

The Adventure Zone: Graduation – Ep. 20, Group Assignment

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Gary: Heyyy, it's me, Gary! Previously, on The Adventure Zone: Graduation... a lot has happened!

[theme music plays]

Gary: Three students, Argo, Firbolg, and Fitzroy started at Hieronymous Wigenstaff's School for Heroism and Villainy. Originally, they were all sidekicks at the Henchperson and Sidekicks Annex, headed by Hieronymous' younger brother, Higglemas. But then, Fitzroy was promoted to the villain track.

After having some adventures, slash becoming BFFs, Higglemas dragooned them into helping him save his brother. Turns out, he turned the real Hieronymous into a dog 50 years ago to save him from the curse of a demon prince named Gray. Then, that very same demon prince disguised himself as Hieronymous and took over at the school.

While on a mission to collect a magic apple, Fitzroy had a vision in which a being called Chaos visited him and explained that they were the source of Fitz's magic. The three Thundermen returned to the school to discover that Higglemas had been lying to them. Fake Hieronymous, AKA the demon prince, Gray, found out about Hig's plan, and were there to confront them.

Gray said that a war was brewing, and they had six months to prepare. That night, our three boys each had their own dream sequence in which Chaos appeared to them to show them their possible futures.

[inhales deeply] I think that brings us up to date.

[theme music plays]

Travis: After everything unfolded in Higglemas' office, you attempted to push the issue. You wanted to talk to him about it, but he waved you off. He

needed to care for his brother, and it was far too late in the evening to get into it. He promised you that he would explain everything; that he would talk to you later, but he needed time.

So you headed back to your dorms, and eventually fell asleep. You woke the next morning from a strange night of dreaming, and the three of you made your way, wordlessly, to the dining hall.

After loading your plates with breakfasts, you sit down at the table – just the three of you – for a quiet moment alone.

Fitzroy: I had a pretty rowdy, non-erotic dream last night, and... I don't know how you two fared. I heard some mumblin' and some grumblin'. So I'm just wondering if we were visited by... three spirits getting us to change our ways around the holiday times, or... what's up?

Firbolg: I believe Chaos was trying to lead me astray.

Fitzroy: Mm.

Argo: I... I had a very similar experience with... Chaos. Um... wantin' me to kill a bunch of people.

Fitzroy: Whoa!

Argo: Yeah, I know. It was very disturbing. Uh, but uh... I—I looked good. It was like... like 10, 12 years in the future?

Fitzroy: Sure.

Argo: And I had a beard? And a scar?

Firbolg: Ooh.

Argo: Yeah.

Firbolg: Love that.

Argo: And I had a boat. It was—it was... Okay, a lot of it was awesome. It was pretty damn awesome.

Fitzroy: Yeah. Yeah, no, mine was too. I said non-erotic, but I will say, I spent most of it topless, and my sort of rigid, muscular frame was a sight to behold. And I know that's a strange thing to say about your own future self, um, but... it was not bad.

Firbolg: Mm.

Argo: You—so yours was in the future, too?

Fitzroy: Yes. I assume, now, we all had visions of the future with sort of, um... there was a lot of lushness in mine. A lot of excess. And a lot of success. And, but then I did have to mur—I did have to blow up a man. So like, there—

Firbolg: No.

Fitzroy: —was also some—yes, there was also a little tradeoff in mine. So I'm glad you all have gotten to know Chaos. A real stinker, that one.

Argo: Firbolg, was yours lush? Did you have a lush one?

Firbolg: I... went home.

Argo: Oh! That was good, right?

Fitzroy: That sounds good, I guess. Yeah. For a lot of folks.

Firbolg: Mm.

Argo: And they were nice to ya?

Firbolg: It was just a dream.

Argo: ... Okay.

Fitzroy: Yeah. I mean, it was a spooky dream that the three of us all kind of shared, I think. So it was a very special kind of dream, but I uh... I... I find myself somewhat unswayed by Chaos' plight, because... I just—I'm gettin' big bad guy vibes off that one. Yeah. Right?

Argo: Okay, so who is this Chaos person? They happened to have said something along the lines of uh... that they should've, y'know, been brought up in conversation by you before that?

Fitzroy: Sure. They're, uh, a somewhat... I mean, it says what it says right there on the tin, right? They're the sort of embodiment of uh, chaos. Or I suppose, a lack of order, and uh... sort of the implications of that on the world, and they're like, sort of like, all about that.

And also, the powers that I have are... they can be somewhat uncontrollable, and so, I guess they're—they're the source of that. They're also the source of Gray's powers, and... I don't know! I got the impression that like, we had a sort of secret arrangement, me and Chaos. But now that I think about it, that's—that's silly. Yeah. I'm uh... I'm fueled by Chaos I guess, and uh, they really want me to just go hog wild with it.

Um... so that's where I'm at. They seem to suggest that if I do go hog wild, we could beat Gray, and then, the future that we all foresaw would be cool, and what would happen, and... I mean, it's not the worst offer. But it's literally a devil's bargain, it seems like, so...

Firbolg: Mm. We are not taking them up on it, I assume.

Fitzroy: I mean, we're up against a... a demonic sort of force of nature. So like, maybe let's not... just burn any bridges, y'know what I'm sayin'?

Firbolg: Mm. Keep your options open.

Argo: I... y'know, my dream was really pretty cool. I mean, there was a lot I really, really liked about it. But I don't know if I like... bein' put in a position to have to kill a bunch of people. Uh... that... I don't know.

Fitzroy: That... I mean, that's a pretty good baseline for any moral compass, I would say, Argo. Um...

Argo: Well, I'm growing. I'm growing as a person.

Fitzroy: [laughs] You sure are. I think we need a... game plan, and I do not think banking on, uh, my unruly powers, uh, is a great sort of like... foundation for that plan? So, maybe let's diversify our power portfolio a little bit.

Argo: Well, I've been givin' it some thought. I think we need to... I think we need, uh, to build up our corporation. I think we need to maybe do some recruiting? I've got some people that, uh, kind of a... secret society, and I guess me tellin' you this makes it not quite so secret, or at least, I'm just not very good at bein' a member of a secret society.

But I'm... I might be willin' to see if I can... talk to them and see if I can get them over on our side to... to combat Gray.

Fitzroy: Uh, I mean, recruiting into our organization is one way of saying 'building an army,' which is probably what we're actually going to need to do.

Argo: Yeah. I was trying to be clever.

Fitzroy: Um, okay. Yeah, let's uh... yeah, I mean, I think we all need to sort of... lean on our... our... connections. Our sort of social links, if you will. And uh, put together a winning team.

I do think, maybe, our first step should be talking to the two people that we know have faced off against Gray, and knows what they're capable of, and that would be Hieronymous and Higglemas. I would love to get

Hieronymous' take on this, since he'll be now able to add more than 'bark bark, woof woof' and sniff his butt.

So that's cool. I think maybe we start there.

Firbolg: I too would like to speak to them.

Argo: Let's go.

Fitzroy: Let's go see if they're taking office hours.

Travis: As you raise up from your seats, you are momentarily interrupted in this action, as you see Hieronymous take the stage to make the school announcements. Uh, and he throws you a grin and winks, and you get the very distinct impression... well, how about, everybody roll an insight check.

Griffin: I—it's fuckin'—it's Gray. No, fuck off. That's Gray.

Travis: Yes. And uh, Fauxronymous says...

Gray: Ah, good morning everyone! Just a couple quick announcements. Uh, one, welcome back, everyone who went out on their real world assignments. Uh, and also... oh, was so excited about this, everyone... it's been in the works for a while, and we were finally able to make the timing work. We have a special guest lecturer for this semester. Joining us now, please, welcome—

Firbolg: [blows a very long, loud raspberry]

Travis: I don't know what it says about the time I've spent with my family. I can't tell who made that noise.

Firbolg: I have made a loong fart noise during the announcements!

Fitzroy: This guy's wild! This guy's so wild! What won't he do?!

Firbolg: Consider... yourself... pranked!

Argo: [laughs]

Gray: [clears throat] As I was—

Firbolg: [blows raspberry]

Fitzroy: He done done it again!

Argo: You are incorrigible! Incorrigible!

Firbolg: I am the bad boy now! I will continue to thwart the dean!

Travis: And you see Fauxronymous snaps his fingers, and... I want you to make a wisdom saving throw.

Justin: Uh, seven. Plus... probably doesn't matter, but it's four.

Travis: Uh, you feel yourself going to make another fart noise, and suddenly, you are unable to speak. You are unable to generate noise.

Justin: The deepest violence, robbing someone of their ability to make hilarious fart noises.

Fitzroy: I'll—I'll take the torch from here, partner. [blows air]

Argo: You have to—no.

Firbolg: You must use the—

Fitzroy: Shut up, I got it! I'll do it! [blows air]

Argo: Try your armpit. Try blowing into your armpit.

Fitzroy: We're sorry. Go ahead with your announcement.

Argo: [blows raspberry] Like that.

Gray: As I was saying... we have a special guest lecturer this semester. Joining us, one of the most renowned heroes in all of Nua. Please, put your hands together and welcome... The Commodore!

[music plays]

Travis: And you see The Commodore take the stage in his full military regalia, carrying himself proudly, chest led, walking with a swagger, with a grin that just is, perhaps, the most shit-eating grin you've ever seen in your life. And he's doing little, polite waves as he takes the stage.

Argo: Shhhit. I hate that guy.

Fitzroy: Yeah, what's—

Justin: Who is—who is The Commodore? Let's remind our listeners who The Commodore is.

Travis: Why don't you remind the listeners who The Commodore is, Dad?

Clint: The Commodore is one of the great naval heroes of this world. Think like... John Paul Jones. Um...

Justin: Ah yes.

Clint: Ah yes. Or Admiral Nimitz, maybe?

Justin: Cap'n Crunch?

Clint: Cap'n Crunch. Popeye the Sailor Man.

Justin: Okay.

Clint: He's like, the biggest military hero of the seas. And he's also the man that uh, Argo blames for the death of his mother, because he betrayed her. And he's... he's a real... creep. I'm trying not to oversell it. He's a real creep.

Travis: He's a real—a real piece of crap.

Clint: Poopy pants. He's a poopy pants.

Travis: Uh, do a—give me a perception check, Argo.

Clint: Shit. Three.

Travis: Um, you do not know, at this point, if you have been spotted or registered. He has not seen you for quite some time. I would say, if uh, he remembers you at all, it is still as like, a little boy. As like, eight years old. That said, Genasi are not super common, and so, it—there is always a chance that, perhaps, he has clocked you.

Clint: Well, Argo has grown a mustache. He's growing that great handlebar mustache. Maybe—

Travis: There is that. I mean, yeah. Listen, that can't be denied.

Clint: Threw him off a little bit.

Griffin: And that's the—that is the go-to disguise facial hair.

Travis: Because when you were eight, you just had the goatee. And now you've switched. You've inverted it.

Clint: Yeah. Yeah, and he's wearing his hair different, too.

Travis: Oh yeah?

Clint: So I think... yeah. Yeah, it's kind of a swept back thing. Feathered at the sides.

Travis: So, now he is just kind of sitting up there on stage, uh, next to Hieronymous, and the two of them are talking. Uh, but he doesn't seem to have registered you at all. This doesn't seem to have any direct impact on your action at this moment, but it is definitely a new wrinkle.

Griffin: Hm. I mean, we're gonna have to address that eventually, yes? I mean, unless you're just gonna kind of fuckin' creep... all around, I imagine you will be bumped into by this fool.

Argo: [sighs] Well, listen, he—I don't—I don't think he knows that I hate his guts. I don't think he knows that I want to... to kill him. I mean, listen, this whole thing at school... I've been tryin' to angle it so that I could become like, a sidekick to him. That's why I went to this school in the first place, 'cause I was gonna work my way into his trust, and then... y'know, when he wasn't payin' attention, y'know, back stab him like any credible rogue would do.

Fitzroy: Right.

Argo: So I don't know if I have to worry about him... I mean, I'm sure if he came right up against me and recognized me, he'd see me as Shabby's little boy. But I don't think he knows I'm—I want to kill him.

Fitzroy: Well, I do just want to say, there, Count of Monte Cristo, that your revenge plot was enough for me to pick up on, and I am a grade-A dunce. So I would not sell him too short. So...

Argo: [whistles] Yeah. That's very—very—that's a cold blast of water in my face. Thanks.

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Fitzroy: Let's just lay low, and... do your best?

Argo: I'll twirl my mustache. I'll twirl the mustache. That'll really enhance the effect.

Fitzroy: Twirl it good. Good. Yeah.

Argo: Nyahahahahaaa!

Griffin: Uh, are morning announcements done?

Travis: Correct.

Griffin: Okay. I think—I think—uh, how long has this been after the confrontation with Gray? Is this the next day?

Travis: This is the next morning, yes.

Griffin: Alright, let's go—let's go, uh... let's go talk to—here's what's weird. Gray just like, being here... means we have to operate with like, a constant level of discretion that I do not think the three of us, either our characters or us as actual humans, are capable of maintaining. So uh...

Travis: Well, y'know what? I believe in you, Griffin.

Fitzroy: [loudly] I have to go to the bathroom!

Griffin: And I stand up and start to walk to Higglemas' office.

Travis: [laughs]

Argo: I have to go to make sure he washes his hands afterwards!

Firbolg: I am... following them.

Travis: You make your way out of the room.

Clint: [laughing] I love the Firbolg.

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: Yeah. Everyone does. You make your way out of the room, and head towards Higglemas' office. You arrive there, no one stops you. You're just making your way across campus in the middle of the day. It's perfectly normal behavior, really.

You arrive. You see cool Gary. He kind of waves at you.

Griffin: He has a lip piercing.

Travis: He has a lip piercing and a septum piercing, and he's got an industrial. He's a really cool Gary, guys.

Griffin: [laughing] How do you pierce a Gary?

Travis: Man...

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: So, you make your way into the Annex, and you make your way up to Higglemas' office. And I would say, this being your third time as a group, kind of approaching the office, this is definitely the most confident you have been walking up to this fool's door.

Griffin: I mean, I'm still looking for traps. You don't know. Those—that's the problem with these magic sigil traps. You fuckin' forget where you place one of 'em, and it's kaboomskis. Y'know what I mean? Like, you're just walking your dog one day, and you're like, "Oh shit, I did place a magic sigil trap there." And then you're gone.

Travis: Well, as you attempt to detect magic, your skin has no glow.

Griffin: Cool.

Travis: I mean, aside from its natural glow. Y'know.

Griffin: Sure.

Travis: A little bit of—maybe you do like a dusting of glitter from time to time. But like—

Griffin: I spray tan. Yeah, I spray tan for sure.

Travis: Oh, you do!

Griffin: Oh, for sure for sure. What about—what about me? What about Fitzroy makes you think he doesn't spray tan?

Travis: That's fair. And I bet it's magical as shit, too, y'know?

Griffin: Yeah, it's good. It's good stuff.

Travis: Uh, so you make your way to the door. You have sensed no magic.

Griffin: Good.

[knocking]

Higglemas: Uh, come in.

Fitzroy: I thought we had a whole system. Okay.

Higglemas: Yeah, come in.

Travis: You open the door. You enter. You find much younger Higglemas caring for his brother, who is currently resting on Higglemas' overstuffed, very worn couch.

Griffin: I thought you were gonna say dog bed.

Travis: Dog bed. [laughs] No.

Griffin: I thought—well, I thought that would be funny. Like, what if I came up and I was like, “Here, have some kibble.” But that would be so rude. I would never.

Argo: So I shouldn’t scratch him behind the ears? That would be...

Travis: I mean, not without consent.

Argo: Right. Of course.

Travis: I mean, but, to be fair... shouldn’t do that to a dog you don’t know, either. Come on, folks. Gotta ask. You don’t know.

Fitzroy: How’s everyone—how’s everyone feeliin’?

Higglemas: Oh, shh, please. He’s resting. Um... I... [sighs] I know I owe you an explanation. I... and an apology. Um... I'm not sure where... where to start, honestly.

Argo: Well... how about you start with, uh, what parts of the story of your brother gettin’ turned into a dog by the bad guy was a lie?

Higglemas: Almost—almost none of it. Um... it—he was cursed. And I turned him into a dog. So that... uh, he could survive. The backlash aged me rapidly. All of that—all of that is true. The... the one difference was, uh... I could’ve... I could’ve turned him back. Um... at basically any point. But... I was so afraid of losing... my brother again, that I could—[sighs] I wouldn’t do it until I knew I could hide him from Gray.

And that’s why I needed your help. I needed your help with being able to conceal him from Gray. And I—it was to protect him. I swear. I—I... I didn’t... I didn’t used to consider myself a coward, but... I know I am, now. I... I was only brave in reflection of my brother. And without him, I did not know what

to do, and I... am sorry that I used you, and I'm sorry that I lied to you, but... I just couldn't... risk losing my brother again.

Argo: So was that the end of your plan? Get your brother back, and... yay? And just hide out and try to ride the storm out?

Firbolg: You are hoping... he has a plan.

Higglemas: Yes.

Firbolg: Mm. Ah.

Higglemas: I don't—I'm not the hero.

Firbolg: I understand idolizing the oldest brother is very common.

Griffin: [laughs]

Firbolg: Seeing them as godlike, ah, infallible, sexual superiors...

Clint: [laughing]

Firbolg: This is a common... trait.

Travis: Damn it! [bursts into laughter]

Griffin: [laughing]

Clint: [laughing]

Travis: I can't even deny that that's what's happening! But...

Griffin: Uh, if memory serves, he needed the uh... the end of that episode was kind of a blur. He needed the apple, not to turn his brother back, but to create a... what, potion or spell or something to hide away?

Travis: Correct.

Griffin: Okay, cool.

Fitzroy: Um, yeah, I mean, you uh... you beefed it. You screwed up, but uh... that's in the past. And now, let's look onward to the future. Um... and ask not what you have done to wrong us, but what you can do to help us build a righteous, badass army to... kill a demon king.

Higglemas: Ah... I don't... [sighs] Right now, I'm—I'm still trying to get my brother back on his feet so he can tell me what to do.

Argo: Well, he can—he doesn't have to get on his feet. He can lay there in the dog bed and give us ideas.

Higglemas: He... doesn't remember much of his life before. I'm still working on that. Um... think of it like... [sighs] I'm doing work on his brain to rebuild it. And it will take time.

Fitzroy: [sighs] Okay.

Travis: See, I almost said brain surgery, but I don't think that exists in this world.

Griffin: Well, magical brain surgery.

Travis: Think of it like magical brain surgery.

Griffin: Sure, sure. Uh, how much time do we have again? What did he say? Six months?

Travis: Six months.

Fitzroy: Alright, so we got six months to start whippin' something up. I don't know about you all – I don't feel like sittin' around waiting while you do fantasy brain surgery. So I think we need to get the wheels a'spinnin', and start building up the ranks. Juicin' our power levels, if you will, and um...

yeah. Any tips you got on that front? You faced off against Gray before. Anything you can tell us, um... would be pretty helpful and good.

And also? The first helpful and good thing you have done for us... eeever?
So...

Argo: Ooh, burn!

Fitzroy: Not a burn. A literal observation.

Higglemas: Gray is clever. Um, and he... he will oftentimes strike from a direction that you wouldn't expect. But... he has a temper. And if you can get him worked up, he is very off kilter. He will make mistakes. That's how we've been able to beat him before. He is more powerful than any mortal I know, even Hiero. But when angry, he is vulnerable.

And I should also warn you... as you attempt to find help, he was able to make it past my wards because he had mortal assistants. They were masked, disguised, so I don't know who, but... someone at this school helped him get through my wards and past the doors. And even then, they shouldn't have been able to make it through. They had some kind of egis that allowed them.

Only my brother or I should be able to make it through the wards without someone lowering them, and they were able to make it through. Like I said, he's clever, so... be careful who you approach.

Fitzroy: And... so, we got spies on the inside. Fantastic news. That's for sure not gonna make us a big paranoid mess. Uh, what of his other forces? We did square off against, I would say, some pretty bad... some pretty bad boys back in town, and it seemed like there was infinite of them. So, of the de—what do you know of the demon army?

Higglemas: Gray is a demon prince. He... [sighs] One of the hell dimensions is his.

Fitzroy: Say that again?!

Higglemas: One of the hell dimensions is his.

Fitzroy: That sucks, guys! That seems like a—

Firbolg: It sounds so bad.

Fitzroy: It sounds so bad! [laughing]

Argo: It does. Really bad.

Firbolg: We, to contrast... he runs a hell dimension, and we share a toilet!

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Fitzroy: [laughing] Okay...

Higglemas: I know this won't help much, but it is one of the smaller dimensions. That's why he's always thinking—

Fitzroy: Oh, goooooood!

Firbolg: [blows raspberry] Why did you not say so?! This is much... well, not better. Is worse.

Argo: And we have a rather large toilet, so...

Fitzroy: Yes, it's true.

Argo: Y'know, there's some balance there.

Firbolg: It is a nice toilet that I do not use.

Fitzroy: You do not avail yourself of this particular indoor toilet. Um, okay. So what—you—a smaller hell dimension. What are you talking? What do you think, like, a hundred of these big pit demons, or...

Argo: Is it a fixer upper?

Fitzroy: Two hundred?

Higglemas: I've never been there. I couldn't tell you what his forces are. But if he's been amassing them for the last 50 years, chances are, he has been gathering as many troops as he can. And...

Fitzroy: Could we—could we get there if we wanted to do a little, uh, reconnaissance?

Higglemas: Everything in my... limited powers... makes me think that his connection to his dimension and to this world... has to do with the Godscar Chasm. So I—I would look there?

Fitzroy: 'Kay. Uhh... I mean, I fe—I don't know about you all. I feel a plan a'brewin'. And it's not a good one.

Argo: Mm-mm.

Fitzroy: But something's cooking in the kitchen.

Firbolg: What are you thinking?

Fitzroy: I mean, we have six months. That's enough for us to have a sort of multilayered approach with many prongs. I think—I think we scout the hell dimension. I've been wantin' to make a fieldtrip to the Godscar Chasm for quite some time, 'cause that's apparently where I get my, uh, special sauce from. So that seems good.

We need to get, uh, y'know, as many fighters as we can on our side. For the confrontation. We need to... right? Are y'all pickin' up what I'm puttin' down?

It's—I don't think this is gonna be a, "we find the magic sword and then plunge it into Gray's chest and then we win."

Argo: Wait. Wait, is there... is there a magic sword?

Fitzroy: Is there a ma—oh my god, yeah! Is there a magic sword?

Argo: Yeah, let's not assume.

Higglemas: No?

Fitzroy: Aw.

Higglemas: I mean, there are lots of magic swords. You have a magic sword, Argo. It's strapped to your hip right now.

Argo: Oh!

Higglemas: If you're asking if there is a magical sword specifically known for killing Gray? Not that we've found.

Fitzroy: What about a gun? A magic gun?

Higglemas: Um... once again, if I had knowledge of a magic gun that would kill Gray, I'd have it.

Fitzroy: Okay. I'm gonna feel silly after I ask this, but what about a big, magic piano that we can like, drop on him?

Argo: Oh, that'd be so funny! And then when he smiles, the—

Fitzroy: The keys would be in his mouth, yes, as a big smile.

Argo: The keys are his teeth? [laughs] I love that gag!

Fitzroy: Or a safe, and maybe drop it on him, and then you open the door, and he's inside, but he's got like, stars going around his head. But he dies, also.

Higglemas: The... I—we have, in the last couple centuries, killed Gray many times.

Argo: Oh! How?

Higglemas: And then he's back.

Fitzroy: Hey! This is wicked useful information! You realize this, yes? Like, when we were asking like, what Gray could do? Like, you could've told us, "He cannot be killed"?

Higglemas: It's never—it's—he's not—[sighs] Not killed killed. we—he has a form here in this dimension.

Fitzroy: Right.

Higglemas: And we can kill that form and send him back to his dimension. But he always comes back.

Fitzroy: Okay. So we gotta kill him in hell. That's very hand—that's handy to know. Thank you.

Argo: Cut off the highway to... hell dimension.

Fitzroy: Sure. I don't know what that's gonna mean for me. Probably nothing good. But we'll cross that bridge when we come to it.

I—I feel like I'm ready to start poundin' the pavement.

Firbolg: Mm.

[music plays]

Fitzroy: Higglemas, before we get movin', um... I do want to say one thing. And you know that I'm not your biggest fan. And have been suspish of your actions. And was totally right. And that's go—that trophy's gonna stay in the old case for a while now. Called it, and that was totally great. Um...

I know you've had a tough time. And although you have sort of engaged in a dereliction of duties as an administrator of this school... that shall go down in history... I do not completely hold it against you. Uh, as you know, Gray did destroy the apple that we did fetch for you, thus making your, uh, escape and your cowardly retreat, uh, impossible.

Well...

Griffin: And I reach into my bag, and I pull out the second apple that we acquired. And I hand it to him.

Higglemas: Uh...

Griffin: Uh, and I say...

Fitzroy: If you're going to be half in on this thing, on this—by thing, I mean war against the demon prince... we don't necessarily... I don't necessarily want you here. I think you're probably going to do much more harm than good. So... if you're going to spend the whole of our war preparation effort looking for a way out... here it is. This is the way out. Get going now so that we know we don't have you.

But... if you and your brother actually do want to do something useful for this school and this world... we'll see you around, I guess.

Travis: And he looks at you for a moment, and looks back at his brother... and then looks back to you and says...

Higglemas: Hiero would help you. So... I... I'm in.

Fitzroy: Oh, thank god. [sighs] Oh man. That would've been so bad if you all had dipped, 'cause like... we have our beef, but I don't know what we'd

do!

Argo: We don't know shit.

Fitzroy: We don't know anything. Uh, also, protip – don't eat that apple. It is... mealy as heck. So...

Higglemas: I... I can use this to help. I—give me a little bit of time to rework the formula, and I think I can make you a potion that would protect you from Gray's detection.

Fitzroy: Hm. Do you think you could brew me a potion that would shrink me down eight inches so all my clothes would fit again?

Higglemas: Okay, so you are taller? 'Cause I wasn't gonna—

Fitzroy: Oh my gosh, much taller, yes.

Higglemas: Okay. I couldn't remember if it was, y'know, the—my change gave me a different perspective or what, but...

Fitzroy: No, my pants are very short on me like I'm a little sailor boy, and that's not just sort of an aesthetic decision on my part.

Higglemas: There is one other thing. [sighs] I... have a reconnaissance team that I think might be able to help. They're not... well skilled, but uh, I have some cats that are good at getting into places.

Firbolg: Your... cats?

Fitzroy: Wait a fricking moment! Are you telling us that the invisible space cat that keeps kickin' it in our dorm room is one of your—one of your little sparrows? Listening in?

Higglemas: Oh, they go where they pl—I didn't send it to you. They are just around. I was testing out a new spell on some of the feral cats around

the grounds. Nothing dangerous! And I found that I could... [sighs] ... create... traveling cats.

Fitzroy: Well, all cats can travel, you dingus.

Higglemas: Oh, interdimensionally.

Fitzroy: That's—now, that is new.

Argo: That's a great band name, too.

Fitzroy: Sure.

Argo: Interdimensional Traveling Cats.

Fitzroy: Maybe just have them keep a couple of their furry pointed ears out to see if they can suss out who the evil, bad spy is?

Higglemas: Oh, uh, yes. Of course.

Argo: So, reviewin' the minutes... action points for you are, you're going to heal your brother so we can ply his brain for wisdom on how to defeat Gray. You're gonna brew up, uh, a special magic apple potion that will serve as like, a bulletproof vest for us. Fantasy bulletproof vest.

Higglemas: More like camouflage. Just to be clear, I can't protect you from danger from Gray.

Argo: Oh, gotcha. Okay. So, camo.

Fitzroy: You made that so explicitly clear with your every word and action since the moment we met.

Argo: And your third assignment is to dispatch cats... spy cats. To send out spy cats. So those are your three action points, right?

Higglemas: And one more point of clarification – I don't control the cats. Have you ever tried to control cats?

Fitzroy: Even better!

Higglemas: That doesn't happen. They just—they sometimes come back to me, and I've gotten pretty good at communicating with animals nonverbally. And so, I can suss it out. I have ways of communicating with animals, and I... I can try to gather information from them.

Argo: Okay. Check, check, and check. Those are your three action points. Right?

Higglemas: Y—yes.

Travis: Everybody, roll an insight check for me.

Justin: Gladly.

Clint: 17 minus one. 16.

Griffin: Four plus zero. Four.

Justin: Five plus four, nine.

Travis: Uh, Argo, you see that, with this clear plan and instructions that have been given to him... but more than that, a level of trust and responsibility, he's standing a little taller. And he seems, uh, a little more present. And it—you get the impression that this is a position he is way more comfortable in than being the one who makes the plan.

Argo: Middle management. He's a middle management guy. 'Kay.

Fitzroy: I mean, are we the teachers now?

Argo: Well, we're definitely the corporate heads.

Fitzroy: Sure.

Argo: Well, you are.

Fitzroy: Okay! Don't forget that, and... break!

[music plays]

[advertisements play]

Travis: So where to, fellas?

Griffin: I have an idea. I feel like... what I'm interested in is kind of like, loose end mode, a little bit. I feel like we—I feel like, in all of the hubbub and excitement, there are a couple of like, things that we started doing. Or at least, that I started doing that we didn't sort of see through to the end.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: So I personally would love to finish up my little, uh, home ec project of the uh, mind control apparatus? Although, I think it's going to sort of be a different form now. The one I was working with, the artificer, whose name I cannot remember.

Travis: Crabtree. That's it.

Griffin: Crabtree! I'd like to dip in there. Uh, but that doesn't have to go first. That's just what I... before I do anything else, I feel like squaring that way, like, I'm not gonna be able to sleep at night. Also, I went through all this trouble to get this fucking permission slip signed. And I want some payoff for that, damn it.

Travis: Okay, so what about you guys? 'Cause I'd like you all to stick together as much as possible for this, y'know what I mean? So Griffin wants to check in on the artificing project with Crabtree. Uh, what about you, Argo and Firbolg?

Clint: Um... I—well, I mean, I think Argo would probably like to check in with the Unbroken Chain. I mean, that’s—talk about—that was kind of a dangling plotline. A dangling... loose end for him. And especially if he wants to try to recruit the Unbroken Chain to their cause.

Travis: Cool. What about you, Firbolg?

Justin: I think I will go... to the library.

Travis: Ah, with the power of books!

Griffin: [blows raspberry] Nerd alert.

Travis: Okay! So, let’s do... artificing first. So the three of you make your way down to the basement of the main building, where is located the forge and the artificing chamber. Um, you make your way in there. You see Crabtree working away, carving some sigils and runes into a metal plate. You would guess, some sort of armor. Uh, and she looks up at you and she says...

Crabtree: Aw, hey! Uh, welcome back! Were you able to get that uh... that permission slip signed? Can we get to work on your uh... what was it, a headband?

Fitzroy: Aw, it’s gonna be a different thing now. We sort of squared that whole thing away. But yeah, I do have a sort of blank check permission slip here, uh, for whatever stuff we need. And I know I say that, and it probably sounds very, very suspect. But uh, yeah. It’s on—put it on Higglemas’ tab, he said.

Travis: She strokes her gray beard for a second, and then she takes the uh—takes the permission slip from you, holds it up to the light of the fire, and as she does, there is a watermark across it, and the ink glows for a second. And she goes...

Crabtree: Yeah, that's legit. Alright. Well... uh, is this the kind of thing where you want me to like, show you how to do it? So, y'know, teach a man to artifice kind of thing?

Travis: And she smiles. And this is like, apparently a joke she has made many times.

Fitzroy: Oh, that old chestnut. Love it, love it, love it. Um—

Crabtree: Y'know, 'cause it's like, teach a man to fish, but it's artfish. Right?

Fitzroy: Yeah. Ohh! I didn't hear it—

Crabtree: The art of fishing?

Fitzroy: Okay. Um...

Crabtree: Teach a man to artfish—sorry, I said it wrong. Teach a man the art of fishing. You get it?

Griffin: I'm gonna pass out. I'm gonna pass out.

Fitzroy: Um, yeah, I mean, that would be helpful, y'know, if we could get a sort of mass production going. But uh... headbands are so last season. And this season, uh, the whole world's goin' wild for a new look that, uh, just debuted at the Fantasy Met Gala, and so uh... I need you to teach me how to make...

Griffin: And I take off my glasses. And I say...

Fitzroy: Some of these.

Crabtree: Glasses?

Fitzroy: Yeah. Not prescription. Well... magically prescriptive. Um...

Crabtree: What... what kind of enchantment you lookin' for? What are they gonna do? Protection? Attack?

Fitzroy: Well, y'know, I was lookin' for something to protect against mind control. But now I'm sort of thinkin' a bit more big picture. Um... a bit more broader. Rather than sort of mind control, like, mind suggestion? Just bein' able to kind of... see through that. Um...

Griffin: To put it in game terms, I'm hoping to artificer the... I mean, what we had talked about in talking about artificing is like, putting a spell inside a thing. And there's a spell called True Seeing. Here's where I'm at – I don't know that it makes sense for us to do much of anything until we are able to sort of crack the case of, Gray has somehow convinced the entire world that the Godscar Chasm has been there forever. And that power of like, y'know, mass hypnosis seems like it's gonna be pretty tough to whip.

Travis: Oh, gotcha gotcha gotcha. So you want to make something that you can put on somebody else, so that they will see through things.

Griffin: I mean, I don't know if that's the only thing my man has like... or, yeah. I don't know if that's the only thing that he has like, sort of like, bamboozled us all. So I would love to make some—some glasses of True Seeing, I guess. Uh, the spell gives a willing creature you touch the ability to see things as they actually are. For the duration, the creature has true sight, notices secret doors hidden by magic, and can see into the ethereal plane, all out to a range of 120 feet.

Travis: Okay! Um—

Griffin: Does that sound—does that—I don't want to like, pitch something that's gonna break the game. Does that sound like something that is... reasonable?

Travis: I think that is probably something where we can do like, a charge of it. Since it is like, a permanent fixture in the glasses, that we do like, a

one-time charge. Y'know? And not something that's like, wear these glasses and you can see through everything for all time ever.

Griffin: Sure.

Travis: So it would have to be like, y'know, a 60 second... charge. Uh, that you could, y'know, use maybe once a day or twice a day or something.

Griffin: Okay, yeah. That sounds good to me. That sounds fair.

Travis: So, Crabtree is kind of stroking her beard, and she says, like...

Crabtree: Well... huh. Yeah, I think I could... I could handle the... the lenses part. I could definitely show you how to do that. But to have frames strong enough to hold it... [tuts] I'm gonna have to—oh. Gonna have to get Mosh's feedback.

Travis: And she grabs kind of a, y'know, speaking listening horn device from the wall and says...

Crabtree: Mosh? Get your ass in here.

Travis: And Mosh, who you recognize, Argo, as a member of the Unbroken Chain, but is also the blacksmith and the blacksmith professor, comes in and says...

Mosh: Yes, Crabtree? What is it?

Travis: And Crabtree says...

Crabtree: Now don't take that tone with me, Mosh! I'm workin' on a project, and I need your feedback.

Mosh: I was working on a project, too, Crabtree!

Travis: And then Crabtree says...

Crabtree: Well, okay. Calm down. No need to fight in front of the boys. So, I'm trying to make glasses of True Seeing.

Fitzroy: Fashionable. Preferably like, fashionable brow line... glasses is kind of my look.

Crabtree: Do you have a preferred shape for the frame and the lens?

Fitzroy: I mean, a brow line frame. I guess a boxier than... than uh, the current spectacles I'm wearing. The lens, I'm not imagining any sort of tint. Actually, transition lenses? I don't know if you all can do that. They're so stylish, and they look very good on everyone.

Crabtree: Yeah, we can do that.

Fitzroy: Okay.

Travis: And Mosh says...

Mosh: Oh, yeah. You would have to have frames with the charge built into the frame to power—

Fitzroy: Well, a brow line—a brow line, y'know, gives you lots of room to etch there on the brow. So...

Travis: And the two of them begin sketching. And they begin drawing out plans, and you hear them—their tone shift from bickering to collaborative very quickly. And they get into a groove of it, and their voices lower as they're talking. You're not able to keep up with every step, but after about five to ten minutes, they kind of break their huddle. And Mosh says...

Mosh: Okay, there you go. Please don't bother me again for the rest of the day. I have to finish what I'm working on. It's... gonna be really cool.

Travis: And he leaves. And as he leaves, Crabtree says...

Crabtree: [mocking] Meh, don't bother me for the rest of the day! It's gonna be really cool!

Fitzroy: Get 'im. Got him good.

Crabtree: Alright. I've got the plans here. Um...

Travis: And she kind of, y'know, gestures for you to lean over, and is showing you the different instructions. She says...

Crabtree: Now, I've never made anything like this before. So I'll tell you what – give me the rest of the day, and I'll see if I can work up kind of a prototype before you and I like, kind of get into it.

Fitzroy: Okay.

Crabtree: So check back in with me maybe... tomorrow, day after tomorrow, and I should have something ready for ya.

Fitzroy: Sounds good. Lovin' it. Check. Gonna check the first thing off the big list, y'all. You can't see the list, Crabtree. It's a secret list. And so stop asking.

Crabtree: Okay!

Fitzroy: [whispers] It's the demon war list.

Crabtree: The wh—sorry, I couldn't hear ya over the fire.

Fitzroy: 'Cause I wasn't whispering to you.

Crabtree: Oh. Okay!

Travis: Um, so, that's one checkmark done. So, let's head to the library next. Books. Check 'em out. Read about stars and cars and electric guitars. Books. Check 'em out.

Griffin: [laughs] Okay okay okay.

Justin: Heavyweight champ and his craziest bow. Books.

Travis: Check `em out.

Justin: Check `em out. At your library.

Travis: Hey, remember when they decided to use California Raisins to promote literacy?

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: Remember when California Raisins were invented to promote raisins, and then people were like, "I can't—I'm already buying all the raisins there are, and I still can't get enough of these fucking raisins."

Griffin: There's gotta be more that these people can tell me.

Justin: There's gotta be more that we could use them for. Can they promote Christmas?

Clint: Do you remember when we dressed you guys in garbage bags and you dressed up for Halloween as the California Raisins?

Justin: Classic costume.

Travis: Yeah, absolutely.

Clint: That was a classic.

Travis: Do you remember when Hardee's slash Carl's Junior paired with California Raisins to sell cinnamon raisin rolls, and you could get—

Clint: Ohh, the—yeah! Still make them.

Travis: What, really?

Griffin: This is the end of the episode?

Justin: This is how the episode ends. It's just a slow fade, Sopranos sty—
[sings] Don't stop... and it's just the end.

Travis: Okay! We've reached the library. It is, y'know, early morning. Most people are in class. You guys are probably playing hooky, if we're being honest, but who cares so much about attendance when you're trying to stop a demon prince from taking over your world?

You head into the library. It's fairly empty. So what is—what's your goal here, Firbolg?

Justin: Where is the librarian?

Travis: You're looking for Sabor the turtle.

Justin: Sabor.

Travis: Uh, Sabor the turtle is over, uh, you see him stocking the nonfiction shelves, returning books back to their appropriate place.

Firbolg: Hello, Sabor.

Sabor: Oh, Master Firbolg!

Firbolg: How are you?

Sabor: I am well. And yourself?

Firbolg: Very well, thank you. Well... I have a lot on my mind.

Sabor: Okay?

Firbolg: Every one of my friends is talking to their friends about... a project. And... I think on this. You and cool Gary are my best friends at the school.

Sabor: Oh.

Firbolg: I cannot talk to cool Gary. Cool though he may be... he talks to... many others.

Sabor: Uh... well, I'm flattered, Master Firbolg. How can I help you?

Firbolg: Do you... like... Hieronymous?

Sabor: The head of the school?

Firbolg: Yes.

Sabor: I respect him very much. Uh, he hired me over a hundred years ago, and I've never had much issue with him. I don't see him much. He hasn't made his way down to the library in some time.

Firbolg: Mm... what... mm. Did you notice... he... becoming different? Eh, maybe... 50 years ago? This question sounds crazy to ask.

Sabor: Hmm... now that you mention it, he did become more involved in recruiting, and bringing in new students 50 years ago, thereabouts.

Firbolg: Mm... turtle, can I trust you?

Sabor: That is a tricky question, Master Firbolg, because my answer is dependent on whether you trust me or not. I will, of course, say yes, you can. But it is up to you to decide whether I am being honest.

Firbolg: It is too early for the logic puzzles. Feel like I need a chart. Um...

Justin: I'm gonna roll an... mm, let's call it an insight check.

Travis: Go for it.

Justin: To see... well, I dropped the ding dang dice.

Travis: Ding dang it.

Griffin: Can we watch our language, please?

Justin: 16 plus four. 20.

Travis: You get the sense that this turtle is on the level. He has done nothing to indicate otherwise. You're feeling real good about your relationship with Sabor.

Clint: Could I—could I help here real quick?

Justin: I didn't realize you guys were here.

Griffin: I'm—I'm playing with a fuckin' like, ball and hoop. A stick and hoop. Because that was the slowest, most boring fucking conversation I have ever heard. You all talk—it's like the sloths in Zootopia. I'm fucking asleep over here. Come on.

Justin: Let me just talk to the guy for one more second. I'll speed up a little bit.

Firbolg: Sabor...

Sabor: Yes?

[music plays]

Firbolg: The Hieronymous that you know... is not the real Hieronymous. The Godscar Chasm... is invented. And... the being calling itself Hieronymous... wants only to bring chaos and destruction to this school. He...

is well connected. He... is powerful. And... the only hope of stopping him... lies with the three of us, now.

You have a library full of books. And in one of them, you must be able to read... that a Firbolg cannot lie.

Travis: And Sabor nods slowly. And you see him look over at Argo for a second, and kind of, y'know, tilt his head inquisitively at Argo.

Clint: Argo raises his hand like he's scratching his head, and when he does, the sleeve of his... jerkin? Um, slides down, revealing his Unbroken Chain tattoo.

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

Sabor: I... will begin my research.

Travis: And walks away from his cart, and heads towards his office.

Firbolg: Oh, Sabor?

Sabor: Yes?

Firbolg: Congratulations on your promotion to secondary character.

Griffin: [bursts into laughter]

Clint: [laughs]

[theme music plays]

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