

The Adventure Zone Balance: Petals to the Metal, Chapter Ten

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Griffin: Previously, on The Adventure Zone...

[theme music plays]

Griffin: You're getting... kind of close to the finish line.

Justin: That's a one.

Clint: Oh! [laughs]

Justin: You see, Garyl...

Griffin: Shit.

Justin: Garyl... talks a big game.

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, Garyl's pulled under the tires of the car.

Garyl: Thank you for believiing!

Griffin: A bright red beam cuts a path through the top of the shark tank. You hear Maarvy yell...

Maarvy: Damn you guys!

Griffin: You bring the axe down on him, and then he falls to the ground dead, and then his bubble deploys, and he just very slowly, you just hear like a... [prolonged squeak]

Justin: I'm gonna cast *Enlarge* on the motorcycle.

Griffin: O... kay? It is going very fast now.

Merle: I'm gonna hit that red, big, red ass button because I think it's gonna give us nitro injected funny fuel!

The Announcer: Can our heroes reach out and take a bite of that sweet, checkered flag? It's the final lap of... The Adventure Zone!

[theme music plays]

Griffin: The two big chrome ram's horns on the front of this, of Hurley's muscle car battle wagon sort of rotate ninety degrees, and are now like sticking out directly away from the car, almost like two big curly wings off the side of the car. And they start to rattle and shake.

And Magnus, from where you're standing on top of the car, you can hear the big row of these big tailpipes on the back of the car - those are also starting to shake. And suddenly, a deafening blast of blue flame just shoots out of the tailpipes, and those two ram's horns simultaneously, basically just turning the entire battle wagon into this great fiery blue arrow that suddenly gains a pretty tremendous amount of speed.

Magnus, like, the G-force of you being like, pushed backwards - if you were not strapped in to those safety rails on top of the car, you would be... just toast right now, 'cause this thing's kicking up a lot of fire. And, Taako, from where you are, I imagine this is probably a pretty terrifying sight. It's like somebody just shot a car missile in your direction.

And it gives you a pretty tremendous boost of speed, and it lasts for about ten seconds before the tanks run dry, but that is all the time that Hurley needed to position herself basically neck-and-neck with Sloane's sleek, floating canoe with these two wings coming off of it - that's her battle wagon. And Taako, you're actually pretty much neck-and-neck with them too, in your great big motorcycle.

Taako: Hell yeah! Easy rider, baby.

Griffin: And the three of you are nearing the finish line. You can uh, you can see it a few hundred meters in the distance. You see these two big black pylons at the end of the race track, uh, that...

Travis: And what's the press kind of situation, and paparazzi at the finish line?

Griffin: There's actually a lot of activity going on around these two big, black pylons. The only sort of familiar sight you see are the Goldcliff militia battle wagons that you saw when you first rolled up into town and shit was going south at that bank.

You see a few of those, and you see—you see a bunch of people standing around and you can make them out better and better because you're getting closer to them very, very quickly, and don't forget that finish line! You got that finish line, and you got, uh, not a lot of distance until the cliff. You're also pretty close—

Travis: That seems poorly planned to me.

Griffin: Well, it's like a game of chicken, y'know? It's like a—

Travis: Oh, I see.

Griffin: Yeah. You're also getting—you're pretty close to Goldcliff itself, because this is basically on the outskirts of the city. Um, you can hear Hurley and Sloane under their masks, you can hear them just like, straight up laughing. Like, they are having a very, very good time in this race.

Justin: [snorts] Well, good for them.

Griffin: And they're sort of—they're trading paint, a little bit.

Taako: I'm just gonna fix this for everybody, nobody needs to worry, okay?

Travis: Real quick. So, time out. Just like, OOC, me asking Justin and Dad this thing. And Griffin too I guess, if you want to chime in, you can be a part

of this show... Aside from beat-Sloane-to-stop-her-from-using-whatever-the-sash-was, and she's bad, was there—

Griffin: The Gaia Sash.

Travis: What?

Griffin: [in unison] The Gaia Sash. The sash that gives you power over all of nature.

Travis: Were we ever told like, this is why you have to beat her, or... anything? Is it just like... if we win the race...

Clint: I thought... the goal was to keep Sloane from winning the race. Not necessarily that we had to win...

Griffin: Yeah, Hurley suggested, during your training montage, that just like, proving to Sloane that she could be beaten, that her—the power that the sash has given her, is fallible in some way, would be enough to convince her to get rid of it.

Travis: Okay.

Clint: So we're gonna save her soul?

Griffin: Kind of, yeah.

Taako: Okay. [pause] We good?

Travis: Yeah, go for it Taako.

Taako: Okay!

Griffin: Uhh, the—the problem with that plan, though, is that she's actually pulling ahead of you guys a little bit. She is—it's unclear what she's doing to get this extra boost of speed, but she is starting to inch ahead of you guys.

Travis: Is she within jumping distance, just out of curiosity?

Griffin: She is within jumping distance, yeah.

Clint: Isn't everything within *your* jumping distance, Trav?

Travis: Well, listen, Taako talked first, so Justin, do what you want.

Justin: Okay, uhh... I put away my wand. I put away my Umbra Staff. I throw the emergency brake on the bike, and just as I do that, I pull out the Wand of Switcheroo. And I point it at Sloane...

Griffin: Holy shit, you remembered.

Justin: ... and fire it.

Griffin: [amused] Okay.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Okay, you fired the Wand of Switcheroo, is there any sort of resistance on the Wand of Switcheroo?

Justin: Uhh, constitution of 17.

Griffin: Okay. [rolls] I rolled a 2. I don't know what kind of constitution I would add to that, but that's not gonna do it. Okay! Suddenly, Taako, you are in this winged canoe that is floating off the ground.

Clint: [laughing]

Griffin: And she is on this motorcycle, and she starts to lose her balance a little bit, and starts to actually drop to the back of the pack.

Justin: And um, and again, the brake.

Griffin: Oh and the brake, okay! The—

Justin: Yeah, I didn't want her catching up.

Griffin: The motorcycle's emergency brake was on, so that disrupted her even more, and she is uh... yeah. She takes a real... she takes a tumble.

Travis: She also takes a real hard look at her life. Her decisions.

Griffin: Yeah and thinks about what got her to that place. And that was enough. You, on this sleek battlewagon, are fired through the air like an arrow.

Travis: I jump onto the canoe. I want to win too.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Okay, you also jump onto the canoe.

Clint: I floor it! The vehicle, because I want to beat them!

Justin: I cast *Gust of Wind*, with my—to blow him back onto his, so only I win.

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: Okay, so just as you see him start to move forward, you use—do you use your magic fan to do so?

Justin: Yeah, I use my magic fan to do so.

Griffin: You're just bustin' out all those items!

Travis: I shoot the harpoon into the canoe!

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: I use my last level 3 spell slot to cast *Fireball* on the harpoon to melt it so he can't attach to it!

Travis: I shake my fist!

Clint: I ram the canoe!

Griffin: Okay, the two of you—the two wagons are now just trading blows in a jovial manner.

Travis: [laughing]

Justin: Nothin' jovial about this!

Clint: How about if I remind us all, that we're all together in this, by yelling out...

Merle: We're a team!

Justin: No way—

Merle: So let me win!

Justin: Okay, so I cross the finish line while they're talking about it.

Taako: Wooo! Somebody give me some milk! To drink! Like in the shows!

Griffin: Uhh, okay! You, uh... yeah, Taako, you cross the finish line in—in this uh, this battle wagon. As you do, like a metric-ton of confetti comes shooting out of the top of those two pylons.

Travis: Magnus yells...

Magnus: Brakes!!

Griffin: And, and the uhh—oh yeah that's not a bad idea.

Justin: Yeah, I brake.

Griffin: Uhh, you can't really find the brake in this battle wagon? You're not really accu—no I'm just kidding.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: You find the lever quickly and yank on it and come to a stop before you go off the edge. The horns from the pylons actually play like a little jovial victory song.

[victory song plays]

Griffin: And the crowd around you is—is roaring with applause! And, yeah! You're really close to those wagons now, those militia battle wagons. You see Captain Bane there, and he's applauding. He looks actually like really, very, genuinely proud. Uhh... I don't know how he knows your identities under those masks, but he does. And he gives you a wink.

Bane: Shh.

Griffin: He says...

Bane: I'll never tell!

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: It's the name tags.

Griffin: And, uh yeah! You have won the battle wagon race! And...

Travis: We've solved the battle wagon puzzle!

Griffin: You did! And Merle, and Magnus, and Hurley, you guys came in second.

Taako: Congratulations, I guess.

Griffin: A smaller spout of confetti comes out for you guys.

Travis: Well, you know, the way I see it, we all were on the same team, so as soon as one of us crossed, I feel like we *all* won. It's not really based on the *vehicle*. If you look in the battlewagon rule book, which I have right here...

Justin: [snorts]

Griffin: And as you're celebrating, you almost don't notice as Sloane appears. In the distance, you see like a trail of dust that she's kicking up, and the roar of this giant motorcycle. And...

[music stops abruptly]

Griffin: She doesn't look okay. She's actually—she's actually like, shuddering a little bit. And, she's holding her chest. And uh, you actually see these giant blue streaks of lightning start to sort of shoot off of her body, and as those lightning bolts hit the ground these giant vines, like, really quickly, violently shoot out of the ground.

And that calamity is getting closer and closer to you. And suddenly, the ground beneath you is starting to shake, and some smaller pieces of the cliff near the edge are breaking off and falling to their... [chuckle] Their bouldery death.

Travis: Ahh, nerts.

Griffin: Her motorcycle runs right through the crowd, and you hear Hurley yell...

Hurley: Sloane, no!!

Griffin: But she goes flying off the edge of the cliff.

Travis: Sloane does?

Griffin: Yeah. On the motorcycle.

Justin: Oh.

Griffin: There's suddenly, though, a blast of wind that comes up from the edge of the cliff, knocking back the few, uh, people who looked over the edge to sort of witness, uh, her demise. Umm... and as those people are—

Travis: Can I just jump in and say, those people are *sick*.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah. As they're blown back, the sky around you, like somebody just flipped a switch, just turns pitch black. And a giant tornado like a mile wide is just a few dozen feet away from the cliff. From the cliff's edge, and away from Goldcliff, the city itself. And surrounding it—surrounding that tornado, you see thousands and thousands of ravens.

Travis: I turn to Hurley, uh...

Magnus: So, how is—

Travis: Let me do my voice. [clears throat]

Magnus: So, uh, how's the whole beating-her-and-she'll-give-us-the-sash thing going?

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: She looks devastated. She looks really, really—she actually just took off her mask, and as she did, as she took off her ram's mask, and sort

of tucked it away in her sack, you hear the crowd around you gasp. As she does—

Travis: I take off my mask.

Magnus: I've been Magnus the whole time!

Griffin: There's not as big of a gasp. Like, you aren't like a, uh, like you aren't a lieutenant in the militia in this town?

Travis: Uh-huh, fair.

Griffin: But people are just like, you hear some chatter, like, "Oh, yeah. Yeah."

Clint: And I take my mask off and say...

Merle: And I'm Bruce Wayne!

Griffin: Okay, they all, uh- you hear a, "Oh. Okay, Mr. Wayne. Cool."

Taako: I'm actually a mongoose. [pause] Meow!

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: She climbs into the driver's seat and straps herself in.

Magnus: Whoa!

Griffin: And she leans out the window and says...

Hurley: I've asked you boys for too much already, I can't—I can't ask you to risk your lives again, but...

Travis: Magnus hops onto the car.

Clint: I leave!

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: Ok. She looks up at you, Magnus, and smiles and says...

Hurley: We gotta try and save her, right?

Magnus: Oh, no, I left my wallet. Sorry... that was confusing. Oh, but yes. Yes, yes. We will.

Justin: And I walk over and say...

Taako: No adventure would be complete without Weaselman!

Travis: [laughs]

Hurley: Thank you Wea—

Clint: Moooooo!

Griffin: She's—she's like, laugh-crying now, like you're cheering her up. She's like...

Hurley: Thank you, Weaselman.

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughing] Then the three of you are suddenly just, uncomfortably looking at Merle, as he doesn't get into the car.

Merle: Alright, alright, alright. I'll get in the car. I'll fix some shit with the big wrench.

Griffin: Okay, you uh, you clang around on the body of the car with the wrench. It had some pretty gnarly damage to it, the uh—

Merle: [tire changing noises] I just changed one of the tires!

Griffin: [laughs] Yeah, you just changed one of the tires. You pry the shark tank's harpoon out of the back of the wagon, and the hole that it created just sort of closes up. So yeah, the battle wagon is more or less good as new. And you guys assume your positions on t—Magnus, are you staying on top of the car?

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay, god bless you. [laughs] She throws the car in reverse.

Magnus: Oh! Real quick, before we go! Maybe a new harness for Taako.

Hurley: We don't have one. We—

Magnus: Okay! Let's go!

Hurley: We only have the ones we got!

Magnus: Okay, cool.

Merle: Wait a minute, I'm not even driving? [huff]

Travis: I pass—

Magnus: Taako, take my harness.

Taako: No, don't worry about, I'll finagle me some mongoose wings. I just extend them, at any point and it's no problem.

Magnus: Oh... cool.

Merle: Are you sure you know what a mongoose is?

Griffin: She's—she's like, laugh-crying again. You guys are really... really lifting her spirits.

Clint: Yeah, like that's our intent.

Griffin: She throws the car in reverse, and backs up quickly, uh, a good—a good couple hundred feet. And does that thing that people do in cars where it's really cool where they have like the brake on and they run the accelerator at the same time, and make real loud noises and the tires are squealin'. And then she releases the brake, and the car flies forward. And you hear Captain Bane yell like...

Bane: [fast and getting distant] What the hell are you doing?!

Griffin: As you go flying past the crowd.

Travis: [laughs]

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: And you are free-falling. The car has flown off of the edge of the cliff, um, and Hurley is yelling, but you can't tell if it's out of fear or if she's just like, psyched, because of how sick this stunt is. Uhh... and you're falling down, but you got a pretty good horizontal velocity too as you enter into the edge of the tornado.

[tense music plays]

Griffin: And as you are sort of caught up in this tornado, you feel yourself being lifted and spun around pretty violently. And you can actually see into the tornado now. You can sort of see into the heart of it. And you see a pretty horrific sight inside. You see this... this giant pillar, like ten stories tall, made out of hundreds of these thick vines. And at the top of this pillar, these vines form sort of a natural platform at their crest.

And on that platform, you can barely make out Sloane, who is semi-encased in these vines. Basically, her legs are sort of absorbed in this giant pillar of vines. And her mask is off, and her skin is a mottled gray, and her eyes are just completely glossed over. She has just been—she has just been completely taken over by the power of the Sash.

Clint: Wow. I just thank God it wasn't Almira Gulch on a bicycle. 'Cause that would have been really scary.

Griffin: Now who and what is that, the things that you said?

Clint: From Wizard of Oz!

Justin: Wizard of Oz! That's not a deep cut.

Clint: Inside the tornado! Come on, get an education!

Justin: Read a book.

Griffin: I guess if I had read the Wizard of Oz, maybe?

Clint: Or seen the movie!?

Griffin: I've only seen Return to Oz.

Clint: Well... [laughs] ... okay. Then imagine Tik-Tok.

Justin: Imagine Tik-Tok.

Griffin: It was really confusing for me.

Justin: My, like, Oz reference point two. Imagine Tik-Tok or nothing. I have nothing else.

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [sings] Ease on down, ease on down the road!

Travis: Ok yeah, that's The Wiz.

Clint: Oh, right, right.

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: So what is our car doing at this point?

Griffin: It's in this tornado, and it's just kind of—

Justin: *Hell* yes.

Griffin: —spinning around. You're just sort of going around and around and around and around this big, giant column of vines. And you're spinning around it. And Hurley's still just screaming, but now it's like definitely, like completely a psyched scream.

Clint: And it's a little irritating.

Griffin: Maybe a little bit.

Justin: Yeah, it's getting on my nerves, too.

Travis: Yeah, we get it. We've *all* been in tornadoes.

Griffin: She yells out...

Hurley: We gotta get over there! We gotta get to the pillar!

Magnus: Okay, you're driving.

Hurley: I can't—it's in the air! What do you want, I can't—there's not a sky road!

Griffin: She yells.

Magnus: Well what do you want *me* to do?

Hurley: I don't know, I didn't think this through! I just drove off the cliff!

Magnus: Could we harpoon it?

Merle: What?!

Taako: If we need to get somewhere in a hurry, and we can't be bound by roads... there's only one place we can turn...

Clint: Duuun, duuun, duuun!

Griffin: Uh, she actually yells...

Hurley: Magnus that's a great idea!

Justin: ... Oh, harpoon it. Yeah, that's good too.

Griffin: Uh, Taako, you're in the gunner compartment. So you're the one who could take a shot at this thing.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: Okay, do you want to roll—I guess make a ranged attack roll on the pillar of vines?

Justin: Uh, sure, yeah. It's not... uh... I'll put this charitably, it's not my strong suit. Making ranged attacks. Oh, 18!

Clint: Maybe it is your strong suit!

Justin: Hatchi matchi!

Griffin: That'll do it! The uh, the harpoon, uh, blasts out of the, uh, blasts out of the cannon, uh, that you have mounted on top of Hurley's battlewagon and a big thick rope comes out, tied to it, uh, comes out after it, and you gave it the exact proper amount of lead time, which is pretty impressive, considering you were encircling your target from a tornado.

Taako: Pretty sweet.

Griffin: But you see the harpoon sort of dig its way into the—to this vine-beanstalk close to the top of the platform, and the car is suddenly sort of jostled as the rope is pulled taut. And now, every time you encircle this central platform of vines, you're getting a little bit closer to it, and a little bit closer to it.

Travis: Like tetherball!

Griffin: Kind of like tetherball, yeah! You're getting closer to it, and closer to it, and another lap around and now you're very, very, very, very close to it. Suddenly, your wagon just kind of... crashes onto the side of it and is bound to it by this rope near the top.

It sort of landed on its wheels on the side of the wagon, so Merle, you're actually kind of pressed up against the door, and through the window behind you, you just see a gooey death waiting for you below. And the left side of the car is facing up towards the top of the platform. And you can almost see it, like you're right up almost flush against it.

Travis: I want to climb up to the platform?

Griffin: Yeah you can actually do that pretty easily. You, by the way, Magnus, had a pretty bad time during that whole—

Travis: I was hooked in!

Griffin: You were hooked in, but damn son. Like, they don't hook—they don't like, hook astronauts onto the sides of spaceships when they blast them off.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Fair enough.

Griffin: But yeah, fortunately, you actually have a pretty easy time climbing up on top of the platform. And you can see a completely enthralled Sloane encased in vines.

Clint: Alright. I uh... clamber. I clamber out of the car. Is there a clamber?

Travis: Do you have a proficiency in clambering?

Clint: I have a clamber proficiency of 22.

Justin: [snorts]

Griffin: Uh, yeah, there—I can't actually think of what the check will be. Which usually means you probably don't have to do a check. In fact, Hurley, you're all snapped in your seat belts, you're not in danger of falling out of the car. Hurley actually helps you out through her window.

Clint: I don't need no help!

Griffin: Well, she helps you anyway. 'Cause that's the kind of person she is. And Taako, you can actually get out pretty easily too, because the gunner compartment has a big hole in the roof.

Taako: Oh, great.

Griffin: So yeah, all of you are standing on this platform, and you see Sloane encased in these vines and she is... she looks *bad*. It is very reminiscent... uh, obviously she's not on *fire* or anything, but it is very reminiscent of when Gundren Rockseeker was completely taken over by that gauntlet and just lost control.

Clint: We call that the Zuul effect.

Griffin: Yeah, she is—

Travis: I look at Hurley.

Magnus: Hurley, what—what do we do? You know her.

Hurley: I don't... I don't know her like this.

Griffin: She looks really upset.

Hurley: Maybe I never... maybe I never really knew her.

Clint: I cast *Zone of Truth*!

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: *Zone of Truth* has been cast, my friends!

Griffin: Okay... on what?

Clint: On... it's all of us! It's a big ol' radius of us all, so everybody has to tell the truth.

Griffin: If they fail a wisdom saving throw.

Clint: Yeah... okay... alright... wisdom.

Travis: I rolled a twelve.

Griffin: Okay, you're tellin' the truth. Hurley rolled a seventeen.

Justin: I did not beat it.

Clint: I rolled a 20.

Griffin: Sloane got a 14.

Clint: Okay, so this is the second part of my plan...

Merle: Sloane? How do we free you from the Sash's possession?

Sloane: [in an echoing, raspy voice] You cannot free your friend.

Griffin: She says. This, by the way, is not her normal voice if you recall.

Clint: [laughs]

Sloane: There is no power greater than the power I possess now. I am absolute.

Magnus: What about the power of love?

Merle: What about Jesus?

Taako: What about Jesus, where is that guy?

Magnus: [laughs] We haven't seen him in a dog's age!

Merle: [laughs] We could use some help right now.

Griffin: I'm gonna need all three of you to make reflex saving throws, or dexterity saving throws.

Travis: I rolled a 15. Well, 13 plus two.

Justin: Uh, a 10.

Clint: Uh, eight.

Griffin: Uh, all—

Clint: Wait! With a zero modifier!

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] Okay. She points her finger, and from her arm, this big, sickly green vine extends. And it's covered in even sicklier green thorns that she just rakes across the three of you, and knocks you on your butts. And all three of you take... nine points of vine damage. Hurley very narrowly avoids it, using her monk-like agility. And with that, why don't we get into initiative?

Travis: I roll—I got a 16.

Justin: 19 for me.

Clint: 18.

Justin: Sorry, 22 for me.

Griffin: Damn. Not good for a God-like plant deity.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: I'm just saying, in fiction, that roll doesn't make any sense at all! She did not do very good either. With a 22, Taako, you go first. As she retracts that vine that she just whipped the three of you with, and it pulls back into her body, what you could see of her body, like her torso and arms and head, are now completely enveloped in even more vines.

And, from her position in the center of this platform extends a... just basically a much, much larger torso and two really scary looking arms and head, completely made out of vines. This thing is about twenty feet tall and it is... fucking terrifying. And it is your turn.

Justin: What are we *on* exactly? Just so I like, got a clearer picture.

Griffin: You're on a platform made out of vines. Don't worry about the consistency of it, it's a solid... solid platform. Y'know how sometimes there's like a boss fight in a video game, and you're like, just standing on a bunch of vines for some reason?

Justin: Yeah. It's like that?

Griffin: Yeah, this could be considered one of those boss fights.

Travis: And Griffin, is this also one of those boss fights where like you're supposed to lose and you all wake up and it's like, "Oh, we'll get 'em next time!"

Griffin: There's only one way to find out! You're saying, is this a dream? Have you been inside of Bart's nightmare this entire time? Bart's—

Travis: I don't know, have we?

Griffin: Bart's Nightmare was known for its fail state boss battles.

Travis: [laughs]

Justin: Free action to talk to Hurley...

Griffin: 'Kay.

Taako: Hey li-listen. We're gonna have to blast the hell out of this thing, you understand that, right? Like, no hard feelings?

Hurley: Can you blast around her?

Merle: We tried to do it your way, it didn't work.

Magnus: Does anybody have any like, Weed-B-Gone or anything?

Merle: I *am* Weed-B-Gone!

Hurley: That wasn't as—

Magnus: That doesn't make any sense.

Hurley: That was not as menacing as you thought it was gonna sound.

Taako: I thought it was pretty cool!

Merle: [menacingly] I. Am. Weed-B-Gone!

Hurley: Yeah, there we go.

Merle: That still... still doesn't work, does it?

Taako: I liked it.

Hurley: It was okay.

Taako: Okay, you saw us use all kinds of powers right?

Hurley: Yeah!

Taako: Did you happen to see us *rest* after that? *No*. Okay, so, we're at limited options territory, my dude.

Justin: Um... I cast *Fireball* on whatever part of the plant that is furthest from Sloane I suppose. Where the Sloane-shaped object would be.

Griffin: That would probably be the head of the thing.

Justin: Sweet.

Griffin: `Cause it's way high up. And Sloane was sort of inside of the platform, partially.

Justin: Sweet.

Griffin: Oh, I make a dexterity saving throw, okay.

Justin: Yep.

Griffin: I just realized you guys are kinda fighting like a wacky inflatable tube person. But it's made out of vines and looks scary.

Travis: It's a *scary* inflatable tube man!

Griffin: Uhh...

Travis: A very *dramatic* inflatable tube man.

Griffin: 13. Not gonna do it. You've set the head of this thing ablaze.

Justin: Six. 13. 16. 20. 23. 28. 29.

Griffin: Fuck me! Wow!

Justin: 33.

Griffin: 33. Okay, and it's fire damage, which plants don't love. So go ahead and double that.

Justin: Uh, 66. And as I fire I scream in one of my patented, cool lines...

Taako: That was my last speeell!

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: Okay, yeah, the head of this thing just disappears. [woosh sound] As you burn it up, and uh, little grey ashy chunks get swirled up and caught in the tornado and just kinda fly—fly away as this thing's head just disappears. And sort of the areas around its neck and shoulders are still on

fire. So it'll take some damage from that as well on their turn. That was... is that the hardest hit of the show so far? It's gotta be, right?

Clint: Yeah it has to be.

Justin: Uh, yeah.

Griffin: 'Kay. Next in the order with 18 is Merle!

Clint: I'm casting *Prayer of Healing* on the four of us!

Griffin: Oh my! That's a good spell, what's it do?

Clint: Up to six creatures of my choice regain hit points equal to 2d8 plus my spellcasting ability. Which is three.

Griffin: That's a fucking heal and a half!

Travis: And I needed that *real* bad.

Clint: Alright. Here we go. seven. So it's, two? I'm sorry?

Travis: Oh, we don't each roll. Sorry, that's okay.

Clint: No, I give you 14 plus—

Griffin: No, you have to roll the d8 twice.

Clint: Ohh. Seven and four. So that's 11. Plus three is 14.

Griffin: Okay!

Clint: I mean...

Merle: I cast *Prayer of Healing*. Ohhh Extreme Teen Bible!

Griffin: Yeah. You hear the faint sound of a chorus of angels as the four of you are encircled in a brilliant white light, and you recover 14 hit points. Hurley is actually a little worse for wear, she took a little bit of damage in the crash, and she stands up and says...

Hurley: Thanks, guys!

Merle: You're welcome.

Griffin: Next in the order with 16 is Magnus.

Travis: Um, can I see Sloane, or is she like, covered by vines?

Griffin: She's *gone*. Yeah, you can't see her.

Travis: Okay. So there's just like a pillar of vines, right?

Griffin: Mm-hmm.

Travis: `Kay. Well, I want to run up to it.

Griffin: `Kay.

Travis: Umm... [sighs] And I guess I want to hack at it?

Griffin: `Kay.

Travis: What I- what I want to do is try to like, pull it open to see if I can see Sloane inside.

Griffin: Uh, pulling it open would be kind of dangerous cause these vines are surrounded in thorns, uhm, that are like, the size of your forearm. Um...

Travis: Mm-hmm...

Griffin: So that might be kind of tricky. You could try it but you would, uh... I would make you do probably Sleight of Hand to avoid taking damage from that?

Travis: Even with Fletcher's Mitt *and* Phantom Fist?

Griffin: Well, that means *nothing*, but yes.

Travis: I've got *gloves* on, Griffin.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Is it possible that this thing is so big, it's become tree-like?

Griffin: No.

Travis: Okay. I do want to try and pull it open, cause if we can save Sloane, the fact that we couldn't save, uhh... Gundren has really been eating at me over the last two seasons.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Travis: So, I'm gonna see if I can pull—

Griffin: Run on up and make a sleight of hand check. I'll say you have to beat a... 15 to get around the—

Travis: Well I rolled a 17.

Griffin: Okay!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Alright, yeah, you find two good handholds where you can sort of get in there without getting poked at. And now make a strength check.

Travis: 19 plus seven. 26.

Clint: Don't you still have the Red Bull?

Travis: Yeah, but I'm good with a 26.

Griffin: Yeah, a 26 is good.

Travis: Well actually, I roll critical on 19 and 20, so technically, I got a critical on my strength check.

Griffin: Okay. Yeah, you—it's like you're throwing open like a shitty saloon door. You just sort of throw these vines out to the left and right and, yeah! You do actually see Sloane in the middle of them. She's got a—it's like a little bit hollowed out inside? There's like a—kind of like a little viney clubhouse that she was in.

But you see, again, her torso and just sort of sticking out from the top of the platform, and she kind of hisses at you violently as you part the curtain into her little inner sanctum.

Travis: I want to go into the inner sanctum and run up to her and punch her.

Justin: Punch who?!

Travis: I want to punch Sloane.

Justin: Cool, okay, I thought you wanted to save her, but all right?

Travis: I want to knock her unconscious!

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Okay?

Clint: Remember, *Zone Of Truth* is still in effect!

Justin: Okay, so he *definitely* does want to punch her.

Travis: I *definitely* want to punch her.

Griffin: [laughing]

Justin: He does want to do that!

Travis: 16 plus seven, 23.

Griffin: Yeah, that's a hit.

Travis: Um... Now, let me ask you this.

Griffin: [laughs] Okay?

Travis: I got this thing called Disarming Strike...

Griffin: No, you can't punch somebody's—

Travis: Can I use that to make her—

Griffin: No, you can't punch somebody's belt off.

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: Ah. Well, then, I just want to punch her and see—and want to push her out of the vines, is that something I can—

Griffin: She can't, no. She's—her legs are gone. Her legs are inside of this giant—

Travis: Well, okay, I just want to punch her in the head then.

Griffin: Okay, you punch her head.

Travis: Okay, four plus two, I do six points of damage.

Griffin: Okay! Yeah, you clock her, and she sort of rears back from your punch and looks up at you and spits out a little bit of green blood and then you hear her go...

Sloane: [dramatic evil laughter]

Travis: And I laugh too!

Magnus: [laughs] We are having a good time!

Griffin: Uhh, you done?

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: Taako calls out...

Taako: Hey, you guys laughin' in there?

Magnus: Yeah! Come on in!

Taako: Don't leave me out! Love a good chuckle.

Griffin: It's actually Sloane's turn, and um, you're actually unable to join them because the vines slam shut—

Travis: [quietly] Shiiiiit.

Griffin: —behind Magnus. And Magnus, you're now sort of in pitch black, and you still hear that sort of haunting laughter. And you can't tell what is coming at you, but you feel like you're being electrocuted and stabbed at the same time.

Travis: I'm on board with this.

Griffin: Uh, it's a 24? Versus AC?

Travis: That *does* hit. But I'm going to use parry.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Which is, when another creature damages you with a melee attack, you can use your damage and expend—you can use your reaction to expend one superiority die to reduce the damage by the number you roll on your superiority dice plus your dex modifier.

Griffin: Okay, go ahead and roll that, um, and...

Travis: It's a five plus two, so seven. Reduce it by seven.

Griffin: Okay, so you only take 26 points of damage.

Travis: Ooh, really glad that Merle healed me. And glad I decreased it. I'm down to eight points of life.

Griffin: Yeah, you just get *fucking shredded*. You just hear Magnus go, "Ah!" from inside of the torso of this giant vine monster, which, also as those vines shut behind Magnus, this thing's head completely regrows. And a raincloud actually appears over it, and rains on it, and the fire that was surrounding it goes out.

And it takes both of its arms and it's going to swing at the two of you again. This time using the edges of its—of its hands as like big morning stars surrounded in these razor sharp thorns.

Clint: Does it say "feed me, Seymour" while it's doin' that?

Griffin: No, it does roll a 20 though. Not a natch—not a natch 20. Uh, so the two of you... take 18 points of damage.

Justin: Hatchi matchi.

Clint: Okay...

Griffin: Next in the order is Hurley. Hurley takes a step back towards the edge of the platform and... hops off of it.

Travis: What?!

Griffin: But she reappears a couple seconds later, and she's holding in her hand, the Arcane Core from the car.

Travis: Oh goodness.

Griffin: That she has popped out of the engine. And she climbs back on, walks over to you, Taako, and she says...

Hurley: You ready to do some pruning?

Griffin: And throws it and smashes it on the ground. And there is a bright blue flash of light, and suddenly, suspended in the air in front of you, Taako, are these just shiny blue translucent flecks that your Umbra staff, kind of like the one time it swallowed that guy's staff and became more powerful, your Umbra staff kind of like, excitedly, like a dog that just smelled a treat, looks up at these flecks and turns inside out and swallows them all up, and is now just kind of shaking in your hand. And you feel empowered with an energy that you've never really felt before.

Justin: ... Okay.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: And it's your turn.

Taako: Okay...

Griffin: All of your spell slots are back.

Justin: Oh, great! Excellent.

Travis: Did it also heal all of us? And give us like, plus 16 to attack?

Griffin: No, the—the Arcane Core just sort of exploded, and its Arcane contents poured out of it and uh, were hungrily gobbled up by the Umbra Staff.

Justin: I guess I'm gonna cast...

Clint: [stage whispers] Try *Zone of Truth*.

Justin: I'm gonna cast *Zone of Truth*...

Travis: [laughs]

Justin: ... on myself and then say...

Griffin: You tell the truth *forever*.

Taako: We're gonna win!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: And just by saying that and being true...

Justin: Right, yeah. Bend reality. Uh, I mean, I uh... I think I'm gonna need to cast *Fireball* again.

Griffin: `Kay.

Justin: But I'm gonna focus this fireball on the same area that Magnus ripped open with his bare hands.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: To try and blow a hole open through it.

Griffin: Uh, 14?

Justin: No, sir.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Not gonna do it. Four. Five. Six. 11. 17. 23. 27. Uh, 32!

Griffin: Okay, you uh, you point your Umbra Staff.

Justin: 64! Yes!

Griffin: Yeah, you point the Umbra Staff at the—at this towering vine giant and fireball starts to come out of the tip of it, but it's like, really big?

Justin: Uh oh.

Griffin: And it's not—it hasn't like fully come out of it yet, it's almost like a drop of water that hasn't really fallen out of the faucet yet, so go ahead and keep rolling those d6s.

Justin: [snorts] Okay... Three... nine... 11. 15. 18. Will you tell me when to stop?

Griffin: Yup.

Justin: 22. 23. 29. 33. 37. 43.

Clint: This is worrying me.

Justin: Yeah. 47. 48.

Griffin: Okay, that's good.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: Okay, so it's 48 on top of the 32?

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: For a total of 160?

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: The sun basically comes out of the end of your Umbra Staff. You actually—

Justin: Hey, but, do I get to say anythin'?

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Taako: Who's up for some sun-dried dipshit?

Justin: Then I fire it.

Griffin: Okay, yeah. The sun comes out of your Umbra Staff. You actually feel like a blast of heat, like backdraft, come at you as this thing flies at the big towering vine monster.

Clint: With Magnus inside.

Griffin: Yeah, there's kind of a Wicker Man thing coming on right now.

Travis: I'm gonna be *fine*.

Griffin: How'd it get burned! You actually are fine.

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: The uh, the—this wacky inflatable vine man is just *completely* consumed by this fire. And it just is completely—he basically keeps his shape, but is now just like, grey ash that is quickly whipped away by the winds of the tornado around you, and is now gone. And you can see Magnus, who looks like *shit*, inside. And you see a still-yet-undaunted Sloane, who laughs and says...

Sloane: Impressive!

Travis: But you are not a Jedi yet!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: She- she starts to regrow vines around her, but these look... different from the vines that formed that towering monster. These vines are... like an inky black, with these shining white thorns. And uh, uh, Hurley actually runs up to you, Magnus, and grabs you by the back of the belt and starts to pull you backwards. And she says...

Hurley: Guys, be careful! Be careful! Be careful! That's—that's silverpoint! It's a type of plant, its venom is cursed. There's no cure! If you get touched by that, there's no surviving that! Stay back!

Griffin: Merle, you've actually heard of this plant before, and it is infamous for its deadliness.

Merle: Stay away from it.

Justin: [snorts and laughs]

Griffin: Those vines sort of form a bramble around Sloane. And sort of encase her.

Travis: Like a pelt?

Griffin: Like a tomb. Like, she is—

Travis: Like a bramble pelt?

Griffin: Like a bramble pelt, yeah.

Clint: Nooo!

Griffin: She is swallowed up in these black vines with these white points. Hurley says...

Hurley: Guys, I have one last idea. Come over here.

Griffin: She says, and walks over to the edge of the vines. She says..

Hurley: We're gonna need a lot—

Justin: Miraculously unburnt vine platform?

Griffin: Yeah, the vine platform itself is fine. The vine monster is gone.

Justin: Oh, good. That was a good spell!

Griffin: Yeah. You targeted it really well. She beckons you over to the edge of the platform. She says...

Hurley: We're gonna need uh, we're gonna need as much distance between her and us if we're gonna make this work.

Taako: Okay.

Magnus: Okay.

Merle: Alright...

Magnus: So far, so good!

Griffin: The three of you walk over to the very edge of the platform, and Hurley's smiling now, she's got a really devious idea, she says...

Hurley: Okay, Taako? Kneel down.

Taako: ... Okay?

Justin: I kneel.

Griffin: Hurley walks over to you, and actually throws her arms around you and gives you a big hug.

Taako: Cool.

Clint: She picks *this* moment?

Taako: I'm into it.

Griffin: And she whispers...

Hurley: Thanks for everything.

Griffin: And backs up. And as she backs up, you see that she's no longer wearing her safety harness. In fact, *you* are. And she claps her hands together and points them at the three of you, and you are blasted backwards by a wave of force. And, instantly, your safety harness bubbles deploy as you go soaring backwards into the outskirts of the tornado.

And you see Hurley clap her hands together with determination. And she starts to glow with this brilliant, white light, and she just takes a running leap, head first into the black bramble. And that white light that encased her suddenly starts to shimmer throughout the vines that you guys were standing on.

And, in fact, it starts to shimmer throughout the tornado that you're trapped in, and it starts to shimmer through the sky above you. And that is the last thing you see before you sort of black out from the G-forces of being in this tornado, just floating around in your bubbles.

Clint: Wow.

Travis: We did it!

Clint: We won!

Justin: We win!

Travis: Another day saved by us!

Clint: We rule! We're the best!

Taako: I didn't think we were gonna fix that one guys, and then we totally did!

Clint: We so came through!

Travis: We did it! And not a life was lost. At no cost to ourselves.

Justin: Another W for the good guys!

Clint: They're gonna change their tune now.

Travis: Yeah. We're gonna get a plaque for this one for sure.

Clint: Woo hoo! Yay us!

Griffin: When the three of you come to, you landed pretty close to each other, which is as unlikely as it is adorable. And you are in a very shallow pool of water. And you realize that you have landed in the middle of the Goldcliff city center. You're surrounded by these tall, shimmering buildings.

And you realize that the sky is now just sort of lovely weather! It is returned to normal.

And you are sort of sitting in this pool that the rivers that flow in the town sort of converge in before they flow out and off the cliff. And about 20 feet away from you in the pool, you see the Raven. And she's... better! Her skin is not this weird, mottled grey that it was when she was in possession of—when she was being possessed by the Sash.

But she's holding in her arms Hurley, who does look bad. She—she looks really, really rough. Her skin is starting to turn, like, pitch black, and—and some sort of contagion, some sort of plague, you can tell, is sort of climbing up her veins. And you actually hear the sounds of sirens coming your way from the uh, from the finish line on the outskirts of town, as the Goldcliff militia starts to rush in to fix the situation. And you hear Hurley weakly cough. And she says to Sloane...

Hurley: [weakly, playfully] You're in troublllle...

Griffin: And Sloane- Sloane laughs and looks up and says...

Sloane: This whole time, I was looking for something more powerful than this fucking belt.

Griffin: And she looks down at Hurley, and she says...

Sloane: I'm such a fool.

Griffin: And Hurley says...

Hurley: Ha ha... yeah.

Taako: Don't you have any magicks? you're a cleric for cryin' out loud!

Merle: Me?!

Griffin: Sloane looks sadly at you and says...

Sloane: This is... the venom of silverpoint is... there's nothing we can do for her.

Taako: Horseshit!

Sloane: Well, there's—

Taako: Hooorse! Shit!

Sloane: There's one thing I can do for her.

Griffin: She says. And she leans down to Hurley and whispers. And Hurley says...

Hurley: Yeah, I think that'd be alright.

Griffin: And Sloane looks back at the three of you and says...

Sloane: I want to thank you for everything you've done, but I... I have one last request for you.

Magnus: [groans]

Sloane: Are there other objects in this world... that are as powerful as this belt?

Taako: [reluctantly] Yeah.

Magnus: Yes.

Merle: Uh-huh.

Taako: There are fewer.

Griffin: She says, uh...

Sloane: Don't let this happen again.

[music plays]

Griffin: And then you are blinded by another flash of light, and an explosion of force that sort of throws back some of the water in this pool back on your face. And you're blinded for just a moment, but as your sight returns, you realize you're being buffeted by this thick whirlwind of these light pink petals.

And they settle somewhat, and the wind settles somewhat. And—and thousands of these petals are floating weightlessly through the air, and you can see in the middle of this pond, a beautiful towering cherry blossom tree has appeared. And it's where these petals are just sort of flying off of.

And, as far as trees go, it's the prettiest one you've ever seen. And at its base, you see these roots and knots that are forming two vaguely humanoid shapes. One is a sort of a shorter figure lying in the embrace of a taller figure. And on the ground, in the water in front of them, you see a raven mask and a ram's mask. And tucked neatly in between the two of them, you see the Gaia Sash.

Travis: I—I elbow Taako and point at the sash.

Justin: I elbow, uh, Magnus.

Travis: Okay. I elbow—I elbow Taako a little bit harder and point at the mask, er, point at the belt.

Taako: Oh yeah!

Justin: I notice Magnus reaching for Railsplitter and I say...

Taako: Don't even *think* about it!

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: And I grab the belt.

[music plays]

[advertisements play]

Griffin: I have a few personal messages to read on this episode. If you want to get a message out there to a fellow listener, a loved one, maybe a soon to be loved one – I don't know what your plans are – you can hit us up. Go to MaximumFun.org/jumbotron, and you can find out how to get on the show, like this message for Jess, from Kenny, who says...

“Eeeyah!” And that’s the phonetic pronunciation I've decided to give this emoji. ‘Cause it’s really just an emoji. Jess, Kenny has said to you, an emoji, and it’s a smiling face with heart shaped eyes. And to me, I see that, and I read it left to right, and I go, “eeyah!” ‘Cause I don't know, I guess that’s the sound of love. Or maybe they're a little bit afraid. Their eyes have been replaced with hearts.

Anyway, sounds like there’s some good love in there. Congratulations, Jess and Kenny, and thanks for listening.

Got another message here, and it’s for RJ, and it’s from Sam, Ryan, and Billy, who say, “Happy birthday, RJ! We know that it’s hard being such an abnormally tall, basic B-word in today’s rough and tumble world. We hope that the PSL we know you're holding, and a message from the McElroys, will ease your pain. Love, the brain trust, and Ryan.”

Ryan, I don't know why you didn’t make the cut. It sounds like you got lots of good ideas on how to spring surprises on your good friend, RJ. But uh, y'know what? Keep on hoping. Aspirations are what fuel the fire of life. And RJ? Happy birthday, man.

[music plays]

Griffin: As you walk forward towards the belt, you hear a voice in your mind say...

Gaia Sash: Wizard! Wizard, wouldn't you like to be more powerful than you are now? Wouldn't you like *unceasing, undeniable* power? Over nature? You could cast big lightning bolts and control trees and vines and shit.

Merle: You know this is Taako, right?

Travis: [laughs]

Taako: Hell yeah, I mean, I'm listening, why'd you stop? What else you got?

Gaia Sash: Grab me and put me on, why don't you?

Taako: Hey listen, belt, I love everything you're laying down, bubbelah, but I can't put you on. I gotta put you in my bag.

Merle: Looks too small!

Griffin: We're gonna do a wisdom contest.

Justin: Oh, gosh. Not my strong suit.

Travis: Probably better than mine.

Griffin: Got a nine.

Justin: Yeah, listen, I can't lie on this one, dudes, it's a critical failure.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Uhh... yeah. You reach down and grab the belt and you stretch its two ends out. Just as about you're going to clasp it around your body, you hear a voice say...

Hurley: No, don't do it, Taako! Hang in there! You're tougher than this!

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: And it's Jiminy Cricket!

Griffin: And you hear—you hear another voice go...

Sloane: Yeah, trust me, man, you don't want to put that thing on.

Griffin: The—the voice is giving you advantage on that roll.

Taako: It's a three, my dudes, sorry.

Travis: I rolled a 22 to punch him in the head.

Justin: Okay, he punches me in the head and—

Clint: And I grab the sash!

Justin: And Merle grabs the sash.

Clint: I rolled a 19 plus a three modifier.

Justin: There. Thank god.

Clint: 22.

Travis: Now, to be fair, Taako does take five points of damage from that punch.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: Noted.

Griffin: Okay, uh, okay, yeah. So Merle, you hear...

Gaia Sash: Oh okay, you, Nature Cleric, I should have come to you first! C'mon man, put me on!

Clint: Nobody ever thinks of Merle...

Gaia Sash: There's no vine you'll never be able to not fuck!

Griffin: They say.

Travis: [laughs]

Gaia Sash: I'll give you sexual conquests over *anything*! What do you want to fuck, an onion?

Griffin: But you have beaten this thing in a test of wisdom.

Merle: I don't need your help, pal.

Griffin: Fucking an onion?!

Merle: To have sex with an onion!

Travis: "I can fuck any onion I want!"

Griffin: "I get all the bulbs I can handle, man!"

Merle: Bermuda! Red! Doesn't matter! Onion rings!? They're mine. You opened the door, I walked through it.

Justin: [laughing]

Griffin: After—after the weirdest—after executing the weirdest brag ever, you put the Gaia Sash safely into your belt. Into your—not into your belt, fuck.

Clint: Fanny pack, into my fanny pack.

Griffin: You lower it into your fanny pack, and give it an authoritative zip. You hear Sloane and Hurley’s voice in your head go...

Hurley: Well that was... not what I expected, really, but I guess through the power of teamwork, the two of you triumphed!

Travis: I help Taako up.

Griffin: You help Taako up.

Merle: Thanks, pal.

Travis: No, you’re Merle!

Clint: I’m glad you helped him up so I didn’t have to!

Travis: We’re the worst.

Griffin: The Goldcliff militia have surrounded the pool that you guys are standing in. A few concerned members of the militia hop out of their wagons and draw their weapons. They pull these clubs and crossbows out. But another battle wagon pulls up and kicks up some dust as it does a brake-slide to the edge of the pool, and Captain Bane does an elegant leap out of the car and runs over to the three of you and says...

Captain Bane: Boys, don’t worry, I got this one! These three are with me!

Griffin: And he grabs you and puts you into his paddy wagon. And says...

Captain Bane: C’mon, I’ll get you guys to safety.

Griffin: And—and drives away from this scene. And he takes you back to his office. In his private office in the Goldcliff militia headquarters. And is sort-of debriefing with you and he asks...

Captain Bane: Guys, I gotta ask, what happened out there?

Merle: ... Nothing?

Taako: Like—

Magnus: Out where?

Taako: Listen, there is like seven episodes of stuff, man.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: And then we cross-fade into the sound of an airplane propeller as we tell him the whole story.

Justin: Yeah, right!

Captain Bane: I guess just for starters, what happened to Lieutenant Hurley?

Magnus: Uh... tree.

Merle: She got limbed, man.

Captain Bane: What does that even mean?

Magnus: She's a tree!

Taako: Tree now.

Merle: Yeah, but we're okay!

Magnus: We're fine!

Merle: We're great!

Captain Bane: Did you secure the grand relic?

Taako: Yes.

Magnus: Yes.

Merle: Yeah.

Taako: It was touch-and-go for a second?

Merle: We—we have a long list of expenses that I guess we could like, just forward that to you?

Taako: Receipts?

Magnus: Yeah, do we need to give our receipts to you, or like...

Captain Bane: No, I imagine the Director would probably want those, she'll pass them off to, I don't know, the bursar or whatever. I sort of play by my own rules. Vis-a-vis expense reports.

Taako: I hope Debra is back from vacation, 'cause Raul takes forever.

Captain Bane: Yeah.

Magnus: Oh god.

Merle: With the birthday parties...

Taako: Of course, and the birthday parties, everybody gotta gather around. It's Friday, it's three PM. I want to go home.

Captain Bane: I gotta ask you guys somethin'. You've recovered three of these things now.

Taako: Mm-hmm?

Magnus: Yeah?

Captain Bane: How do—how do you manage to, like, resist the thrall of 'them? Y'know?

Magnus: Oh, we're pretty dumb.

Merle: We are *dense*.

Taako: Dumb as a box of rocks.

Griffin: He looks at the three of you and doesn't quite believe you, but he says...

Captain Bane: That's interesting. That's interesting. Well...

Griffin: He reaches underneath his desk and he pulls out a decanter with this thick brown beverage inside of it and pours himself and the three of you a glass of it. And he holds up his glass and he says...

Captain Bane: A toast to Lieutenant Hurley. She was the bravest—the bravest officer I ever worked with in this force. I'm getting too old for this shit.

Taako: Yes. I hope her memory never 'leaves' you.

Clint: [laughs]

Magnus: Ah, nice. Nice.

Merle: That got right to the 'root' of the problem.

Taako: It was a—it was a 'tree'mendous joke, if I do say so myself!

Magnus: Bark!

Merle: There's a dog in here!

Griffin: He is uh, he is looking at the three of you sort of expectantly, and he looks kind of nervous as he's holding this drink up.

Captain Bane: Uh, a toast—a toast then. Have you guys ever toasted before?

Merle: Marshmallows...

Magnus: I like toast!

Captain Bane: No. [sighs] It's bad luck if you don't drink after the toast.

Griffin: He says.

Merle: Uh, I'm not really thirsty, ol' buddy.

Magnus: Yeah, I'm good.

Taako: Yeah, um...

Captain Bane: This is a—this is a 30 year brandywine.

Merle: Magnus, kill him.

Captain Bane: [agitated] This is really rare stuff—

Merle: Kill him Magnus, right now.

Captain Bane: Just fucking drink it!!

Justin: I cast *Charm Person* on him.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: He has to uh, make a wisdom saving throw.

Griffin: He rolls a 19.

Justin: Fuck.

Griffin: Yeah, he resists your charm spell, but you almost feel like, your charm spell was overpowered by another... spell. Another mind-control spell. As... and Captain Bane starts to glow red. Like, he has a faint red outline around him as he—

Magnus: Yo Bane, my dude, what's up?

Griffin: —as he quietly stands up, and Taako, he takes your glass and smashes it to the ground, and Merle, he takes your glass and he smashes it to the ground, and then he takes Magnus' glass, and just chugs it. And then suddenly, his skin starts to turn that sort of sickly black color that Hurley's was after she dove into the silverpoint vines, and he falls to the ground, dead.

Travis: Aw, bummer!

Clint: Well, shit...

Griffin: And as he—as he falls, you see a figure standing behind him. It's actually not standing, it's kind of floating, and it's human-sized, and human-shaped, but you can't really make out its race definitively, because all you can see is a bright red robe.

[eerie music plays]

Travis: I punch it.

Griffin: If there's a person in that—uh, okay, you reach up to punch the red robe and your fist just passes through it. It is—

Travis: I punch again.

Griffin: You punch again, it is—

Travis: And again!

Griffin: You punch it furiously. It is incorporeal.

Travis: Oh, then I use Railsplitter on it.

Griffin: Okay. Well, that did it, you cut it in half.

Clint: It's not in-arboreal, it's incorporeal.

Griffin: Oh, that's a good joke!

Clint: Thank you.

Griffin: Your axe—your axe passes clean through it. You're lucky you didn't get a hunk of one of your buddies with that. With that swing. You can't see inside this floating red robe, all you can see is just complete pitch-blackness and a single small white light that illuminates as this red robe begins to speak, and it asks...

Red Robe: [raspy, quiet] Are you afraid?

Magnus: What?

Merle: Hm?

Taako: Yeah?

Merle: I think he's talking to you, Taako.

Magnus: What did you—I couldn't—what did you say?

Red Robe: Are you afraid of the dark?

Merle: I'm still—I'm still not—

Griffin: He doesn't say 'in the dark.'

Magnus: Like, in general, or—

Merle: Could you project a little more?

Taako: I'm a Goosebumps man, myself.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: His whispers are actually filling the room. They're—they're really loud.

Travis: Cool.

Red Robe: Are you afraid?

Taako: No.

Magnus: I mean, sometimes.

Taako: Yeah, I think we all are, it's natural.

Magnus: Y'know, you get lonely and you're like, "What if I never meet the right person?" And oof, there's a lot to worry about, y'know what I mean?

Griffin: It says, uh...

Red Robe: You do not know how to be afraid.

Merle: Well, probably not.

Magnus: Oh.

Merle: If it's a smartness thing, no, uh-uh.

Griffin: It uh, it extends a sleeve of its robe and displays—

Travis: And hands you 'Being Afraid for Dummies'.

Griffin: [laughs] A book that says 'How to be Afraid'. No, he actually kind of projects this almost holographic representation of a series of familiar faces, and it says...

Red Robe: Gundren Rockseeker. Magic Brian. Jenkins. Sloane. Captain Bane.

Griffin: And as it says these names their faces sort of appear in the palm of its hand. And it says...

Red Robe: This is the true nature of man. The want, the hunger. It consumes everything it touches, it can't be stopped or changed. It's the end of everything.

Griffin: And then it says...

Red Robe: This is your first lesson.

Griffin: And disappears in a spout of flame.

Merle: I didn't get any of that.

Taako: It wa—it was really spooky though, I was—

Merle: It was a little spooky!

Taako: When it was asking if I was afraid, I was like, yeah.

Merle: Hoo, yeah.

Taako: Pretty afraid right now.

Magnus: Yeah, for like a second, I didn't know what was going on.

Taako: Definitely got a little afraid!

Merle: A little afraid now, but he's gone.

Magnus: Yeah, I thought it was pretty good!

Taako: Yeah, well yeah, catching my breath.

Merle: Love the Santa robe.

Taako: Oh boy.

Merle: It looked great!

Magnus: Oh yeah, it was a good red. Looked like a rich fabric, I tried to punch it, did you see that? Nothing happened!

Merle: That'd be cool to have. That'd be really cool to have.

Magnus: Yeah, right? Ugh.

Merle: But we're alright!

Magnus: And now we've got this cool office!

Merle: Yahoo!

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: [laughs]

Taako: Guys, I think—I think I—if I was getting the right message from that, I think we're going to need to turn our attention to one very important question. [pause] D'you think there was any prize money for the race, or is that something I need to check back in on?

Merle: Sure!

Griffin: Actually, sitting on Captain Bane's desk, you see a briefcase. You actually see two briefcases, and one is bigger than the other. And imprinted on the top of it is the number one, and then the smaller briefcase, on that is the number two!

Clint: I grab number two!

Justin: I grab number one.

Griffin: Yeah you crack them open, and inside of number one is three thousand gold pieces.

Clint: Hoo hoo!

Taako: Hell yeah.

Magnus: Split evenly, is a thousand each.

Griffin: And inside number two is 1,500 gold pieces.

Merle: [laughs] Oh yeah!

Taako: Pretty good, we'll just split it three ways. 1,500.

Travis: And I search Captain Bane.

Taako: Fifteen hundred apiece, that seems fair.

Griffin: Captain Bane doesn't have anything on him except for his badge, and—

Travis: I take his badge.

Griffin: Okay, he also has a small black vial.

Clint: I take the vial.

Griffin: Okay, you take the vial, and written on the—the vial, in scrawled, almost childish letters, is the word 'silverpoint'.

Taako: Oh yeah, figured.

Merle: That bastard!

Taako: What a monster.

Clint: I grab the bottle of hooch.

Griffin: Yeah, okay, well. It's very poisoned, but... that's your prerogative. I guess it'd be a fun prank.

Justin: Just write it down. Write it down, you might need it someday.

Clint: Bottle of hooch!

Griffin: There's a stapler in here, anybody want the fuckin' stapler?

Justin: Are we done yet?

Clint: Yes! I grab the Stapler of Power!

Griffin: Naw, it's just a stapler, dude! Uh, yeah, that's all the story I got for you.

Clint: This is too meta.

Travis: So if you would like to hear season four, just go to Kickstarter, search—

Justin: Go to Kickstarter dot Patreon, throw us some money.

Clint: [laughing]

[theme music plays]

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