

The Adventure Zone: Graduation – Ep. 27, Long Way Down

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

[theme music plays]

Gary: So, 50 years ago, this rip in the land named The Godscar Chasm appeared out of nowhere. Ask anybody, though, and they'll tell you it's always been there. 'Round about the same time, a demon prince masquerading as Hieronymous Wigenstaff took over at the school.

So, fast forward 49 and a half or so years, and a whole mess of other stuff has gone down. A powerful being named Chaos gave Fitzroy some wild magical powers, Sabour the librarian turtle was mind-controlled and forced to attack his allies, Argo has had his mind poisoned by a hell dimension, the real Hieronymous was turned into a dog and back again... when are they gonna catch a break, am I right?

[theme music plays]

Travis: Fitzroy, Argo, and Firbolg, the three of you stand on the precipice of the Godscar Chasm. The depths are obscured by a swirling mist. The three of you, make a perception check.

Griffin: Just off to the races. Ooh, I got a B! What does the B mean? Oh, B is a natural 20! I guess it stands for 'beyond,' which is where this website has taken me.

Justin: Four.

Travis: Okay.

Clint: I am number one, apparently.

Travis: Nice. Okay. Uh, Fitzroy. You peer deeper, and your vision begins to pierce the haze. But Argo, your vision goes fuzzy, and you feel yourself start to sway. Make a dexterity saving throw.

[eerie music plays]

Clint: Uh, let's see... 19 plus...

Griffin: Infinity. You're a rogue.

Clint: Four. 23.

Travis: You're able to grab Fitz's shoulder for balance, but something is wrong. You look down and realize that your other hand is grasping the hilt of Florence, the blade thrust fully through Fitzroy's ribs. He turns, his face confused. There's a trickle of blood from the corner of his mouth. His body crumples, and he falls back into the chasm, lost in the swirling darkness.

Firbolg begins to speak, but your blade is faster. In a blur, you draw it across his throat, and he is silenced. You consider what you have done, and you smile.

[music intensifies]

Travis: And then... you wake up.

[softer music plays]

Travis: Argo, your eyes slam open. In the space between breaths, you can't remember what was dream and what is real, and you're wracked with guilt for a moment before the fog clears from your mind.

Argo: [clears throat] Oh! Phew. Okay...

Clint: Do I remember? Does he remember the dream?

Travis: You—yeah. Vaguely. I mean, it's already slipping away, but you can piece together what kind of happened in it. Y'know, it's the kind of thing where it seems so real at the time, but now, it's kind of fading at the edges, and you're finding it harder and harder to remember why you feel the way that you do.

Clint: Okay. So he looks down on the floor, which is where the Firbolg sleeps. Right?

Travis: And he is gone.

Clint: Okay. And then, he... does Fitzroy have his own bedroom?

Travis: He does.

Clint: Yeah.

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: Um... he runs over, looks through the door, into Fitzroy's room. Actually, no. He puts on his Eavesdropping Ring and puts his hand on the door to Fitzroy's room, just to hear if there's any sounds of like, bleeding.

Travis: Okay. Would that be like, blurgle gurgle gurgle?

Clint: Listen, if I'm—okay, snoring. He's listening for snoring.

Travis: Make a perception check for me.

Griffin: I just—by the way, if I can drop a complaint in the fuckin' feedback box, Travis, I am going to... take a rain check on that nat fucking 20 that I rolled, the dream nat 20 I rolled, and I'm going to use it later for something other than a fuckin' dream.

Travis: Okay, you can save it. You can save that.

Clint: Okay, 12 plus three. 15.

Travis: Uh, you don't hear anything! The room is pretty silent. You can't even pick up on breathing.

Clint: Okay. I open the door just a crack.

Fitzroy: What are you doing?! I'm nake—

Griffin: No, I'm just kidding.

Travis: No, the room is empty. And the light shining in the windows is a strong clue that, perhaps, you have slept longer than normal. With that perception check, you also see on the counter is a note.

Clint: I read the note.

Travis: Uh, it's written in Fitzroy's hand, which is now pretty familiar to you, and reads, "Argo, I tried to wake you, but I guess you needed sleep. Firbolg and I are out. Be back soon. Prep whatever you need for a climbing adventure." Roll a wisdom saving throw for me.

Clint: That is a 14... minus one. 13.

Travis: You hear a voice in your head, and the voice says... "They think you slow them down. They would rather hang out without you. They don't appreciate you."

Griffin: That's just Dad's inner monologue.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: Alright, let me try mine. It's one of those weird ghosts that only speaks the truth!

Travis: [laughing] Aww. We'll be nice to Dad, please.

Justin: That was about his character, actually. I love my dad. I don't know why Griffin said all those things.

Griffin: No, I do too. Mine was a joke. I would never say anything like that. I didn't even say it. In fact, my son ran in here and said that bullshit.

Travis: Aww, Henry. You're always bein' mean to peeps.

Griffin: Yeah, I thought that was fucked up.

Justin: Wow.

Clint: That kid.

Justin: Being a bad son is genetic, it seems.

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Firbolg, you make your way down to the library. You haven't seen Sabour the turtle since he was mind-controlled by Gray, so you thought maybe it was time to check in on him. And you find him in his office.

Firbolg: Hello Sabour.

Sabour: [startled] Oh! Uh... sorry.

Firbolg: Forgive me.

Sabour: Uh, I was—it's not your fault. I was just somewhere else for a moment. Uh... Master Firbolg. Always nice to see you.

Firbolg: I wanted to see if you had discovered any way to help in our efforts against... Gray.

Sabour: Uh... [pause] I... have been trying to... research, but... if I am being honest, I have been somewhat... distracted. Uh... I... uh, am having a hard time sleeping, Master Firbolg.

Firbolg: I am sorry to hear this.

Sabour: I... have had nightmares about Gray. And... being controlled, and... hell, frankly. And... I'm worried... that... he may be stronger... than... we... understand.

Justin: I am creating a new podcast law, and this is actually—I'm inventing this as we speak, if everyone signs on. To keep people from reaching for that point—uh, 1.5 button, Travis and I, when we are—*only* when these two characters are speaking to each other...

Griffin: [laughing]

Clint: [laughing]

Justin: We will create a bubble effect, magical in nature, multiple use, no recharge time, uh, where they speak more quickly. How does that sound to everyone?

Travis: That's fine. We totally understand. It's totally great.

Griffin: But in order for that to work, you need one of us in the background like, [speaking quickly] "Hey, what are you guys doin'? Are you guys talkin'? Are you guys talkin'? You guys havin' fun over there? You talkin' really fast?"

Justin: Just underlay that over the entire thing.

Firbolg: Do you know if these dreams are magical in nature, or do they seem to be... uhh... dreams?

Sabour: They... [sighs] ... have had a very detrimental effect on my psyche. And I find myself becoming more and more irritable, unable to perform my

duties... whether they are dreams, or spells, or... scarring, I do not know. But the result is the same.

Firbolg: Are they... [sighs] ... prophecy? Maybe this is a strange question. But... one must be sure.

Sabour: I pray that they are not.

Firbolg: You wish to tell me of the dreams?

Sabour: I... have seen... this school... decay before my eyes, and become... a blasted hellscape, full of torment and pain.

Firbolg: Hm. What... [sighs] What can be done?

Sabour: [sighs] I... in the past, I would have said that information is the greatest weapon, and the more we know, the more powerful we are. But now, I worry that I know too much. And I worry... that... [sighs] ... nothing can be done to save us. But whether that is how I truly feel, or whether that is this poison that has seeped into my mind, I do not know.

Firbolg: If not information, what about a true weapon?

Sabour: Hm.

Firbolg: Do you know how we could secure one of the sacred weapons?

Sabour: I have been giving this much thought.

Firbolg: Hell yes.

Clint: [laughs]

Sabour: The worry...

Firbolg: Oh no.

Sabour: The problem is, we do not know what agents Gray might have at the Heroic Oversight Guild. He has 50 years of influence as the head administrator here at the school. I think the only way to retrieve these weapons is by subterfuge.

Firbolg: Mmm... this is not my strong suit. Luckily, I have friends who... I do not know how to say in a kind way.

Sabour: They are thieves.

Firbolg: This is your word that I have not corrected.

[upbeat music plays]

Travis: Fitzroy, you have been called to check in with Festo.

Griffin: Yeah! I was just about to ask!

Travis: It has been some time since you had a sit-down.

Griffin: It has been! I walk in just fuckin' shooting sparks out of my fingers like...

Fitzroy: Look! What I! Learned to do! I said, levitate! Woowoowo! Have you seen me levitate? Woowoowo! I can turn invisible! Bah! Haste! Pshew! Chromatic Orb! Blow!

Travis: You find Festo getting out of a tiny bath, and you assume they are nude, but it is hard to tell, because their body is glowing brightly so that one could not see any details.

Griffin: Also, I'm not even looking, 'cause I'm just...

Fitzroy: Thunder Step! Pow! Invisibility again! Bam! Did you see?! Did you see?!

Festo: That is some good magic!

Fitzroy: Yeah!

Festo: You would do great at a rave!

Fitzroy: I... I have—I'll be honest, Festo. Ever since that dance, I have been curious about your whole lifestyle. I think it is something I could actually wicked get into.

Festo: Would you like to party with the faeries?!

Fitzroy: Am I going to—I need like, a sort of survival guarantee that I'll make it through the evening.

Festo: I'll be sure to bring along some magic orange slices!

Fitzroy: Okay. Um, so, yeah. Festooo! Got a big... let's call it field trip comin' up.

Festo: Oh?

Fitzroy: Yeah. And I'm sort of... a bit nervous about it, because... it's gonna sort of bring me face to face with some... some powerful stuff? And uhh...

Festo: But your magic is coming along nicely!

Travis: I just found Festo's voice again.

Griffin: You just found it back. I'm so glad. I know it wasn't right before. I didn't want to say anything.

Travis: No. I wasn't hitting it.

Festo: But your magic is so powerful now!

Fitzroy: Yeah. Uh...

Festo: You made sparks, and you turned invisible!

Fitzroy: And I did Haste and Thunder Step and all kinds of cool stuff. No, it's for—I'm—for sure, I'm like, super good at it now. But we're talking about sort of... y'know how when we first spoke, you gave me my first lesson, and you gave me my magic crab? Oh! Magic crab! Pfft, yes!

Festo: Yes!

Fitzroy: Yes, I can still do that one.

Festo: Ooh! Hello, Snippers!

Snippers: [crab sounds]

Travis: That voice will never leave me.

Griffin: Yeah.

Fitzroy: Snippers, be—don't be like that.

Festo: It's okay, I'm flattered!

Fitzroy: So anyway... I—you told me that I needed to love... my magic. Which, at the time, I thought you meant, very literally, that I need to love this little phantasmal crab. And don't get me wrong – I do, to the moon and back. This little guy's my familiar. He's not the source of my magical powers... as far as I know. That would be a pretty wild late season twist.

Travis: Damn it Griffin, you figured it out!

Fitzroy: What I am—

Travis: All magic flows from Snippers! Not just yours – all magic!

Griffin: He is a wellspring, err flowing.

Justin: [laughs]

Fitzroy: What I am going to encounter on this field trip is going to be the source of my magic. And as far as I can tell, it is a sort of malevolent... enti—otherworldly, extradimensional entity...? And I don't know that they have my best interest at heart.

Festo: Oh! I see! Hmm... let me examine Snippers.

Fitzroy: I don't see how that is applicable here.

Travis: They come over, and they take a long, hard look at Snippers. Uh, and they say...

Festo: Have you recently come in contact with powerful necromantic energy?

Fitzroy: Oh yes. Oh, goodness, yes. I mean, I have, technically, every time I've received a telegram from Rainer. But uh, yes. I met Rainer's dad, who has just like, super—

Festo: Oh! The lich king!

Fitzroy: Yeah! He's super nice, actually. Makes a killer scone.

Festo: Oh, I know! We've partied!

Fitzroy: Who haven't you partied with, Fes—Festo, have you partied with Chaos? 'Cause that could probably like, just sort of cut this whole thing down pretty... to a pretty digestible little nug.

Festo: Oh. I have not partied with Chaos, but I have heard snippets of rumors.

Fitzroy: Did you want—can you tell—do you want to tell me those rumors, Festo?

Festo: As you might expect, they are a powerful and unpredictable being!

Fitzroy: Thanks, Festo. They're literally called Chaos.

Festo: But they have not been seen for... centuries!

Fitzroy: I mean, I'm pretty sure me and my squad have all had sort of dream hang seshes with them, so...

Festo: Chaos has spoken with you?!

Fitzroy: Oh, yeah. Like, a lot. We're practically pen pals at this point.

Festo: Fitzroy?

Fitzroy: Yes, Festo?

Festo: When you met Rainer's dad...

Fitzroy: Mm-hmm?

Festo: Was it at the Crypt?

Fitzroy: It was.

Festo: Were you able to use your magic?

Fitzroy: I was—well, kind of. Yeah.

Festo: Interesting. The Crypt is notoriously impervious to magic.

Fitzroy: I mean, I did a little Thunder Steppin' here and there. Um...

Festo: But what I mean is... if your source of magic is external, you should not have been able to access it.

Fitzroy: Ahh! Okay, so you're saying that Chaos is... is not the wellspring, err flowing? What are you telling me, Festo?

Festo: I do not know! This... it's all new information to Festo.

Fitzroy: Okay. Well, I'm still gonna do this field trip, and I'm gonna... I guess confront them. But it's nice to know that, y'know, if they... if they cut me off, I'll still sort of have a little bit of juice left in the tank for the big ol' war. You don't happen to know anything about the sort of topographical layout of the Godscar Chasm, do you?

Festo: The Godscar Chasm is unexplored!

Fitzroy: Weeelp.

Festo: But do be careful! Let Festo make a suggestion.

Fitzroy: Yep.

Festo: Don't piss them off.

Fitzroy: Yeah, Festo. That's—yeah. Good to—

Festo: I mean, you say that, but you have a habit of pissing people off!

Fitzroy: It's not—habit isn't—I also have a habit of like, delighting people, so...

Festo: Eh.

Fitzroy: Okay. Uh, well, you wanna cast like, a magic spell on me that makes me—if I fall, I don't die?

Festo: Um... hm.

Fitzroy: Just be good. We're doing—it's gonna be like a climbing adventure, Festo. That's what I've been telling the boys, so...

Festo: Do you want... like... like, a *feather fall*?

Fitzroy: Yeah. That would be great. I mean, I don't know that one.

Festo: Oh. Um, here.

Travis: Uh, and they flit over to a set of drawers, and they open it up, and they pull out a golden eagle's feather. And they say...

Festo: That will be... ten gold!

Fitzroy: Are you kidding me?!

Festo: I am! [laughs]

Fitzroy: Festooo...

Festo: Ohh, Festo make joke.

Clint: [laughs]

Festo: Festo is silly joker!

Fitzroy: I don't know why you just spoke—you just spoke like Borat there for a second there, Festo.

Festo: Oh, Borat is great wizard!

Fitzroy: Okay, so, you're leaving.

Festo: Terrifying! Do not cross his wife!

Fitzroy: Oh, that's canon.

Justin: Wizard... wizard's sleeve.

Clint: [laughs]

Festo: What does that mean?

Justin: I'm not there!

Griffin: I hurl myself out the window of the room.

Justin: Festo can't hear me. That's non-canonical.

Griffin: I really do hurl myself out the window, and tap myself with a golden feather on the way down.

Festo: That's not how it works!

Fitzroy: Fuuuck!

Justin: Dead.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: End of show.

Travis: Uh, it does work, but unfortunately, it only had one charge.

Griffin: Oh.

Fitzroy: Can you toss another—

Justin: [laughing]

Fitzroy: Festo!

Festo: Yes?

Fitzroy: Festo!

Festo: Yes?

Fitzroy: Can you toss another one down?

Festo: No, you have to come up and get it!

Justin: [laughing]

Clint: [laughing]

Fitzroy: Alright. I don't—I'm gonna take the stairs.

Festo: Okay.

Fitzroy: Can you stay there for like, ten minutes?

Festo: You better hurry! I have an appointment!

Fitzroy: Oh my god. Okay.

Travis: You make it back up to Festo's office.

Griffin: God, let me fuckin' roll. Let me play Dungeons & Dragons.

Travis: Okay, yeah. Roll for stairs?

Griffin: I mean, it's an athletics check! I got a 14 plus seven, 21!

Travis: You—

Justin: People have fallen on stairs before. And damaged their computers.

Travis: I guess that's true. You sprint up the—[laughs] You sprint up the stairs, two at a time. You said you'd be there in ten minutes, but you make it in eight.

Fitzroy: I'm so very tired! Feather, please.

Festo: Oh, I don't know if I have any more. Let me look.

Fitzroy: Festo...

Festo: Yes! Here is one! Now...

Fitzroy: Thank you.

Festo: This is strong enough—

Clint: Do it again! Jump out the window again! Jump out the window again!!

Festo: Argo, how'd you get here?

Clint: That wasn't Argo's voice, that was your dad!

Festo: Clint?! The powerful wizard?!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Festo's dad, Clint.

Fitzroy: Okay, anyway. Bye.

Justin: [laughing]

Festo: There's enough charge in there for all three of you!

Justin: Oh my god. If Clint McElroy's in this universe, we have now finally confirmed... the multiverse! The McElroy multiverse!

Clint: [laughing]

Griffin: Uh... end of—

Justin: Which we need a name for, if Dad has created it, by the way. I'm gonna call it—can I say something?

Travis: What about the Clintoris?

Justin: No—fuck off.

Griffin: Oh my god, Travis!!

Justin: Honestly, die forever. Worst.

Clint: [laughing]

Griffin: Honestly, Travis!!

Justin: Not—no longer my brother.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Are you kiddi—are you fucking kidding me?!

Travis: That's the one that did it? Okay.

Clint: [laughing]

Justin: How about Emilverse?

Travis: Mmm.

Clint: The Emilverse! I love it!

Justin: The Emilsphere.

Travis: I like that. The Emilsphere works for me.

Griffin: I'm sorry, guys. I'm lookin' at the poll, and Clintoris is taking off like a rocket.

Travis: Yeahhh!!

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: Clintoris?! No! It can't be true!

Clint: [laughing]

Justin: So the name of the multiverse is the Clintoris? Is this correct?

Travis: Yep!

Griffin: No, it's not. No, there is no multiverse.

Justin: There is no multiverse.

Griffin: This scene is over! I have left!

Clint: I want there to be a multiverse!

Justin: Clint McElroy remains!

[music plays]

[ad break plays]

[music plays]

Travis: The time has come. The three of you have rejoined, and you are making your way towards the Godscar Chasm. Now, it's a bit of a walk, so you have some time to chat.

Justin: Uh, okay. Um, I had planned to take a bathroom break during Dad's vignette, but he didn't get one, so now I'm just kind of stuck here. What's going on with you guys?

Travis: You can go use the bathroom if you want to, Justin. We can take a little break.

Justin: You told me to chat.

Travis: No, I meant like, in character.

Justin: Oh, okay!

Firbolg: I had planned to use the bathroom.

Fitzroy: Yes, go ahead.

Justin: No, I was just—it was just a joke. And it wasn't a joke, per se, but when I said it, it kind of receded into my body. The need.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Well, and because this is, as everyone knows, important to me, the three characters, Argo, Fitzroy, and Firbolg, do all go potty before they leave for the trip.

Griffin: Any character I ever play on this show is going to use the bathroom before they leave the house.

Justin: It's called attention to detail, folks.

Griffin: It's an unbreakable habit. A ritual for myself. Um...

Fitzroy: Alright, everybody. Let's check. Everyone got their good climbing shorts?

Argo: Uh... yeah. I mean, I brought... I mean, yeah. I brought some. What exactly are we doing? And why didn't you guys wake me up when you left this morning?!

Fitzroy: Um... because... you seemed to be doing a bit of what I will call "dream stabbing." And I didn't want to sort of put my physical body in the way of that. So, I thought it was sort of a sleeping dogs lie situation.

Argo: Dream... dream stabbing?

Fitzroy: Yeah, y'know, you have a dream, you do some stabbin', but somebody gets in the way in the real world.

Argo: Ooh.

Fitzroy: Yeah.

Argo: Oh. Okay. Well, alright. I'll buy that. I buy that. Yeah. Yeah.

Fitzroy: Firbolg, shorts check?

Firbolg: I have fashioned my first ever pair of shorts.

Fitzroy: Oh my god. Welcome to the frickin' party, pal.

Firbolg: I—can I say something? I get it.

Argo: Well, you look spectacular. You look great in them.

Fitzroy: Let's go down the checklist. GORP. Firbolg, that sounds like your—

Argo: Check.

Fitzroy: Oh. You brought the GORP?

Argo: Well, I brought the jerky. That's close, right?

Fitzroy: God, it's not all—it's just—you can't supplant all foods with...
Firbolg, did you get the GORP?

Travis: Argo, make a wisdom saving throw.

Griffin: To see if he can tell the difference between jerky and GORP?

Clint: 17 minus one. That's a 16.

Travis: Uh, Fitzroy makes the comment about, uh, that your suggestion, your offering of jerky, is not good enough. And it riles you for a second, but you decide to let this one go.

Argo: I—it—[sighs]

Fitzroy: You absolute dipshit!

Griffin: Is that what it sounded like in his brain?

Travis: Yeah, that's what he heard.

Fitzroy: And then pit... pitons? Pitons? God, I never know how this is pronounced. Pitons?

Travis: And you hear a voice on the wind say, "Pitons!"

Fitzroy: Pitons?

Travis: That's just another suggestion, don't at me!

Griffin: [laughing]

Justin: [laughing]

Travis: Now, uh, I will remind you as you're making all this small talk and conversation that though it has been a couple of days since your return from the crypt, and the battle to save the students, uh, you have, as yet, been unable to pry from the Firbolg information about why he needed to head home for his clan.

Griffin: I do not think I would push on that.

Travis: Okay!

Griffin: Like, I think I know—I don't know. Argo may be in a different thing, but I feel like I know the Firbolg well enough now to know that that's, like... privacy is an actual, genuine sort of cultural concern for him. So I have not pushed.

Argo: So, Firbolg, what's the deal? What was goin' on in your hometown?

Firbolg: Uh, thank you for asking. I'm glad at least one of you cares so much. I would rather not speak on this.

Argo: Oh. Okay.

Fitzroy: See, I knew—

Argo: Wait, I have a question. I want to bring something up. Are we just not goin' to class anymore? I mean, has that just gone by the wayside?

Firbolg: It's over—

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: At this point, you've been doing a lot of independent study classes. But most of the—

Justin: Right. Immersion. [laughs] Immersion learning.

Clint: Using Gary.

Travis: Most of the faculty at this point are aware that you're building towards a big demon war, so no one's really taken role for you three anymore. You get a lot of leeway as far as truancy goes.

Griffin: It's sort of a capstone project.

Travis: Very much so, yes.

Griffin: Is winning the demon war.

Travis: Yeah. Thesis.

Clint: So we're being treated like collegiate athletes.

Travis: Sure! Yeah yeah yeah.

Justin: [laughs] Exactly.

Travis: You got a job at the local cart dealership, but you rarely actually go into work.

Clint: [laughing]

Griffin: Do we know where we're—let's, I guess... maybe this is a history roll or a nature roll or something, but like... we know that the Godscar Chasm is a... something of a work of fiction. At least, what we know of the Godscar Chasm is like a sort of mass hypnosis thing, right?

Travis: Right, yes.

Griffin: That it only showed up 50 years ago, while everybody else thinks it's been there forever. But like, what do we know about it, aside from the fact that it has the spookiest name for a geographical feature I've ever heard?

Travis: Um, I mean, you know location. You know that it is a source of chaotic magic. You know that, uh, what you saw there during your transportation back to the school, that there is a portal at the bottom of it. And that you saw Chaos there, or who you believed to be Chaos.

Griffin: So, when Festo told me – and I feel like this is common knowledge, that nobody has explored the Godscar Chasm – is it... it's not a case of people don't know where it is? Is it more a case of, if you go there, you die? Or just people don't go there? Or...

Travis: Um, I think it's along the lines of the mass hypnotism that makes it seem much more ancient than it is, of people kind of—their thoughts slide off of it. Where they think about it like, you three are the first to show this much interest in it. And because of your experience with chaos magic and Gray and all of that, you are able to kind of fixate on it in a way that everybody else doesn't seem to be able to.

I mean, even since you have been telling people that it is only about 50 years old, people have been very interested in that, but still, like, no expeditions have been mounted.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Gotcha.

Clint: And I also know that when I write *Graduation: The Musical*, I am definitely gonna have a song that rhymes Godscar Chasm with God's sarcasm. It's just a—it's a natural, and I'm going to use it. TM TM TM TM.

Justin: Whoa. Oh, god, hold on, guys. I gotta get out and stretch my legs after that *very* long trip Dad had to take for that sub-gag.

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: I'm gonna... oh boy! Gotta get out and get some fresh air!

Clint: That's why I did it. I saved you the effort!

Justin: Not since Dad took us two hours out of our way while driving to the beach to visit Maurice's Barbeque have we had such a long detour for so little of a turn.

Clint: The piggy palace, ooh.

Griffin: Dad, go ahead and make a wisdom saving throw for Justin dumping on—

Clint: Wait a minute, why are you—

Griffin: No, I'm just—

Clint: [rolls]

Griffin: No, I was saying you, Dad, Justin's making fun of you.

Justin: I would never. That was in character.

Clint: I'm glad that you noticed that.

Travis: About 20 yards from the chasm, you see someone sitting on a stump, facing the gorge. It appears to be Hieronymous; specifically, the weary looking version of Hero who looked happier as a dog.

Griffin: Umm... I—ooh. I'm gonna go ahead and use my True Sight Glasses charge for the day, just to make sure that really, really is the real Hero.

Travis: Uh, yeah. No illusion here, no disguise. It's the real Hero, as far as you can tell.

Griffin: A waste of the glasses, but boy, if that would've paid off... feel like it would've—

Justin: What a thing.

Griffin: What a thing. What a view.

Travis: I don't think it's a waste to confirm something, right?

Fitzroy: [whistles]

Hieronymous: Oh! Um... hello. Sorry. Um... I didn't see you there.

Fitzroy: Didn't want to scare you, so I guess I just made a bird noise.

Hieronymous: Um, what are... what are you three doing here?

Fitzroy: That is... a good question. Following up on a lead.

Hieronymous: Oh. Um... [sighs]

Fitzroy: What are you... so what are you doing here?

Hieronymous: Oh, well, um... it's embarrassing, honestly. But I have been... trying to... [sighs] ... work up the strength to explore... the Godscar Chasm. Um... and I can't seem... to manage it.

Firbolg: Are your legs too weak?

Hieronymous: Ah... not really that kind of strength, Master Firbolg.

Argo: Your arms?

Justin: [laughs]

Argo: Well, there's a lot of, y'know, arm... y'know, you have that upper body strength for climbing.

Fitzroy: Sure, it's a full body work out.

Hieronymous: It's not a physical thing, guys. I... I'm just... I'm just tired. I... I have been meaning to talk to the three of you. I'm actually glad you're here. I wanted to apologize.

Firbolg: For what?

Hieronymous: I mean, listen, I'm not gonna mince words. You guys are cleaning up my mess. This... this fight with Gray, this battle, all of this... I started this. Y'know, centuries ago. And... you guys got roped into it. And... here I am, unable to do much to help. And I feel terrible.

Firbolg: Well... you were a dog for a long time. You think you would be used to people cleaning up your messes.

Griffin: [laughs]

Hieronymous: That's... an excellent point, Master Firbolg.

Firbolg: I have attempted to brighten your spirits with humor!

Travis: And he is smiling. That did get a smile out of him.

Firbolg: I will now do a slow dance.

Hieronymous: That's not necessary.

Firbolg: [hums a little tune]

Justin: It's celebratory.

Hieronymous: Okay. I see.

Fitzroy: He does this whenever he makes a slam dunk of a joke. So we just gotta let it play out.

Hieronymous: Is he done?

Fitzroy: Oh, he's done.

Firbolg: Silence, please. I'm almost done. ... Please continue.

Hieronymous: I... I'm sorry that I can't do more. And I'm sorry that you have to deal with this. And I'm sorry... I'm sorry for everything.

Fitzroy: Um... I mean, okay. You are too weak to explore the Godscar Chasm. That is understandable. Most folks are. Not us... Completely just ripped boys. But I understand that for some people, it can be quite a physical challenge.

You... however, do possess a lot of might in the... realm of bureaucracy. So maybe you let us do the, y'know, Chasm exploring. The spelunk—it's not spelunking. Bouldering? I don't know what it's called when you go into a chasm. But—

Hieronymous: Repelling. It's repelling.

Fitzroy: I guess. Um, and maybe you could get started on... the Heroic Oversight Guild, and securing... sort of demon slaying weaponry from them. Y'know, let's diversify our sort of hero portfolio a bit.

Hieronymous: I see. Well, I... um... I guess I probably shouldn't just put in a request, huh?

Fitzroy: No, Hieronymous. No, you probably shouldn't just put in a request. You should assume everyone there is a secret demon, and then, behave accordingly.

Hieronymous: So what's your plan? I'll follow your lead on it.

Justin: [sighs] Okay, table talk. Can we table talk?

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: Table talk. Okay. I was thinking about this, uh, after I talked to Sabour. I'm trying to formulate... let's just talk real quick strategy. We can't leave. Correct?

Griffin: What, the chasm?

Justin: No, the... I mean, we're still technically on school grounds, right?

Travis: Um, so, just to jump back in with that – Gray just needs to know that you're leaving and coming back. Just think of him as like, a mother hen, as far as that goes. It's not that you can't leave, he just doesn't want you sneaking off.

Justin: Well, I feel like... okay, well, see if you guys agree with this. I feel like if we tell Gray we're going to the Heroic Oversight Guild, uh, that won't... fly well. That won't do well.

Griffin: So we come back and we beat the shit out of some more dogs. Like, whatever. I barely broke a sweat last time.

Justin: Uh, yeah, but what if some students get eaten in the process? We can't take that risk.

Griffin: Then maybe they should've been strong enough. [laughs]

Justin: Okay. Are you doing a character right now? I'm talking to you as a local human being, Justin McElroy, father of two.

Griffin: Okay. Uh... yeah, no, I agree. Like, I don't... the Heroic Oversight Guild is a bureaucratic machine. We don't know how to operate those. We are a—we are very much a blunt instrument, who sometimes can get snippy with lawyers, and get like, paperwork done that way. But I do believe that having somebody else spearhead the HOG initiative, as I have now named it, would be a great idea.

Justin: I think it's gotta be—I think it's gotta be, um... I think it's gotta be Hieronymous and Althea.

Griffin: Yes.

Justin: Working in tandem. Right? I feel like the two of them might have a shot. I feel like Hieronymous by himself will be a disaster.

Griffin: Yes.

Justin: He won't know who anybody is. It won't—it won't go well. I feel like Hieronymous and Al—Hieronymous might have some juice, and Althea knows the bureaucracy best.

Griffin: Right.

Justin: I feel like that's the play.

Griffin: If there's wet work that needs done...

Justin: Right.

Griffin: At the premises... then we can swing that.

Justin: I mean, now, I really—I don't think it's a good idea. I feel like it's gonna break bad. Like... we can't tell Gray what we're doing, and I don't want to risk more lives.

Griffin: Sure.

Justin: Dad, what do you think?

Clint: Yeah, I think he's got—if nothing else, there has to be a way that they can communicate with the outside world. And surely, he's still got the reputation. He's still got, like you said, he's still got the juice to sway some folks.

Justin: Yeah, I feel like we tell Hieronymous to entreat Althea to go with him, and maybe between the two of them, they might stand a chance.

Travis: Fwoom! And we're back in the scene!

Griffin: How does he respond to... I mean, we already asked him, right? How does he respond to our request?

Hieronymous: [sighs] Y'know boys, I tell ya... come to me 200 years ago and tell me that this is the kind of fight that I'm going to be getting into, and I would've rolled my eyes so hard at you, they would've fallen out of my head. But y'know what? Right now, it sounds exactly like what I am up to. I won't fail you. I promise.

Fitzroy: Well, technically, you could. Because you're a—you're technically still a teacher at our school.

Hieronymous: Oh, I see what you're saying. No, I won't fail you there. I mean, listen, if you guys win a demon war, that's at least an A minus.

Fitzroy: What would it take to get the A plus?

Hieronymous: Uh, I mean, you could bring me a fruit basket.

Fitzroy: Wow. Corruption on every level.

Justin: [laughs] I rip off my mask.

Clint: Jump from an—

Justin: To reveal that I have been a, uh... John Quiñones this entire time.

Travis: Oh man! You got me again! He uh, heads off, full of purpose, excited to have some way to contribute.

Fitzroy: Wait wait wait! Do you have pit—pitons? Pitons?

Hieronymous: Sorry, what did you say?

Fitzroy: Climbing—climbing—

Hieronymous: Oh, pitons!

Fitzroy: Pitons!

Griffin: [laughing]

Argo: A Joey Piton!

Fitzroy: [pronounced strangely] Pitons!

Travis: [pronounced very strangely] Pitons!

Hieronymous: I believe they're pronounced pyitooooons!

Fitzroy: Just forget it.

Hieronymous: And no, I don't. I do have this climbing potion. Does that help?

Fitzroy: Nah. It's not sharp enough to break into the rock, so...

Argo: Wait a minute. What's a climbing potion?

Hieronymous: Oh, it's um... it makes you climb as fast as you can walk.

Argo: Oh. So like, down?

Hieronymous: Uh, I mean, sure. We're up. I mean, both ways, really. Side to side, really.

Argo: How many servings per package is this climbing potion?

Hieronymous: Um... I mean, there's... it usually lasts, uh, one vial for one hour. So three of you, probably 20 minutes each?

Fitzroy: I mean, I don't need no potion. I got my... my knuckles are—

Hieronymous: You want to just hold onto it? I mean, I'm clearly not gonna use it.

Argo: No, I'll take it. I love—I love potions. I am into potions.

Hieronymous: Okay.

Travis: Uh, yeah. He hands you a stoppered glass vial that is far lighter than it looks, almost weightless. It contains a clear liquid.

Fitzroy: It's just water. It's like a Michael's secret stuff thing.

Argo: He wouldn't do that.

Fitzroy: He would. You're gonna get to the bottom, and then he's gonna yell down from the top, "The climbing was inside you all along!"

Argo: You can be such a schmoe sometimes.

Travis: If I may, with Feather Fall, you guys could just like, jump in.

Griffin: Yeah, that's a good point.

Travis: Why climb? You can fall.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Speaking of...

Argo: It may come in handy later...

Griffin: I guess a climbing potion would help us get *out* of chasm.

Travis: Hey, there you go! [laughs]

Griffin: We're not just going to get to the bottom of the chasm and be like, "Well fellas, time to start a new life here! In chasm!"

Travis: We live in chasm now!

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Fitzroy, Argo, and Firbolg, the three of you stand on the precipice of the Godscar Chasm. The depths are obscured by a swirling mist. Make a perception check.

Griffin: Nat 20. Plus four. 24.

Travis: You peer deeper, tempting to pierce the haze. Argo, make a wisdom saving throw.

Clint: [whispers] Shit. One.

Griffin: Are you fucking kidding me!?

Clint: Minus one. So, it's...

Justin: Let me help. [laughs]

Clint: Go for it.

Justin: It's zero.

Clint: It's zero.

Travis: Fitzroy, this time, your perception pays off, and you see something out of the corner of your eye. Make a dexterity saving throw for me.

Griffin: Is this for—is this real life? Is this real life?! I got a three plus two, a five.

Clint: Is this just fantasy?

Travis: Um, you see Argo draw his blade. And you see a look in his eye.

[intense music plays]

Travis: Firbolg, make a perception check.

Justin: 16 plus... eight.

Travis: You see the look in his eye as well.

Justin: I'm going to Thorn Whip around his wrist.

Travis: I'm going to say that he is not, uh, attempting to resist, and you are not trying to hurt.

Justin: No.

Travis: So I'm going to say that that is successful. You are able to grab his hand in time and stop him. But... everyone is pretty unsettled by what just happened.

Fitzroy: I—we've been dancing around this for a little bit, Argo, but you have not been yourself for a little bit, and it's—and if something is bothering you, uh, on a level that you are, uh, drawing a blade, uh, on me, in a threatening manner, we should probably hash this out like bros.

Argo: Uh, I... I wasn't drawin' a blade on you. I was... I—I'm not—I'm not—I think... well, aren't we gettin' ready to go into a dangerous situation? I think I was just like, freein' up... freein' up my blade from my scabbard so that whatever we face down there, we'll be ready to go! I think... hell, I don't know. I—I don't think I was... oh, jeeze. It's been a really shitty day today, and I'm... I don't know what's going on.

Fitzroy: Um... [clicks tongue] So, I—Argo, will you subject yourself to me doing a sort of brain dive into your... into your thoughts? Into your head meat? And I did it once to Firbolg. Firbolg, did it do any sort of permanent damage in there that you're aware of?

Firbolg: I... think not.

Fitzroy: `Kay. So... I'm gonna have to insist, Argo. It's—I promise, I'll be gentle.

Argo: Wait, wait, wait. What do you mean you have to insist? No. I mean, you want to—if you want to do it, you gotta get my permission to do it! That's a very personal intrusion! Have you never watched Fantasy Star Trek with the Vulcan mind meld?

Fitzroy: Okay. Uh, may I—

Argo: So yeah, go ahead. Go ahead. I want to know what's going on, too.

Travis: Argo, make a wisdom saving throw.

Clint: 12 minus one. That's an 11.

Travis: Um... you agree, but then, as he nears you, you start to put up a fight.

Argo: Okay, wait wait wait. How exactly is this gonna work? Because, y'know, am I gonna have some pain? Is it gonna make me sick? What's the deal?

Fitzroy: I'm—I've only done it to people—did it hurt, Firbolg? When I did it to you? Explain it.

Firbolg: I... it... was not... fatal.

Fitzroy: So there you go. I mean, we're about to jump into something called the Godscar Chasm. So like, it seems like you should be up for... a bit of light telepathy.

Argo: No. I... I don't want to do it.

Justin: I'm gonna—okay.

Firbolg: I... Argonaut Keene, I am sorry.

Justin: And I cast Hold Person.

Travis: Does he have to make a check?

Justin: Yeah, um...

Clint: Oh, please be dexterity.

Griffin: I doubt that.

Justin: No, wisdom.

Griffin: Good.

Clint: Oh... that's probably a fail. That's a six minus one.

Justin: That's a big fail-o-rooski.

Clint: Five.

Argo: [grunts]

Griffin: What does Hold Person do?

Clint: Yeah, how does that manifest itself?

Justin: Yeah, you're paralyzed.

Argo: [muffled whimper]

Fitzroy: What did you just do?

Firbolg: I have... held him.

Fitzroy: Okay, this is—

Firbolg: Until we understand this.

Argo: [muffled] This is a violation of my privacy!

Firbolg: He was to stab you.

Fitzroy: Yeah, I thought so.

Firbolg: I cannot take that risk.

Fitzroy: Yeah, I thought so too.

Argo: [muffled] I wasn't gonna stab him!

Fitzroy: Okay. Listen, this is escalating wildly. Let me just pop right in there and do a little poke around, and I promise, it'll be quick, okay?

Argo: Mmf!

Fitzroy: Just blink twice if that's okay.

Argo: [muffled] Can't blink twice.

Fitzroy: Okay.

Griffin: I touch his temples. Uh, okay, so I can... I can read their like, immediate thoughts for free. But if I want to go any deeper than that, they have to make a wisdom saving throw.

Travis: Okay. So his immediate thoughts, you—they're somewhat weak, but it is definitely Argo's thoughts saying, "Help me."

Griffin: Okay. Uh... yeah. Let me get deep in there, then.

Travis: Make a wisdom saving throw.

Clint: [laughs] Another crit one, minus one! It's another zero!

Travis: Well, that's a good thing this time for you.

Griffin: [laughs] Yeah.

[eerie music plays]

Travis: You encounter a barrier, but you push, and the barrier is of little resistance to you. And if you imagine, like, standing in a field that is beautiful, right? That is the conscious part of Argo's mind, you take one step forward, and pass through a barrier, and now you are in a blasted hellscape that is very familiar to you.

And as you step forward, Gray turns to greet you.

Gray: Ah! Hello, Fitzroy.

Griffin: I just hit him with the Thunder Wave. I mean, he knows what's up at this point. And I've hit him before, so it shouldn't come as that big a surprise. But I don't even know if he's real or if this is a figment. But either way, um...

Travis: He puts up a hand, anticipating to block it. What does he roll?

Griffin: A constitution saving throw.

Travis: Uh, yeah. He puts up a hand, anticipating to block it, and it knocks him flying about a good ten feet.

[music intensifies]

Griffin: I don't know that I have to roll... I mean, yeah, ten feet is how much it knocks people back. I don't know if I have to roll damage on a mag—imagination—

Travis: No, I think in this, uh, it is... the fact that you have power here is, uh—he was not expecting that.

Griffin: Okay. I yell...

Fitzroy: Stop fucking cheating!

Travis: He stands, once again, a similar look of shock to the one that you saw on his face when you speared him with magic back on the night when

he sic'd the hellhounds on the students. And he rips another portal, but this time, the whole thing kind of shatters as he does, and you are bumped out of the mind, as it all—the image falls apart around you. And you're back in your own thoughts.

Now, Argo, for your part, um... this has helped you kind of regain some of your awareness. You still feel the same kind of, uh, like, dark flame. Y'know, that kernel of hell there, back deep in your mind. But um, it is much receded. You feel a lot more self-control and willpower than you have for days.

Clint: I would like to point out that I think that... this is also—the realization has to be new to Argo.

Travis: Oh yes, very much so.

Clint: I don't think he—I mean, he just felt weird, and knew he was, y'know, in a bad sort. But I think this is—right? This is confirmation that there's been—somebody's been tampering with his brain, right?

Travis: Absolutely.

Clint: Okay.

Argo: [muffled] Will you unparalyze me now?

Fitzroy: Oh, that's not me, that's him.

Argo: [muffled] Oh. Firbolg?

Firbolg: I'm sure there must be... a way of...

Travis: Just break your concentration.

Fitzroy: Yeah, just think about baseball.

Firbolg: What is... baseba—

Justin: And it's broken.

Griffin: [laughs]

Argo: Ah!

Fitzroy: Try to conceptualize the sport of baseball.

Travis: How would you invent it?

Griffin: Yeah.

Fitzroy: Uh, okay. Argo, bad news. You had a guy in there. You did have Gray.

Argo: [sighs]

Fitzroy: Pullin' the old strings. Zapped him.

Argo: So it wasn't just gettin' a bad lime or two, it was... y'know, I have felt so weird for the last couple of days. I still feel a little weird.

Fitzroy: Okay.

Argo: But... thank you both. Thank you for helping me out. I think... there's still—I still have kind of a funny feelin', but... I don't feel like bein' such a jackass, like I think I have been for a little bit. I'll leave that to you, Fitz.

Fitzroy: Uhh... I mean, we've lived with you for some time now, Argo. I think me and the Firbolg both knew that something was awry. Um... I'm going to ask you, and I won't force it – but do you want us to hold onto your sort of stabbing instruments?

Argo: I have—I have so many.

Fitzroy: That's—yes.

Argo: No. Um... no. I think I'm... I think I'm good. I think now that I know that... did you completely chase him off? I mean, is he gone for good?

Fitzroy: I don't know, man. I was—I just did a psychic, like, Highlander battle. And I'm sorry for cussing in your brain. But I did—I don't know how any of this works! But Argo, we're about to go into the gaping maw of... well, not hell, but something quite bad. And me and the Firbolg can't be checking our backs the whole time while we're...

Argo: I know, I know.

Fitzroy: ... cliff diving. So, are you going to be able to lock it down?

Argo: Yeah, I think so. Yeah. Yeah. I—yes. Now that I know it's there, I can fight it. Does that make any sense?

Fitzroy: Kind of.

Argo: Well, I mean—

Firbolg: We will continue to watch.

Argo: Okay. And maybe now that I know it's there, maybe I'll have a better chance of perceiving it, and... maybe I won't have such shitty perception and wisdom rolls.

Travis: Well, we'll see.

Clint: [snorts]

Griffin: That's not how it works.

Argo: So the plan is, we're just gonna wave a magic feather, and then jump over the edge of a chasm?

Fitzroy: Uh, yeah. I already used it once, and it went—it was fine.

Argo: Okay.

Travis: You did put a lot of faith in that first one, huh? I'm just kind of thinkin' about it, huh? Okay.

Griffin: Festo wouldn't do anything to hurt me.

Clint: Is this gonna work for all three of us?

Griffin: Let's find ouuut!

[echoing music plays]

Travis: You float gently through the Godscar Chasm. The occasional gust of wind blows past, and sends you gently spinning. Your descent is quiet, almost tranquil... at least, at first. Once you pass through the swirling mist, things change – and I mean that literally. The color scheme of the chasm changes, very gradually, from tans and reds to ashes and slates. The air was cool in the shadow of the canyon walls, but now it feels bitter. You have seen this and felt this before. The whole area has the same noxious atmosphere as Gray's hell world.

Argo, you begin to sweat, and you feel your skin crawl. Below, you can now see a portal torn in the air. It is incredibly large. Larger than you possibly could've guessed. More than that, it seems to be continuously expanding. Standing before it is a large, humanoid figure with opalescent skin, their back to you.

You land without a sound. At first, they don't seem to be aware of you, but then, they turn, a smile on their face, and their all-white eyes twinkle.

Figure: Fitzroy... Firbolg... Argo. This is such a pleasure. Oh, how I've looked forward to meeting you.

Fitzroy: Is that—uh, sorry. It's Sir Fitzroy.

Figure: Of course. Sir Fitzroy. Sorry.

Argo: And Argonaut.

Fitzroy: He likes it when you say the full name.

Figure: Argonaut. Sorry, it's—I'm a little nervous, meeting you for the first time.

Firbolg: Who are you?

Figure: Oh! Yes, of course. Sorry. Let me introduce myself. I've been called many names. Some of them, unkind. I think the one that I most identify with is... Order.

[music plays and fades]

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Justin: [sings] Where were you when my dad killed me and my brother?
Do you remember the moment that he kicked us into the chasm, as he
spasmed with joy? He watched the death of his boys. Where were you when
my dad killed his sons?