

The Adventure Zone: Graduation – Ep. 31, High on the HOG

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

[theme music plays]

Gary: After finding out that the avatars of Order and Chaos have been working together to bathe all of Nua in blood and terror, the Thundermen spring into action. They've teamed up with their then-enemy, now-frenemy, the demon prince, Gray, to take down the Heroic Oversight Guild from the inside. Their hope is that this will create enough lower case C chaos to avoid the need for war.

Lucky for them, they've recruited a couple of competent adults in the form of Althea Song and the demon prince's mole, Taren. Now, it's time to get down to some serious scheming!

[theme music plays]

Justin: Friends, we need to begin today's episode with a somber message from Clint McElroy, just warning you about some of the content you may hear today. Clint, please go ahead.

Clint: Thank you.

Justin: And again, congratulations on your bravery.

Clint: Uh... if, at some point, I'm all of a sudden kind of quiet... uh, it's because I have, uh, debilitating... kidney stones.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: You laugh like that's not true!

Clint: I only passed along the two of my sons, and not the third one. Not the first one. And so, if I have to vanish, it means I'm going to painfully urinate.

Griffin: Um, and just to sort of... I know you're probably wondering. This is a D&D actual play podcast. Yeah, he did jam a couple D20s up there.

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: God, it feels like it! [laughs]

Travis: Y'know, here's—if I'm being honest, I'd rather have a D20 than a D4.

Griffin: Oh my god.

Justin: What's the worst—what's the worst—[laughs] What's the worst die to get in your urethra?

Travis: D4! The little pyramid one?

Griffin: D4. A pyramid would be absolutely—

Clint: Oh, the pyramid one.

Travis: That thing's like a caltrop up in there!

Clint: Man. Thanks for putting that in my mind.

Griffin: If, during the final battle, though, Dad was like, "Okay, this is it." And he stands up and pees on his desk, and the dice comes out, and it's a natural 20...

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: I think we would win an Oscar for that.

Clint: That's good podcasting.

Travis: Um, let's first and foremost, before we begin anything else, you boys have all leveled up. A lot has happened in the last couple episodes. And you've had some battle experience, some life experience, and some love experience. Uhh, so let's—

Griffin: Did we have love ex—what was our love experience?

Travis: You learned to love yourself.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: It was in the spinoff.

Griffin: Sure.

Travis: Yeah, I've been doing a web comic, like, on the side, to kind of fill in the world.

Justin: Yeah, you gotta follow the ARG to get all of it.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Let's start with, uh, Griffin, there. With Griffin and Sir Fitzroy Maplecourt, Knight in absentia to the realm of Goodcastle.

Griffin: Yeah, I just did—I got more barbarian juice. Because I—it seemed right. My magic isn't behaving correctly. And so, I just got some more barbarian juice. It's really nothing very exciting. I can attack twice now.

Travis: You say that, man. I did some pretty creative stuff with attacking multiple times, Griffin.

Griffin: Yep. That's true. That's true.

Justin: That was when you were in the streets, Travis. You don't remember what it's like in the streets anymore.

Travis: That's true. Now I'm in the sheets. So...

Justin: No, you're a fuckin' desk jockey.

Travis: That's what I'm saying. Character sheets. Character sheets.

Justin: Oh, got it. Okay.

Griffin: That's fair.

Travis: What about you, Firbolg? Master Firbolg?

Justin: Uh, just some good new spells. I have, um... not like, a big deal. I have *Nature Ward*, which kind of protects me from, I think, poison and disease. So don't—in case you had a big poison-themed adventure planned, don't even trip with that. And I got—I picked up some new spells that I think will make, um, the adventure you've planned fun, and uh, uh... organic.

Travis: Okay. Uh, that's a terrifying thing to hear. Okay, what about you, Argonaut Keene?

Clint: Um, Argo got to add two ability points. He could either add them to one ability, or one to two different abilities. So he added, uh, to his constitution, 'cause he's tired of getting his ass kicked in regular places.

Travis: Good.

Clint: And just to see how high he can get, he added another point to dexterity.

Travis: You monster.

Griffin: Wait, did it go above 20?

Clint: Nope. And the other thing I got is, uh... this—you talk about exciting. *Reliable Talent!* Yeah!

Griffin: Hm.

Clint: I have a reliable talent! Whenever you make an ability check, it lets—

Travis: I feel like you're being sarcastic right here, but I guarantee you...

Clint: No, I'm not!

Travis: The majority of our listeners would kill for any talent that was reliable.

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: Yeah, but why not call it awesome, cool talent?

Travis: Because that—I have also cool talents, and sometimes, they don't work!

Griffin: They're just not reliable. Yeah.

Travis: I want a reli—that every time I open my mouth, I'm hittin' that note, y'know?

Clint: Well, whenever I make an ability check, it lets me add my proficiency bonus. I can treat a D20 roll of nine or lower as a ten, so I never drop below ten.

Travis: There you go.

Griffin: Wow! That's—

Travis: That's reliable.

Griffin: That's fucking wild. That is—

Clint: So why not the Fucking Wild Talent?

Justin: [bursts into laughter]

Travis: Because that sounds—that sounds unreliable!

Justin: The fuckin' wild boy. Wild boy of rolling.

Travis: If somebody said, "Hey, do you want to have—who do you want to have drive you to the airport? Fuckin' Wild John?" You'd be like, "No! Give me Reliable Bill!"

Griffin: Also, if you were ever like, "Uh, I rolled an eight on my perception check." And then you were like, "But it gets bumped up to a ten!" None of us would be like, "Fuckin' wild, man!"

Clint: [laughs] That's reliable as hell!

Travis: That's reliable as hell!

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: Yeah. If you think about any time you've ever rolled a ten... no one has ever been like, "Fuckin' wild, dude! How'd you do it? That's the median, baby!"

Travis: The chat went crazy!

Clint: [laughs]

[music plays]

Travis: After a fairly exhausting 24-hour period, you returned back to Althea's humble, but nice, apartment. It's a one bedroom, but with a spacious living room, which is where the three of you are sleeping this evening. She made you, y'know, a filling, but not fancy, dinner. Mostly out of boxes and containers. Nothing, uh, homemade.

Clint: Yuck.

Griffin: Wait, like, microwaved?

Travis: Well...

Griffin: Like fancy—fantasy Hungry Man?

Clint: Or cardboard. Like cardboard food?

Travis: No, she didn't make it *out* of boxes. The ingredients were *in* boxes. I'm saying, this wasn't fresh stuff. And she didn't order it. Y'know what I mean? She made you basically like, fantasy macaroni and cheese. Y'know?

Justin: Got it.

Travis: Uh, and she, uh, had maybe one drink too many. It's been a pretty stressful day for her, too, and she is headed to bed pretty early. Leaving the three of you to camp out here in her living room, with a brief moment before, y'know, having to get a good night's rest and get down to business tomorrow.

Griffin: I'm just—I'm just, as like, stealthfully as possible, just trying to find more pillows. 'Cause I don't know how many she gave the three of us, sharing her living room floor, but I can guarantee you it was not enough. I'm

projec—me, Griffin, am projecting onto Fitzroy, but there's no way I have enough pillows here.

Travis: There's definitely not enough pillows. There's never enough pillows.

Griffin: Okay. Well, I'll—I'm gonna grab what I can. Maybe some coats from the coat closet that I can bundle up inside a garbage bag. You have to get resourceful when you have special needs for your sleep habits.

Justin: So you have imbued this character from your life... this characteristic from your life into your character. Does that help them be relatable to you?

Griffin: Yeah, it's the only thing.

Justin: To make them a pillow pervert, just like their dad?

Griffin: I'm not—I'm not strong or do magic. But I do need pillows, so...

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Um...

Justin: That is the one thing I will not miss about you not visiting this year. I won't have to open up every closet and be like, "There's gotta be more pillows for Griffin in here somewhere! Jesus! He's got four between the legs, two under the head... "

Travis: And he can feel that one dried pea underneath the mattress!

Griffin: Yeah. Um... okay. Just so I'm clear, because we did fast forward a bit... is this like, night before the big heist territory? Are we...

Travis: So this is—tomorrow, you guys are doing some big planning. So there's some information that you guys know that I've sent you. And one of the big pieces of information is, Althea has told you that, in two days, there's some like, big announcement event thing at HOG HQ that everyone is

encouraged to attend. So you're thinking, during that is going to be your best chance. And so, tomorrow, you're doing all the recon you can.

Griffin: Okay.

Argo: Uh, Gary? Hello?

Travis: Uh, there's no Ga—unless you want to use Pocket Gary, there's no Gary in Althea's apartment.

Clint: Aw. Ooh.

Griffin: Are we out of cell signal range for Pocket Gary?

Travis: Uh, no. It's magic, Griffin.

Griffin: Okay, fine.

Travis: I don't feel the need to quantify... like, I guess there's like, Gary cell towers around that it can ping off of.

Griffin: Right, sure. Gary 5G, giving people Gary COVID.

Travis: Yeah, right right right.

Clint: Who has the Pocket Gary?

Griffin: It's a communal—I don't—let's say I have it, and you can borrow it.

Clint: Okay.

Argo: Pocket Gary?

Pocket Gary: Yeah, how can I help you? What do you need?

Argo: Um, did I have any mail? Have I had any messages?

Pocket Gary: Uh, yeah! There's a, uh—there's a lot here for you. Uh, let me pass it through the system.

Fitzroy: Whoaaa! Paper is coming out of my pants!

Clint: [bursts into laughter]

Travis: It is a tiny little—basically, think of it like he's a printer, right? He's just printed you off a—

Griffin: Right. Like a Gameboy Camera printer.

Travis: Exactly like a Gameboy Camera printer, Griffin. Yes, thank you.

Clint: So, what's it say?

Travis: The letter, uh, is addressed to you, Argonaut Keene, in Barb's sharp but very legible hand. And it says...

"Dear Argonaut,

Well, I was pretty surprised to get your letter, and frankly, flattered. So I guess my answer, uh, first, regarding asking me out on a date, um... not my usual type. Little bit younger than I usually go, but sure. You seem like you'd be fun. Why the hell not? Let's do it. You can take me to dinner, your treat.

As far as the roast thing goes, I've never catered before. Uh, I don't really know... it's not really my thing. I'm more of a, y'know, a bartender than I am a cook, but we could probably figure something out, if I'm your best bet. Uh, so I'd need a little direction on that.

As far as the making jokes at Althea's expense thing... I mean, even if it's good natured, I gotta strongly, strongly advise against it. She's been through quite a bit. I don't know that I'm comfortable telling you her story, but you should ask her. It's pretty painful, and her past after school... it got

real rough for her. But if you want to throw a party in her honor otherwise, I am totally there.

Signed,
Bloodhawk Barb”

Argo: So...

Fitzroy: [laughs] Seems fruitful.

Clint: So... [laughs] Argo’s continual use of mail to try to get information... still fails miserably.

Fitzroy: Listen, one of these days, you're gonna hit the goldmine. Hey, just real quick – you didn’t ask my mom out on a date, didja?

Argo: Uh... well, to be honest with ya, I don’t even remember askin’ Barb out on a date. So I can't unequivocally say no...

Travis: Hey, you *definitely* did.

Griffin: You—yeah, I remember there being some vibes.

Travis: You wicked did.

Argo: Oh. Well, son... wow, it sounds weird callin’ ya son. Uh, don’t worry, I won't follow through with it.

Fitzroy: Wait—okay?

Travis: Wait, are you still talking about a date with Fitzroy’s mom?

Fitzroy: Yeah, this is gettin’—this is gettin’ uncomfortable.

Argo: No, don’t—listen.

Firbolg: I'm fine.

Argo: Dinner, dancing, and that'll be it.

Travis: Bloodhawk Barb isn't Fitzroy's mom.

Clint: Well, I know.

Griffin: He's gonna go on a date with both women at the same time, in a sort of Flintstones-esque...

Clint: Fantasy Three's Company?

Griffin: Yeah.

Fitzroy: Um, okay. That was great. So, tomorrow, we're gonna like, y'know, get maps and do all the fun stuff. Steal keys, whatever. Um... but I think there's a question that we might wanna ask ourselves before we even begin our little, um... flirtation with felonies.

And that is... if we do manage to get ourselves all the way into the archives... how does one responsibly... sort of... obliterate, like, half a building? What's the ethical way of doing—of doing that? And the mechanical way of doing that. I can make a fire, but something tells me they'll have, y'know, sprinklers.

Firbolg: Mm. You mean, uh, how to do a bomb?

Fitzroy: That's... that's—the B-word, actually, will get us demonetized. So let's, uh, avoid—avoid that one, but yes. Something along the lines of a... something along those lines. But a bomb that also doesn't like, get too rowdy. Do you know what I mean? Like, I don't know anything about this.

Firbolg: A nice, safe bomb.

Fitzroy: Yeah, very—[laughs] A controlled bomb. Like they do on Fantasy Myth Busters.

Firbolg: Mm. No.

Fitzroy: Okay.

Firbolg: This is far from my area of expertise. But... if it helps... I do not know how to do a dangerous bomb, either.

Fitzroy: Okay.

Clint: [laughing]

Firbolg: This does not help. I realize now. It is a great shame.

Argo: How much paper we talkin'? Are we talking paper, even? Do we even know what the...

Fitzroy: Oh, that's a good point. What if it's like, rocks?

Firbolg: Ohh. Or sometimes, it's a hologram.

Fitzroy: Yeah. I mean, I feel pretty confidently I could zap me up a hologram. That one's—that's—that is honestly best case scenario, for me. Um...

Justin: Table talking. Is our plan—is our hope to... destroy enough records, that the sustainability of the organization is...

Griffin: Collapses in on itself.

Justin: In a bureaucratic standpoint, not from a structural standpoint, right? [laughing]

Travis: So, I—well, let me tell you about how the paperwork system works, right? 'Cause this is another piece of information—

Justin: Fuckin'—that—wait, hold on, Trav. Can you give that clean? 'Cause I feel like, for our Peabody Award, this is probably gonna be the clip.

Travis: Yeah. This is how the paperwork system works in this world.

[music plays]

Travis: So, uh, contracts are written up by admin, which is located on the second floor of the HOG. And then, they are—go to the shipping and receiving department by a mail person. There, they go out to the appropriate party to be signed. And after that, they come back through shipping and receiving to case workers, which are located on the third floor, who are assigned to the contract. From there, they're taken by a different set of internal mail workers to processing, which is located below ground in records one and processing.

There is one last check of all details, and contracts are sorted to their appropriate departments. They are then sent to the appropriate departments of payroll, which is in records two. There, the pertinent details relating to pay, frequency, currency, et cetera are recorded. And finally, the full contract is then stored in archives on record three, for reference, if needed.

I tell you all of this to make it clear that this is a lengthy process, right?

Griffin: Right.

Travis: And this, techni—this, normally, doesn't create much of a problem, because it's kind of, y'know... there's a flow to it, where these contracts are kind of trickling out and in as they go. If all of this had to be reset at once, you are looking at, probably, six to ten weeks of this—trying to get this back in the system, and some of these contracts were established decades ago.

So if they had to be renegotiated now, it's a whole 'nother thing, as heroes have gotten more famous, as there's been more money in the trade, as kingdoms have gotten poorer... all of that. It would be a huge mess, and so, that is why they keep them so secure, because it is not just like, okay, well, how much do we owe you? Right? It would become a huge new negotiation.

Griffin: Cool. Um, it sounds almost like they devised that process to stop people from getting into the archives and destroying it. Which seems...

Travis: Yeah, it almost sounds like that, doesn't it?

Griffin: It seems inconvenient for us, specifically. Um... so, yes. The idea is that we're gonna—I—ugh.

Fitzroy: Do you guys think... and I'm sure this is gonna be like, bureaucratically, like, devastating. But do you think when we go back to the giant embodiment of Chaos and Order, we can be like, "We burned up some paper! Now can you not do a war?" Like, do you think that that's gonna be enough for them?

Argo: I think it's a good first step.

Fitzroy: Sure. Yeah.

Argo: I mean, we wanted to—I mean, we said that taking down HOG was only one part of the process, didn't we?

Fitzroy: Yeah, I was just kind of hopin' it would be satisfactory.

Argo: I don't think it will. I think we're gonna need to screw up some other stuff, too.

Fitzroy: Cool cool cool. Great great great.

Argo: So, Firbolg... let me get this straight. Fitz, you don't have magic anymore, right?

Fitzroy: I kind of do. Sometimes.

Argo: Like, kind of... well, okay. Uh, we can deal with this, I guess, in the planning session when we, y'know, get together and come up with our ingenious plot.

Fitzroy: I mean, there's like, at any point, like, a 50/50 chance that I could make, like, a Fireball. Which is better than most people. It's high—it's a higher chance than most people could do to conjure a Fireball.

Firbolg: It's true.

Fitzroy: So, y'know? You gotta look at the silver lining.

Firbolg: I... [sighs] I think I am... scared. Hm. This is, ah... even if this works... I... if we succeed, hm? The... future cannot be known. I had grown used to knowing what tomorrow is. Class, and... trying not to get killed by an evil guy. Then more class, and the sleeping, and berries. I like that routine. I'm realizing now, we will not go back to this. Even if we are not, mm... arrested or killed.

Argo: Hm... well, I'm not gonna lie to you, bud. I think that, uh, you're right. This is gonna change everything. But... I was almost gonna say, doesn't mean things will get worse, they're gonna get better, 'cause... probably, they're gonna get worse.

Fitzroy: No, it's our whole job to make things kind of worse. Yeah.

Firbolg: This is the—this is the not knowing, eh? You can't say we—if we know, is not Chaos.

Argo: Well, there are some things we know. I mean, we'll have each other. The three of us. We got—

Fitzroy: Sure.

Firbolg: Unless we are summarily killed or arrested.

Argo: Well, yeah. But then, if we're killed, we don't worry about it anymore. [laughs]

Fitzroy: Yeah!

Firbolg: Some are killed, some are not. You don't know.

Fitzroy: That would be terrible.

Firbolg: I am very strong and tough.

Argo: That would be—yeah. Well, let's just make a death pact. If one of us goes, we all three go.

Fitzroy: [laughs]

Firbolg: Death pact. This is what I was getting to! I did not want to be the first to say!

Clint: [laughing]

Fitzroy: Excellent.

Firbolg: The death pact.

Argo: Okay! So, death pact!

Firbolg: I will sleep soundly tonight!

Argo: Glad I made you feel better.

Travis: So you all head off to dream land. You drift off immediately! There's no anxiety.

Justin: I drift off with dreams of—dreams of death pacts!

Travis: Yep. The land of nod. Uh... [laughs] Okay!

[music plays]

Travis: Uh, you all have received some maps, uh, of what the headquarters looks like. And you can—even though Althea just kind of scratched them out, you wonder why she never pursued a career as a professional artist. `Cause you're like—

Griffin: Oh, fuck off.

Travis: These are beautiful, y'know?

Griffin: Right, yeah.

Travis: We'll post—we'll post Althea's beautiful work on Twitter so everyone can see it. Here's what I will do for you, because I am a kind and benevolent DM. So, you received a message from Gray, letting you know that he had opened up, like, basically an endless line of credit at Barnes and Nobles for you. Right? So you can order some items that would help you for the heist. And uh, if you want to, I sent you a list of some items to pick.

You can pick them now, and plan, uh, plan the heist around the items you have, or, you can do the recon, and then pick two items each to use as you see fit after that.

Justin: I kind of feel like if we have to pick before we plan, it'll make us have to commit a bit more. If we can switch these out as needed, I feel like we could over-plan. I kind of like the idea that we have to commit before we go into planning.

Travis: Okay! Yeah, let's do it.

Griffin: I'm kind of envisioning my role in this organization as the face. Because of my, uh, incredible, natural charisma. So there's, uh, Pietro Shanty's Miracle Mustache Wax, which gives me plus four to my charisma. IF

used to style a mustache... I guess, can I grow a mustache overnight? I might have to.

Travis: Well, it's been a couple days since you shaved. You have some of—

Griffin: Damn, it almost seems like they made this for Argo, and I'm kind of stepping on it. But, um...

Travis: Eh. He produces natural mustache wax.

Griffin: Okay. Well, I'm gonna go full Wilford Brimley big boy mustache.

Travis: Okay.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: That's by, uh, Summer Hoglin Abernathy designed that item.

Griffin: Thank you.

Clint: I literally... I like the literally just a janitor's uniform.

Justin: I bet you do, Clint McElroy!

Travis: Yeah, I knew you would, you son of a B. That's why I put it on there.

Clint: On the other hand—on the other hand...

Travis: That is, by the way, Literally Just a Janitor's Uniform from Sarah from Vancouver. Thank you, Sarah.

Clint: Yeah. Everybody knows, if you're wearing a janitor's uniform, you may go anywhere in question, and challenge adds a plus two to stealth rolls, and advantage on deception checks. I'm wondering if that... that makes more sense than... what is the dress for the job you want? No, y'know what?

I'll leave that for somebody else, because even though I figure that Argo's gonna be the main subterfuge, unlocking doors and stuff, it wouldn't hurt to—somebody else is gonna have to infiltrate too, right?

Travis: Absolutely.

Clint: Alright, I'll take Just a Janitor's Uniform.

Travis: Literally Just a Janitor's Uniform. Got it. Okay.

Clint: Juice?

Justin: Yeah, I want to clarify something, Trav, actually, before I do this. Um, in my—I feel like, because of... my race, and my culture... that I am going to be like... it would be like, insta-fail, were I spotted at HOG. Is that—do you think—does that jive with your understanding of the world?

Travis: You mean like, if somebody saw a Firbolg there, they'd be like, "Why is a Firbolg there?"

Justin: Exactly, correct. Right, exactly, yes.

Travis: Uh, yeah.

Justin: No Firbolgs live like I do. There aren't—it's not a thing.

Travis: Yeah, I would say you definitely stick out like a sore thumb. I don't think that that would instantly fail you, because I think that there are plenty of explanations that Althea and yourself—or, like, Althea could give for you as to why you are there with her. People know that she has been investigating the case, and y'know, she's done reports and stuff. So I don't know that it's instant fail. But yeah, I mean, you would be very recognizable.

Justin: I am going to... use the Man of Many Masks. I'm gonna get that.

Travis: Okay, the Man of Many Masks! This nondescript looking sack cloth can be drawn over the head to cast a Disguise Self spell with no

concentration needed, for as long as the mask is worn. However, the face it can copy can only be people it has touched within the last 24 hours. This grants advantage on any disguise-related deception checks.

Justin: Okay. Thank you, Ronald.

Travis: Thank you, Ronald.

Griffin: Um, I'd like the birthday boomers. It's a—

Travis: The birthday boomers.

Griffin: It's a small present box wrapped in a colorful paper and bow with a note card on one corner, and when you open it, it sprays out a cloud of chaff confetti, capable of scrambling electronics temporarily and interfering with any radio, video, or telephonic communication. I don't know how helpful that'll be. We may get in there, and it'll be a purely analog affair. But um...

Travis: And that is by Eric the Reddish. Thank you, Eric.

Griffin: It's giving me snake vibes, and I want it.

Travis: Perfect. I love it. Uh, Clint?

Clint: Hm.

Travis: Oh no.

Clint: I think the hummingbird.

Travis: The Hummingbard, you will see.

Clint: Oh, the Hummingbard!

Travis: A small, jeweled hummingbird. When activated, it will fly 40 feet speed in any direction. It cannot pick things up on its own, and cannot

support more than a pound of additional weight. While flying, it plays a simple melody that sounds exactly like someone humming to themselves. It can follow complex commands, such as hover here until someone spots you, and then flee; or, flit from shadow to shadow in the halls. After 30 minutes of flight, it cannot be used for a day. And that is by Ty. Thank you, Ty.

Clint: Yep. I'll take it. I'll take it.

Travis: Excellent.

Clint: Because I don't have a magical crab.

Travis: Very few people do. And Justin, one more. Here's what we have left, just so we can tell people. Uh, Dress for the Job you Want by Carey. A small vial of unsavory salve from Battlesturge. Uh, let's see... The Earworm from Skye. Re-Anchoring Stone from Jonathan, and the Clefticles from Lauren Michaels.

Justin: I—whoa. Um, I'm gonna go with the Re-Anchoring Stone.

Travis: Re-Anchoring Stone! A one-time-use stone that allows the user to change which way gravity pulls them. The user chooses a different direction to anchor them – say, the right wall – and they can walk on that surface as if it was the ground. The user can change the anchoring surface one additional time while the stone is active with a D20 roll above ten. However, if below ten, gravity resumes as normal.

The stone, a small pebble, is activated by sliding it into your boot. Will stick to the bottom of foot for non-booted feet.

Griffin: Oh, we're gonna get up to shenanigans with that one.

Travis: Some shenanigans will—some, uh, canned heat shenanigans.

Griffin: Right.

Clint: May I ask a question? These items – are we gonna do what we usually do, which is get them and then never use them?

Travis: I can't tell you that, Papá. Only you can tell yourself that.

Clint: Okay.

[music plays]

Travis: You walk into the atrium of the Heroic Oversight Guild. You've been here before. Yesterday, you came through. You know the process now. Looking around the first floor, uh, let me give you a little bit more detail as to what you see.

Around the first floor, it is an open-air atrium with a small café cart where employees and guests can buy food and coffee. In the entryway, there's a large reception desk where everyone has to sign in. You also see, around the floor, magical pools of water that stay in place with no containment, and have trees growing in them.

On the east side of the atrium, the first floor is also where shipping and receiving is located. Within that area is also the mail room. The ramp leading to the lower floors is in the atrium directly outside of shipping and receiving. Standing on the first floor, you can look straight up and see open air to the second floor and third floor. There are walkways and balconies around the outside of the open air, y'know, pavillion.

On the second floor is where all of the admin offices are. They basically take care of the contracts, they take paperwork, they take care of the running of the Heroic Oversight Guild. On the third floor is where investigators like Althea Song are. They're the ones that are sent out to settle claims and look into any disputes. You have enforcement, which are the ones who make sure that contracts are followed, that people get paid, that the shows go on. So, if it's found by the investigators that a complaint is valid, enforcement is called in.

You also have case workers. Case workers are the ones that are assigned to setting up contracts between heroes, villains, henchpeople, sidekicks, and the kingdoms that they work for.

Griffin: Hmm. Okay.

Clint: So are we casing the joint? Is that what we—

Travis: You absolutely are.

Griffin: That is explicitly what we are doing.

Clint: Alright!

Travis: And there's a couple things you don't know. Just like, very clearly that you don't know. Um, one, you need to talk with Taren. You haven't seen Taren since coming through the Drip and Sip the day before. And—

Griffin: What was her role at the...

Travis: She works at the archive.

Griffin: Okay, that's—that's all we know about—that she works at the archive? We don't know what she does?

Travis: Correct.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: You also—so, with, um... with your Snippers plant, that's how you learned about the flow of contracts. Seeing how it comes through the mail room, and up and down, and you know that there are two sets of mail employees. There are—and just to be clear, M-A-I-L. Damn homophones.

Justin: Right.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: So, there are internal mail, who deliver from office to office and floor to floor. And there's external mail, who collect packages to take out through shipping and receiving.

Griffin: Can I just say, I appreciate the amount of excruciating detail you've put into this, assuming that we will leverage it somehow. For like, a clever 14-step plan, when we will almost certainly end up just driving a bulldozer through here.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Absolutely.

Griffin: Like, I really appreciate, like, the—

Justin: Oh, it's so meaningful.

Griffin: There's a lot of, um... y'know, castle intrigue happening here, and I love it, I love it. But we are just pretty much gonna smash on in here with a wrecking ball or a dinosaur or some shit.

Travis: Absolutely.

Griffin: Cool. Okay.

Travis: Uh, there is one more kind of big piece—or, two big pieces of information, really. You noted the other day that employees do have badges that denote security clearance.

Griffin: Yes.

Travis: The ranks are determined—the security clearance is determined by a combination of the metal the badge is made out of, and uh, the jewel that is fixed inside of it. So, gold denotes a senior member of the Heroic

Oversight Guild. Silver is a member of the Heroic Oversight Guild, and copper is a junior member.

If they have an emerald in the badge, they have full access. If they have a sapphire, they have full access to the main floors, with escorted access to records. Ruby, full access to main, and no access to records. And if it's a diamond, they have first floor access and escorted access to the upper floors, no access to records.

Clint: What does Althea have?

Travis: Althea is gold and sapphire, meaning she is a senior member, and she has full access to the main levels, and can gain access to records if escorted.

Griffin: Records is where we are—where we need to go, yes?

Travis: Correct.

Griffin: Records is what we are destroying. Records is the...

Travis: Records is comprised of three floors. Processing, and then the next lower floor is payroll, and the lowest floor is archives.

Griffin: Okay, so that's—that's the subterranean...

Travis: Correct.

Griffin: Uh, okay. Well, that's—that's gonna put a real ding in my dinosaur-smash-through-with-a-wrecking-ball plan. If it's underground.

Travis: Yeah. Now, the one more piece of—

Clint: Maybe a big mole?

Griffin: Maybe.

Travis: The one more piece of information that you do need to know... there is an emergency exit system from the records levels, but it only moves upwards to keep people from being trapped on lower levels in case of emergency. So it can't be used to access down.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: But it could, potentially, be used as an escape route.

Griffin: 'Kay. Um... should we find, um, Taren first? Just to sort of—before we do it—that feels not risky to me. So before we get, y'know, blow up our spot, maybe we should do the thing that seems fairly, um... y'know, not potentially a huge fuckup in the making.

Travis: Well, lucky for you, Taren is easy to spot. She is over at the café cart here in the open air atrium. She is buying a pastry and a coffee from a large but handsome ogre who has a badge that says 'Chef Mike.'

Griffin: Chef Mike. Hell yeah.

Clint: So Taren still doesn't care for us, right?

Travis: Correct, but she is open to the idea of working with you.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: And she's in on what we're—I mean, she's in on us doing this?

Travis: Correct.

Griffin: I walk up to the cart.

Fitzroy: Hi, could I get a, uh, soy—

Chef Mike: Ah!

Fitzroy: —soy hazelnut latte with no liquid in it, please? Thank you. Just a dry one.

Chef Mike: Uhh... just a—just a dry... uhh... yeah, I can do that.

Fitzroy: Great, great. Oh, Taren! I didn't see you there!

Chef Mike: Did you want a scone?

Fitzroy: Of course I wanted a scone. You know what?

Argo: I'll take his liquid.

Fitzroy: Put the liquid back in, actually, if we're doing a scone. That's too much dry.

Chef Mike: Uuugh. Fine.

Fitzroy: Taren, how are you?

Taren: Uh, oh, just—I'm so good. Thank you so—like, ugh. I'm doing so good. How are you?

Fitzroy: Ugh. I've been better. You probably heard about me and... Susan, huh?

Taren: What?

Fitzroy: Oh, it's sensitive. I don't want to bother Chef Mike about it. Let's walk away where we can have some privacy, because things between me and Susan have gotten really nasty.

Argo: I'll bring your drinks over.

Justin: [laughing]

Argo: Let me hang here. I'll take care of them. It's on me. I'll hang here and bring your drinks when they're ready.

Fitzroy: I've always looked at Taren as a sort of counselor, and I just need some real help with my thing with Susan.

Taren: [sighs] Fine. Yes.

Travis: And she heads over towards one of the little, like, café tables, seated between two of the pools of water with trees. And she waits for you to join her. Impatiently, you would say. She's—y'know, she is not, let's be honest, charmed by you quite yet. But give it time.

Griffin: Not yet! Give it time, baby! Um... I want to—this may be sort of paranoid of me, but I want to know a baseline of how paranoid I should be in here. Can I do a perception, or... it'd probably be investigation check to see if like, we will—we will, indeed, have privacy at this table, or if there are cameras looking at us, or if... y'know? I don't think we know that yet.

Travis: Yeah, go ahead. Do that roll.

Griffin: Is that investigation or perception?

Travis: Uh, let's do investigation, because you are specifically looking for something.

Griffin: I know what I'm looking for. Right. Uh, so I got a 16 minus one. 15.

Travis: Uh, I would say with a 15, you think that you have as much privacy as you can. You see, um, the equivalent of security cameras, but they're like, mechanical eyes. But they don't seem focused on you, they just seem—

Griffin: No magic ea—I'm more concerned about magic ears at this point.

Travis: No, there doesn't seem—you can, with a 15, it seems—you seem to be in the clear.

Griffin: Okay. Um, I go join her, then.

Taren: So, what? What—Susan? That's not real, right?

Fitzroy: God, no. No. No. There's a whole, uh... we're on a sort of field trip here today, looking for... y'know?

Firbolg: Weaknesses.

Fitzroy: Cracks in the ol' armor? Um, for a big... you know about the thing, right?

Taren: Yeah.

Fitzroy: The big naughty thing we're doing? Okay.

Justin: [laughs]

Fitzroy: Um, yeah. So we're just kind of doing a little bit of pre-pro for, uh, the big `mish, and just wondering what you might be able to do to help us out with that.

Taren: Well, what do you—what do you want to know?

Firbolg: First, uh... would you do me a favor?

Taren: Sure?

Firbolg: Will you rub this sack on your face?

Taren: Huh. Well...

Fitzroy: It's a magic—it's a magic sack for, uh...

Firbolg: This magic sack.

Taren: That's a little better.

Firbolg: You've probably heard that one before.

Clint: [laughs]

Firbolg: But I assure you...

Travis: Now, this is Travis talking. I do just want to clarify – they just have to touch it. It doesn't have to touch their face.

Justin: Well, that's fun. I don't have a Travis in the game.

Travis: Okay. You got it.

Taren: Um... yeah?

Justin: Sorry our—sorry our comedy podcast got too funny, Trav. I'll try to reign it in, bud.

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: I just want to make sure that you're not going—

Justin: No no no, I get it. No bits and goofs, you want to keep it real. I'll just have her graze her hand across it. That's good.

Travis: She rubs it on her face enthusiastically.

Firbolg: Very funny. You actually only needed to touch it with your hand.

Taren: Oh, you got me.

Firbolg: Classic Firbolg.

Fitzroy: We're off to a great start. Um... I mean, we know some stuff about how this building works. Ooh! This is a good place to start. Tomorrow, there's supposed to be this big event. Some big to-do. What do you know about that?

Taren: Um, y'know, we got kind of a memo about it, saying it was the big kind of, uh, surprise announcement thing. There weren't many details to it. Everybody's encouraged to be there, which...

Fitzroy: Encouraged?

Taren: Yeah, I mean—

Fitzroy: But not required.

Taren: [sighs] It's like six of one, half dozen the other, y'know? Like, at this point, they can't really require us to go. But if you don't go, your supervisor is like, "Hey, why—I saw you weren't there! Uhh, what happened?" And so, it's a lot easier if you go. Everybody pretty much goes.

Fitzroy: Okay, okay. Uh, how long is the event gonna—I guess you don't know that.

Taren: I don't—I have no idea.

Fitzroy: Okay. Yeah, I mean, how do we get down into the archives and goof it up? I mean, those are the—there are probably many questions leading to that one, but...

Taren: I mean, the ramp is over there. Um, you're gonna need an access badge, 'cause those are scanned.

Fitzroy: Can we borrow yours?

Taren: Uh, then I wouldn't be able to get down there?

Fitzroy: Can you just go down there and blow it up or something? That would actually be pretty sick.

Taren: It's not my mi—this is your mission. I'm watched. You need to—okay. [sighs] You need a distraction, and you need to not be noticed, right?

Fitzroy: Yeah, yeah.

Taren: If I go down and do it, I will immediately be under suspicion as one of like, five people who have unfettered access to it, right?

Fitzroy: What a noble sacrifice that would—bards will sing tales of your bravery.

Taren: Of the time I was arrested? For life?

Fitzroy: Well... mmm. What is nobler than to give up one's life to blow up a bunch of records?

Taren: [sighs] Listen. There's only two kinds of people that have access to that area, right? There are employees of the area like me, and then there are people who work in the internal mail, who are trusted to deliver things to records. Right? You need to become one of those people, get in there unnoticed, 'cause who the hell pays attention to the mail people, and that's how you get in. Okay?

Fitzroy: Um, is there like, a mail person locker room that we can go be silly in?

Travis: Uh, she gestures over towards the shipping and receiving area and says...

Taren: Yeah, they have like, y'know, an office in there or something.

Fitzroy: Okay. I didn't think that that was gonna be a question that got a yes. So I'm excited right now.

Taren: Well, where else would they congregate, and like, share stories about mail delivery?

Fitzroy: Well, you're right. That was silly of me to think that something like that might not exist.

Taren: Yeah, come on.

Fitzroy: Just a room for mail carriers to pal around and tell mail stories.

Taren: They have to let off steam!

Fitzroy: Sure. Yeah. In their designated mail stories room.

Taren: Right!

Argo: Uh, Firbolg?

Firbolg: Yes.

Argo: Could you, uh... this coffee is really hot. Could you come over here and uh, help me with it? You—

Firbolg: Well...

Justin: I walk over.

Firbolg: What help could I offer you with your coffee?

Argo: Well, I was thinkin', if you used, uh, that bag around your hand, you could take it from Chef Mike, and uh, y'know, then it won't burn you, won't burn me, and y'know...

Justin: Is he over at the counter?

Clint: Yeah.

Justin: Am I over at the cou—okay, I'll—

Firbolg: Chef Mike, think fast.

Justin: And I throw my bag to him. My sack to him.

Clint: [laughs]

Chef Mike: Uhh, uhh?

Travis: Okay, hold on, I'm gonna do a dex check to see if Mike catches it?
[laughs]

Griffin: He doesn't need to catch it. It apparently just needs to touch his body somewhere.

Travis: Uh, oh, he catches the hell out of it. You throw it, and he starts like, doing kind of like, a cool routine with it. Uh, and he hands it back to gracefully and says...

Chef Mike: Oh, reminds me of my days back in the royal ballet.

Firbolg: That was very good.

Chef Mike: I wasn't always a chef!

Argo: Yeah. Give us the coffee, please.

Chef Mike: Do you wanna hear my story?

Argo: Uh—

Justin: I cast Ice Knife on Dad's coffee.

Clint: [laughing]

Firbolg: There you go. This should do it.

Argo: Oh! Good job. Thank you.

Travis: So, just to be clear of what that looks like... do you spear it, or is there just a—

Justin: It spears right through, and then the coffee trickles. But as it trickles, it freezes. [laughs] There's like, an increasing brown icicle coming off the coffee.

Clint: We gotta remember the visuals.

Travis: Great. Perfect.

Justin: [laughing]

Griffin: Um... alright. I think that's probably all Taren can do for us right now, I'm assuming.

Travis: Well, you had questions about how the archive works. So, if you would like her to explain to you, like, a filing system...

Griffin: Yeah, I guess that's a good... yeah.

Argo: Heere's your coffees! There you go.

Taren: What happened to your cup?

Argo: [laughs]

Firbolg: I happened.

Taren: Oh. That was a very cool thing to say.

Fitzroy: Yeah, just wait until we blow up this building. [laughs] He's gonna have quite the zinger, I bet. Just you wait. Ooh, this one's goin' on a poster.

Clint: [laughing]

Fitzroy: So like, what's... we get into the room with all the records. What's it look like? We talkin' about just like, a big pile of paper that we throw a match in, and whew, that's the ball game? Or...

Taren: No!

Fitzroy: `Kay.

Taren: [sighs] Okay. So, down in the archives on the lowest floor, there are 28 six-foot cabinets. Right? They're alphabetized with two cabinets remaining for any names or locations that don't fit into the 26 letter alphabet. Okay?

Fitzroy: Mm-kay.

Taren: Within each cabinet, there is a pocket dimension.

Fitzroy: Pschew. Okay.

Taren: Sort of like a... like one of those bags of holding kind of things, right?

Fitzroy: Yeah, we—sure.

Taren: And so, that is how we keep all the files there in that limited space. Once you account—some of these contracts are like, a hundred pages long. There would be billions of pieces of paper or something like that. Right? This way, we can keep track of them without having to build a warehouse. The

problem is, that kind of compression, that kind of magic running constantly... it creates, uh... for lack of a better word, exhaust. Right? Magical exhaust.

And it's not harmful or anything, but like, as it builds up, it can uh, like, wreak havoc when you try to cast a spell. Right? And y'know, so, in order to keep it from interacting with the compression magic, with the dimensional thing, uh... what we have is kind of an exhaust system, uh... this like, um... well, basically, it's stalactites with this moss on them that like, basically feeds on the magical exhaust. Right?

So that keeps the air clear, and it keeps the magic working.

Fitzroy: Okay. Is it gonna keep us from doing magical stuff in there?

Taren: No, it doesn't stop magic.

Fitzroy: Okay.

Taren: It just kind of feeds on the byproduct of when you cast magic.

Fitzroy: Okay. Cool. I bet that's some potent moss.

Argo: So, uh, Taren, are they... so you said they're organized alphabetically. Is that, uh—is there any way to tell which are the most important files? The most important contracts? Do they have, y'know, some kind of system for... denoting that?

Taren: Like a gold star, or...

Argo: Well... any way to tell that one file is, y'know, more important, or worth more, or... y'know, better target?

Taren: I guess... not easily? The only, like, sure way to do it is, if you can get into the files, you can see, like, updated contracts, which usually means, uh, that they were renegotiated in some way, which usually denotes some kind of long-term thing. Um... that's really the clearest indicator. But I mean,

we don't normally do, like, massive searches through them. We know which one we're looking for, and that's how we're able to like, summon it.

Argo: 'Kay. So 28 pocket dimensions. Right?

Taren: Yep.

Fitzroy: Cool.

Firbolg: Argo...

Argo: Hm?

Firbolg: Aaargooo...

Argo: Uh, yes, Firbolg?

Firbolg: Your coffee was not too hot.

Argo: No, it was—well, yeah. It was—I thought it was too hot. Isn't that—

Firbolg: It was a subterfuge!

Fitzroy: Is he gonna do that every time?

Firbolg: Now I have discovered your clever ruse! This was genius! I thought it did not seem to hot, and then I cast a spell on it, but it was not too hot!

Travis: Oh no, Firbolg's turning into Dracula!

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Argo: Well, yes, Firbolg, and I didn't want you to be in a position to have to lie, because I know you're still new at it. But you did great! You did awesome!

Firbolg: Thank you. You're a... your incredible, uh, mendacity served us both very well.

Argo: I think that was a compliment. Thank you.

Firbolg: In a sense, yes. After a fashion.

Argo: And now you have two faces in your databank, right? For your—

Firbolg: The mask has two faces.

Argo: The mask... ooh. That's good.

[eerie music plays]

Travis: Hi! Real quick, before we get into the ads and announcements and stuff, I just wanted to say... one, thank you to everybody who submitted items for heist shopping. They were all great, I just had to narrow it down so there wasn't too much choice.

Uh, also, thank you to everybody who tweeted about the show. Um, I— there's going to be lots more NPCs in the next couple episodes. But, I have some names this week that I wanted to tell you about. First of all, Chef Mike is named after Mike Haracz, who people probably know as Chef Mike. Hollifer is named after Hollifer Fogarty. Kai is named after @TealBeanKai. Bailey Kern is named after three people – Brittany and Knell Bailey, as well as Ann Kern. Nander is named after Tom Garvey, and Taren, who I should've mentioned, like, two episodes ago, is named after @TarenMaroun.

So, thank you to everybody! Like I said, there's gonna be more NPCs, so keep tweeting about the show with the hash tag, #TheZoneCast. And y'know, if I need a name, I'll be pullin' from there! Okay, now, onto the ads and stuff!

[ad break]

[eerie music plays]

Travis: Where to?

Griffin: Um, should we split up so as not to attract attention? I mean, as long as none of us pop off, and like, really give ourselves away...

Travis: And in this open air scenario, it's very easy to keep track of one another, so...

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Travis: You'll always be within, basically, shouting distance of one another.

Griffin: Alright, I did—I wanted to check out the mail room, because it feels like that would be a good, like... first costume to have. The first sort of thing to know about. Um... yeah. That's kind of where I wanna...

Travis: And y'know, as the face, I also think that that is a good start for you.

Clint: And where exactly are the badges?

Travis: Well, that would be a good place, uh, reception would probably be a best place to kind of inquire about that.

Clint: I believe that's what Argo's gonna go check out. Because I think that, regardless of... I mean, we're just plannin', right?

Travis: Right.

Clint: Just gathering resources. Um... I think he might like to try to lift a badge or three.

Travis: Okay. What about you, Firbolg?

Justin: Aw jeeze, man. [laughs] I'm just really outside my comfort zone here.

Travis: Oh, absolutely.

Justin: Um... yeah, I'll just—I'll just kind of hang out in the atrium, and try to just... just try to meet some folks. [laughs] I don't know. I—yeah. That seems good.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Well, here's—if I may recommend... um, you know, from Althea, that there is a security force. An internal security force here in the Heroic Oversight Guild. But she does not know, like, what their routes are, what their patterns are. So here, in the open air atrium, you can pretty much get eyes on everything above ground. So that might be a good chance for the Firbolg to do a little recon without having to wander around or lie to anyone.

Justin: Yeah, that sounds good. I want to do that.

Travis: Okay, great. So let's start, uh...

Justin: And also, I wanna get people used to the idea that there's a Firbolg running around.

Travis: There's a Firbolg here! Let's get all the—let's get all the chatter done first, and then just get used to the fact that there's a Firbolg here. Um...

Clint: Do we have the goodies? We have all the goodies, right? We have the things that we ordered from Barnes and Nobles?

Travis: Yeah. You can have them to use now.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: 'Kay.

Travis: Um, so let's start with the reception conversation.

[music plays]

Travis: So, Argo, you approach the reception desk. It's a pretty wide number, and you can see like, different—there are places for many people to kind of work behind it. But this early in the morning, it's still, uh, before like, main check in kind of rush. There's only one person working behind the desk. It is a human woman, uh, with pink hair.

Argo: Um, greetings!

Woman: Oh, hi!

Argo: How are you today? Your hair is lovely.

Woman: Oh, well thank you very much! Can I get your name? Do you need to sign in?

Argo: Oh no, no, I'm just—I have read so much about this place, I'm just kind of soaking in the atmosphere. I just am so amazed at the attention to detail. I'm so amazed at the beauty and...

Woman: Well, thank you so much! I do need your name, please.

Argo: Ah, yes! Uh, my name. Oh, my—what, first or last?

Woman: Just your full name, please.

Argo: Uh, okay. Blofeld... uh... Johnson.

Woman: Blofeld Johnson! Well, it's a pleasure to meet you. My name is Bailey Kern. How can I help ya?

Justin: Fuckin' Blofeld Johnson.

Argo: Hi, Bailey! Just—it's just your—I—I just am so amazed at this place. How long has this place been around?

Bailey: Oh, uh, quite some time, now. The actual building itself is only about 75 years old, but the Heroic Oversight Guild has been around over 200 years.

Argo: And how long have you worked here?

Bailey: Uh, well, I've only worked here about a decade.

Argo: Oh, okay. So, it's so amazing to me. And it's full of surprises! I have looked around, I've seen so many things that surprise me. And listen – how long have you had a Firbolg workin' here?

Bailey: There's a Firbolg here? Oh yeah, he signed in here yesterday. He's just a guest, I think.

Argo: Have you ever seen one up—I mean, before?

Bailey: A Firbolg? No, this is my first!

Argo: Look at him. Look at how—he is an amazing... creature.

Bailey: I prefer not to stare. Creature? Sir, he's a person!

Argo: Well, I know. I know.

Justin: I mean, I think the important thing we can all agree on is that he's here and it's normal.

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: [laughs] I think we're all...

Bailey: Listen, we get all types here at the Heroic Oversight Guild, y'know? We get all kinds comin' through.

Argo: So, does he have a badge?

Bailey: Oh, the Firbolg? No, he's just a guest. The badges are for employees only.

Argo: I've heard a looot about those badges. Are—are they really gold? Are they really like, gold and silver and stuff?

Bailey: Well... some of `em are.

Travis: Roll an insight check for me.

Griffin: To see how fucking wicked onto you and us and this whole operation?

Clint: Uh, that's a 17... plus... minus one, so that's a 16. But I have advantage with the Monocle of Misdirection.

Griffin: No way you beat that.

Clint: And that is a nat 20.

Griffin: Wow. Wow.

Travis: Okay, yeah yeah yeah. Uh, with a nat 20, you get insight that she, uh, as soon as you mention the badges, she got uncomfortable. But it seems like she's mostly uncomfortable hearing you ask about the materials they're made of. And with a nat 20, you're able to tell that it is because these are precious metals. Right? So this is a thing—even if you're not worried about

people trying to steal them for security clearance, it's a very valuable badge to have, right? So as soon as you're like, "Hey, is this made out of gold and silver?" That instantly made her kind of, uh, suspicious.

Clint: Okay. Is she wearing one?

Travis: Of course she is.

Argo: Okay! Well, uh, thank you for the info. Thank you. Where—where do you get your hair done?

Bailey: Oh! Well, thank you! Yeah, uh, y'know, can I tell you a secret?

Argo: Sure.

Bailey: I do it myself!

Argo: No!

Bailey: Yeah, absolutely!

Argo: The—I have been needin' a trim. Have you noticed the length? How long my hair—look how—I have got nobody good. I got no good stylist.

Bailey: Ugh, that's the worst, isn't it? Ya can't find somebody you trust.

Argo: Yeah. I know. And—but I mean, I see what you've done to yours! You don't have like, a break or anything comin' up, do ya? I mean, where you could maybe—

Bailey: Are you asking me to cut your hair? I've never cut somebody else's hair before.

Argo: Well, I mean, if you can cut your own hair, you can cut somebody else's hair, right?

Bailey: I mean, I don't know that necessarily holds true. But uh, y'know, I... I'm... I know we just met. Uh... I mean, I'd be willin' to try if you're desperate.

Argo: Yeah, oh, I am. I mean, look at this. [laughs]

Bailey: Okay, well, uh... [sighs] I tell you what. My replacement comes in in about an hour. Maybe I can, y'know, I don't know, just cut off your split ends at that point?

Argo: That would be so cool. I would love that. Just a—just trim it up a little bit. Y'know, maybe thin it out a bit. Thin it out a hair. [laughs] See what I did there?

Bailey: Okay, yeah, sure. Uh... yeah. I think we can probably make that work.

Argo: Oh, that's excellent. Where should I meet ya?

Bailey: Oh, just meet me back here in an hour.

Argo: Good deal!

Travis: I realized about halfway through that conversation, I forgot to make dad do any checks. But then I was like, eh, it's fun. I wanna cut some hair. That's fine with me.

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: Okay, let's hop on over to that mail room conversation!

[music plays]

Griffin: Uh, I got a mustache on now.

Travis: Oh! Ooh la la! A big ol'—and it's like a push broom mustache? You said it was like a Wilford Brimley?

Griffin: Yeah, no, it goes all the way to the ground. And uh...

Travis: Whoa, that's not what I meant at all! [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] No, it's not quite that long. Uh, and I walk in with just a sort of air of confidence. So I guess, just the normal way. And uh, I just walk right into... the mail, like, break room.

Mail Man: Oh, hey `dere! Can I help ya, `dere?

Fitzroy: [in a strange voice] Yeah, I'm here for the interview?

Mail Man: Oh! Well, I'm the supervisor here. Name's Nander. Uh, I didn't know... I had an interview today. Do I?

Fitzroy: Uh, yes sir. We've, uh, we've spoken on the phone.

Nander: Well, okay then!

Travis: Wait, I gotta pick a different voice. Hold on. I just did that kind of voice.

Griffin: Yeah.

Nander: [in a slightly different voice] Well, hey there! Uh, yeah, I can... I—we spoke on the phone?

Fitzroy: Yeah. Several times. The name's Buck.

Travis: Roll a deception check for me.

Clint: Buck Johnson.

Griffin: Uh, that is a 13 plus eight, 21.

Nander: Oh. Well, I don't remember... talkin'... but, I guess?

Fitzroy: The name's Buck... Humpman.

Nander: Buck Humpman. Y'know, I guess now that you mention it, the name does sound kind of familiar.

Fitzroy: We talked on the phone, and I'm here for the mail carrier job interview. Um, so... where is that gonna take place? Do you have a sort of sub break room that we could have a little privacy in, or...

Nander: Oh, uh, everybody's out workin', now. I—I—I can just interview you... right here.

Griffin: I grab a chair, and I fuckin' like, turn it 180 degrees and sit on it the cool way.

Travis: Oh man. You are really working it.

Griffin: I'm interviewing for this guy's job.

Travis: Yeah, right? The job you want.

Griffin: Yeah.

Nander: Uh... I—I—okay. Didn't even know we had any positions open. Um... I guess, my first question is, what makes you want to work in the mail room?

Fitzroy: I love messages. People talking. Bringing it together. That's what it's all about, isn't it?

Justin: [laughs]

Nander: I mean, yeah.

Fitzroy: Communication. Collaboration.

Justin: [laughing]

Clint: [laughing]

Fitzroy: When lines get crossed, I feel like our hearts get closed off. And that's a big problem in the world today.

Justin: Hey, Griffin, let me give you this one. When lines get crossed, that crosses the line.

Griffin: Okay, yeah, let me try that.

Fitzroy: When lines get crossed, that crosses the line in Buck's book.

Travis: Um, Griffin, do a...

Justin: Buck's Book, chapter seven, page 13. It's right there. When lines get crossed, that crosses the line.

Travis: Do a... let's see. Do a charisma check for me. Just a—

Griffin: Straight charisma?

Travis: Just straight...

Justin: Wow, it's a thousand! Buck's the most charismatic character we've ever had.

Griffin: That's 16 plus four. 20.

Travis: Uh, he—you see a tear roll down his cheek. And he says...

Nander: I... I didn't know anybody cared about the mail as much as I did.

Fitzroy: Oh, I care even more. Don't try me.

Nander: Okay, what's the biggest package you ever delivered?

Fitzroy: Uh, did a—did a operation dumbbo drop.

Nander: No! Those are legend!

Fitzroy: Yeah, I did one.

Justin: And real.

Fitzroy: And it's a real one. An elephant. Got him on a helicopter. Dropped him out of the plane, and he did—he did live when he hit the ground. Lot of dumbbo drops are not as—they're not as cautious about the descent phase.

Travis: Now, roll a deception check for me.

Griffin: Son of a—really, for every—yeah, I guess so.

Travis: Well, I didn't make Dad do any, so I gotta use them up here.

Griffin: Ten? Ten plus eight. 18.

Travis: Uh, he is blown away. Um...

Nander: Where—where have you worked before? What kind of experience you got?

Fitzroy: Uh... I've been sort of a mercenary. When people need messages to get from one place to another, or elephants, as the case may be, I'm uh... I was sort of their guy. But I'll be honest – there's, uh... I miss being part of a, uh... a family. And it feels like... it feels like I've found one. What was your name again?

Nander: Nander?

Fitzroy: Nan—Nander?

Nander: Nander.

Fitzroy: Nander, it feels like—

Nander: Nander.

Fitzroy: Feels like I found one, Nander.

Nander: Well, y'know... when I came to work today, I didn't even know there were any open positions. But I—you're hired!

Fitzroy: Yesss!

Nander: When can you start?

Fitzroy: Tomorrow. [laughs]

Justin: He already has. Look around here. [laughing]

Griffin: [laughing]

Fitzroy: Uh, yeah. Um... I could start... let me think about it. Uh... talk—let me talk to the, uh—let me talk... about it. And tomorrow seems good, though.

Justin: [laughs]

Nander: Okay!

Fitzroy: So, where do I get one of those mail guy costumes that you're wearing that looks so cool?

Justin: [laughs] He's an extremely experienced mail deliverer that doesn't know what a uniform is.

Nander: Do you mean uniform?

Justin: [laughing] He always did it rough and rowdy at his old gig. Whatever you roll out of bed in.

Nander: What kind of uniforms have you worn before?

Fitzroy: Well, y'know. A lot of, uh, jungle camouflage.

Nander: Oh, man.

Fitzroy: But I assume that that's not necessary here. Yeah, I've delivered some pretty thorny messages.

Nander: Well, yeah, you can start tomorrow. Uh, I'm gonna start you off pretty slow, but I'll partner you with one of our most experienced deliverers. Their name is Kai. Um, and they'll show you the ropes!

Fitzroy: Hey, Brock works a—Buck works alone.

Nander: Well, okay, but you—

Fitzroy: Brock also—Brock is my brother who also works alone. We never work together.

Nander: You do need to kind of learn... Kai has been here longer than anybody else, and... they can show you the ropes, and y'know, I'm—it sounds to me like you're gonna pick it up pretty fast. Buck Humpman.

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: [laughs] It can't be that, though. That can't be right.

Fitzroy: Now that uh, now that I've gotten to know you, Nander... I can tell you that that was a—that was not my real name. And I have to be careful. Because like I said, Nander, I've delivered some packages that, uh... could get me in some real trouble. But now that I know that you're on the level, I can let you—

Justin: This is nom de mail.

Fitzroy: Mm-hmm. I can tell you my real name. My real name is Chuuud...

Justin: [laughing]

Fitzroy: Chud... [pause] ... Bobsman.

Justin: Is it Chud Chud Bobsman? [dissolves into laughter] Sorry, is it Chud Chud—[laughing]

Nander: It's so nice to meet you, Ch—

Clint: Chud Chuuud!

Justin: I need to clarify that his name is—[laughing uncontrollably] Chud Chud Bobsman, please! I actually—it's been a hard year, and I need his name to be Chud Chud Bobsman.

Griffin: It's Chud, hyphen, Chud Bobsman.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: [laughing] Just wanted his name to be Chud-Chud Bobsman.

Griffin: Chud-Chud Bobsman, mail carrier for hire!

Nander: Chud-Chud... I think—

Justin: [sings something unintelligible] Chud-Chud-Chud!

Nander: I think Chud-Chud and Nander are gonna be best friends.

Fitzroy: Oh, I already feel it.

Justin: [laughing] Chud and me are best friends.

Nander: So you get in here tomorrow morning at six AM to work with Kai, and they'll show you around.

Fitzroy: Cool beans.

[music plays]

Travis: Uh, let's see. So, you, Firbolg... you've posted up here in the café. You've been enjoying the scones that everybody ordered but didn't eat. And I don't mean across the entire, like, atrium. I just mean at your table.

Justin: I keep going back for scones. And I feel like, maybe, I have a bit of a relationship with Chef Mike at this point. Does that seem fair?

Griffin: I hope so. If you're gonna be him.

Travis: You've listened to Chef Mike's life story. About his time dancing in the royal ballet, and how that transitioned into being a highly paid assassin, and eventually, that led into the obvious path of becoming a café cart worker at the Heroic Oversight Guild.

Justin: Okay. And I want to talk to him. Can that be my thing?

Travis: Sure.

Firbolg: I...

Chef Mike: Oh, back again.

Firbolg: ... have returned.

Chef Mike: Yep.

Firbolg: This is not a proud time. But the scone, I have never had this. I have had... mainly berries. The scone is, um... Mike, it is amazing.

Chef Mike: Oh, thank you so much.

Fitzroy: I require three more scones.

Chef Mike: Three more? I'm worried about you.

Firbolg: Craaanberry.

Chef Mike: I know I have...

Firbolg: Cran.

Chef Mike: [sighs] For you? Firbolg. You seem like a berry connoisseur. I have some special berries here. They're ogre berries.

Firbolg: Those get you high, I have heard.

Chef Mike: Uhhhh you didn't hear that from me!

Griffin: [laughs]

Firbolg: [laughs] I take an ogre berry, and also chocolate. Live a little, eh?

Chef Mike: Okay.

Firbolg: I have... a question for you, Mike. Who, uh... does everyone have to come here to get their scones?

Chef Mike: To the café?

Firbolg: Yeah.

Chef Mike: I mean, are you asking if I've ever thought about doing scone delivery? I have. Honestly, I have. It's a hard business to get into. A lot of competition.

Firbolg: It's a big facility. I thought maybe... do, sometimes, you bring food to people that are working?

Chef Mike: Are you asking if I'll bring food to you?

Firbolg: No! No no. Just making conversation.

Chef Mike: Uhh, I mean, if it's a special customer, good tipper, uh, I'm not above makin' a scone run.

Firbolg: Who's the—who's the best?

Chef Mike: The best tipper?

Firbolg: I thought that maybe... if I knew the best... it would... help for me.

Chef Mike: Yeah, that seems a perfectly normal thing to say.

Justin: [laughs]

Chef Mike: Uh, I would say it's probably... probably Hollifer, frankly. Hollifer's always been good to me. She's great.

Firbolg: What is Hollifer?

Chef Mike: It's a name.

Firbolg: No. Who—who is Hollifer?

Chef Mike: Oh! Yeah, she's one of the guards. She's around here somewhere. She looves her scones, almost as much as you do!

Firbolg: I must talk with her about scones!

Chef Mike: I mean, she's married, if—I—

Firbolg: This is not a... relationship. This is purely scotonical.

Clint: [laughs]

Chef Mike: Oh, well, she's, uh—she's over there, uh... you can see her. She's right next to the shipping and receiving, there. She, uh—she is right there at the top of the ramp, down to records.

Firbolg: Give me—give me seven more scones.

Chef Mike: Seven!

Firbolg: Keep `em coming, big boy.

Chef Mike: I'm married, too.

Firbolg: Again.

Chef Mike: Okay.

Travis: Uh, he gives you the scones, and they're fresh. They're warm. They're perfect. They're perfect.

Justin: Mm-hmm. I put them into my sack.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Wait, your fucking transforming face sack? Are you gonna turn into scones?

Justin: Yeah, baby. Oh, boy. Sweet summer child. I'm gonna go over and—

Travis: Now, Griffin, don't be dumb. Only his face would turn into a scone.

Griffin: You're right. [laughs]

Justin: I'm gonna go over and talk to Hollifer.

Travis: Uh, you head over to Hollifer. She, uh... roll an insight check, for me.

Justin: Yeah, I just haven't had to roll this whole time, and the whole notion of rolling kind of slept through my—even when I said that wild thing about how it would help to me, you didn't make me roll then.

Travis: Well, at that point, we had established that you and Chef Mike had a rapport.

Justin: It's a great rapport. Insight is 22.

Travis: Uh, so, she—all appearances are that she is, uh, very chill, and maybe even kind of dozing in and out. But you notice that, as you move, her eyes track you, and she seems to be kind of taking everything in all at once. So, appearances appear to be deceiving, and actually, she is very on point.

Firbolg: Hello, excuse me?

Hollifer: Yes?

Firbolg: I am a friend of Chef Mike. And Chef Mike says he delivers scones to his best customer, and he said you are one of his best customers, so I would... I have brought you a scone.

Hollifer: Ju—you—Chef Mike?

Justin: And I open the bag and extend it in front of me.

Clint: [laughs]

Hollifer: You're, uh... you're a Firbolg, right?

Firbolg: I can't say no.

Hollifer: You do anything to these—

Firbolg: This is a Firbolg joke. Please appreciate.

Hollifer: You do anything to these scones?

Firbolg: Smell—I did take a few free smells.

Hollifer: Well, smells are free. Uh... I am hungry.

Firbolg: There's seven.

Hollifer: Okay.

Travis: And she takes two.

Firbolg: Excellent. Do you recommend any of the scones? I am new here.

Hollifer: Like, the flavors?

Firbolg: Yes?

Hollifer: Uh, don't do the ogre berry. They get weird.

Firbolg: Uh, okay. I understand that, but why does the giant pigeon behind you... why are they warning me against them as well?

Hollifer: Oh, man. You're havin' a bad trip. Listen... uh, you need to get some orange slices.

Firbolg: I am going to lie down.

Hollifer: Yeah, have a little nap.

Firbolg: Please guard me in your official capacity.

Hollifer: Okay. Just lean your head against the cool stone floor, here, and... I'll make sure the pigeon doesn't get you.

Firbolg: [mumbling] Please... thank you. If you could... just... watch my other scones. [laughs]

Hollifer: Yeah. I'll keep an eye on the scones and keep them safe from the pigeon.

Griffin: Just to take it to the scoreboard real quick – Dad is getting a haircut, uh, Justin had a bad drug trip and had to lay down on the ground, and I *got a job at the building we are robbing*.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: So... one of us is leading on the heist leaderboards.

Justin: I think, considering my inability to lie, I think I navigated the situation masterfully.

Travis: I mean, he picked up a little bit of, I guess, magical DNA.

Griffin: Yeah, you continue your game of bureaucrat Pokémon GO that you've been playing here.

Justin: [laughing]

Travis: Um, so! Let's jump back to that reception desk real quick. Uh, time has passed, and uh, we see Argonaut waiting for Bailey Kern to get off work so that she can cut his hair. Because that's where we're at. And then, you hear, uh, behind you, as you're waiting, two voices, Argonaut. And one, uh, is speaking a bit of a whisper. Go ahead and make a perception check for me.

Clint: I swear to god, another nat 20.

Griffin: Holy shit!

Justin: God.

Travis: Um, so you hear that voice—

Clint: Plus three!

Griffin: Well, it doesn't matter. Okay.

Clint: So that's 23.

Travis: Okay. Doesn't matter. It's perfect. You got 100%. Uh, and one voice says...

Voice 1: Everything is prepared, sir. We're going to make the big announcement tomorrow about your promotion. Uh, oh... we can't wait. Uh, everyone's going to be so excited. This is a long time coming.

Travis: And the other voice says...

Voice 2: Yes, it's a little too long coming, if you ask me.

[theme music begins]

Travis: And you recognize the voice. You recognize it immediately, as the first voice says...

Voice 1: Yes. It'll be such good news for everyone to hear Commo—or, should I say... Admiral?

Travis: And you turn around, and you see, walking up to the reception desk behind you... The Commodore.

[theme music plays]