strong. It's pleasant. It smells good. Y'know, when you like, walk into a barn, but like, a good, clean barn. It's pleasant, is what I'm saying.

**Griffin:** A good barn.

**Travis:** A good barn. Hash tag good barn. And when you enter, you see that a table is laid out with some snacks, a tea service, and you see Malwin the Strong standing at the table, enjoying a tea service. And seated across from them, with their back to you, appears to be an elven woman with autumn red hair. And Malwin sees you and says...

**Malwin:** Ah! Come in. Welcome, adventurers. And I believe you already know my guest. She showed up shortly before you did. Uh, Althea?

**Travis:** And Althea Song turns and sees you and says...

**Althea:** Ah! Fitzroy, Argo. It is good to see you.

[music plays]

**Fitzroy:** Yep. Oh, good is the word I would use also. To see you.

**Argo:** Um. Yep. Surprising. That's another word.

**Fitzroy:** Big one. Big surprise.

**Althea:** Well, I thought... I thought that as part of my, y'know, responsibilities of observing, uh, things at the school, I might come. And since, y'know, we'd already established a bit of a rapport, come and observe a real world assignment in action.

Now, don't mind me.

**Travis:** And she smiles.

**Althea:** I'm just here to watch and listen.

[theme music plays]

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**Travis:** Um, now here's... oh, sorry. Give me one second. I need to go pick up my Invisalign retainer, but they're only open 'til two.

**Griffin:** Damn it!

**Travis:** Anywho. Yeah. And then they won't be open again until Thursday. Okay.

**Clint:** Your life is hard.

**Justin:** That sucks.

**Travis:** Well, I haven't had that Invisalign retainer for five weeks, and my teeth hurt like shit.

**Griffin:** Oh, your teeth are gonna be fucked up, son. Oh my god. That's gonna hurt.



**Justin:** Is this—is that thing you just said in the show, or not in the show?

**Travis:** No, it's cut.

**Justin:** Oh, darn. Okay. I had a really good joke.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Justin:** Can I just tell you guys my joke?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Justin:** And then you can just remember it?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Um. Uh... I—I think, um, that you... if you have to stop playing D&D to go pick up your retainer, you actually regain your virginity.

**Clint:** [laughing]

**Justin:** You're a new...

**Griffin:** Oh, Trav, you should leave that in. That's a funny slam.

**Clint:** [laughing]