

The Adventure Zone: Graduation – Ep. 25, Burden of Things

Published on October 1st, 2020

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

[theme music plays]

Gary: The demon prince, Gray, declared war. He informed the Thundermen that they had six months to prepare. Thanks to some research by Sabour, they're armed with the most powerful weapon there is: information.

Fitzroy made plans with Rainer to speak with her dad about the possibility of obtaining his help with the war effort. They met by night, with their intention being to summon the lich king to the school, but... things didn't work out that way.

Also, the Firbolg has been trying to adjust to life after being excommunicated from his clan, with mixed success.

Meanwhile, Argo is just doing his best.

[theme music plays]

Travis: Argo and Firbolg, you are awoken from your slumber by a pounding on the door. It's getting, uh, progressively louder, and let's say, frantic.

Clint: Anybody want foley?

Travis: No.

Justin: Mm, no thank you.

Griffin: No, I think we all know what a pounding...

Justin: And I'm—let's assume that you were asking for the rest of our natural lives, and so the answer is just no.

Clint: Oh.

Travis: Unless—unless it's preceded by Dave, I don't want any foley, Dad.

Clint: Oh!

Justin: Yeah. Now, if you can get me Dave Foley on here...

Clint: Our old friend, Dave Foley!

Justin: [sings] One time I saw him at a cupcake store. He had a mustache, and he went to the door. Got himself a cupcake, a nice little treat! Something for the kid in the hall to eat.

Griffin: [laughs] That was—[claps] And that's the end of the episode. Wow, a two minute one.

Travis: Yeah, we really nailed—well, you just gotta know when you've hit the top, y'know? When you've peaked, you gotta come off of it.

So, there's still a pounding on the door, but this might—

Clint: Oh yeah!

Travis: It has now progressed to the sound of... let's say, a battering ram?

Justin: I'm opening the door. To save you the brain juice to come up with a metaphor. I'm opening the door.

Travis: No no no. It wasn't a metaphor – it literally is a battering ram.

Justin: Ah.

Travis: You open the door, and you see Rainer in her chair come flying through, and she's been slamming her chair backwards into the door to try to get your attention. So she comes hovering into the room backwards, and kind of like, skids to a halt in the air, and says...

Rainer: Oh, hey! Uh, you're up! Great! Um...

Argo: We really didn't have much choice with your chair antics there, friend.

Rainer: Yeah. Yeah, sorry about that! Um, uh, kind of, uh... ahh, big deal? Big deal. Might be a big deal. It's probably fine. It's probably nothing. Um... my dad... has... for lack of a better word... kidnapped... Fitzroy. But it's probably fine! I—y'know, now I'm saying it out loud, I don't even know what I'm worried about.

Um, my dad, he's a good dude. Um, nice guy. He can, um, if he... if he has not been around people for a while, he can get... [smacks lips] Y'know, kind of out of touch? But it's probably nothing. Uhh, uh, yeah! Um... [exhales]

Argo: Whoa.

Firbolg: Where is he now?

Rainer: Well... um... so we did the spell that I thought was gonna summon my dad, but instead, Fitzroy disappeared? So... if I were to bet, he's at the crypt. Uh, which is my dad's, y'know, house.

Firbolg: You... transported him?

Rainer: Uh, yeah! Yeah.

Firbolg: This is impressive magic.

Rainer: Oh! Oh, yeah. No, sure, yeah, it's very—he's very powerful, for sure.

Firbolg: No, you? Or...

Argo: I thought you did it.

Rainer: Oh no, I didn't do it!

Firbolg: Hm.

Argo: Well, okay. Well, let's go save him.

Firbolg: How far is it from here?

Rainer: Ooh, uhh... about a day's ride by horse, unless you guys have something faster.

Argo: Ooh! Ah! I know this one! Uh... the—the flying horses!

Rainer: Pegasi?

Firbolg: Pegases.

Argo: The pegases, yeah.

Firbolg: It's a flock. It's a flock of pegasi.

Rainer: Ooh!

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

Rainer: If you guys have pegasi, that's like, half a day. Uh, so, I don't know. Get dressed, uh, and let's head down to the big tree.

Justin: Okay, we do that.

[music plays]

Travis: Fitzroy. You have come to your senses here in this crypt-like chamber, which our listeners at home now know is called... The Crypt.

Griffin: Yeah, so it's about as crypt-like as it gets, huh?

Travis: Oh yeah. No, I mean, I would say it's past crypt-like into just crypt.

Griffin: It is crypt, yeah.

Travis: Um, and the pile of bones that you saw moving have now formed themselves into two skeletons in front of you. One skeleton is taller than the other. The taller one is a little lankier. Uh, has a bunch of teeth missing, has about three or four left. And the shorter skeleton is a little stouter, and has a full set of gold teeth. But they're just standing before you, and not really doing anything inherently threatening.

Griffin: Hmm.

Travis: And these two skeletons are going to be played by... uh, let me check my notes here... Clint McElroy and Justin McElroy. So, if you guys want to take over the description of their physicality, go right ahead.

Justin: Okay. Imagine a bone. Now... do you have that, uh, locked in your mind?

Travis: A single bone? Yes I do.

Justin: Yes, do you have a single bone? You see it in all its alabaster glory. Now, imagine 206 of them in different shapes and orientations.

Travis: Whoa.

Justin: Yes. And... a scimitar?

Travis: Sure.

Justin: Seems like it, right?

Travis: Yes.

Justin: Feels right.

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: Yeah. A scimitar. And a merkin.

Griffin: Whoa!

Travis: Well, now, hold on.

Griffin: Huh!

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: That's cool!

Travis: But Justin, let me ask you this – where is the merkin?

Justin: Right in the sweet spot, baby. [laughing]

Clint: [laughing]

Travis: Okay.

Justin: Right in the sweet spot. Right, front of the pelvis. Right above the coccyx. Right where...

Travis: Right where one would expect a merkin to be.

Justin: Right where you expect the merkin to be. How does he hold it on there? I don't know. Mickey magic. You tell me.

Travis: Excellent.

Justin: I have no idea.

Griffin: [laughing]

Travis: So, what is, uh... oh man, I really don't want to call your skeleton merkin. Can we call your skeleton anything else?

Justin: Uh, his actual name is Gherkin.

Travis: Okay. What is Gherkin kind of doing while standing here in front of Fitzroy?

Justin: He has an idling animation that's just kind of like a shamble in place.

Clint: [laughing]

Travis: Kind of like he's like, awkwardly shambling in place, or just confidently shambling in place?

Justin: He's fine with it.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: [laughing] He doesn't—it's—like, it's fine. He's moving, or he's not moving. He doesn't really have much of a preference.

Travis: Okay, uh, now, what about our second skeleton?

Clint: Well, I have a question. Could Gherkin be wearing a jerkin?

Travis: That would cover the merkin.

Justin: Gherkin's wearing a jerkin above the merkin, yes. Correct.

Travis: Okay.

Clint: Okay.

Justin: And he's often lurkin', so let me get out in front of it.

Travis: Okay.

Clint: [laughs] And sometimes, he's a shirkin'.

Travis: Aww, come on, Gherkin.

Justin: That's impossible. That one doesn't...

Clint: Anyway.

Travis: Okay, now what about skeleton number two?

Clint: Um, uh... imagine... 206 bones. A lot of them have been broken many times. Uh, y'know, low calcium content.

Justin: Hmm. Such a problem.

Clint: And um... shorter. He is the shorter of the two.

Travis: Oh, with the gold teeth?

Clint: With the gold teeth. Um, and the—but the gold teeth are spectacular. And he's even got a couple of really long canines.

Travis: Oh, really?

Clint: Yeah! Just—

Travis: Like maybe he was a vampire? He's a skeleton of a vampire?

Clint: Yeah! Yeah!

Travis: Okay! [laughs] Okay! Wow! Hat on a hat, man! I love it!

Clint: That's what I was planning for the last four seconds. And um... his uh—his name is, uh... Tibia.

Travis: Nice. Okay. Now, I'm going to, for ease here, say that they have little name tags on, Fitzroy, so that you know this. Now Fitzroy, what are your feelings about Gherkin and Tibia?

Griffin: Um... I mean, as far as I know, this is probably not out of the ordinary. I think I'm more freaked out by the fact that I've just been teleported, by the fact that I see skeletons. I see skeletons all the fuckin' time.

Travis: Right. Like, at the school, there's a team of skeletons that you have worked with many times. Like, the idea of an animated skeleton isn't that weird to you.

Griffin: Yeah, sure. So yeah.

Travis: But it should be noted – these skeletons are silent.

Griffin: Um, well, then I... I mean, I wave at them, I guess.

Justin: They wave back.

Fitzroy: Okay. Alright, we're getting somewhere. I'm feeling this. I'm feeling this connection. Um, so... I guess I'm where Rainer's dad... lives? Can I get like, a boney thumbs up if I'm close?

Justin: Um...

Travis: That is a boney thumbs up, yes.

Justin: Boney thumbs up. Okay, thank you.

Griffin: Okay.

Fitzroy: And um... I was brought here accident—accidentally, and I would love to get back to school. So, am I... can I go ahead and... go? Or... I guess, why are you greeting me here? Am I in trouble, or what's up?

Clint: Well, you can't tell it, because there's no skin or muscles or anything, but uh... Tibia's just smiling, to beat the band, and—

Travis: We can go with a little bit of Coco rules, where there is some movement to the skeleton.

Griffin: Oh, I see, I see.

Travis: To the skull. Yeah.

Griffin: Uh, okay.

Justin: Coco does rule, by the way.

Travis: Yes, Coco does rule.

Griffin: Coco rips ass.

Clint: Okay, Tibia moves in for a big hug.

Fitzroy: Oh! Uh... yeah. Maybe a gentle hug, 'cause I don't... want us to hurt—oh, here it is. Oh, that's—oho. Yeah, I'm inside you, for sure for sure.

Travis: Ohh. I don't care for that phraseology at all!

Fitzroy: I don't care for the physiology of it at all, but here we are. You made this. Well, I'm gonna head that way. Y'all wanna come with, or... are

you cool havin' a little bone party here, or... [pause] Okay. Don't know what I expected there.

Travis: Fitzroy, you and your two skeletal pals enter a long room. At the other end of the room, you see a door. Spread out in front of the door are three panels set into the floor. Now, you, Griffin, with all of your video game experience, would recognize them as the kind of thing that people have to stand on to open the door.

Griffin: Clearly. Clearly. Don't insult me.

Travis: However, between where you are standing and the switch is, is a deep pit that you can't see the bottom of. Hanging from the ceiling are three chains set into tracks that span the length of the pit. However, they are not all the same. One is shiny and new, and has a harness hanging at the end of it. It looks very secure.

The second is a little worn looking, and has stirrups at the bottom that one could easily stand in to get support while holding on. The third chain has only a small loop at the bottom that you could maybe squeeze one foot into. And not only that – the chain itself looks greasy and difficult to hold onto.

Griffin: Uh, how wide is this pit? Like, how long a jump would this be?

Travis: Um, you would be willing to bet, just by eyeballing it, 30 to 40 feet?

Griffin: Okay, so not really jumpable.

Travis: No.

Fitzroy: Hey, so, skeleton friends. Do you know what's up with this uh... with this here, what is almost certainly a trap? Do you know like, which one is safe?

Clint: Uh, Tibia looks at all three and just kind of shakes his head. He doesn't get it either.

Justin: Gherkin points at the left one.

Griffin: The new one?

Justin: Yeah.

Fitzroy: Uh, oh. You like that one, friend? That one looks good to you?

Justin: Thumbs up.

Fitzroy: Are you basing that on anything like, scientific, or is that just sort of a... no pun intended, but like a gut—I guess not pun, but insult-intended gut reaction?

Justin: Double thumbs up.

Fitzroy: Okay. Uhh... let me—let me try something.

Griffin: I'll reach out with Mage Hand and grab onto that chain, and like, pull it towards me.

Travis: And Mage Hand pulls on it, and nothing happens.

Fitzroy: Okay. So um... you there, friend. You are so confident about this. Do you want to take a fateful journey across the pit?

Justin: Nods.

Fitzroy: Okay, I'll strap ya in. This may be a bit precarious. Gosh, it would be easier if you had skin. Wow, skin really holds it all together, huh?

Travis: So now, Gherkin is hanging, uh, in this harness, looking pretty comfortable. Like a sitting zip liner.

Fitzroy: Okay. Now, send it on back if you make it to the other side. And if you don't make it to the other side, it's like... you're already a skeleton, so...

Justin: I nod knowingly.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: And I push—I push with all of my might to try and swing it over.

Travis: Okay! It's a well-oiled track. It goes flying across.

Justin: He throws both arms in the air like, "Wheeeeeee!"

Travis: Uh, Gherkin makes it to the end safely. You hear a 'ka-tunk' as the chain hangs over top of the other side.

Fitzroy: [yells] Send it on back!

Travis: He goes to push it, and it doesn't move.

Fitzroy: Come on! Stronger than that! Send it on back, like we agreed!

Justin: I push again.

Travis: Does not move.

Fitzroy: Send it right on back. Come on now.

Justin: I push again.

Travis: Still not moving.

Fitzroy: Did me like a dirty dog. Okay, so we got two more. Um... let's do... gosh. Other skeleton friend, how's your sort of, uh... not muscle tone, but... endurance? Do you think you could just sort of hang off an old chain, or do you think you'd kind of beef it off that?

Clint: He holds one boney hand up, and does that side to side, "Ehh, maybe, maybe not."

Fitzroy: I can't do that. I can't send a bone... bone man to his death. Uh, so, hop in those stirrups. Let's go. Let's do this thing before I change my mind.

Griffin: And I push him to the other side.

Travis: He is able to hold onto the stirrups. Make a strength check with advantage.

Clint: 16... 19!

Travis: Oh yeah. Your boney hands grasp the chain. Your boney feet stay in those stirrups. You are able to make it across safely, and 'ka-chunk,' it locks into place on the other side.

Griffin: Uh, I walk up to the last chain, and I grab onto it, and I say...

Fitzroy: Ohh golly. Ohhh, gosh. Um... two skeleton friends, it's important that if I die here, if I fall into the pit, tell my friends that I will—that I will miss them. Well, they'll miss me, more accurately. And the—boy, I'm so scared! Ohh, this is so—no, I'm just kidding. I'm a wizard.

Griffin: And I cast Thunder Step, and it, uh—there is a crash of thunder right where I am that can be heard up to 300 feet away. Uh, and I disappear, and reappear right next to the skeletons on the other side.

Travis: Nice! And now you've made it. You're safely on the other side.

Fitzroy: I had y'all goin'. I was like, "Oh no, I could do this wrong!" But I have magic, so nothing ever goes wrong for me.

Travis: [scoffs] Well, okay, you turned into a potted plant in the last episode.

Griffin: One thing went wrong for me once. Uh, let's move on!

Travis: You stand on the three plates, and the door swings open.

[soft music plays]

Travis: We're back with Rainer and the Firbolg and Argo, down at the big tree.

Justin: I need to um... summon Breeze Through the Willow.

Travis: Okay. You hold out the feather that Breeze Through the Willow gave you, and you speak her name. Um, and there is a gust of wind, and but two moments later, you hear the pounding of wings on the air. And she lands before you, along with Storm at Sea and Snow on the Mountain.

Firbolg: Hello. How do you fare?

Breeze: I'm quite well, Firbolg. How are you?

Firbolg: I have been better. We must ask a favor.

Breeze: Anything.

Firbolg: We are going to... crypt. And it is half day for you, a day for us. Will you permit us transportation?

Travis: And she bows her head slightly. Rainer says...

Rainer: What did—what did she say?

Firbolg: She says yes.

Rainer: Ohh, that's awesome! I mean, it's not awesome that—y'know, it's not awesome that Fitzroy was kidnapped and that we have to like, go save

him... but! I get to ride on a pegasus!!

Argo: Yeah, it's not quite as much fun as you might think.

Firbolg: Chafier than you would imagine. Prepare for chafing!

Rainer: Will you guys help me up?

Firbolg: Sure, of course.

Travis: So, she is able to stand on her feet, but she is shaky, so she does need to rely on you guys to help her. And when she stands out of her chair, she pushes a button, and speaks the word...

Rainer: Minimize!

Travis: And the chair shrinks, so that it is about one tenth the size it was before, and she's able to put it into her bag.

Justin: Cool.

Clint: Very cool.

Rainer: Thank you! Yeah! It's a badass chair, right?

Justin: Yes, cool chair.

Travis: And she smiles real big.

Rainer: Um, will you help me up?

Firbolg: Of course.

Justin: I give her a boost up there.

Travis: Firbolg, you are about to mount up when... y'know what? Make a constitution saving throw for me.

Justin: Dang. Okay. Springin' it on me. Uh, no! No! I dropped the die! Aw beans, I dropped it again!

Travis: Oh.

Justin: 16!

Travis: Okay, you did bad, huh? You can just say you did bad, Justin.

Justin: No, 16! I had to roll—it kept rolling off the table.

Travis: You had to roll it three times 'cause it kept rolling off the table?

Justin: Uh-huh.

Travis: Okay...

Griffin: Yeah, he's playing on his—he's playing on his tea table.

Justin: Hey, bud? Hey, bud? If I wanted to cheat, I don't have to roll the die repeatedly.

Travis: I guess that's true.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: There's other, smoother heists that I can pull off. Plus one, by the way. 17.

Griffin: He can just roll the dice and then say 18 no matter what number comes up.

Travis: Hey, eat my whole butt and my butthole. So... the Firbolg, you are able to remain on your feet, but just barely, as a striking pain pierces what feels like your entire brain. And you hear the voice of the Guardian from the Unknown Forest say...

Guardian: Uh, Master Firbolg... can you hear me?

Firbolg: Yes?

Guardian: I am sorry for the intrusion, but I have a message for you from... well, from you. And I believe this is the time you wanted me to deliver it.

Firbolg: What did I say to me?

Guardian: Your clan is in great danger, and they need you urgently. It cannot wait.

Firbolg: [sighs]

Travis: And Rainer says...

Rainer: Uh, are you okay?

Firbolg: I am needed at my ho—mm. What was once my home. I'm... sorry, but this must come first.

Rainer: Oh. Um... well, I mean—that—it should be fine. I'm not—like I said, I'm not expecting any trouble at dad's. Um, I just need to go get Fitzroy. Uh... Argo, do you need to go with him, or...

Argo: I... I don't know, what do you think, Firbolg? You want a little company for your road trip? I mean, I don't know what good I'm gonna do in a demon—

Firbolg: No.

Argo: What?

Firbolg: No.

Argo: Oh.

Firbolg: This is... not the way of the clan. They would not... understand.

Argo: Cool, cool, cool. Okay. Okay. Yeah, 'cause I wouldn't want to just like, y'know, go along and just hover. Waitin' for ya. Right?

Firbolg: Yes.

Argo: Okay! Um... hey, I guess I'm still on board, Rainer! I'll go with ya!

Rainer: Okay, great! Um, well, Firbolg, I... we'll see you soon, I guess?

Firbolg: Mm.

Argo: Firbolg, you're sure... you're okay goin' by yourself, right?

Firbolg: I am.

Travis: Firbolg, you mount up on Snow on the Mountain, while Argo hops on top of Storm at Sea. And Argo and Rainer take off in one direction, and the Firbolg leaves in the other.

[eerie music plays]

Travis: You find yourself in a room with a white marble pedestal in the middle. On the pedestal are many keys. Each key has a different end on it. All the teeth are the same, but on the end of each is a different three-dimensional figure. They are a book, a dove, an anchor, a knight's helmet, an oak leaf, a wheel, and a candle.

The door opposite you is a dark, rich purple with gold inlay running in swirls throughout. And written across the door in gold letters is the word 'choose.' The hardware itself also appears to be made of gold, including the lock. The lock plate seems to have something written on it, but you can't make it out from where you are standing.

Griffin: Yeah, I mean, it seems like examining the lock plate should be, uh, first order of biz.

Travis: Uh, roll a perception check for me? Or no, sorry. Investigation.

Griffin: Oh, well, that is a minus one, so let's see how we do on that. Uh, 12 minus one. 11.

Travis: It says 'and justify' in tiny letters.

Griffin: Okay.

Fitzroy: Um... bone friends? I mean, your gut seemed pretty good there. Can you uh... what's your—what's your heart of hearts... gosh. You really don't have organs. But what are you feeling in your bones?

Justin: A lot of our metaphor—a lot of our metaphors are hung around organs.

Griffin: Yeah, it's weird. Sort of meat-based.

Travis: You gotta go with your gut. Heart on your sleeve.

Clint: Wrap my head around it.

Griffin: Well, you still have a—well, you have a skull. I don't know. Anyway.

Fitzroy: Got any instincts?

Justin: Um... I point at the book.

Fitzroy: The book one, huh? You like the book one?

Justin: Nod.

Clint: And I point at the knight's helmet.

Fitzroy: Uh oh.

Justin: And I point at him and give a thumbs up. [laughs]

Fitzroy: Wait, you like his better?

Justin: Nod.

Clint: And I point back at him and give a thumbs up.

Justin: Double thumbs up. Nod.

Fitzroy: Okay, now I'm confused, 'cause you said you liked the book, and—

Justin: I point at the book and the helmet. And then give kind of a cocky nod.

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: Yeahhh! Both!

Fitzroy: Okay, but—[sighs] It seems like there's only one keyhole. So I don't—you want me to try and jam both those in there at the same time?

Justin: I lock my fingers together like, "Combine. Combine them."

Griffin: I try to press the two—the book and the knight one together into one incredible key.

Travis: Yeah, that does—nothing happens.

Griffin: [bursts into laughter]

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: [laughs]

Fitzroy: It didn't work. Am I just not—am I doing it hard enough?

Justin: I flex—I pretend to flex my boney muscles?

Fitzroy: Okay, so, stronger.

Griffin: Travis, I try and push them together even stronger, now.

Travis: Make a strength—yeah, make a strength check for me.

Griffin: Uhh, that is... uh, 18.

Travis: Yeah, they bend.

Fitzroy: Oh. Ooh! Guys, guys, look! Guys, look! Oh no! Ohh, beans! Welp... I know it's not—

Travis: Luckily, they bend in such a way that you think you could still use, y'know, one of them.

Fitzroy: Nope. They're sullied. Uh, these two are obviously not the right answer.

Justin: Give me that list again?

Griffin: Book, dove, anchor, knight, oak leaf, wheel, candle.

Travis: Yes.

Justin: And what is he trying to figure out here?

Clint: What—yeah, what did the plate say?

Travis: The instructions said 'choose and justify.'

Griffin: Justify.

Justin: Hmm. I point at the candle.

Fitzroy: Ohh! So...

Justin: Slow nod.

Fitzroy: Okay. Is there any way you can sort of pantomime why you are team candle now?

Justin: I pantomime like, burning my hand like, "Ooh, hot."

Travis: [laughs] Oh, I love Gherkin.

Fitzroy: Okay. Um...

Griffin: I pick up—

Clint: And I point at the knight's helmet again, and then point back at Fitzroy.

Fitzroy: No, I—yeah, no, I get it. I am a knight, but I don't see why that is gonna necessarily be the... the key here. Um... candle, I'm interested in.

Griffin: I pick up the candle one. Can I do like, an arcana check to see if I'm getting any sort of magic vibes off any of these candles?

Travis: You sure can!

Griffin: Uh, 12 plus three, 15.

Travis: Yeah, so, these things are magic as hell.

Griffin: Right.

Travis: Um, and it is a sympathetic magic between the lock and the keys. Y'know, with your studies of magic, and the feeling you're getting from the kind of magic that you have found here, it seems like, in order for it to unlock the door, you need to be convinced that it will unlock the door.

Griffin: I... pick up the candle, then. And I take it over to the lock, and I say...

Fitzroy: Right, so, uh, the knight seemed a little obvious. So did the book, 'cause it's like, he's a student, he's a knight. What isn't he? What can't he do? The oak leaf, it's like, nah, that ain't me. Anchor is more of an Argo thing. Dove, I could be like, "Oh, peace is great! And I'm a peaceful—" But that is also still not my thing.

Wheel, I thought about for a second. But it also seems like sort of symbolically not as fitting as candle, which is—y'know, it's got fire in there, and it's like, y'know, fire is chaotic, and it is a necessary thing to shed light for the path ahead of you, but also, it can burn your fingers, and it, uh... [blows raspberry] Yeah. That's it.

Griffin: And I put the key in the lock.

Travis: And you turn, and it opens.

Fitzroy: Oh, cool. Yeah, process of elimination. Gherkin, two for two!

Justin: Slow nod.

Clint: Tibia sulks.

Fitzroy: Ahh, you'll get them next time.

Justin: I wear the helmet out.

Travis: It's a tiny little key.

Griffin: It's a little key.

Justin: I wear it on my thumb.

Travis: [laughs] But rather than face a new room, or some kind of challenge, you see... stairs leading up.

Fitzroy: [gasps dramatically] Oh. It's just stairs. I thought it was a monster.

Travis: It might be a mimic.

Griffin: I climb the stairs. I ain't afraid of no mimic.

Travis: At the top of the stairs, you find a stone room. There are devices and tools everywhere. It is unclear what the purpose of this room is. You see movement, and you realize that there is someone standing with their back to you. They are wearing a rich, black cloak with the hood up.

Fitzroy: Hi. Hello? Mister... Rainer's dad?

Cloaked Figure: Hello, Sir Fitzroy. I've been waiting for you.

Fitzroy: I mean... I could've gotten here a lot sooner without all of the, um... these two, by the way, great dudes. I don't know if you do like, a promotion. If you can upgrade them to sort of arch... arch skeletons or whatever, but uh, huge, hearty recommendation from yours truly. These two are top flight skeletons.

Cloaked Figure: I'll keep that in mind.

Travis: And he turns... and you see a skeletal face, with intricately painted black lines patterned across its surface. And he is holding a tray. And he smiles, and you're instantly confused. And he says...

Cloaked Figure: May I interest you...

Travis: And he raises the tray.

Cloaked Figure: ... in a scone?

[soft music plays]

Travis: Firbolg, you arrive at your clan, and everything is fine. You weren't sure what you were expecting – maybe devastation, fires, demons rampaging. But it looks exactly like you left it. Even better than you saw in your vision of the future. The main hall still stands, the wooden structures, the homes at the center of town, everything still stands. But your landing draws attention.

And he comes towards you. The Firbolg you would've called friend... but now have not spoken to in a long time. And he says...

Firbolg 2: What are you doing here, thief?

Firbolg: ... I was told... there was calamity.

Firbolg 2: We need no help from your kind.

Firbolg: Oh. Is this the will of the clan? Or... is it your will?

Firbolg 2: It is the will of the clan. That's why you were banished.

Firbolg: Mm... I was banished for a fundamental understanding of economic theory. This was... my only crime.

Firbolg 2: This means nothing to me. Still, I suppose this saves us the trouble.

Firbolg: Of what?

Firbolg 2: Your sire is dying.

[pause]

Firbolg: [sighs] This is... most unfortunate.

Firbolg 2: You may stay... for the passing. And then, you go.

Firbolg: Hm.

[long pause]

[ad break]

[eerie music plays]

Travis: The skull faced man registers the look on your face, and says...

Cloaked Figure: Oh, uh, sorry. Uh, one second.

Travis: And he sets down the scones, and he says...

Cloaked Figure: I forgot I was wearing, y'know, my work clothes.

Travis: And he pulls back his hood, and the skeletal face changes into a shaved head man with dark skin, but areas of lighter pigment, kind of in a pattern throughout his face. And he says...

Gordy: It is a pleasure to meet you. My name is Gordy.

Fitzroy: Gordy the lich king... ?

Gordy: I mean, you can just call me Gordy, if you want.

Fitzroy: Uh, okay, Gordy. Hello. You know who I am, I'm guessing? Wow, that sounded like a real douche thing to say, but...

Gordy: I mean, I did just bring you into my home and kind of put you through a bit of like a job interview, so... yes. I do know who you are, Fitzroy.

Fitzroy: Y'know, I suspected that that was like, a job interview. I didn't think—usually traps are more sort of like, there's poisonous needles or spikes or big boulder, or... uh, acid cube... or just a big mouth that gets you.

Gordy: [laughs]

Fitzroy: Yours seemed, uh—they seemed awfully... uh, I don't know. Up to interpretation.

Gordy: Yeah. I mean, you were in no danger. That was clear, right?

Fitzroy: Oh god, yes.

Gordy: Okay. Um, yeah, no. Rainer said that you were looking... [laughs] for an army. And as much as I appreciate her glowing recommendation of you, I wanted to kind of get to know you first. Um, and part of that was, y'know, the rooms, and how you interacted with my two friends here.

Travis: And he gestures towards Gherkin and Tibia.

Gordy: But also, this. I want to just be able to have a little sit down with you. So, scone?

Fitzroy: What kind?

Gordy: Well, uh, I have cranberry here—

Fitzroy: Allergic.

Gordy: —and I have chocolate.

Fitzroy: Allergic.

Gordy: You're allergic to chocolate?

Fitzroy: And cranberries. Oh for two.

Gordy: Really?

Fitzroy: Uh, yeah, listen. It's like, a half elf thing. Listen, I... you seem very nice, and your daughter is uh, rad. And a great friend. But I do not necessarily appreciate being, uhh... [pause] ... appraised? It's kind of a—it's kind of a running theme for me lately, and it seems like we're the only ones kind of trying to save the world right now, and everybody else is just kind of figuring out if we're up to it or not. Uh, so... I'm—we're starting off on the wrong foot, is what I'm saying, Gordy.

Gordy: I see. [sighs] Okay. Y'know what? I have to ask. Do you... [laughs] It kind of seems like you don't... care about the army, or the job interview? I'm confused, I thought this is what you were looking for.

Fitzroy: [sighs] It—yeah. Here's the thing, Gordy. I need to sort of do a job interview with you, if I'm gonna really let you in on the truth of the matter. Okay? Do you think we could do that?

Gordy: I see. Yes.

Fitzroy: Give me your—give me your hands. I'm gonna do the thing where like, I put my hand on your pulse, and I can do like a lie detector thing.

Gordy: Sure.

Fitzroy: That's not really anything.

Gordy: Yes. No, I know.

Fitzroy: I have a plus zero insight.

Gordy: Yeah, I'm like a lich, and like, a necromancer. I know a lot about the body. You know that, right?

Fitzroy: Okay, fine.

Gordy: Yeah. And I don't have a pulse. I don't know if that would've thrown it in... yeah, that probably would've been a problem, yeah.

Fitzroy: It would've been a real issue, yeah. So, uh, are you a... I'm guessing just sort of a professional villain, or... what's your whole thing?

Gordy: Oh, no. I'm not... [laughs] I'm not in the villain hero system. I'm not from here.

Fitzroy: Okay? Uh, what's your... what's your deal, then?

Gordy: That's a... big question. Um... Would you sit, please? And we can talk?

Fitzroy: Uh, sure.

Griffin: I sit.

Gordy: Well, let me... can I tell you a little story?

Fitzroy: Yep.

Gordy: That will tell you about me.

Fitzroy: Okay.

Gordy: Um, so as I said, I'm not from here. Uh, my family... we traveled a lot. And my parents were travelers. For work, mostly. And one day, on one of their travels, they found me. And I had been abandoned by my family, because of my power. It scared them.

Fitzroy: Necromancy? Like, just like... necromancy from—

Gordy: Yeah.

Fitzroy: Okay. Literally from cradle to the grave?

Gordy: Yes. It was inherent.

Fitzroy: Okay.

Gordy: It was a thing that I was born with.

Fitzroy: Gotcha.

Gordy: And it scared them. And so, in turn, it scared me. I was only five, at the time. And so, my parents – my adoptive parents – took me in. And they raised me, and they weren't afraid of me, and they taught me everything they knew about necromancy, which was... a lot. Um, and... I... learned... not only about magic and power, but love. And when I was old enough, I wanted to do the same. I wanted to pay that forward. So I came here, to Nua, to this... um, to here.

And I found Rainer. And she needed the same thing. She needed someone to show her that... [sighs] ... power, in itself, is not good or bad. That it's what you do with it, and you can help or hurt, no matter what power you have. And also, I found a purpose here. I found countless, unquiet dead that everyone feared. And so, no one would help them.

And so, I helped them. And this whole... the undying lord, the lich king thing... a lot of it is smokescreen so that people leave us alone.

Fitzroy: Pretty great name. Pretty great brand. I do—see, I came up with – check this out – Thunderman.

Gordy: That’s pretty good too. That’s good branding. It says right there. Right there, what you do, y’know?

Fitzroy: What I do, how I do it. Yep.

Gordy: I like that. And y’know, so now I mostly just... keep to myself, and take care of my friends.

Fitzroy: Alright, Gordy. You got the job. You passed the test.

Griffin: Uh, I’m gonna roll an insight check. Not because I think he’s lying, but because I don’t think he’s telling me everything, necessarily.

Travis: Go for it.

Griffin: Uh, that’s just a nine plus zero.

Travis: Yeah, he seems pretty on the level. You can’t tell if there’s anything he’s holding back.

Griffin: Uh, okay.

Fitzroy: Yeah, Gordy. Okay, so I forget necessarily where we were in the process when I had Rainer reach out to you, but... there’s a—there is a demon prince named Gray. Know him?

Gordy: I’ve heard about him, yes.

Fitzroy: Okay, cool. He is going to war with... well, it was a pair of the instructors at Wigenstaff’s School for Heroism and Villainy. But now like, I’m sort of mixed up in it, and so is all my friends, and Rainer is starting to get involved. And pretty—here in a few months, we’re supposed to go to

war, and it's going to be cataclysmic and very, very bad. So, instead, we've recently decided to just kind of kill him in his sleep.

Gordy: I see.

Fitzroy: Because we knows—we knows wheres he lives. So like, I don't know that we need an army of skeletons or whatever. Uh, although, these two, I would trust with my very life. These are, again, primo bone boys.

Gordy: Yes, they're two of my best.

Clint: Tibia blushes in a very impossible way, because he has no skin.

Griffin: [snorts] Right.

Justin: Uh, I put two fingers in cheek dimples that aren't there.

Travis: Aww, that's very cute.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Dimples is in the bones, isn't it?

Travis: God, I hope not.

Justin: Dimples isn't in the bones. Dimples ain't the bones.

Griffin: Dimples ain't—dimples ain't made in the bones! Anyway.

Fitzroy: Uh, so y'know, but you are an extremely powerful necromancer. And so, I'm sure there is something you can do to help me out, right?

Gordy: Well, um... I'm sure that there is, but before I kind of play the necromancy thing, can I... [sighs] Can I be a dad for a second?

Fitzroy: Yep.

Gordy: How did you get roped into this?

Fitzroy: Oh boy. Long, long story. Uhh... I—me and my two friends sort of figured out that the demon prince, Gray, was like, in disguise at Wigenstaff's. He's been pretending to be, uh, Hieronymous, and uh... yeah. We sort of unmasked him, and—oh, by the way, we have the same source of chaotic power. So, there's sort of a showdown for our... y'know, divine power source's affection. There's a lot going on there.

Gordy: It just... I mean, excuse me, I know we've only just met.

Fitzroy: Yep.

Gordy: But it seems... really unfair to you.

Fitzroy: Y'know, after a while, you kind of just stop thinkin' about things that way. Uh... it is... it is what it is, and if I didn't feel up to the task, then... y'know, maybe I would be sulking. But I think we can do this. It's just... [laughs] Gordy, we need help, and every time I ask for it, there's a series of hoops that we have to jump through. And...

Gordy: Well...

Fitzroy: And instead of just sort of like, excited support.

Gordy: That is the thing that I have seen in this world that... as an outsider, this world loves its little intricacies and bureaucracies. And it's all bullshit. There's so much expectation. I... [sighs] I love my daughter so much, and I hate that she has to grow up here. That there's so much... restriction and expectation, and... oh boy. Y'know? I feel so bad for you kids, that there's people who won't just let you... go out on your own and have adventures. That you have to be taught, this is what you're supposed to do, and this is what you're supposed to do, and... it's all just made up bullshit.

Fitzroy: Yeah. I'm sort of figurin' that out. The longer I spend in the higher education track, uh, the more I find it sort of, uh... upsetting. But it—Gordy,

that's neither here nor there. Forgive my impatience. Will you please help me kill the demon prince, Gray? I said—and I said please in there.

Gordy: Absolutely.

Fitzroy: Cool.

Gordy: I hear that you said please.

Fitzroy: Thank you.

Gordy: And... I will help you. Because you seem like a good guy. And... I don't know, the world—

Fitzroy: But first, I have to get the dragon's diamond from the top of the— just say what the qualifier.

Gordy: No. There's no hoops. I have actually only one request.

Fitzroy: Yep.

Gordy: I'll even have some of my friends help you, if you need it. I just... just make sure... that you treat them with the same care and respect that you would living fighters. They feel it, too, and a lot of people don't always take that into account.

Fitzroy: I've learned a lot about skeletons, and their—just their hearts. Sorry. We've recently discovered that pretty much all idioms refer to body meat. Um, but they're—they're kind bone boys, and I will protect them with my life.

Gordy: Y'know, I... I'm here to help. I'm at your disposal, and... [sighs] I just... it seems like... a lot of people have asked a lot of you. And I'm... on behalf of them, I mean, I'm sorry.

Fitzroy: Uh, it's all good. I think this was the last one that I'll be patient for. And so, like, you helped me kind of reach that threshold. So I appreciate it.

Gordy: It kind of seems, if I may... uh, I'm, um, as a king, I guess, in my own way... it kind of seems like you're the one in control here? You're leading an army, you're stopping, you're one of the sides in a war. I don't see why you are the one doing the asking.

Fitzroy: Y—right?!

Gordy: Yeah.

Griffin: [laughs]

Fitzroy: Yeah, that's all I got for that. Yeah. No, it's wild.

Gordy: Yeah.

Fitzroy: But anyway, uh, I'm feelin' good, though. After this, Gordy? This heart to heart? Um, feelin' strong. Feelin'—can I be honest, Gordy? Pretty ready. So, I guess have your—does it have to be by the light of the full moon when we make this assassination mission, or...

Gordy: No, you just let me know what you need.

Fitzroy: Alright.

Gordy: Do you want... now, I will offer this. Would you like Tibia and Gherkin to kind of accompany you home?

Fitzroy: Gherkin, is there any way that you could shed the pubic wig?

Gordy: Oh, is he—are you wearing that?

Justin: Shameful nod.

Clint: Oh crap! Is that what a merkin is?! [laughs]

Travis: Yeah, Dad!

Griffin: Daaad!

Travis: Read a book!

Griffin: Daaad!

Justin: Daaad!

Clint: [laughing]

Travis: Oh, our poor, innocent daddy.

Griffin: Alright.

Fitzroy: Um, okay. He can keep it. Yeah, I would love them to come with me. Just as a sort of liaison.

Gordy: Okay, great! Um, well, dinner's almost ready. You can have a bite, and then I'll send you home!

Fitzroy: Sounds good! What's cookin'? Not more scones, I hope, that I—I need a more balanced sort of meal than that.

Gordy: No, it's fish?

Fitzroy: Allergic.

Travis: You are not. We just established in the last episode that you eat bowl full of fish every day for your muscles.

Griffin: Just cod. I'm allergic to any non-cod—

Gordy: I'm making cod!

Fitzroy: Oh, perfect.

Clint: He actually eats mussels for his muscles. So, he does eat fish.

Griffin: Boo.

Fitzroy: Okay. Yes, I'm fine. Yes, eat. Let's eat.

[soft music plays]

Travis: Firbolg, you make the way towards your father's home. You know where it is well. Even in the dark of the evening, it takes you no time to find it. And do you hesitate at the door, or do you go right inside?

Justin: No, I go right inside.

Travis: You go right inside, and you find him where you expected him to be. Laying in his bed.

Firbolg: Mm. You... do not look... ill to me.

Firbolg's Father: Ah... is that you?

Firbolg: Yes. I heard... you were... ill. But... you look as strong as I have ever seen.

Firbolg's Father: [laughs] Firbolg, don't lie.

Firbolg: This is... just my opinion.

Firbolg's Father: Well, I have missed you.

Firbolg: Mm. I have missed you as well. I have missed... [sighs]
Everything. I am a... stranger here.

Firbolg's Father: Not in my home. But enough. Enough. Where have you been? Where... have you made a new clan?

Firbolg: I have found a school. I am... learning a new trade.

Firbolg's Father: Oh. Well... I was not expecting this.

Firbolg: Mm. I am, um... well, I have a promising career in small business finance. But... I would not expect you to approve of this.

Firbolg's Father: Ah... it is not what I wanted. But... I am dying, so... what do I care, eh? [laughs]

Firbolg: [laughs] This is as close to a blessing as I could hope for.

Firbolg's Father: I care more about... have you found new clan?

Firbolg: I have. It is... small. There are only three of us. But... they are my clan.

Firbolg's Father: There are other Firbolg at school?

Firbolg: I am the only one. They are not... ah, Firbolg. They are... Genasi, and half elf, and... Gary.

Firbolg's Father: Ohh. Do they follow the code?

Firbolg: [sighs] ... From time to time.

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Firbolg: They have their moments. But... no. No. No, they don't follow the code.

Firbolg's Father: Well, then... they are lucky to have you, eh?

Firbolg: I... have... I have tried to be a light. To set... a good example. But I... have been taught, too.

Firbolg's Father: What have you been taught?

Firbolg: I have learned that... the code... that we follow... is... [pause] ... what keeps us together, eh? Keeps us... strong. Keeps us... eh... unchanging.

Firbolg's Father: Ah.

Firbolg: But... there are others who do not follow this code. Who... are brave. And strong. And... care. And it seems... we could learn from them... as well.

Firbolg's Father: I see. Well... it also seems like they could learn from you, eh? [laughs]

Firbolg: I have taught them many places to find berries.

Firbolg's Father: Oh! Is good.

Firbolg: There are fine berries there. You mustn't worry about this. I have found many fine berries. I have learned more magics.

Firbolg's Father: Ohh.

Firbolg: And I... have made friends. This is like clan... but... they live elsewhere.

Firbolg's Father: This makes me very happy, to know that you are not alone.

Firbolg: Oh... no. I am alone. I have been alone since... I left here. We... are... alone together.

Firbolg's Father: Ah. Is better, then. I want you to know... of all the Firbolg, eh? That I have known... to be out in the world... you are the one who I know will do good. Who will... ah... not let world change him into... bad Firbolg. You know what is right. You know code. And sometimes, those are the same thing, eh?

But... take it from me – I have been... alone without you for some time, too. And... they are not always the same. You... [sighs] You are good Firbolg.

Firbolg: Sleep well, eh? In the morning, we will speak more on this.

Travis: And your father closes his eyes for the last time.

Firbolg: [sings] Her burden of things, walking out,
Her burden of things, walking out,
On Earth my Nina,
On Earth my Nina.
God forbid a vaguer feat,
National hell mock me,
Say the sparrow wants a morbid arrow,
Here's a quarter; that's the one I want,
Maybe I'll buy the whirlwind.
That always keeps me yearning,
Her sitter's down there mourning,
Her burden of things, walking out,
On Earth my Nina,
On Earth my Nina.

[somber music plays and ends]

Travis: Fitzroy, you and Gordy are just about to sit down to dinner, when Argo and Rainer come rushing into the room. And Gordy says...

Gordy: Oh! Uh, Rainer. And... guest. I wasn't expecting you! Oh, join us! There's plenty!

Travis: And Rainer says...

Rainer: Um, o-okay. Why did you kidnap Fitzroy? Fitzroy, are you okay?

Fitzroy: Oh yeah, it was a misunderstanding, in that he thought that I would have the patience for his adjudication. And I did not.

Rainer: Oh, was it a job interview thing?

Fitzroy: Yeah, but we're fine now. It's okay.

Rainer: Ugh.

Fitzroy: And we're—we're good, right? And then we're gonna do a war, I guess.

Gordy: Oh yeah, sounds great.

Fitzroy: Yeah. It's all good.

Gordy: Do you—

Argo: Are those scones?

Gordy: They are! Please!

Argo: [laughs] Thanks. Starvin'. Ridin' a pegasi, it... whoo! Takes it right outta ya.

Rainer: Um, I—Fitzroy, the Firbolg, um... something is happening with his clan?

Fitzroy: Something—what—what is happening with his clan?

Rainer: Um, he said they were in danger, and he had to go.

Fitzroy: Why didn't you go with him?

Argo: I tried to go with him! He wouldn't let me! He said it was something he had to do on his own. Y'know, I... I asked twice! Twice, I asked him. "You sure you don't want me to go?"

Fitzroy: [sighs] Did he say it in the way where it's like, part of the code? 'Cause like, I don't want to trample all over that, but if he's in danger, I don't—

Argo: I think it was code-ish. Yeah. I think it was very code-ish. I mean, he made it sound like I wouldn't even be able to go into the... gathering, or whatever they live in.

Gordy: So, do you guys need to go?

Fitzroy: Uh... I don't know. Um, hold on.

Griffin: Um, I open up the notebook of far writing, or whatever it's called, and... write. "Is everything okay?" Just like, as big as I can, in a way that like, he'll feel the vibration in his pocket, or whatever.

Gordy: Oh, um... is that like, a magical communication thing?

Fitzroy: Yes.

Gordy: Oh, that, um... that's not gonna work. Um... no magic except mine can get in or out of here.

Fitzroy: Okay, well, where can I... I'm gonna go on a hike then to get some cell signal. Like, what should I do?

Gordy: Um... I mean, I can send you back to the school, if you want.

Fitzroy: If that's what you—I feel bad that these two—can you teleport the pegasi, too? 'Cause they just had a long ride.

Gordy: Oh yeah yeah yeah, yeah yeah.

Fitzroy: Okay okay.

Argo: Could you send us to just outside of Firbolg city?

Gordy: I—not without a summoning circle there. There's still the summoning circle from when I brought you here, so I can just connect directly to there.

Fitzroy: Alright. So...

Argo: Should've looked in the book. Sorry.

Fitzroy: Yeah. So we'll, uh—we'll reach out, I guess, and let you know, bone boys. Oh, god, Argo, I can't wait for you to meet these two.

Argo: Look at this adorable gold toothed skeleton! Ohoho! [laughing] Oh, can I have—may I—oh, can he be my friend?

Fitzroy: Okay, let's go. Let's go.

Gordy: I'll send them along, okay?

Fitzroy: Okay, thank you.

Argo: [laughing]

Gordy: Uh, stand on the circle there.

Fitzroy: Okay.

Gordy: Oh, um... hold on. Huh. That's... weird. Um... oh, no. Uh... huh. Okay, no, yeah, here we go. Devocho!

Travis: And the green fire wraps around you. The same green fire that was there last time. And unlike last time, the transportation is not instantaneous. It seems like the fire is kind of flickering in spots, and at one point, you, Fitzroy, a kind of big-ish area of the ball of fire surrounding you opens up, and you see that, momentarily, your transport has been redirected to the Godscar Chasm. Specifically, the bottom of it.

And the silhouette that you have seen in the portal, you are now about ten feet away from this person. And they are looking directly at you. And they are nine feet tall, with opalescent skin, all white eyes, and they look at you... and smile, and wink. And then, that portal closes, the spell completes, and you are back at the school.

[tense music plays]

Fitzroy: What a day.

Griffin: I write in the book again. I like—there's part of me that sees that and is like, "Oh wow." And then there's part of me that's like, "Okay, fine. Let me get there."

Travis: And you hear behind you...

Voice: [clears throat]

Fitzroy: Yes?

Travis: And you turn to see Gray sitting on the steps of the school. And he says...

Gray: I told you, if you left without my permission, I would kill ten students a day. And yet, you didn't listen! You must think me a demon of empty threats. Well, I am a demon of my word.

Travis: And he gestures to the big tree, where you see ten unconscious students tied around it. And he yells...

Gray: *Sic 'em!*

Travis: And you see a dozen hell hounds tear towards them.

[intense music plays and ends]

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