

## The Adventure Zone: Graduation – Ep. 18, Field Trip

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

[theme music plays]

**Gary:** The Thundermen went on a real-world assignment, and worked with some centaurs to prevent a war over some magical apples. Turns out, an evil wizard named Calhain, who was working for a demon prince, had stolen the apples! This presented an additional problem for the Thundermen, because they were hoping to steal one of the apples themselves!

You see, Higglemas Wigenstaff told them that he needed it to save his brother, who had been transformed into a dog, after the demon prince cursed him, disguised himself as Hieronymous, and took over the school. Working together, the Thundermen were able to stop the wizard, recover both apples, and head home.

But just when it seemed like the fellas had it all figured out, a squad of demons attacked the tavern they were hanging out at. Luckily, they had help from some friends, and they were able to catch a ride with some Pegasuses!

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** In the sky, everything is serene.

[music plays]

**Travis:** Your bruised bodies begin to relax, and you are aware of an even deeper soreness. Your bones and blood seem to ache, and all you want is to sleep. But you can't, unless you want to risk slipping from the backs of your equine saviors.

Breeze, via the Firbolg, has made introductions. The Firbolg rides the shire horse named Snow on the Mountain. Argo is astride the Peruvian Paso named, fittingly, Storm at Sea. Fitzroy is riding Breeze Through the Willow.

After taking to the air, they headed in the direction of the school. You weren't sure what you expected to see as you approached the complex. Destruction, flaming wreckage, an epic battle of good versus evil? But it looks exactly like it would on any other night; like it did when you left.

The Pegusi wing their way past the school and towards the Unknown Forest. Before long, they begin their descent into a small clearing. It is an oasis of light in a sea of darkness, with the moon's light illuminating the area.

**Breeze:** The others should be right behind us.

**Travis:** Says Breeze Through the Willows. Only, this time, it is in all of your heads, and not just the Firbolg's.

**Fitzroy:** What the f—what the hell?!

**Argo:** Ah!!

**Breeze:** Oh, uh, sorry. I should've warned you. Uh, here in the clearing, it's possible for anything to communicate with anyone, and vice versa.

**Fitzroy:** So I could talk to like, that rock over there?

**Breeze:** I mean... I guess I should say, anything sentient?

**Fitzroy:** Well, listen to you. You give somebody a brain and a voice, and all of a sudden, they think they're better than all the... all the rocks! Woo! No, I'm just joshin'. Uh, are our friends dead, do you think? Or... I do feel a little bit guilty for just kind of dipping out of that situation. Definitely seemed like they all had, uh, boners for murdering, specifically, the three of us, and I don't want to toot my own horn, but maybe, specifically, myself.

Um, but we did just kind of say like, "Hey, good luck with the... apparently infinite number of demons."

**Breeze:** There were others sent to get your friends. Um, they should—they should be along right behind us. Are you okay? Is everyone... okay?

**Fitzroy:** Yeah.

**Argo:** Yeah.

**Fitzroy:** All things considered.

**Firbolg:** I am... fine.

**Argo:** Probably could use some healin'.

**Breeze:** Oh, um, yes. Of course. Um... if—if you check in that basket there, there's some healing items there. Uh, some potions and whatnot. Firbolg, it's so good to see you again.

**Travis:** And Breeze Through the Willows nuzzles you gently.

**Firbolg:** You have grown so swiftly.

**Breeze:** I've... I've needed to get strong here.

**Fitzroy:** Primo ride. Gotta say, Breeze. Smooth sailin' the whole way through. I thought, saddleless, it was gonna hurt in my... bathing suit zone.

**Argo:** Oh, yeah.

**Fitzroy:** But it felt—it was nothing. It was like nothing. It was perfectly smooth up there, and I just want to say thank you for that.

**Breeze:** Well, I am so glad to hear, Fitzroy, that your bathing suit area is perfectly smooth.

**Fitzroy:** No, it's your back was smooth on my bathing suit area.

**Breeze:** Oh, okay. I understand now.

**Fitzroy:** So, uh, yeah. Are we like—is this like, a demon-free zone, or... because they seem to have a beat on us.

**Breeze:** Yes. Uh, The Guardian keeps the clearing free of threats. You will be safe here.

**Fitzroy:** Cool cool cool. Uhh... that's great. 'Cause we do need some time to come up with game plan. Um... not sure how well-versed in all this demon business you, uh, three fine equine friends are. But it's, uh... whoo! Little bit worse. Little bit worse of an infestation than I think we originally, uh, thought.

**Breeze:** Yes, we are, unfortunately, very aware of the demon situation.

**Argo:** Who sent you to get us? How—how did you know to come save us?

**Breeze:** The Guardian. The Guardian sent us on Higglemas' behest.

**Fitzroy:** Who—I mean, I thought The Guardian was just a sort of like... metaphorical... metaforestal... that's nothing. I'm sorry about that. Um, thing. But you're saying that The Guardian was just like, just dispatched you? Like, called you up on the horse phone?

**Breeze:** Yes, The Guardian is an ancient and powerful being that keeps, or has kept, the Unknown Forest safe for creatures, for nature, to be protected from the world of man until the demons came.

**Firbolg:** Men are the worst.

**Voice:** Indeed they are.

**Travis:** You hear in your head.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And it is very deep. Very sonorous. And uh, Firbolg, roll... uhh... a perception check for me.

**Justin:** Hmm, yes. I, for some reason, have not thought to... prepare any dice for today's Dungeons & Dragons.

**Travis:** Well, why would we need them? It's just Dungeons & Dragons.

**Justin:** Dungeons & Dragons adventure. Today's adventure. Uh... I thought it was just kind of a chill horse sesh.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I had—I had, at first, planned about 45 minutes of just horse talk. But I shortened that.

**Justin:** Yeah, to—you saved it all for My Brother, My Brother, and Me. [laughs] Uh, 12 plus seven. 19.

**Travis:** Uh, you actually have heard this voice in your head before. On the first night of school, when you did the initiation ritual and carved on the tree, this is the voice from the being you heard in the woods.

**Griffin:** Ooh! Okay. Oh, so we just heard the voice of The Guardian?

**Travis:** Correct.

**Griffin:** Oh, okay.

**Travis:** Now, look as hard as you can, you cannot see The Guardian anywhere. And Breeze sees you looking around when you hear the voice and says...

**Breeze:** The Guardian, uh, will keep itself hidden. It does not allow itself to be seen, because its appearance is unsettling.

**Fitzroy:** Oh, I mean, we take all kinds here. We're not here to judge.

**Travis:** And you hear the sonorous voice once more in your head say...

**Guardian:** Millennia ago, I was hunted because of my appearance. That is why I came here to the Unknown Forest to keep myself and others safe from those who hunt. I do not show myself now.

**Justin:** Bet he looks like a giant gummy bear.

**Griffin:** Mmm.

**Justin:** Everybody's like, "Yum yum."

**Griffin:** "Yum yum, gimme some. That huge, sentient McRib."

**Fitzroy:** Uh, okay. Well, let's not press the issue. Uh, I don't want to be... a real stick in the mud. This is a really beautiful and serene situation that you have going on here. Three flying horses. Uh, mystical, protective spirit. Loving all of that. But there are very pressing matters at hand, vis-à-vis a demon prince occupying the school where all of our friends are currently sleeping, I assume.

And so, I think it would be pertinent for us to figure out how to... explode him, or at least, get back to Higglemas, and find out what sort of plans he's got. Like, we—I kind of want to... kind of want to get a move on.

**Guardian:** It is worse than you know. Higglemas and his brother, Hieronymous, have been taken captive by the demon prince. He called to me, and asked for assistance, and told me to retrieve you.

**Argo:** So Higglemas and the dog brother, right?

**Guardian:** Correct.

**Argo:** Okay. Okay. Just wanted to keep it... the players straight.

**Fitzroy:** Why taken captive? Why not just... kill them? And how were they taken captive? He had wards all over his office.

**Guardian:** I do not know. Our connection was cut short before I could collect further details.

**Fitzroy:** Okay.

**Travis:** You see a shape backlit by the moon, as another steed lands in the clearing. This one, a dappled gray horse with Althea astride. When they land, she dismounts, and Breeze asks...

**Breeze:** Thaw of the Spring, where is Night of No Clouds?

**Travis:** Thaw of Spring answers that Night of No Clouds took the werebear, Moon, directly to a healer, and Althea explains...

**Althea:** He was in bad shape. He'll live. He'll be fine, but... it was getting pretty dire.

**Fitzroy:** Okay.

**Althea:** It's good to see that the three of you are safe.

**Fitzroy:** Yeah, big ups for the heal. Um... really put a spring back in my step. Althea... we can sit around here and... talk about how bad things are,

and... that there's demons everywhere, but that's not going to make there be less demons. So... what do you think we need—what—what should we do?

**Althea:** I wish I had a quick answer for you. It's starting to get... and I'm not telling you anything you don't know... complicated. Um... I am at your disposal. I can assist you in whatever you need here, or I can head back and see if I can muster any support amongst the bureaucrats at the Heroic Oversight Guild. [sighs]

**Fitzroy:** We're past that, I think. We're probably well past... [laughs] ... the aide that bureaucrats could send us. They have infinite demons. I don't know if you could bind them with red tape.

**Clint:** Can I make an investigation check? Because...

**Travis:** You can do anything.

**Justin:** The only limit is your imagination.

**Clint:** Okay, then I want a flying Wonkavator... no. I want to make some kind of check... to know more about this guardian?

**Travis:** Okay.

**Clint:** Is this the first time we've encountered The Guardian? Because I don't see The Guardian written down in any of my copious notes.

**Travis:** This is the first time that you have officially been introduced to The Guardian, but the Firbolg spoke briefly with The Guardian on the first night of school, though, was not aware at the time that that was what was going on.

**Clint:** Okay, then let me do this.

**Argo:** Firbolg, you vouch for this Guardian? I mean, are they cool? Are they cool, man?



**Firbolg:** Are you asking if they have... [sighs] ... truthfulness in their heart?

**Argo:** I think that's what I said. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, are they... should we trust them? I mean, are they good folks?

**Fitzroy:** Kind of sounded like you were asking if the immortal Guardian of the woods had drugs on them that you could have and party.

**Firbolg:** Are you asking, do they party?

**Clint:** [laughing] And how hard?

**Travis:** Somewhere, Festo twitches. Just like, "What? Huh? Someone say party?"

**Firbolg:** Um... I... do not know.

**Argo:** Okay.

**Firbolg:** I have... hm. Trusted too much, this year, I think. I think... I... will only trust my eyes.

**Clint:** Alright, then Argo's gonna make an investigation check into The Guardian.

**Travis:** Uh, how about—

**Griffin:** Are you trying to see them?

**Travis:** Yeah, how about an insight check?

**Clint:** Insight check. Yeah. It doesn't make any difference. It's a one. It's a critical fail.

**Griffin:** Cool cool cool.

**Travis:** Uh, you get a migraine from thinking too hard and take two dam—no. [laughs]

**Clint:** Oh!

**Griffin:** Bet that happens a lot.

**Clint:** Can we talk to anybody?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Clint:** Can I ask Storm at Sea?

**Travis:** Sure.

**Clint:** `Cause I want to hear a new character voice.

**Travis:** Okay, great. So far, I've just been doing kind of slightly deeper, but sure.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Argo:** Stormy, tell me about, uh—

**Storm:** [loud and goofy] Okay!!

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Argo:** Uh... okay. So, they alright?

**Storm:** Are you asking me if The Guardian is alright?

**Argo:** Yeah, I am. 'Cause like Firbolg said, every time we trust somebody, we turn around, and they're stabbin' us in the back. So I want to know if they're alright!

**Storm:** Listen, I'm gonna stop you right there, fella. You're new here, so I'm gonna let that slide. But without The Guardian, we'd all be dead. Do you understand that? The creatures of this forest owe their lives to The Guardian. It's been fighting off demons left and right. It's been keeping this forest safe for... beyond what you mortals could count. This... this is our home. And The Guardian has made it safe for us all these years. So if you're asking me if I think you should trust The Guardian? I think you should feel bad for even doubting it.

**Argo:** Well, I don't, but I mean, we didn't know—how was I supposed to know any of that? I mean, I mean... I'm ridin' on your back, so I'm not gonna accuse you of havin' a bad attitude, but... hey, look, we just wanted to know! Just asking a question. 'Cause I am new around here!

**Storm:** We came and saved your life because of The Guardian. And the first thing you do is show—[sighs]

**Travis:** And Breeze kind of steps over, and just kind of gently leans against Storm, and you see Storm kind of huff and walk away. And Breeze says...

**Breeze:** You'll have to forgive him. It's... it's been difficult here. It's been... tough for us. The herd... was once far larger.

**Firbolg:** What happened?

**Fitzroy:** Can I gue—can I wager a guess? Was it demon-related?

**Breeze:** The demons came to this sanctuary. The Unknown Forest is not unknown by chance. The... The Guardian's magic makes it difficult to

navigate, and somehow... the demons are not affected by this. They came to this peaceful place... and they... wreaked havoc upon it.

The danger has been growing for some time, but it has... increased exponentially in the last year.

**Fitzroy:** Um, okay, so Guardian, or uh... flying horse friends... do you know where Higglemas has been taken?

**Guardian:** When last I heard from him, he was being held captive in his office.

**Fitzroy:** Oh, so he's in the school.

**Guardian:** Correct.

**Fitzroy:** Okay. Well, let's go sa—let's just go smash in there and save him, right? It's got a ward. We just hop in through the window.

**Argo:** Eh, well...

**Fitzroy:** What's wrong?

**Argo:** Wait. Why don't we sneak in? Why don't we use my tremendous rogueing skills?

**Firbolg:** Mmm...

**Fitzroy:** Mmm... loving that.

**Argo:** Okay. How about if we use my acceptable rogueing skills?

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Firbolg:** Ahh...

**Argo:** And my plus ten to stealth.

**Firbolg:** Mmm...

**Argo:** And maybe try to scope out the situation and see what we can find out before we go crashin' and bashin' and smashin'? Since we don't seem to be real good at crashin' and smashin' and bashin'.

**Travis:** [sings] Hackin' and whackin' and slashin'...

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Fitzroy:** Which one of you, um, beautiful equine, uh, associates are, would you say, the sneakiest? 'Cause we just hop on, y'know, your backs, and—

**Firbolg:** I know which one it is not. [laughs]

**Travis:** What, the big, bright white one?

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Justin:** The one that... the one that talked earlier like such a goofball.

**Griffin:** [laughs] Oh, yeah.

**Travis:** [in a goofy voice] Okay!

**Fitzroy:** Hey, you just—we'll hop on your backs, and you can fly us there, and we'll... y'know, avoid...

**Travis:** The Guardian says...

**Guardian:** I do not know if that plan is wise. The Pegasus are powerful and beautiful, and very conspicuous. But... I may be able to help. I... have spent countless eras perfecting the skill of hiding. And you have my blessing.

**Travis:** And you feel... fuzzy. Not in your skin, but in your being. In your very presence. And you have gained... uh, advantage on your stealth checks!

**Justin:** Mmm!

**Griffin:** Okay. Okay. That's a good start. Um—

**Travis:** And you—who's holding the Notebook of Farspeech?

**Griffin:** Who was hol—god, I don't even—I feel like it's changed hands a few time.

**Justin:** I don't think I've ever had it, if that helps at all.

**Clint:** I don't think I have either.

**Travis:** Then let's say Fitzroy.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** You feel a buzzing from the notebook in your bag.

**Griffin:** Uh, I open it up and try to remember who I gave the other one to.

**Travis:** On the back page, there is a note. And the note reads, uh... "Are you guys okay? I was working in the infirmary when they brought in Moon. He told me what happened. – Rainer."

**Fitzroy:** Thank you for signing your name at the end. I'll be straight with you, I forgot who I gave the other book to. And oh, shit, ran out of room. Hold up.

**Griffin:** I wait for it to fade.

**Travis:** It fades.

**Fitzroy:** Okay. Anyway, uh, if this really is Rainer, tell me something only Rainer would know. Not trying to give up our loc' to demon pri—and I ran out of room again. But I think she understands.

**Travis:** It comes back. "You're overly obsessed with crepes and afraid of my raccoon skeleton."

**Griffin:** I write back...

**Fitzroy:** "Nice try. Everyone knows those two things. Literally everyone. Nice try, Demon King. I'll see you in hell."

**Travis:** She writes back two words. "Hot mint."

**Fitzroy:** Get—that works for me. Okay. "Yeah, so we're in the woods with some flying horses, and the immortal spirit of the woods, and um... we're gonna be there soon. And if you could cause some sort of big distraction, that would be amazing."

**Rainer:** "A big distraction? Yeah, I can do that!"

**Travis:** Exclamation point with a hot dotting the bottom of the exclamation point.

**Griffin:** I write very quickly.

**Fitzroy:** "Nothing spoo—nothing spooky with a lot of bones that we might have to encounter."

**Rainer:** "Too late!"

**Fitzroy:** Shit.

**Firbolg:** Fitzroy, did you tell Rainer nothing spooky?

**Fitzroy:** I tried, but I think we may—the ship done—

**Firbolg:** With an underline.

**Fitzroy:** I did nuh-thing spoo-kee.

**Firbolg:** Good.

**Fitzroy:** Alright. Uh... let's, uh... let's get movin'.

**Travis:** As you approach the school, you are coming from the north, passing the sidekick and henchperson dorms, as well as Groundsy the groundskeeper's hut. Even though it is quite late, you see light bleeding from beneath the door to the hut.

**Justin:** I want to do a perception real quick. Uh, 17 plus seven.

**Travis:** As you move closer to the school, you become aware of patrols of devil dogs prowling the grounds. Now, the good news is, they are patrolling in single groups. So there's one at a time, so you won't need to worry about getting past, like, six of them at once. Um, but you will need to either sneak past them or engage them in combat.

**Griffin:** I don't want to do that. They're a bunch of dogs.

**Travis:** Well, they're—

**Griffin:** Wait, are they—is 'devil dogs' like, a cute name, or are they... ?

**Travis:** No, they're fiends. They're fiends. They're devils. They're dogs but devils.



**Griffin:** I mean, they're still sweet puppies with beautiful toe beans, and I would ask you to respect that.

**Travis:** Let me read this. "The devil dog is a terrifying creature with a brow containing three sets of eyes, and a long snout full of jagged, alligator-like teeth. Red, leathery skin stretches across the skull and the disproportionate body, and a skeletal red tail slinks behind it as it hunts the layers of hell."

**Griffin:** Yeah, that sounds bad.

**Clint:** And also, a delicious chocolaty treat with crème filling from Hostess.

**Justin:** I would murder a Devil Dog right now.

**Travis:** I mean, we all would. Yeah.

**Justin:** Ugh. Would love it.

**Clint:** I would suggest we try to sneak past it. Let me lead the way.

**Fitzroy:** I mean, anything we can do to goose the numbers a little bit would be great. Master Firbolg, do you have any sort of like... distract dogs? This is—I don't think there's a spell called 'distract dogs,' right? That would be so—

**Justin:** They are not—if I could clarify for myself, they're not animals, right Trav? Like, these are demons.

**Travis:** No, they're demons. Yes.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** So none of my cool animal abilities would be helpful here.

**Travis:** And don't forget – you have Rainer at your disposal to help distract.

**Griffin:** What am I gonna do? Whistle, and then she's fuckin', with a sniper rifle from the roof?

**Travis:** No, you have the book to communicate through!

**Griffin:** Uhh...

**Travis:** You have a two-way communication system with her that you used but five seconds ago!

**Griffin:** Well, she said she had a plan. I didn't know if that involved, y'know, being able to help us with this. Okay. Uh, let's just sneak. Right?

**Travis:** Um, so, make a group stealth check for me.

**Clint:** May I?

**Travis:** I mean, all three of you roll.

**Clint:** I mean, everybody—everybody rolls?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Clint:** Okay. Uh, 14 plus ten. 24.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Clint:** And don't we have advantage on that, too?

**Justin:** 15 plus two. 17.

**Griffin:** [distant] Fuck's my d20? Oh, that's a nat 20! Holy shit!

**Justin:** Great.

**Griffin:** Not even gonna roll the advantage. This is the first time I've rolled physical dice in months.

**Travis:** All of you succeeded. And so, you sneak right on by the first one. Uh, you are now, uh...

**Clint:** Let's paint a word picture! We're crouched down, and that music, that—dun dun dun dun duuun... dun dun dun dun...

**Justin:** I don't like it.

**Clint:** No? Okay.

**Justin:** It's not very tense. It's a little silly. I like my D&D like I like my men.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Serious... and full of dogs.

**Travis:** Huh.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Like in a... like a Meet Dave situation?

**Justin:** Serious, and full of satanic dogs.

**Travis:** You are now across the courtyard from the main school. You're hiding behind the large tree that the Firbolg has fallen asleep against numerous times.

**Justin:** Oh, I thought you were about to say right now. Like, shit.

**Travis:** Right now!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Damn, that was a bad look.

**Clint:** He is laid back!

**Travis:** Uh, there are dogs patrolling from the west, as well as from the east. They won't be like, crossing right in front of the door or anything, so it's not impossible to get by, but you will probably need to sneak one at a time in order to make it successfully.

**Clint:** That is a ten plus ten. Dirty 20.

**Travis:** So yes, Argo has made it across safely.

**Griffin:** Uh, Firbolg, after you.

**Justin:** Uh, sure. 16 plus two. 18.

**Travis:** The Firbolg has made it across safely.

**Griffin:** We had advantage, yes?

**Travis:** Correct.

**Griffin:** Yeah, that's a nine plus two. 11. Probably not sufficient.

**Travis:** No.

**Griffin:** Uh, 13 plus two? 15?

**Travis:** As you go, you see one of the devil dogs start to turn your way, sniffing, when a skeletal fox darts in front of it, and the devil dog begins chasing the fox, panting after it and barking wildly. And you make it across safely!

**Griffin:** Cool. I write in the book.

**Fitzroy:** "Thanks again. Wish there could've been a little bit more meat on them bones, but... thank you."

**Rainer:** "Well, puppies love bones!"

**Fitzroy:** Sure. Fantastic.

**Travis:** You have now made it to the entrance to the Annex, the Henchperson and Sidekick Annex, at the top of which is Higglemas' office. There is a Gary there, and I don't know if you want to interact with the Gary or sneak by. I'm gonna leave that up to you.

**Justin:** Uh, while we have a moment... I should've done this earlier, and I'm gonna go ahead and just say, like, I'm sorry, y'know, to everybody. Uh, but I'm gonna cast Pass Without Trace.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Good one. That's a good one to have.

**Justin:** Yeah. Should've deffo cast that before. But I will cast it now. And that is... almost better, in a way. Because I'm casting it.

**Griffin:** Do you want to tell the audience what that spell does?

**Justin:** This is going to—yes, Griffin. This is going to—the veil of silence and shadow radiates from me, and everybody within 30 feet of me that I choose has a plus ten bonus to dexterity checks and can't be tracked, except by magical means. And we leave behind... no footsteps.

**Travis:** That's good, too, if you're like, going through like, a national park or something.

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Justin:** Yeah, it's true, Travis.

**Griffin:** Leave only—leave only footprints? Fuck no! What am I, some sort of footprint polluter? No way, man!

**Travis:** Leave nothing.

**Griffin:** Leave literally nothing.

**Justin:** Just corpses.

**Travis:** Wait.

**Griffin:** Whoa. Holy shit.

**Travis:** "Yeah, how was your time at the Grand Canyon?"

"It was okay..."

**Justin:** "It was weird..."

**Griffin:** "Chocabloc full of—"

**Clint:** "Had to kill all those people... "

**Travis:** "I was trying to take a cool panoramic photo, and the corpses kept getting in the ding dang way!"

**Justin:** Is there a way in the D&D sheet to do like, a temporary bonus to something? Or do you just have to add it?

**Griffin:** You just kind of have to add it.

**Travis:** Just gonna have to add it.

**Justin:** Just gonna have to add it.

**Travis:** Yeah, just kind of have to add it. So are you going to sneak by the Gary, or interact with the Gary?

**Griffin:** I mean, if we don't sneak—the Gary is going to interact with us either way, it feels like. He's a loud fucking statue, and he's like... sometimes, he's not the most discreet or tactful individual. So I wonder if I can just kind of like, approach very carefully with like, a finger up to my mouth, like... fully saying with my body language, "Gary, be, for once in your fucking life, be cool."

**Gary:** [quietly] Eyy!

**Fitzroy:** [whispering] We don't have to do this, Gary. We do not require your services.

**Gary:** [quietly] Oh! Okay! I was just gonna say hello to my best friend, Firbolg! Eyy!

**Travis:** And it is the Gary wearing sunglasses and a little hat that you befriended earlier.

**Fitzroy:** [quietly] There's a cool—Firbolg, there's a cool Gary?

**Firbolg:** Hello, cool Gary. Looking very cool today.

**Gary:** Eyy, thanks! You helped me keep the sun out of my eyes, buddy! I really appreciate it!

**Firbolg:** Hey, no problem. Listen. I need you to be... your coolest yet!

**Gary:** Eyy!

**Firbolg:** Do not tell... the other Garys... that we are here.

**Gary:** Ooh... well, I wouldn't normally do that, but for my buddy, the Firbolg? You got it, pal!

**Travis:** And he gives you a big stony thumbs up.

**Firbolg:** I will forever live in your debt for not asking me why. [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Gary:** Friends trust each other!

**Justin:** This is very wise, cool Gary. You are... have a mind... bigger than your diminutive stone form.

**Gary:** Okay!

**Clint:** So he's holding, though, 'cause he's cool.

**Gary:** Oh yeahhh!

**Griffin:** He's definitely holding. Uh—

**Gary:** I've got a bunch of stone drugs!

**Griffin:** Sure. Are we outside of—

**Justin:** He loves to get stoned. Is that—

**Griffin:** Oh, that would've been better. Are we outside of Higglemas' office?

**Travis:** Uh, so you now have snuck your way in. You just have a couple of sets of stairs, and a hallway betwixt you and the office door.

**Griffin:** I'm gonna play this like... as cautious as possible, and send my crab drone up there to get a lay of the land, and see through its eyes.



**Travis:** Snippers makes its way up the stairs, and it's kind of funny, 'cause y'know, it's stairs. And—

**Griffin:** I give him a toss up the—I'm not gonna make up walk up the fucking stairs.

**Travis:** Well, I was gonna be cute. Okay. Um, and when he gets to the uh, to the hallway, it is empty.

**Griffin:** Is it...

**Fitzroy:** Snippers... is it—

**Snippers:** [crab sounds]

**Fitzroy:** Is it *really* empty?

**Snippers:** [crab sounds]

**Fitzroy:** Snippers, what do your crab eyes see? And remember what we talked about? Critical thinking skills? Do you remember, Snippers?

**Snippers:** [crab sounds]

**Travis:** Um, and with his like, really looking, roll a perception check for Snippers for me, I guess?

**Griffin:** Oh boy. Uh, it's 11 plus three? 14? I'm giving him my perception.

**Travis:** Yeah, I think that makes sense. Uh, yeah. It's not hard to spot there. Uh, on the floor and the walls and stuff, there are little sigils, uh, kind of done in what looks like black ink.

**Griffin:** 'Kay.

**Travis:** In various tiny spots all along the corridor.

**Griffin:** Uh, I'm gonna roll an arcana check to see if I recognize them. Oh! That's very good. 19 plus two. I guess that's an elect check, and that ain't my speed. But yeah, 21!

**Travis:** Uh, they are magical tripwires. You can see that they are—

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Travis:** —paired off across, uh, the hallway. Vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. That they are kind of, y'know, they're laser sensors, but magical.

**Griffin:** Can I... do I recognize like, what they will trip?

**Travis:** They're signal sigils. Not damage. They're more of a—like an alarm.

**Griffin:** Um... okay, cool.

**Travis:** It took me that long to remember the word 'alarm.' Ugh.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Sig—they're signal... signal... uh. Alarms.

**Justin:** Crime...

**Travis:** Crime stoppers...

**Justin:** Crime tellers?

**Travis:** Y'know, clang clang bells? Wong wong wong wong! You know.

**Griffin:** [laughing]

**Justin:** Y'know, klaxons! Fuck! How do you remember klaxons?

**Travis:** Klaxon, klaxoff.

**Griffin:** Would it be possible to get Snipper—I think there is precedent for this maneuver. Can I uh, maneuver Snippers around those trip wires and get him into the actual office, like, under the door?

**Travis:** Uh, it would be pretty easy for him to maneuver around them. I mean, they are set up for full-sized people.

**Griffin:** Full grown men. Okay, yeah. Can I—

**Travis:** But I will also tell you, with his perception check, that it is very clear that someone has done a—uh, nailed up a board across the bottom of the door.

**Griffin:** Are you telling me that somebody has installed a fucking Snippers prevention device?! Specific—specifically for this one, like, thing? This one instance?

**Justin:** [laughs] Yes. Someone did, and it is Travis, who knows your bullshit.

**Travis:** Well, let me ask you a question, Griffin.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Have you done this before and sent Snippers under, specifically, Higglemas Wiggerstaff, very paranoid person's door?

**Griffin:** But he didn't even know—he did not fucking know—he did not clock this crab.

**Travis:** You don't know that.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I'm gonna make Sni—fuck it! I'm still gonna put—I'm gonna put Snippers there, and I'm gonna make Snippers push as hard as he fucking can to try and pry this board off, 'cause he's a strong little son of a B.

**Justin:** Okay, here's the shirt. It's a big picture of Snippers, and just in a circle around him are the words, "You will not clock this crab."

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Big Johnson.

**Griffin:** Alright, fine... I fucking dispel it.

**Clint:** TM TM TM TM.

**Griffin:** I say...

**Fitzroy:** My weak crab has located trip wires. I will point them out to you when we make it to the thing. But I'm very cross, and don't ask me why. It's complicated.

**Clint:** I think Argo would try to disarm them.

**Fitzroy:** They're magical sigils. They do not have gears or gismos or wires. So unless—can you smudge the ink, maybe?

**Travis:** If you can make it past the wire and on the other side of it, you can reach, uh, the sigil without activating the tripwire. So if Argo wants to do, uh, a dexterity check to see if he is able to, y'know, Zeta Jones his way through those babies to disarm them...

**Griffin:** Considering he has an additional plus ten, on top of what I imagine is already a pretty stellar dexterity modifier...

**Clint:** It is. It's okay. Yeah. That would—I'm thinking more along the lines of the guy in Oceans Twelve.

**Griffin:** Oh yeah, the Sacha Baron-Cohen dance.

**Travis:** No, that's not him. Who is that guy?

**Griffin:** It's not?

**Clint:** No, but that guy—yeah. With the...

**Travis:** The French guy. The fox.

**Clint:** The French guy, yeah.

**Travis:** Yeah. We all know who you're talking about, Dad.

**Clint:** Yeah. Okay. So I think he's gonna do that. And if Argo's gonna—

**Griffin:** Oh, Vincent.

**Clint:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Vincent Cassel.

**Clint:** Vincent Cassel.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** I need some kind of cool jazzy music for some—I need one of you guys to give me some cool jazzy music.

**Travis:** No.

**Griffin:** No.

**Justin:** Okay. I'll do it. I'll do it. I got it. [clears throat]

**Clint:** Okay.

**Justin:** [sings] He is... the stealthiest guy in the woorld!

**Clint:** Okay. Yeah, there we go. Okay.

**Justin:** [singing] The sexual power of...

**Clint:** That's a—[laughing] That's a 15...

**Justin:** [singing] ... the secret stealthy guy!

**Clint:** Plus four dexterity. That makes it a 19.

**Justin:** [singing] Everybody [??] dude. You won't see him comiin'! But you'll see his incredibly body!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs] [sings] I hope that his big, big dingle dangle doesn't fall out of his pants and trip all of the wires!

**Justin:** [laughing] [sings] The secret dad is my dad with an incredible body! Sexual dad! You won't see him comin', but you'll hear him comin'! Sexual dad!

**Travis:** You are—

**Justin:** [interrupting with more singing] He's half genie! And three fourths super lover! That's one and a quarter pleasure journey!

**Travis:** ... you are able to—

**Justin:** [interrupting with more singing] With my sexual dad!

**Clint:** [laughing]

**Justin:** It got too loud for stealth at some point.

**Travis:** Yeah. You still made it past. Uh...

**Clint:** Okay. Oh, thank god.

**Travis:** Uh, so you are able to clear the trip wires and make way for the others to follow.

**Clint:** Okay, do I smudge out the rune?

**Travis:** Do you? I assumed you did.

**Clint:** Yeah! Let me smudge out that rune. [makes a squeaky noise, like smudging ink]

**Travis:** Yeah, smudge it!

**Clint:** Yeah! It's smudged.

**Travis:** Okay, so now you've all reached the door.

**Griffin:** I mean, knocking's not great. Can we—yeah, I'll just fuckin' listen. I forgot. I put my ear up to the door.

**Travis:** Uh, roll a perception check for me.

**Griffin:** Uh, 11 plus three. 14.

**Travis:** Uh, you don't really hear anything discernable.

**Griffin:** Well...

**Clint:** Is there a keyhole?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Clint:** Could I look—I'm going to look through the keyhole. That's 17 plus two. That's another 19.

**Travis:** Uh, okay! Uh, you look through the keyhole. It is dark, um, but you are able to make out some figures at the back of the room. Uh, towards where, the last time you were there, you know Higglemas' desk to be.

**Griffin:** How many figures?

**Travis:** Uhh, it seems like three.

**Clint:** Are they moving?

**Travis:** No.

**Argo:** There's three—there's three figures in there, towards the back of the room. Back where the desk, where Higglemas usually sits, and they're not movin'.

**Fitzroy:** Loving that.

**Clint:** Is the door locked?

**Travis:** Are you testing it?

**Griffin:** Careful. Be very careful about what you say next.

**Clint:** I think I need to do some kind of check to detect if there's a trap on the lock.



**Travis:** Hey! There's my guy! That's my thief boy!

**Clint:** Yeah!

**Travis:** Um—

**Clint:** Can I do investigation?

**Fitzroy:** I mean, there's a—I will tell you this. There is a crab-proof plank at the bottom of the door, which is a sort of trap.

**Travis:** Yeah, roll an investigation check for me.

**Clint:** Okay. 17 plus three. Dirty 20. Man, I'm killin' it today.

**Travis:** Through examining the latch, the door, the keyhole, all these things, you can see that there is no trap, and the door is unlocked.

**Firbolg:** We have hesitated long enough.

**Justin:** And I open the door.

[music plays]

[advertisements play]

[eerie music plays]

**Travis:** When you enter, the torches flare on dramatically. You see Higglemas sitting, facing his desk with his back to you. His shoulders are slumped. And sitting at his desk, and looking directly at you, is Fauxronymous. But, looking quite different than the last time you saw him.

His skin has turned the color and pattern of slate that has been splashed with liquid. His ears are pointed, his teeth are sharp, and his eyes are

shining. And he appears to have sprouted a pair of horns from his forehead. He is smiling at you, and seemingly, absentmindedly, petting Hero the dog.

**Fauxronymous:** Finally.

**Travis:** He says.

**Fauxronymous:** I've been waiting all night! I sent so many escorts for you, but nooo. You had to do it your way.

**Griffin:** I throw a fire—I throw a fire bolt at him. I'm not fuckin' with this dude. [laughs] He almost killed me today, so... I'm gonna attack him with a magical bolt of fire. Just to see how he likes it. That is a 16 plus six, 22. If that doesn't hit, let's leave. [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Let's leave the room immediately.

**Travis:** It does connect, in his shoulder. Uh, and how much does that hit him for?

**Griffin:** Uh, it hits him for 14 points of fire damage!

**Travis:** Uh, it hits him, and he looks down as his lapel on his jacket begins to burn.

**Fitzroy:** Hey, your shit's on fire.

**Fauxronymous:** Now, well, that's not very nice. That's not what I was expecting from a gentleman such as you, Fitzroy Mapleco—

**Fitzroy:** Argo, stab this dude! He's just talking! We can hit him!

**Fauxronymous:** Now, listen. I... I understand your vehemence towards me. And we could engage in combat right here, and right now. That

probably wouldn't fare too well for all of the sleeping students here, with my demons housed in the hallways, waiting to kill them if you challenge me. But sure, we could do that. Is that what... you want?

**Fitzroy:** No...

**Fauxronymous:** No, it's not what I want, either.

**Griffin:** I'm gonna roll insight to see if he's fuckin' bluffing about these demons.

**Travis:** Go for it.

**Griffin:** 14 plus nothing. 14.

**Travis:** Uh, it's pretty clear to you that he is not bluffing. He is maintaining eye contact with you. There's no tells whatsoever. And he says...

**Fauxronymous:** But... I will do you the kindness of getting straight to the point. I have been waiting a long time for a fight that has not been happening. I have been waiting for Hieronymous to recover, for Higglemas to fix him, so that we can once again begin our struggle of good and evil... everything that makes life fun for me. But no. I have been stuck here, waiting. But no more.

Tonight... begins... the end.

**Travis:** And he smiles very broadly with his sharp and shiny teeth.

**Fitzroy:** Demon Prince... first of all, is there a better—demon prince feels like—I understand it's your title, and I don't want to be disrespectful. Wait, I do. It's a stupid name. So like, do you have a name name?

**Fauxronymous:** Demon Prince is a title. You can call me Gray.

**Fitzroy:** Gray. Sounds a lot like Greg, and I'm gonna slip that up a few times, and I hope you're okay with that.

**Gray:** I am.

**Fitzroy:** Okay. Um... why were you pretending to be Hieronymous for this long, if you're just jonesing for a fight?

**Gray:** Well... the honest answer is... 50 years ago, when I tried to kill Hieronymous for the umpteenth time, I knew it probably wasn't successful. I had no proof, mind you. But Hieronymous had evaded death so many times, it was becoming... annoying. And so, I infiltrated the school to confirm his death. And then, I couldn't confirm his death, because Higglemas... the coward... hid away, here, in his warded office.

So I had to wait. I had to know. And as time passed, I began to see... the opportunities here. You see, I crave... conflict. And I saw an opportunity here to influence some of the future most powerful people on Nua. And there was an opportunity here, and I took it. But I tell you, it has not been fun. It has been grueling. And achingly slow.

More so than I normally feel with the seeds of conflict I sow. Even the tree that I planted for the centaurs has been sitting there for a millennia. But I didn't have to do anything about it! It just waited until I needed it.

**Fitzroy:** I mean, maybe you should consider a career change. I think you've done a pretty bang-up job of, y'know, managing this place. It's not easy, being a school administrator. I think that maybe you should... think about, y'know, attending a... y'know, professional sort of course, and get your, like, actual licenses. Don't you think? Isn't that better?

**Gray:** Fitzroy, I ran several levels of the abyss. Of course, I am good at managing people and running this kind of institution. But... [sighs] I guess I just miss the blood and viscera of it all.

**Argo:** Sure, sure, sure.

**Fitzroy:** Uh, so did you ever confirm what did happen to Hieronymous?

**Gray:** Well... I became aware of the transformed state, here, when Higglemas began collecting ingredients for a potion.

**Fitzroy:** [pause] Yeah.

**Argo:** So you want us to... we're kind of on the same side, then. You want... you want Hero restored, right?

**Gray:** Yes.

**Argo:** And we want him restored. And, so... I'm not sure—I mean, conflict resolution is something that the Thundermen corporation is pretty good at, so it seems like, uh... we've got the situation in hand, right? We want the same thing!

**Gray:** Well, Argo... we were heading towards the same goal. Until this *coward...*

**Travis:** And you see him clench his fist, and Higglemas tightens.

**Gray:** ... changed the plan. You see, he didn't need the apple to transform Hieronymous, or himself.

**Fitzroy:** I know that there's a rest of that sentence, but can I just say that it makes me very upset. 'Cause we went through a great deal to get this apple.

**Gray:** He needed *my* apple, from *my* tree, to hide from me. He was going to take the potion, and his brother, and run... and rob me... of my war.

**Griffin:** I'm not—if we could step out of character for a second, he's saying that Hieronymous wasn't—didn't need the apple for a... dog transformation potion. He needed a potion to what?

**Travis:** To basically ward them, hide them, from the demon prince. Basically, what the demon prince just said there is that he created the tree, and the apple, and so, it's part of his magic. I mean, if this is what you want

to dive deeper on, that's the implication there. And so, Higglemas' plan was to use part of the demon prince's magic to hide them from the demon prince.

**Fitzroy:** So let me get this straight. He didn't actually need the apple to make a potion to save his brother?

**Gray:** No.

**Fitzroy:** I just want to say. Called it, called it, hash tag called it. Holy crap. Called it, called it, called it.

**Firbolg:** No, you did call it. It's fair.

**Fitzroy:** I called it. Wicked called it. So... extremely called it.

**Argo:** You called it.

**Gray:** He had all of the ingredients. The apple... [sighs] ... was so he could hide. And I won't have that. Calhain was supposed to use the tree to start a war between the centaurs for me, and then, when I found out what Higglemas was doing, he was *supposed* to get the other apple to stop the Wigenstoffs from escaping. And when he failed to do so, I had to step in to stop you from getting the apple to Higglemas so that they could escape and rob me of my war.

**Firbolg:** Gray.

**Gray:** Yes?

**Firbolg:** Why is it so important for you to have war?

**Gray:** Why is it important for you to have air? Why is it important for you to eat?

**Firbolg:** Well... ah. Is rhetorical.

**Gray:** Yes.

**Firbolg:** I understand.

**Fitzroy:** I think I speak for the whole sort of Thunderman Corporation when I say, we have very little interest in uh, aiding and abetting these two to just kind of scamper off, and leave us to your horrible whims. So...

**Griffin:** And I reach into my bag and pull out one of the apples. Since we have two. And I toss it to him. I say...

**Fitzroy:** There you go. No potion. No running away. We'll uh, regroup. What do you want to say, Saturday? We'll do a war? I'll make sure that these two are uh, ready and rarin' to go.

**Firbolg:** Mm, yes, war. My favorite.

**Gray:** Three students, one coward... and one dog... doesn't quite make an army, does it? I have been—

**Argo:** A little one. Tiny one.

**Firbolg:** The crab. I have tiny Gary.

**Argo:** Got the crab. We got some flyin' horses.

**Gray:** I have had 50 years to prepare for this war. And so I can make things fair... will give you six months.

**Fitzroy:** That's not as—you should give us 50 years, if you want to make it fair.

**Argo:** Yeah. Equitable.

**Gray:** I could just kill you now.

**Firbolg:** Oh, six months is...

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Argo:** Yeah, good! Six months!

**Firbolg:** Good. Six—oh, that's a long—that's half a year.

**Fitzroy:** Just to sort of establish a baseline – when I threw a fireball at you earlier, did it fe—did it hurt at all? Like, did it feel bad?

**Firbolg:** This is a good question.

**Gray:** It hurt my feelings.

**Fitzroy:** I set your clothes on fire. I know it did some damage. Like, don't be an asshole.

**Travis:** He waves his hands, and the clothes are repaired.

**Firbolg:** Perhaps we shall wage a war of feelings!

**Fitzroy:** This is another option.

**Firbolg:** Your ass looks chunky in your jeans!

**Gray:** Mm, we both know that that isn't true.

**Fitzroy:** No, it's fantastic.

**Firbolg:** No, they look fantastic.

**Gray:** Yes.

**Griffin:** [laughs]



**Clint:** [laughs]

**Gray:** Oh, one more stipulation, and... I'm sorry, this one isn't coming from me. But Fitzroy, our mutual benefactor... wants to make sure I keep an eye on you. So I'm going to need you, at least, to stay here at the school, unless sent on other missions. No running and hiding for you, either.

**Fitzroy:** Aw, maaan. No, I mean, I—y'know, I'll do what I want. I'm a grown up.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Gray:** Well, let's say this... if you were to run and hide, if you were to leave the school without my permission... I'll kill... [sighs] Ten students a day until you return.

**Fitzroy:** Do I get to pick the students, or are you going to pick them?

**Justin:** [laughing]

**Gray:** I'll make it random.

**Fitzroy:** I don't like that. Okay. Uh, yeah. No, I'll stay put. So, you and me have the same sort of magic daddy, is what you're saying?

**Gray:** Eh, in a way.

**Fitzroy:** They're uh, they're quite cross with me, so I'll have to have a word with them. Um... okay. That's good—that's good to know. Any other sort of like, helpful information that we could leverage to defeat you? 'Cause I gotta tell ya, that was a juicy one.

**Gray:** Well, um...

**Fitzroy:** Do you have like, a crystal embedded in your chest that, if we hit it just right, it'll shatter and you'll die? Or...

**Firbolg:** Classic.

**Gray:** Oh! Let me be clear – I'm going to win the war.

**Fitzroy:** [mockingly] I'm going to win the war~

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Fitzroy:** Like, of course you're going to think you're going to win the war. But like, we're gonna make it tough. Otherwise, it won't be satisfying, right? So...

**Firbolg:** This is a good point.

**Argo:** Yeah, and we almost beat your pit fiend. We had that pit fiend on the ropes.

**Travis:** He stands to his full height, 12 feet tall.

**Griffin:** Oh shit.

**Justin:** Jesus fuck.

**Travis:** And says...

**Gray:** Don't mistake my courteous nature for weakness, Fitzroy. I will not be disrespected. And if you talk to me like that again, I will kill your friends.

**Firbolg:** He can be a bit more respectful. He is... y'know.

**Fitzroy:** I apologize. I'm not the—

**Firbolg:** He'll reign it in.

**Fitzroy:** I'm not the communications director.

**Argo:** I'm the chairman of the—

**Fitzroy:** See, yeah, so...

**Argo:** I'm the communications guy, so...

**Fitzroy:** I'll leave future communications. So I do—

**Argo:** Yeah, he's sorry.

**Fitzroy:** I am sorry. I thought we were having fun. I thought it was like, a witty report between arch nemeses situation.

**Argo:** A war of feelings. That's what we were—

**Gray:** Enough. You have plans and preparations to make, and I suggest you waste no time.

**Travis:** And he hands you a vial and says...

**Gray:** Transform the coward. Transform the dog. And I'll see you around campus.

**Travis:** And he walks out of the office.

**Fitzroy:** Wait, you're just going to hang out around—I thought you were going to like, go to your lai—you're gonna like, watch us get ready to fight you?

**Travis:** He's gone.

**Griffin:** [snorts] Okay. Uh, is Higglemas awake?

**Travis:** Uh, he—you can check on him. He has had his back to you this whole time.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I mean, I want to check on him.

**Travis:** Uh, he is awake. He is looking fairly grim. He seems to have taken, uh, some damage. Perhaps a beating or two, prior to your entrance.

[pause]

**Fitzroy:** Hey, I know you're not feeling well right now, and I think maybe we can get you to the infirmary and see to your wounds. But I do just want to say, called it. And you were major league fibbin', and we caught you. And are you—but that's not important. Are you feeling okay?

**Higglemas:** Vial... vial!

**Fitzroy:** Should we hand him the vial?

**Firbolg:** Yes.

**Fitzroy:** Okay.

**Argo:** Sure.

**Fitzroy:** Sure, here.

**Travis:** He takes the vial and painfully lowers himself from the chair, and moves over to Hero. And he pours half the vial down Hero's throat, and half the vial down his own throat. There is a bright flash of light.

[music plays]

**Travis:** And then, before you, are two brothers. One brother who you have seen just about every day since you've been here. And he looks much like

Fauxronymous has looked this entire time, except there is... [sighs] ... something emptier about him. Something hollower in his eyes.

And you see Higglemas, who you also have come to know pretty well over your time at the school, except... younger, back to what you imagine his appropriate age is supposed to be. And he has a brightness in his eyes that you have not seen before, as he looks on his brother... and begins to weep.

He holds his brother tight, and at first, Hieronymous doesn't react. He just stares blankly ahead. Then, his vision seems to clear for a moment, and he hugs his brother back, before falling limp in Higglemas' arms, unconscious.

[music plays and fades]

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