

## The Adventure Zone: Graduation – Ep. 15, Out of Order

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**Gary:** Heyyy, it's me, Gary! Previously, on The Adventure Zone: Graduation...

[theme music plays]

**Gary:** The Firbolg, Argo, and Fitzroy were tasked with assisting the centaurs of the woods in settling a dispute between them and the centaurs of the valley over a magical apple tree. Specifically, the issue arose when the tree, which normally produced two apples every year, only produced one.

When they got to the camp, they discovered that the Heroic Oversight Guild investigator, Althea Song, had arrived shortly before them. They spoke with the spirit of the Scarlet Woods and got a better understanding of what sacrifice it required.

Then, they spoke with the centaur's magical advisor, a human wizard named Calhain. He was pretty shady, and rubbed the Thundermen the wrong way. Shortly after leaving Calhain's tent, Fitzroy was struck by a curse, and now, he is not doin' so good.

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Fitzroy, you have been cursed.

[tense music plays]

**Travis:** It is hard to breathe. It feels like there's an invisible weight pressing on your entire body all at once. And it just keeps getting heavier. Althea is trying to talk to you, but you can barely understand the words. You catch phrases here and there.

**Althea:** Where did... did you... can you...

**Travis:** But every time you try to focus, your vision goes white.

Argo, Firbolg, Althea turns to you.

**Althea:** Where—okay. Where were you guys this morning?

**Argo:** Uh, uh, talk—uh, we were talkin' to a spirit. Ah, uh, a weird—right?

**Firbolg:** Yes.

**Argo:** Firby? I—

**Firbolg:** We visited the spirit of the Scarlet Woods.

**Argo:** Scar—Scarlet Woods, yeah. Which sounds like a golf course, but it isn't. It's not.

**Althea:** Okay, we'll get back to that in a second. Then, how did—did that go well?

**Argo:** Mm-hmm.

**Firbolg:** Yooop.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Althea:** Okay. Then what? Then what did you do?

**Argo:** We get—uh, we came back. We came home. We... we jumped on our horses and... galloped back.

**Althea:** Okay. Who—who did you come in contact with?

**Argo:** Calhain!

**Firbolg:** Ah, yes. The bad magician.

**Althea:** Okay, wait.

**Travis:** And her eyes dance around the crowd that has gathered, and she says...

**Althea:** Okay, don't... don't say anything else. Um... okay, Fitzroy. Fitzroy! I don't know the specifics of this curse, and so, I can't stop it. But I—I can help, but you have to stay with us. You have to fight!

**Travis:** And Fitzroy, these words are lost on you. Because that's not where your mind is. Your mind is back at your first day at Clyde Nite's Night Knight School.

[tense music plays]

**Travis:** Griffin, what did Fitzroy feel like, walking into the school? What was he thinking?

**Griffin:** He was thinking that... there was a certain amount of out-of-placeness that he felt, I think, that the airs that he currently puts on is a sort of affectation that... developed during his time at Clyde Nite's Night Knight School. It was a sort of aspirational, uh, haughtiness, so to speak.

Um, and I don't necessarily think he had developed that, uh, before going to the school. I think there are certainly, y'know—he is excited. It is something of a dream, fulfilled. But it is also a... y'know, the—the fear that you are going to fuck that dream up, and that you are not sort of worthy of it.

**Travis:** As Fitzroy walks in on his first day, he can feel the looks from the other students. He knows he doesn't quite belong. You can see their eyes scanning your clothing. You hear them whisper, "Goodcastle," with hidden smiles.

Firbolg, Argo, Fitzroy is clearly in pain. Althea has run back to her tent, and you are left to care for your friend. What do you do to try to keep him with you?

**Justin:** I'm gonna do... an arcana check, to see what I know about curses. Uh, 13 plus three. 16.

**Travis:** So, you know that this has all the indications of some sort of psychic curse. He is being hurt from within, right? This weight that he is feeling, it is psychosomatic; that this is... something is happening in his brain. He is going through, perhaps, a nightmare. Perhaps, a horrible memory. Something along those lines that is making it difficult... his body is rejecting its own psyche.

**Clint:** I can't think of anything Argo can... uh, could Argo—would—Argo's gonna talk to him. Just to, y'know...

**Argo:** Uh, hey, uh... hey, Fitz! Um, listen. I—we know you're in there. Uh, just want you to know that, uh... me and the Firbolg, we've got your back. Uh, and y'know, just, whatever... we're gonna protect ya, whatever you're goin' through. Um, it—it doesn't make any difference. You're our friend. We—we care about ya. It doesn't make any difference, y'know, what's goin on in your brain. When ya come back, your ol' buddy Firbolg and your ol' buddy Argo are gonna be right here with ya, and we're gonna... we're gonna help ya through all this.

**Travis:** Now, we haven't used it in a while, but in this homebrew game, there is a check—a skill I created called 'support', right? And you, as a sidekick, can support your hero or villain. So I want you to make a support roll. And that would be plus charisma, so plus two.

**Clint:** Okay. That is a seven.

**Griffin:** That feels appropriate for the relationship that Argo and Fitzroy have. [laughs] We're about about—out of 20, I would say our friendship is at about a seven.

**Clint:** Uh, so a nine. Nine with the two.

[tense music plays]

**Travis:** Fitzroy, you are standing there, feeling alone. Feeling... completely separated from your other students. I want you to make a wisdom saving throw.

**Griffin:** That's a plus zero, so, uh... oh! 14 total.

**Travis:** Fitzroy, you've been at Clyde Nite's Night Knight School for a while now. You work hard to succeed, but your dedication to school has not been well received by the other students. Behind your back, they call you 'teacher's pet' and 'kiss ass.' Overall, how has your experience been here?

**Griffin:** [sighs] Um... I mean, tough. I—I... I'm just like... I'm just now thinking about it, and there's obviously a disconnect from like... where Fitzroy—his actual family life, and like, where he came from, and who he pretends to be these days. And I think that that... I think this is sort of why that came about. I think he is desperate to make something of himself, and see Clyde Nite's Night Knight School as the way of doing that.

Um... and... so, while I don't think he used to be a fairly antisocial guy, uh, he's got a 16 charisma for Christ's sake.

**Travis:** Hm. Yeah.

**Griffin:** But I think that... he decides that that is sort of a part of himself that he has to shed if it means, y'know, succeeding at this school, and becoming a knight who is sort of... has some sort of value to society.

**Travis:** How has your experience here at the school been different from your life before this, growing up with Dindra and Jerry?

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** That's your dad!

**Griffin:** Sorry. I forgot.

**Travis:** That's your dad, Jerry Maplecourt! Long haul caravaner!

**Griffin:** No, I love Jerry.

**Clint:** The long haul caravaner.

**Griffin:** Uh, I mean, it's completely different. It's literally the, um... y'know, Harry Potter level of sort of scholastic transformation. Not that life was like, y'know, terrible and abusive, but just like, it was... it was nothin'. It was just sort of like... he was just sort of a just... Podunk nobody. And had a—just a fairly, um... provincial life. Is that the right word? I don't know.

**Travis:** Well, that's what Belle had in Beauty and the Beast, so I think so.

**Griffin:** Yeah. It's something along those lines. Uh, and... uh, I don't even think he—I—it's not like he had, I think, aspirations to become a knight, like, his entire life, but there was certainly, uh, a moment where he decided he wanted to be something more. And so, I think this whole thing is new to him. It's—it is a... a pretty, like, swift shift in personality, and, uh... I think he is enjoying it. I think it's something he knows he could get used to.

[tense music plays]

**Travis:** Firbolg, Argo... Fitzroy is not looking good. Um, you—he is clenching his jaw. He is whimpering slightly. You've never seen your friend in this kind of pain before. You've seen him hurt. You've seen him bleed, but this is different. This is... painful for you to watch, in a very real way.

What are you thinking about right now?

**Clint:** Well, I feel kind of helpless. Y'know, mental is not my strongest suit.

**Argo:** Firbolg, can you do anything? Do you have any like... y'know, nature stuff to help him out?

**Firbolg:** Mmm... [pause] I will ask... a question.

**Justin:** And uh, I leave the tent to, uh... go look for Calhain.

**Clint:** And while he's gone, um, Argo reaches into his pocket and pulls out the copy of, uh... The Adventures of Larry the Lime, and starts reading to, uh... to Fitzroy. Just readin' out of the book.

**Argo:** Um... Larry the Lime had quite a situation on his hands. His two best friends, uh, Carrot and... Pear... were really havin' some issues with each other, and he felt like he was caught in the middle. Larry the Lime loved his friends, and really wanted things to be good. So, Larry the Lime, uh, started organizing a little party for 'em.

**Travis:** Uh, Argo, make another support roll for me.

**Clint:** 'Kay. Can't be as bad as the last one. That is a 13 plus two. A 15.

**Travis:** Excellent. Even though you feel separated from the classmates, and you haven't made a lot of friends, you don't feel as alone anymore, Fitzroy. You feel like what you are doing is right. Your focus on your work is the right thing to do. And maybe it's not all bad.

Uh, make another wisdom saving throw for me with advantage.

**Griffin:** Okay. That is a flat 13, and... a five. So we're gonna take that thirt—well, let me think... yeah, the 13.

**Travis:** Okay. Now, Firbolg... what is your—where are you looking?

**Justin:** Where did we—I'd be back at his tent, I guess. They're all in the same camp, right?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Justin:** Geographically speaking, it should not be a hike.

**Travis:** You reach his tent, and he is nowhere to be seen. But make an investigation roll for me.

**Justin:** Indeed I will. Well, my friend, that is a 15 pluuus... I'm gonna get a soundboard for each of us that says "pluuus..." Like—like that.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughing] And I'll just press the button after every roll. And that way—zero!

**Travis:** Okay. A 15, you say?

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** You find, amongst his possessions... and this is buried deep down. Earlier, when Argo searched, he found, y'know, a bunch of, uh, store bought magical supplies. But this... this looks like it's really magical. Hand crafted. It is a magic mirror.

**Justin:** Hm.

**Travis:** And in this world... you don't have to make an arcana check on this, because you know these magic mirrors. These are two way communication devices.

**Justin:** Uh, what do I see on the other end?

**Travis:** Well, if you want to activate it, you are going to have to make an arcana check, because they are locked. And to figure out the right set of, y'know, activation buttons on it, you are going to have to make an arcana check.

**Griffin:** Do it, swordfish! Hack that shit!



**Justin:** [laughs] Uh, swordfish got a 13 plus three.

**Travis:** Uh, so you are able to activate it. Now, the screen is obscured, so you're not able to make out a face. But... you can make out the voice.

**Voice:** Calhain, why are you calling? Is something wrong? Do you have it?  
[pause] Calhain?

**Firbolg:** Um... Mm-mm.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Voice:** You don't have it yet?

**Firbolg:** Mm-mm.

**Griffin:** [laughing]

**Clint:** [laughing]

**Voice:** Calhain, what's the matter? What's wrong?

**Firbolg:** ... Mm-hmm.

**Clint:** [laughing]

**Firbolg:** Mmm...

**Clint:** [laughing]

**Travis:** Make a deception check for me.

**Griffin:** [laughs] This is wildest deception check!

**Justin:** With triple disadvantage. [laughing]

**Travis:** Yeah. I was trying to decide between deception and performance, but because you didn't actually say anything, I went with deception.

**Justin:** Uh, 16 plus... uhh... one. 17.

**Voice:** Calhain, don't bother me again unless you have it.

**Travis:** And the mirror clicks off. Now, roll a perception check for me.

**Justin:** Damn. Right when I needed it. Five plus... oh, seven!

**Travis:** It is a voice you are very familiar with. You have heard it many, many times since you started at the school. It is the voice of Hieronymous Wiggerstaff.

**Justin:** Mmm. Mmmmmm. So, it was kind of a woofing?

**Travis:** No, sorry. Fake Hieronymous Wiggerstaff.

**Justin:** Ahh!

**Travis:** Now, otherwise, you haven't been able to find anything, uh, of note. Anything other than what you were able to find before—

**Justin:** Why was the screen obscured? Was it just not working properly, or—

**Travis:** It was clouded over.

**Justin:** Okay. Okay. Got it. Okay.

**Travis:** Y'know, kind of like a witness protection kind of thing.

**Justin:** I'm with you.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Justin:** No other clues about where dipshit might be, right?

**Travis:** You are able to find, uh, in further investigation, that as well as the front entrance to the tent, which you came through... there is also a back entrance. A back exit, uh, to the tent.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Travis:** So it seems that after—directly after your encounter, he fled.

**Justin:** `Kay. Um... so he headed out as soon as we left.

**Travis:** Correct.

**Justin:** Do I see any tracks out there or anything?

**Travis:** Um, behind that, it's just the field leading up to the apple. So you're not able to see anything, uh, in the grass.

**Justin:** I'm gonna go to the apple. As close as I can get.

**Travis:** Uh, you make your way as close as you can, being careful, because you know that the magical wards are still in place. There is the sentinel. Um, and from what you can see, everything seems to be about the same. Nothing has changed.

**Justin:** I don't see Calhain around here anywhere?

**Travis:** Roll a perception check for me.

**Justin:** [sighs] Three.

**Travis:** No you do not.

**Justin:** [laughs] Alright. Um... can I investigate here? I guess I just did perception. So maybe investigate. See if there's any clues?

**Travis:** Well, uh, here's what I will say. Uh, I will remind you that, yes, there is the physical world that one might perceive and investigate. But there is also the magical world.

**Justin:** Yeah. Let me, uh... let me try to detect magic. I just feel like the apple was so fuckin' magical that it would cover up all the other magic.

**Travis:** Well, now you get a whiff of something else.

**Justin:** Mmm!

**Travis:** A soupçon of a different sort of magic. Um, now, as you said, it is, uh, somewhat obscured, but make another perception check for me. This time, with advantage.

**Justin:** Okay. Oh, uhh... see, that's a... 14 and a—oh, wow, a 20!

**Travis:** A nat 20?

**Justin:** Nat 20!

**Griffin:** Where is this fucker?! You have to tell him, legally! You have to tell him exactly where the fuck he is!

**Justin:** Legally, you have to tell me where the fucker is!

**Travis:** That... the scent that you got, that whiff, that soupçon of other magic, is now so clear to you, that what you are sensing is powerful illusory magic.

[music plays]

**Justin:** Illusory? Shit. Coming from—just like, all around me?

**Travis:** Correct.

**Justin:** My dude is like, fuckin' hiding? Aw, you piece of shit.

[pause]

**Travis:** Fitzroy, you are standing in front of a room filled with your peers. You have been called to the front by Sylvia Nite. The class is magical theory. This is, by far, the class that you are worst at.

As a half elf, it has been difficult for you to deal with the fact that you just have zero magical ability. You are trying for the zillionth time to light a small tea candle with a one-time use spell. Everyone else mastered this on the first day of class. You are sweating, and your stomach is swirling. You can hear the students laughing quietly behind their hands.

The wick remains dark; not even a whiff of smoke. In the briefest of seconds, everything changes. Your magic breaks loose, transforming Sylvia into a slimy bottom feeder. The wild magic crackles through the air. Visible lightning bolts arc from wall sconce to rafter and back. The assistant professor, an accomplished wizard, quickly steps forward and draws the magic through her body and grounds it.

She turns, and with a wave, Sylvia is returned to her normal self. You lock eyes with her. What do you see in her eyes?

**Griffin:** Fear.

**Travis:** How does that make you feel?

**Griffin:** It makes me feel simultaneously crushed, because I know that this dream I have had has just instantly... come to an end. But... it also... seeing a person who I perceive as being as powerful as she is, um, not just in the like, D&D sense of powerful, but in the like, societal stance of being powerful... um, take notice of me? Take, uh... I know she will remember this,

and there is a part of me that I don't feel great about, that feels great about that.

**Travis:** You're now sitting outside of her office. You can hear her speaking with other professors. You don't catch much of it. But it has become clear to you that your time here at the school has come to an end.

How do you feel?

**Griffin:** Now I just feel crushed.

[tense music plays]

**Travis:** Argo, Fitzroy is barely responding. He's grown paler and paler, and shows little signs of life. What do you do?

**Clint:** Um... [clears throat] He continues reading. Because Argo knows about Fitzroy's past.

**Griffin:** Well, to an extent, right? You know that I'm not a wealthy...

**Clint:** Yeah. Okay. Okay. So, uh... so, um, Argo keeps reading. Um...

**Argo:** Larry the Lime knew that Quella the Quizzenberry really wanted to dance with Beth the Beet, but just wasn't brave enough to ask. Quella didn't think they were good enough, so Larry told Quella that it doesn't matter what other produce thinks of them. Quella is a good berry. A good, good berry, and Larry is proud to be friends with Quella, and knows that Quella's gonna turn out just to be the... the best... fruit... on—in the world. Here in the produce stand.

**Travis:** Argo, roll a support roll for me.

**Clint:** 16 plus two.

**Travis:** Fitzroy, even in this, perhaps the darkest moment of your life you've ever experienced, you feel, for just a second... warm. You feel... like

maybe there is hope. You can't quite wrap your fingers around it to grab it and hold onto it, but it feels like it's right there, that maybe your life isn't over. Make a wisdom saving throw with advantage.

**Griffin:** Uh, that's a ten, and that is a 19.

[tense music plays]

**Travis:** Firbolg, you now find yourself looking around the field, trying to make sense of this feeling of illusory magic you now find yourself in the middle of. What do you do?

**Justin:** I'm gonna do... and this is not my strong suit, but it's a place to start. I'm gonna do a check against the illusion.

**Travis:** So you're trying to like, pierce it with your magical skills? Give me an intelligence check.

**Justin:** That is a 16 plus zero.

**Travis:** The illusion is fairly solid. You can't quite take it apart in its entirety. But, you are able to zero in. Your—the overwhelming feeling of it is that it is centered on the tree. Uh, centered, specifically, on the apple. But that there are also two flickering zones of it, uh, just in front of either camp. And you're able to focus enough to realize that the two kind of outlying foci are the two sentinels of the camp.

**Justin:** Sentinels are...

**Travis:** The two centaurs of each camp, uh, watching the tree, because they don't trust the other.

**Justin:** So... they're illusory?

**Travis:** It would seem so.

**Justin:** I want to try to walk up and take the apple, and just see what fuckin' happens.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** I know it's not gonna—I'm just gonna try to take this fuckin' apple. This is my apple now. I'm gonna walk up and take it.

**Travis:** You move forward, towards the tree. You're careful as you approach where you know the first magical tripwire to be. But as you cross it... nothing happens. You move forward, with more confidence now, moving through each tripwire, now undaunted, unwaiting, walking quicker and quicker. Your hand, outstretched. You raise it to grab the apple...

... and it closes on nothing. And the illusion fades.

**Firbolg:** Motherfucker.

[tense music plays]

[advertisements play]

[tense music plays]

**Travis:** As the illusion fades, the apple is gone. The sentinel on the side of the centaurs of the valley is gone, and the sentinel on the side of the centaur of the woods is a charred corpse.

**Justin:** Is it still, um... smoking? Like, does this look recent?

**Travis:** This is very recent.

**Justin:** This is very recent. Okay. Scarlet Woods' sentinel is a charred corpse?

**Travis:** Correct.



**Justin:** Other sentinel is just gonezo.

**Travis:** Yep.

**Justin:** Um, I have to get to the other camp.

**Travis:** You head over to the centaurs of the valley, and as you cross into their camp, you are immediately met with confusion and anger. They have not seen you before. They draw spears on you and begin to approach.

**Firbolg:** I... mean no threat. I... [sighs] The apple is gone.

**Travis:** They look to the tree, and see that what you're saying is true, but it doesn't calm them; and, in fact, has much the opposite effect. And now, they advance even quicker. The leader of this mob is a 20-something looking centaur, uh, with a full beard, and fire in his eyes. And he yells...

**Leader:** Thief.

**Travis:** And raises his spear.

**Firbolg:** I have come here... to build peace. To warn. One of the Scarlet Woods centaurs is... dead. If you strike me down, it... would be a war... neither of your herds want.

**Travis:** A voice speaks out from the crowd and says...

**Voice:** He's telling the truth!

**Travis:** And you see Rhodes the ranger step forward with her hand raised. And the centaur pauses and looks at her, and says...

**Leader:** You—you know... you know this spy? This thief?

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

**Rhodes:** He—he can't lie! He's not lying!

**Firbolg:** It's true. Which... is a little bit like the riddle. You know this?

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Firbolg:** One says... it is not important. But... Rhodes... Fitzroy is dying. He is cursed. The apple is... gone.

**Rhodes:** Okay? Uh... that's... okay. What...

**Firbolg:** We are headed towards F territory.

**Griffin:** [bursts into laughter]

**Rhodes:** Yeah. Yeah, I would say that things are getting pretty F'd, yes.

**Firbolg:** I have plans to ascend at Thunderman LLC, but I do not plan to... do this today. Hm? You must help me track. You are a ranger, yes?

**Rhodes:** Wait, track what? Track the apple?

**Firbolg:** No. We will track Calhain. A wizard who... needs to help a friend of mine.

**Rhodes:** Oh, he's like a healer?

**Firbolg:** He is your quarry.

**Travis:** And she looks at you for a second, makes eye contact with you, and you kind of—you see—well, make a perception check for me.

**Justin:** 13 plus seven.

**Travis:** You see her make the decision not to ask any more questions. She knows that the Firbolg doesn't ask things lightly; does not do things that don't need done. She trusts that if you say that this wizard needs to be found, then this wizard needs to be found. And she turns to Mimi and Moon and says...

**Rhodes:** Okay, sidekicks. This is on you. I need you to get Arturis, and get him in a room with Malwin, because here in about 30 seconds... all hell is about to break loose. And we need to stop a war before it starts.

**Travis:** And she turns back to you, Firbolg, and says...

**Rhodes:** Let's hunt.

**Travis:** Fitzroy, it's time to open your eyes.

[music plays]

**Travis:** You find yourself sitting in a world of opulence. You sit in a comfortable, richly upholstered wingback chair. You see above you, dark, wood beams. On the walls, masterpiece paintings separated by velvet draped windows. From where you sit, you can't quite see out the windows. You do, however, get the distinct impression that you are no longer in the world you just were.

Standing in front of you is a nine foot tall person. Their skin has the iridescent quality of mother of pearl. The slightest shift of posture sends ripples of green, silver, and purple across their body. The effect is beautiful, but also disconcerting. You find the constant flow of spectrum mesmerizing and intoxicating. Their eyes are pure white.

They wear the finest clothing you have ever seen. Their cloak is a deep, rich burgundy with gold embroidery and onyx lining. They smile at you. The first impression is welcoming and gregarious, but as time passes, their gaze becomes... off-putting.

**Tall Person:** Sir Fitzroy Maplecourt... Knight in absentia of the realm of Goodcastle. Words cannot express... how pleased I am to finally meet you.

**Fitzroy:** Are you part of the fever dream, or... something else? 'Cause I have to be honest. I am... so tired.

**Tall Person:** Oh, I—excuse me.

**Travis:** And they wave their hand. And you are not tired. You feel completely revitalized.

**Fitzroy:** Alright!

**Tall Person:** To answer your question, I am something else.

**Fitzroy:** [sighs] Are you something that understands how ominous you're being right now?

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Tall Person:** Yes. I know. I... can be... a lot. I understand that. But... it's only because I have been looking forward to this moment for a while, now. And now that you're here, I... find myself... at a bit of a loss.

**Fitzroy:** I mean, I could come up with some helpful prompts. Like, where are we, who are you, what's going on... those are the three really good ones, actually.

**Tall Person:** Let me answer them in order. You are in my home. I have gone by many names; some of them, unkind. But I think the one that would be clearest, the one I most identify with is... Chaos.

And as far as what's going on... well... that, I can't quite go into. But... let's consider this... a performance review.

**Fitzroy:** God, even in my fever dreams, I'm getting grades. Uh, okay. How am I... how am I doin', Chaos?

**Chaos:** So far, *wonderfully*. I knew you were worthy. I knew you had potential.

**Travis:** Firbolg, you and Rhodes are back at the tree now. What are you looking for?

**Justin:** I don't know. She's the tracker.

**Travis:** Let me pull up her character sheet.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** I guess you're looking for something.

**Travis:** Okay. She is searching the tree for any indications, and there is one. And it stands out because, up 'til now, the tree has been... so clean. Which is strange. A tree, sitting in the middle, not a speck of dirt. But very clearly, you can see a footprint on the trunk. You can see where someone scurried up the tree to grab the apple.

And then, from there, she begins to track. You see her at once, phase out everything, and yet, becomes so focused. You can tell, she is pairing down every piece of unimportant information, and only capturing the things she needs for the hunt. And her attention is drawn back towards the centaurs of the woods camp.

You follow her as she walks carefully in that direction.

Argo, your friend has gone very still now. He's still breathing, but only slightly. What do you feel?

**Clint:** I'm—he's extremely worried, uh, about Fitzroy. Feels kind of helpless. Um, not really sure if what he's doing is helping him out. He doesn't have

any kind of magic that would help. He's been going through all of the... all of the things in his inventory, trying to figure out if there was anything that would help. Um... he doesn't think forcing a chocolate chip cookie glade spring would do anything.

Argo starts, y'know, reading more of the book, about like, Larry... y'know, flashin' forward and standing in the back of a palace while Queen Quella the Quizberry is crowned the queen. And then he suddenly realizes that he's messing himself up. He's just—he can't even follow the analogy anymore, so he says...

**Argo:** Look. Fitz... I'm—I know you're in there. And listen – I know all about ya. I know... I know that you're not really the fancy lad that you put on. You come from, uh, y'know, kind of lowly stock. Your mom and your long haul truck driver dad, and... I know this 'cause I was investigatin' ya. I was checkin' up on ya. I was keepin' an eye on ya. I never did anything to hurt ya. I never wanted anything bad to happen to ya, and now, here, of course, now something bad has happened to ya.

But listen – I mean what I'm saying. And I'm only usin' Larry the Lime as an example. Look. You're a good dude. You're a really good dude, and you're my friend, and I believe—I believe in ya, and... I think that no matter what you failed at before, or what you didn't do or what you want to do, you—you have noble intentions.

You're a—you're a good guy. And I'm your friend. And Firbolg is your friend. And I think you're gonna be remarkable! I think you're gonna be just an amazing person! Because... you just... have it in ya. I mean, you've won me over, and the Firbolg, and I think a lot of other people.

Look, my friend... don't let your failure dictate what you're gonna be. Don't let your—the Claude Nite's Knight School of Knights at Night... don't—that doesn't define ya. Y'know, when you fail at something, the only way it defines ya is if you give up! And you haven't given up! You're movin' on, and you're trying to make something better out of yourself, so... you gotta fight whatever this crap is that's eatin' away at ya, that's in your head.

Look, you gotta come back to us. We can't do this without ya.

[tense music plays]

**Travis:** Fitzroy, Chaos is now sitting across from you in another wingback chair.

**Chaos:** You must have so many questions for me. But I only have one question for you, Fitzroy. How... are you enjoying... the magic?

**Fitzroy:** Uh, honest answer?

**Chaos:** Yes, please.

**Fitzroy:** It's alright. I'm not especially great at it. Um... which is... troubling. Obviously, my life could've gone a completely different, non-sort of catfishy route, had it not manifested, and I think I probably would've been doing pretty well, if, y'know, that particular door had slid open. Um... but it didn't, and so, now, I have these... random powers that I can't quite, uh, control. And so, that is, uh... that is disappointing. I—

**Travis:** And you see them wince for a second when you use the word 'control.'

**Chaos:** Con—control? Why would you want... to control them? Let them... let them run wild! You have... so... much potential. I know what you could be capable of. I... gave it to you, so that you... could be... uncontrollable.

**Fitzroy:** Mm. What do you suggest I do?

**Chaos:** Whatever you want. Do you want power? Do you want... respect? Do you want... to be important? To be remembered? Do that. Are you waiting for someone... to give that to you?

**Fitzroy:** It is, in my experience, the only way that it is... gotten.

**Chaos:** If you want to do something, Fitzroy... you need only act on that. When you transformed Sylvia Nite, the fear in her eyes made you feel powerful. Don't you want that again?

**Fitzroy:** [pause] Hm. I kind of do.

**Chaos:** Yes.

[tense music plays]

**Chaos:** Then what are you doing, trying to control yourself? *Act.*

**Travis:** Firbolg. Rhodes is on the trail now. She's moving faster and faster. And you become confused, because you realize that she has led you back to your own tent.

**Firbolg:** Why are we here?

**Rhodes:** This... this is where the trail... has led. I—I—[sighs] I... I don't... go where I want. I go where the trail leads. This is...

**Firbolg:** This is Calhain's trail?

**Rhodes:** It's the trail from the apple.

**Justin:** Um, is this just my tent? Do we each have our own tents?

**Travis:** You're all staying in the same tent.

**Griffin:** Am I in this tent right now? Where am I?

**Travis:** No, you are still—so, you are still on the ground, outside of Calhain's tent, with a crowd around you as Argo is trying to keep you clinging to life, and Althea has run to her tent. All of this is happening very quickly.



**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** I'm gonna investigate in our tent, obviously, for the apple. Um, 19.

**Travis:** Excellent!

**Justin:** Plus... let me see if I have a modifier on that. I've been getting good rolls today. Um, no, that's a zero still. Investigation is not a Firbolg's strong suit.

**Griffin:** Today it is.

**Travis:** Yeah, I was gonna say! With a 19, fuckin' detective Firbolg here.

**Justin:** That's fate. That's just chance. What you're representing there with that dice roll is the dumb luck of just like, stumbling over something.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Well, I would say that what it is is, the Firbolg is feeling very passionate right now. Very inflamed in a way that it is helpful.

**Justin:** That would be modified through other... outside of a roll. That wouldn't be—his passion wouldn't be dictated by a random system. It would be dictated by like, giving advantage on rolls, or something like that.

**Travis:** Okay. Fine. Dumb luck, huh?

**Justin:** Just fuckin' dumb luck. That's all I'm saying.

**Griffin:** [laughing]

**Travis:** Well, so... that investigation, you are not able to find anything that has been added to the tent. You're not able to find Calhain. You're not able to find the apple. But... you *do* realize that something is missing.

Your pack. Specifically, the pack that you carried all the supplies in when you came here, uh, for the whole crew, is missing.

**Justin:** Hmm.

**Travis:** And with that investigation check, Rhodes is able to pick back up on the trail, and you can also very clearly see that there has been a razor-sharp slit made in the tent, and once again, he has fled from the tent, continued on past there.

[tense music plays]

**Justin:** Well let's keep after him.

**Travis:** The trail continues, and so do you.

Fitzroy, it has been a brief moment since last either of you spoke. What are you feeling right now in this moment? What are you thinking?

**Griffin:** I think it's tough that... he is having this conversation right now, after being forced to kind of relive the... events that happened at Clyde Nite's Night Knight School. And uh, he is... sort of weighing the uh, the difference between fame and notoriety, I guess?

He is—there was something humiliating about what happened to Sylvia Nite, and... it wasn't like, power in the traditional sense that he wanted. Like, the power of being able to hurt people. It was more the... just the... the fact that somebody would remember him for doing something. And so, I don't think that that is his preferred way of doing that.

Obviously, his preferred way of doing that is to become a big, famous knight, which... that door is, again, closed. So, um... I think—I think, in a way... okay. I can summarize it. I think he feels that same kind of disappointment again that he felt sitting outside of the office where he overheard he was going to be expelled. Because... he realizes that... this is—what Chaos is offering him is another... like, door to fame. To, um... being

remembered. That is closed, because he cannot... he is not interested in hurting people.

And I think that decision came, uh, a lot slower than he would be comfortable admitting, but that's where he is.

[tense music plays]

**Travis:** Argo, Fitzroy is almost completely still now. His breathing so shallow, as to be imperceptible.

**Clint:** Okay. Argo leans in real close. Gets up close to Fitzroy's ear, and says, uh...

**Argo:** Alright. Let's try another approach. If you don't suck it up and come back to us, I'm gonna get your stuff, and I'm gonna wear all your clothes. I'm gonna put on your doublets, I'm gonna put on all your cloaks, and your hats, and your fancy pantaloons, and your shoes and socks, and I'm gonna prance around, and I'm gonna—I'm not even gonna bathe first. I'm gonna put 'em all on, and I'm gonna wear 'em all over the place. What do you think about that?

**Chaos:** Fitzroy, you seem... unhappy.

**Fitzroy:** I mean, I've been psychically poisoned? So like, um... I mean, that's in my body body. I don't know what this is, necessarily. Um... yeah. Listen, Chaos, I appreciate... well. I appreciate the power you've given me. Maybe not all of the, um, baggage that comes along with it. Um... but I'm—I am not going to be your... weapon. I am not going to be your instrument to use, to spread your sort of chaotic influence around the world. Um... I'm not interested in that.

Yeah. So, I don't know where that leaves us. Are you going to... banish me? Like—do I—are you going to toss me out the window? And if I die in the game, do I die in real life? What's... yeah. That's where I'm at, Chaos. I'm sorry if that disappoints you.

**Chaos:** I am... disappointed, but... not for the reason you think. I was hoping that this would be fun for you. Because you see... I'm not asking you to be... my... influence, my weapon, on Nua. Because you already are.

**Travis:** And suddenly, Fitzroy, you are aware of a new sensation. Since Chaos waved their hand, you have been feeling pleasant. Warm. Comfortable. But suddenly, you feel something right above your right collarbone. It feels like you are being prodded by a red hot poker that is also, somehow, electrified.

And your body convulses. You cry out in pain. And just before your eyes slam shut from the sheer sensation of it all, the last thing you see... is Chaos. And they wink at you.

And you open your eyes again. And you are looking up at Althea song, holding what appears to be a stamp that one might use to wax seal a letter. And it's glowing white. And next to her, is Argonaut Keene, looking, perhaps, the most relieved and happy you have ever seen him.

**Fitzroy:** [weakly] If you touch my cloaks, I'll use my magic to explode your head.

**Argo:** [laughs] Welcome back, boyo.

**Travis:** Firbolg, you and Rhodes have continued to follow the trail, and it has led you to Malwin's tent. You are standing outside now. What do you do?

**Justin:** Detect magic.

**Travis:** Um, you don't sense anything. Anything out of the ordinary that you wouldn't catch as like, normal background magic.

**Justin:** I want to do perception to see if I can tell if anybody's in the tent. Great, that's an eight.

**Travis:** You do hear voices, but you can't—

**Justin:** Plus seven!

**Travis:** Oh, okay.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** You hear voices—

**Justin:** It's interesting—it's interesting. My perception is plus seven, my investigation is plus zero. So it's like... I can—I find a clue! I can't make fuckin' heads or tails of it.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** I don't know. I found all these clues. I'm just gonna leave 'em in a pile on the floor. Thank you.

**Travis:** You can see something until you try to look at it. [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Right.

**Travis:** Um, you do hear voices inside the tent. They are definitely raised. Uh, angry. And you hear many voices. Um, about four people talking, you would guess.

**Justin:** Okay. Four people in the tent?

**Travis:** That's what it seems like. That's what it sounds like. Four distinct voices.

**Justin:** Does the tent have a bottom?

**Travis:** Nnno?

**Justin:** Okay, I flip the tent over.

**Travis:** It's a huge tent. How are you doing—

**Justin:** I'm a huge dude. What are you talking about, how am I flipping it? Flipping a tent?

**Travis:** It's like a big—

**Justin:** How big is the tent?

**Travis:** It's like a big canvas deal! It's like—

**Justin:** I can't help it that my dungeon master didn't paint a good enough word picture for me, that I thought I could lift the tent.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** This is like a tent like one might use in a wedding.

**Justin:** Tell me more about the tent, papa.

**Travis:** It's like a tent that you would use for a wedding reception.

**Griffin:** I could flip one of those over.

**Justin:** I could flip one of those over.

**Travis:** Okay, y'know what? Y'know what? Make a strength check for me!

**Justin:** Not my strong suit. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Turn into a fuckin' bear. Like, what are you—can't you turn into a rhinoceros or some shit?

**Justin:** Uh, no. It's an 18. [laughs]

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

**Justin:** Plus two! 20!

**Griffin:** Flip that motherfucker!

**Clint:** Firbolg hulks out!

**Griffin:** That shit's unnecessary, and I'm here for it!

**Travis:** The—you hear—the Firbolg lets loose a mighty roar, and rips open the front of the tent, flipping it upwards, throwing the whole tent into the air. The spikes come loose, and the whole thing blows over as he enters, and four faces turn and look at you and Rhodes. And the eyes that lock onto you are the eyes of Diana, the centaur, Malwin the centaur, Arturis the centaur leader of the centaur of the valley, and Calhain.

And Malwin looks at you in shock for just a moment, because you have just thrown her tent. She—

**Justin:** Fuck yeah I did.

**Travis:** She doesn't know how to answer. And in fact, she takes a step back at this display of strength, and as far as she can tell, animosity. And she says, almost in a subdued whisper...

**Malwin:** How could you have done this? We trusted you.

**Travis:** And Arturis said...

**Arturis:** And you, Rhodes...

**Travis:** And Calhain is holding your pack. And says...

**Calhain:** Someone, arrest them.

**Travis:** And throws down your pack... and out falls the magic apple.

**Firbolg:** Motherfucker.

[theme music plays]

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