

## **The Adventure Zone: Ethersea – Prologue IV: The Hierarchy of Terror**

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**Griffin:** Hey, folks. Quick pre-programming announcement. Thanks for listening into our setup episodes for The Ethersea. We're playing The Quiet Year, a game by Avery Alder, that's all about map making, and making wild choices to help build a community. You can find a link to where you can find and purchase and learn more about the game on the episode description.

And also, if you want to follow along visually, we are uploading all the maps at the end of each of these sessions at [bit.ly/EtherseaMaps](https://bit.ly/EtherseaMaps). And I think you need to capitalize Ethersea and Maps in order for that link to work, 'cause that's how bit.ly works. We heard some folks say they were having some trouble following along sort of visually, and uh, if you, y'know, need a little help with that, go to that link.

I also think that, if you go to our Twitter page, we will be uploading those maps alongside the episodes there as well. That's it. Here's the episode!

[music plays]

**Brother Seldom:** Today's lesson: the intricate hierarchy of mortal terror.

While the divine invitation is what brought our community to the shoreline so many years ago, it was our fear of the storm itself that fueled our every endeavor. Each morning, we woke to find the waters receded further and further from the land, and the maelstrom growing in size and intensity.

We were not ashamed of our fear; it is, after all, our most powerful, most primal instinct. Fear is built into the foundation of this city, just as much as any glass, clay, or Kodite.

But the autumn preceding our evacuation shook the single-minded focus that came of that fear by showing us... or rather, reminding us – of the dangers great and small that loomed just in the periphery.

We were mortals, the lot of us. And while our mortal passions may be responsible for building this new home, it was not without suffering the wages of mortal kind's less enviable characteristics.

Some amongst our number were quick to distrust, while in lockstep, others were quick to deceive. There was no shortage of ideas on how to help our community, but those ideas became principles. And those principles became orthodoxy, which I can personally attest is capable of becoming something far rowdier still.

Our mortal bodies suffered, as well. But you'll find few among those original builders who would deign to seek pity over that. Because of the magic we wielded, many of you listening to this very lesson will never see sunlight. If the tribulations we faced on that beach were, in any measure, a kind of atonement... well, then, we got off very, very easy.

[theme music plays]

**Justin:** This is what it would be like if we played Dungeons & Dragons together in one room. And I want to bring more of this energy to the show, of like, talking about going to get snacks.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Y'know what I mean? Or talking about drinking, or drinking, or eating snacks on the...

**Travis:** It's just that we haven't played in like, two weeks, and I'm really excited to play.

**Justin:** No, I'm excited too. I'm exci—but y'know what? When you say that, the other thing you're saying is, we haven't *talked* in two weeks.

**Travis:** That is not true, though. That is not how this works! We don't just talk in recording time!

**Clint:** I haven't talked to you! I haven't talked to anybody!

**Justin:** I haven't heard from anybody.

**Griffin:** Yeah, me neither.

**Justin:** I haven't heard from anybody.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Justin:** I was frozen solid. My home was frozen solid. I begged Daddy to come help me, and he wouldn't.

**Travis:** Well, Dad has those old, brittle bones, and if he gets cold...

**Clint:** And there were wolves! I mean, the wolves were probably out. Wandering around...

**Griffin:** There were actual wolves.

**Justin:** Huge problem.

**Travis:** Alright.

**Griffin:** But y'know a place where everything is great, and everybody knows your name, and there's definitely no sort of cataclysmic, weather-related disasters happening right now?

**Clint:** Cheers?

**Griffin:** And it is the Cheers bar. Thank you, Dad.

**Travis:** Yeah, there actually is a huge cataclysmic—they don't talk about it on the show, but the underlying theme of every season of Cheers is that the earthquake is coming.

**Griffin:** There's a meteor circling the earth.

**Justin:** Now, Griff, you had talked about, you were gonna move the sea over to the land... the sea side of the map. And that has not happened yet.

**Griffin:** Yes. Well, yeah, in my defense...

**Justin:** I can't wait until, when people see this map, they are gonna lose their fuckin' minds. It's so insane.

**Griffin:** Yeah. The reason I didn't actually do that since our last session, Justin, is that I moved the sea into my bathroom floors and my bedroom, and my ceiling, and all the drywall and everything. So I apolo—you're right, I should've prioritized that over...

**Justin:** Well, as long as we're agreed that you should've prioritized it, then I think we're fine.

**Travis:** So, where were we?

**Griffin:** Yes, let's pick up where we left off. It is the beginning of fall. There is a crispness in the air, and—

**Travis:** Everything smells of cider!

**Griffin:** Uh, so ongoing projects. There's just a couple. There is the ongoing sort of labor organization project that has one week left, as does the—

**Justin:** How long does it have?

**Griffin:** As does—we did that joke every episode. Uh, the moving of the Crystal Ascension...

**Travis:** [sings] It's got... one week!

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** ... into the water. Um... and yeah, I mean, a ton of stuff happened in the last episode. The coral robot concept sort of came about. The Ol'Joshy school for fighting sharks with psychic powers...

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** ... is here.

**Clint:** Oh, fighting—

**Justin:** That's a great—whoever came up with that is a genius.

**Clint:** Y'know, a nice spin on that would be to fight sharks that *had* psychic powers. That would be...

**Griffin:** That is... I mean...

**Travis:** Y'know what's really fun, and I thought about this since, is that... we all laughed at that. Maybe some of us more than others. But then, in the time since, I thought about the fact that... there is psychic magic in D&D. It's not like...

**Griffin:** Yeah. It's not out of the question.

**Travis:** It's not like it's so wild. It's not like we haven't done something like that before.

**Justin:** It should be noted, though. I just want to color in a little. If I could pick up my charcoal and just sketch it a little bit here, these—Uncle Joshy does *not* possess those powers.

**Travis:** Oh, okay.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Absolutely not. It's aspirational.

**Justin:** There's still cranks in D&D.

**Travis:** Okay, great.

**Griffin:** Alright. Well, I'm gonna flip the first card of autumn.

**Clint:** Whose turn is it?

**Griffin:** Uh, it is mine. "A natural disaster strikes the area." Great. "Choose one: you focus on getting everyone to safety – remove an abundance, and a project fails." Jeeze.

**Travis:** Ooh.

**Griffin:** "You focus on protecting your supplies and hard work at any cost – several people die as a result." Having fun here on The Adventure Zone!

**Justin:** So it gets harder as we go on. Is that what's happening?

**Griffin:** Yeah, I think this is a really nice little amuse-bouche for autumn, because it's gonna be, uh, tough. Oh man...

**Travis:** Remind me, what's the project over at the crystal tower thing?

**Griffin:** They are moving that into the water to utilize it as some sort of infrastructure for the actual underwater city. Oh, gosh. I mean, we don't have that many projects to fail... I can't—we can't—I don't want to cancel one of Travis' projects again. I shouldn't metagame like this. I think sacrifices are made.

**Travis:** Ooh.

**Griffin:** As sort of sad as that is, I think that, um... it's just a wave. And it emanates off of the storm in the distance, and it's just like a freak, rogue wave that, um, everybody living on the land managed to sort of get safe

from. I think most of the losses came from the ships that had started to sort of organize around this, um, this build site out on the water. A ship was capsized, and some people drowned.

And now, I think the people, y'know, this... Fineas Caul, Boyar Hermine sort of faction is getting increasingly frustrated with how long people are dragging their feet, because now they have, y'know, kind of the first countable fatalities due to this storm, and they're eager to get going.

That is what happens. And let's count down the clocks. Travis.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Griffin:** The labor organization finishes! Can you sort of remind everybody what that project was all about, and how it ended up?

**Travis:** Yeah, so basically, they were categorizing people's skillsets so that both in the process of setting up this new underwater settlement, and staffing the underwater settlement, they could kind of take peoples' very specific expertise and generalize them a little bit more. So, y'know, if you, uh, maybe were like, a botanist, right? You're probably going to work in some kind of underwater agriculture. Or if you had anything whatsoever to do with any kind of like, uhh, y'know, dentistry, or doctoring, or nursing, you're probably going to be on a shift to staff the med bay or whatever.

So, we're trying to get people a little bit more, uh, what's the word I'm looking for... uh, organized? So we can do like, some shifts.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure. It is a prescription by the state to fill the—what they have outlined as the essential needs of this city.

**Travis:** Right.

**Griffin:** By um, sort of coordinating the capabilities of the people here. But like, is there any force behind this prescription? Do you know what I mean? Like, there's probably people who are like, "I don't want to farm, y'know, seaweed," or whatever it is.

**Travis:** Yeah. So, that is kind of... it is, frankly, frustrating for some, but elevating for others. There were people who were kind of, uh, pushing towards the mean a little bit more, because we need people to... y'know, like, maybe you were a four-star chef at a fancy restaurant. Maybe you worked the equivalent of like, a roadside food truck. Everybody's going to be the same job title, taking shifts in like, the cafeteria. Right?

**Griffin:** Right.

**Travis:** So some people are getting elevated. Some people are maybe going to lose a little bit of status as these jobs are filled, because we won't have as—at least to start off with, there won't be as much specialization in the work force.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Uh, because we need to make sure basic needs are met first.

**Griffin:** I feel you. Okay. Um, the Crystal Ascension project finishes. Um, and they manage to move it out to the water. And using a system of like, basically super big buoys, they were trying to float it out to the build site. Um... but when it was there, that's when the wave hit. And it fell off of the buoys, and fell down into the water. And people were understandably pretty bummed about that, but... it fell in such a way that, it kind of turned out to be the first... step. The first sort of flag planting. The first sort of survey of where this city, uh, should be built.

And I'm going to now begin drawing on the seaside of things. So, immediately under the build site, with the calm patch of sea and where the coral staircase comes up out of the water, there is a very wide, um, but not especially deep ravine. And the Ascension falls down into this ravine, and kind of gets... it falls against one of the sheer walls of the ravine, and there's—and in fact, there's a crack. A huge crack in the wall that the Ascension just kind of perfectly gets wedged into when it reaches the bottom.



So, basically, what we're talking about is, in this shallow ravine, very close to where the coral staircase and the sort of robot bodies are being grown, is this... y'know, big wall. Big shelf of one side of this ravine. And the Ascension is now up against that wall, and is more or less, like... it could be thought of very easily as scaffolding, that the settlers who go down there – not that, really, anybody's doing that yet – can move around in.

So, that is what I am drawing! Okay. I'm almost certainly going to have to cut out a great deal of drawing time. I need to take an action. [pause] I'm gonna start a project, and it is simply to build a fuckin' boat. [laughs] In the Cradle.

**Justin:** We must build a boat.

**Griffin:** We must build a boat. Uh, I think that... uhh, a lot of resources have been sort of hauled out into the water to begin city prep. Um, and the, uh... the people who want to build this boat take—claim the rest of the Kodite to build, essentially, a big, big, big battleship to defend, uhh... y'know, the settlers going underwater from blink sharks, defend them against whatever other threats they may face. Because right now, they are completely defenseless.

But this is a pretty huge project in scope, so I'm gonna say this is going to take... five weeks. And that is my turn. I will draw that, but first, here's a card.

**Travis:** The ace of autumn. "The community becomes obsessed with a single project. Which one? Why? Choose one. They decide to take more time to ensure that it is perfect – add three weeks to the project die. They drop everything else to work on it – all other projects fail."

**Justin:** This is perfect time—I can't believe how good the timing is on this.

**Travis:** Yeah. "If there are no projects underway, the community becomes obsessed with a grandiose vision. Hold a discussion about this vision in addition to your regular action for the week." I think the only project right now is the big boat, right?

**Griffin:** It's the big boat.

**Justin:** So that is... so it's the last one, there.

**Travis:** Nnno.

**Justin:** If there are *no* projects underway. So it has to be adding three weeks.

**Griffin:** Or it fails. [laughs]

**Travis:** Well, they drop everything else to work on this. All other projects—

**Justin:** All other projects fail. I love the idea that, as a nation, that work begins on Big Baby, and we all just decide like, as a nation, we're like...

[all laughing]

**Justin:** We love Big Baby, we're obsessed with Big Baby, we put Big Baby on t-shirts. Like, Big Baby fever is sweeping. Everybody gets really particular about how it comes together.

**Travis:** I think that that's it, is because Big Baby is going to require so many resources, everybody's like, "We cannot let this get fucked up."

**Griffin:** If we are using the rest of the Kodite, then this is going to get a two month endeavor.

**Travis:** Right. Yeah, so everyone is like, "We're working on this. It's gonna be perfect, because we don't want you guys to fuck with the resources."

**Griffin:** Yeah. Okay. Um... cool. Countdown. And world clock is at one, so, Travis.

**Travis:** Um, so, here is... I'm going to start a project. Which of these kingdom's peoples would you say are the most, uh, agrarian? Have the most kind of farming expertise?

**Griffin:** Um, I think that... I mean, if you want to talk about more like, uh, hydroponic, uh, y'know, growing stuff in maybe not the natural climate in which it's supposed to grow, the Delmer probably take that. But I also think the, uh, the Einarr are probably the most, um... uh, yeah, the most agricultural.

**Travis:** Okay. Yeah, so, I'm going to say, uh, that the Einarr, then, um... in this big wave, a bunch of seaweed – a seaweed-like plant – washed up on shore. Big clumps of it, like you would expect when there's a big storm. And it's, of course, poisoned, polluted, from being in this prestige magic-polluted ocean.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** And their pitch is that the filler fish are great, but we should not live on like, protein alone.

**Griffin:** Yeah. What about—

**Travis:** And so, they're going to start a project to see if they can figure out a way to like, purify—a process to purify this seaweed, so we can then use it as like, underwater vegetation when we move to the underwater city.

**Griffin:** Okay. Uh, cool. Well, draw that. How long do you think that that takes?

**Travis:** Uh, I'm going to say three weeks. Does that feel... maybe that's a little long? Two weeks?

**Griffin:** It doesn't feel long to me. To figure out how to grow things... I guess Matt Damon did it in like a few hours in A Martian. He was just like, I'll dookie on some potatoes.

**Travis:** It's not to grow it. It's already growing. They want to see if there's something they can do to like, neutralize the poison to use the seaweed that's already there, and make it edible and digestible.

**Griffin:** Right. Okay, yeah, I think three weeks feels right to me. I will give you a three on the map, and we will...

**Travis:** Here's a big pile of seaweed. No, it's over here by the—there you go. Biiig... right next to the anus.

**Griffin:** Okay. Next card for Clint.

**Clint:** Autumn three. "Someone leaves the community after issuing a dire warning."

**Travis:** Ooh!

**Clint:** "Who? What is the warning?" Or, "Someone issues a dire warning, and the community leaps into action to avoid disaster. What is the warning? Start a contentious project that relates to it." Now, what is that?

**Griffin:** Ooh! That means, in the way that Ol'Joshy's School for Psychic Shark Fighting was a foolish project, uh, a contentious project would simply be one that maybe not everybody agrees on. You could argue that the building of Big Baby, which is not going to be the name of the ship, was a contentious project, just based on...

**Travis:** Mmm, I feel like... Big Baby, I feel like, is catching on, though...

**Griffin:** Um... yes. So, that's your choice. You can choose between the two.

**Clint:** Alright, I've got an idea. The first part of this. I'm gonna do the first part of this. "Someone leaves the community after issuing a dire warning. Who? What is the warning?" Fineas Caul leaves the community.

**Travis:** [gasps]

**Griffin:** Whoa!

**Clint:** Because... he doesn't think they're going to be able to survive without the bathysphere. And he sets out to find the bathysphere. Is that dire enough?

**Griffin:** Interesting. Yeah, I mean, that's fairly dire. I don't know that the... is the warning just, there is something that we... there is something special about that thing that we need to get it back from the people who stole it?

**Clint:** How much—I've got a—well, I've got a rough idea of the problem that I think Fineas would want to address, that I don't know if anybody else would have come up with, and that would be oxygen. What they're going to breathe. And I think he has an idea... about using the bathysphere.

**Griffin:** Okay. Okay! Well, uh, what about the Boyar Hermine? Because they were sort of thick as thieves, uh, leading the construction of things.

**Clint:** I don't want to take her away from... no, I—

**Griffin:** Maybe he leaves her instead, like, in his stead. Like, you are—

**Clint:** Leaves her in charge.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** He leaves her in charge, 'cause this is—he's gonna set out on his own to try and find the bathysphere, 'cause he really thinks they need it, since they don't have any other kind of craft quite yet. And...

**Travis:** And the resource collectors, whose name I—the Vanguard stole that, right?

**Griffin:** Right. Yeah. So he is essentially saying, "I'm gonna find the Vanguard."

**Clint:** He's gonna track down the Vanguard, yeah.

**Griffin:** At the end of the last episode, one of their sort of sonic pickaxes washed up ashore. So there is, y'know, proper catalyst for this excursion. Uh, cool! Okay! He is gone. Uh, world clock... uhh...

**Clint:** So do I do a project now?

**Griffin:** No, not until we do the clocks. Which is good, 'cause the world clock just hit zero, and another big thing is going to happen.

**Travis:** The storm clears up!

**Griffin:** The end!

**Travis:** Yeah, everything's fine!

**Griffin:** Thanks for listening, everybody. Um, no, actually, the storm has grown louder. Um, it's... there is just a constant wind now that is just ripping through the camp, pretty much constantly. It has made things, y'know, pretty unpleasant, and I think people are very appreciative of the, y'know, crappy... of the shithouses, because it provides some protection from the wind.

But like, everything that's not weighed down—like, tents have flown off, and clothes, and anything sort of lightweight. But there are just constant peels of thunder and lightning that tear through this swirling cloud form out in the distance. And every time that there is a flash, it illuminates these massive flying shapes that are flying around inside of there that nobody really has seemed to figure out what it is yet.

Um, there are bigger waves now that are beating against the stones where the shoreline has retreated to. None big enough to threaten you in the same way that the one rogue wave did, but enough to make a really just calamitous noise.

And as the fall continues, a new sound joins the discord. In the distance, the people living in this settlement can hear the sound of battle. Far off, across

the water, there is just this occasional, unnatural flash that illuminates the sky, and then, a few moments later, you hear the sound of a high-pitched explosion. And a couple days after the signs of that battle appear, the settlement makes contact with the survivors of the Southern Archipelago.

Um, which, the occasional trader, I think, from the islands has probably swung by to take, uh, a trading opportunity here and there and provide you all with some level of support. But now, like, this is the exodus plan for the Southern Archipelago is a fleet of ships. There's a lot of them.

There are three sort of massive flagships that are wrought from this like, thick, light green glass, and what looks like bright white ceramic. And then, surrounding these three flagships, there are dozens of these smaller ships that are filling various purposes for the flagships; mostly, defense. The assembly of battleships here puts the settlements to shame, obviously.

And very slowly, the fleet accumulates in the bay, just off shore, and makes contacts with the settlement. And several of their smaller ships and one of their flagships is in desperate need of repairs, because they were ambushed by the naval forces of Hominine.

**Travis:** Mmm.

**Griffin:** And far out at sea, at this moment, nearly half of their naval fleet continues to hold off Hominine while the rest of the fleet seeks repairs, which is what brought them here. So, basically... the fleet that has left the Southern Archipelago to try and make a life as underwater nomads, is seeking safe haven in this bay while they get repairs, and they offer sort of their naval expertise and defense in exchange.

**Travis:** Sorry, wait. So just to be clear, they are planning to live underwater as well?

**Griffin:** Yes, in a—not in a stationary city, but in a convoy. In a fleet of moving ships. Um, so, let me draw them out on the map. And uh, set the world clock for an ominous ten weeks.

**Travis:** Mmm.

**Griffin:** Uhh, Dad! You need to take an action still.

**Clint:** As interesting as I find this fleet and all that stuff, I think I don't want to leave Fineas hanging.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** I think Fineas is going to set out on a quest to find the bathysphere. Fineas Caul, oceanic detective, and he's going to, uh... start where the pickaxe was found, and go looking for the bathysphere.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** Which, we've never established where it came from, right? It was an—he didn't build it.

**Travis:** No, it was there.

**Clint:** It was just this ancient—

**Griffin:** Yeah, it washed up. That was the discovery. Yeah. I think—

**Clint:** He feels very strongly that the bathysphere is really important. So he's gonna set out on this mission. And what I'd like to do is... [laughs] See if he can work out a deal with Ol'Joshy's school.

**Griffin:** Hmm.

**Clint:** And see if they would provide a crew for him. Y'know, like White Squall, where they uh... the high school kids set out on the sailing mission.

**Griffin:** Sure, we can make that true, right? We can say that, when he left, some... [laughs] ... graduates of Ol'Joshy's School for Shark Fighting went with him, because they knew it was going to be a potentially... I mean, the



Vanguard didn't come back. So, something's out there, and it sounds like he—

**Clint:** Well, I know this isn't the way the game is played. I know you just make your decision and do it. But would that... I want to ask Justin what he thinks of that, because I don't—I mean, Ol'Joshy's his baby.

**Griffin:** Well, no, let's—

**Justin:** What are you gonna do to my son?

**Griffin:** We're—that is, I feel like, going against the rules of the game.

**Travis:** Let's not metagame too much.

**Griffin:** Yeah. That's not—

**Justin:** Yeah, whatever you—[crosstalk] There are no feelings. Griffin knocked my beautiful tower into the ravine. Everybody's taking their swings.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Um...

**Clint:** Alright, he's gonna set out with this ship crewed by Ol'Joshy's school students. And...

**Griffin:** They're getting on the job training? Shadowing?

**Clint:** Yeah. And it will—to find the bathysphere.

**Griffin:** How long do you think this will take?

**Clint:** To find the ancient bathysphere! Well, I would say four weeks.

**Griffin:** 'Kay.

**Clint:** `Cause it's a big ocean.

**Griffin:** It is.

**Travis:** It is. The ocean? It's big.

**Griffin:** Quite big. Okay. He's down here, to indicate that he's going far away. Okay. Next card, Justin. Uh oh!

**Justin:** Ugh, this is a long one... "Disease spreads through your community. Choose one. You spend the week quarantining and treating the disease." A week? [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** "Project dice are not reduced this week. Nobody knows what to do about it. Add health and fertility as a scarcity." Um... I feel like... we've gotta take this seriously. We can't—we're about to go into an enclosed space. We can't bring this disease down there. Um, so, I think that we're probably just gonna quarantine for a week... to get it under control.

**Griffin:** [laughs] What—

**Justin:** We're laughing `cause you probably—you folks listening to this probably don't remember. But back in February—or, sorry, March of 2021, we were still in the midst of sort of like a, uh, I guess a pandemic.

**Griffin:** Yeah, like a yucky... it's—

**Justin:** Everybody was quarantining. It was wild. But I'm sure it's wrapped up by now.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Um, what is the disease? Like, what is it... what does it look like?

**Justin:** Oh. Um, it is called... uhh... the—man, this is a slippery slope. 'Cause there's lots of different...

**Travis:** Aw man, you got a bad case of slippery slope?

**Griffin:** Go ask Sydnee. Go ask Sydnee to generate a disease with her mind.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Just come up with a disease out of nowhere. Um... [laughs] It's called Mumps Two.

**Griffin:** Nooo.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** It's called Mumps Two: A New Age. No. It's—the people call it the shallow. And you look very sunken, and uh, low energy. And then, sometimes you beef it, and other times, you don't.

**Griffin:** Okay. I don't know how to draw that on that—we already have a ghost on the map.

**Justin:** Just some stink lines.

**Griffin:** Stink lines coming off of the baby?

**Justin:** I'll draw some—yeah, I'll draw a few. If you want to draw some stink lines...

**Griffin:** The uh, the curator is up here if you want to stink him up.

**Justin:** Yeah, we'll make the curator sick.

**Griffin:** M'kay. Uh, so no project clocks go down this week, but the world clock does go down to nine. And Justin, you get to start a project, discover something new, or hold a discussion.

**Justin:** I guess we don't permanently need to remember about the people who were sick for a while. Those look like money signs. Uh, I'm gonna start a project...

**Griffin:** `Kay.

**Justin:** It is a marketing and branding brainstorm for the boat. People have noticed that some people are calling it Big Baby, and people think that that's not inspirational or particularly good.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** [laughing]

**Justin:** And it's gonna be weird to live inside the big baby if we ever, like, are stuck on there for a while. So like, it is a conference of some of our like, big thinkers. Probably a lot of folks from the Southern Isles, I feel like marketing would be sort of in their wheelhouse. But there's representatives from all of the communities. And they just wanna—it's called 'Brand the Boat.'

**Griffin:** Okay. And this is to come up with a great name for the boat?

[music plays]

**Justin:** Not just a great name for the boat, but like, iconography, slogans, marketing materials... to really sell the boat. Y'know what I mean?

**Griffin:** Yeah, no, for sure. How long?

**Justin:** About three weeks.

**Griffin:** That's a long time.

**Justin:** Two weeks. About two weeks to really market the boat.

**Griffin:** `Kay. Great. Uh, I love that they're doing that, and it will still be a whole full ass month before the boat is, uh, finished.

**Travis:** Well, you want to have it figured out before launch!

**Justin:** Well, people are obsessed with—people are obsessed with it.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Justin:** Right? They have to get out in front of this, because people are obsessed with the boat.

**Griffin:** Okay.

[music plays]

[ad break 31:50 – 33:45]

**Griffin:** Next card. Eight of autumn. “Someone sabotages a project, and the project fails as a result. Who did this? Why?” Or, “Someone is caught trying to sabotage the efforts of the community. How does the community respond?”

**Travis:** Ooh.

**Griffin:** Hurmmm. Wow, okay, so what projects do we have?

**Travis:** We have name the boat, build the boat, purify the seaweed, and Caul investigates.

**Griffin:** Oh man. Okay.

**Justin:** Well, we can't not brand the boat. [laughs] So other than that...

**Griffin:** No, that's not what happens. One of the crew members on Fineas Caul's expedition...

**Justin:** He had the sallow?

**Griffin:** He was Vanguard. He was one of the Vanguard, and he came back to... sort of spy on the rest of the community, to see how they were living. And we lose contact with Fineas. And it is assumed that his ship has gone down, because of this, uh, saboteur, or perhaps he has been taken to where the Vanguard is. Um, but Fineas is no longer in control of this ship that he has been using this whole time, and is now in captivity.

**Clint:** So, to be specific, are you going with the A option or the B option?

**Griffin:** Uh, the A option.

**Clint:** Okay. So it's sabotaged. It's not just that somebody got caught trying to sabotage. Okay.

**Griffin:** Right. Uh, so...

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** We'll take Fineas Caul off the map. Fineas, RIP.

**Clint:** Oh man!

**Travis:** Sorry about your son, Dad.

**Griffin:** Uh, clocks...

**Travis:** I mean Griffin.

**Griffin:** Clocks go down. I feel like I am the executioner of everybody else's projects. I always get the card that's like, "Destroy a concept. Destroy a dream."

**Justin:** "Say no."

**Griffin:** "Say no. Say no, but... " Okay. Uh, nothing completed, so...

**Travis:** Did we ever, like... the robot bodies made of coral. Is that something that is done, or still needs to be done?

**Griffin:** It's—it's done. We have not sort of circled back to it to talk about like, how that is going. Um, but I mean, that's—we've discovered how to do it. It's just like, what we don't know, necessarily, is how... uhh... y'know, how many of these coral bots are being produced, and uh, what life is like for them.

Okay. I'm going to start a project. Under the sea.

**Travis:** [gasps] Down here where the fish is happy?

**Griffin:** I wouldn't say the fish is happy, as much as they are sort of, uh, magically mutated. Basically, uh, the Boyar Hermine strikes a deal, now that she is, essentially, the leader of this community... strikes a deal with the visiting ships of this fleet. Basically says like, you can kick it here, we will help you with repairs. Maybe they siphon some of the Kodite away to like, help them out. But you are going to, essentially, recreate one of your arks under the water to be sort of the first of our undersea buildings, at the very least, that we can begin to have a footprint down there that we can start expanding from.

So, that's what they—that's what they set out to do, and they are able to do it, because these ships are made out of natural things. The glass is made out of, um, like, salt. It is salt glass. The ceramic is made out of this clay found in the sand. So they have the ability to kind of... uh, utilize nature to fix up their ships, and that is basically the material makeup that they are providing for this underwater facility.

And that's going to take, also, a long time, I think. Five weeks, maybe?

**Travis:** I feel pretty good about five weeks.

**Griffin:** Well, they've already been here for a while. I'm gonna say four weeks.

**Travis:** I feel pretty good about four weeks.

**Griffin:** Okay. [laughs] Uh, and onto the next!

**Travis:** Gimme a card! The five of autumn. "The parish arrives. Who are they? Why have they chosen your community, and for what?"

**Griffin:** Ooh!

**Travis:** Or, "A small gang of marauders is making its way through the local terrain. How many are there? What weapons do they carry?" Ohh, you know I like a good church storyline.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Travis:** No, I'm gonna go with the parish.

**Griffin:** Hell yeah.

**Travis:** I like the parish. Um... uh, the parish arrives. You can cut this if you want to, Griffin. Do you think that that means it has to be an entirely new thing, or like, an organization of preexisting people?

**Griffin:** I mean, you talk about the parish. Hominine is a kingdom built around the worship of this magical god.

**Travis:** Oh, okay.



**Griffin:** Brother Seldom is Brother Seldom because he was definitely in this parish. Right? It's just that he didn't necessarily want to abandon everybody.

**Travis:** Okay. So the parish arrives. It is, uh, a faction of the main church of Hominine. And they come, and they offer to help this organization, to help this community, right? With the use of the magic that they have harnessed through Hominine's guidance, on the condition that they, uh, swear that there will be a presence of religion and worship of Hominine in this new settlement.

**Griffin:** Worship of... Benevolence.

**Travis:** Benevolence, yes. That there will be—it is not that everybody has to convert. It's not that they expect everyone to worship. But that some of the old ways of the worship of Benevolence will be included. Basically, they're coming as missionaries of Benevolence, and saying, y'know, we have all these powerful magicks that have been gifted to us by Benevolence, that we will offer in assistance, if you are willing to allow us to establish a church.

**Griffin:** A foothold. Right. Yeah. Foothold is a crass way of putting it, probably, for them, but... yeah.

**Travis:** Yeah, but that's exactly what it is.

**Griffin:** Okay! Um, I want you to draw that on the map, 'cause I think that's an important sort of faction.

**Travis:** Is there like a symbol of Benevolence?

**Griffin:** Hum. No, not that I've sort of generated yet. Maybe a... like an open hand? Like, offering something, is probably the most sort of iconic...

**Travis:** Okay, I'll see if I can draw...

**Griffin:** ... thing that Benevolence did. Or, uh, a key maybe? Like a key that has... or scales? Ooh, scales is good.

**Travis:** Hey, Griffin, I'm not that good of a drawer, bud.

**Griffin:** Draw scales. Scales is good.

**Justin:** Scales are easy.

**Travis:** Okay, well, I already drew that. How do I erase that?

**Griffin:** Let's see. Did he Google 'scales'?

**Travis:** No, I'm just remembering.

**Griffin:** Uh, okay. Clocks tick down. Uh, Travis, seaweed.

**Travis:** Uh, yeah! So, they are able, through a process of basically like, uh, repetition of dehydration and compression to like, squeeze the liquid out of it, they are able to get sort of like, a dried, like, seaweed flake kind of thing that is edible. It's bitter. It does not taste good.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** But it provides a lot of like, key nutrients, including vitamin C.

**Griffin:** Gotta have vitamin C.

**Justin:** Huge.

**Travis:** Yeah, to avoid the scurvy. Um, and the byproduct that is created, that is removed, this poison that is removed, uh, is a powerful and dangerous narcotic.

**Griffin:** Oh!

**Travis:** That causes euphoria. So everybody commits to keeping that in control, and making sure nobody uses it for illicit reasons.

**Griffin:** Fuuun. What's that called? What's that street name?

**Travis:** Uh, it's called Sandman.

**Griffin:** The seaweed juice... that gets you fucked up... is called Sandman?

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Uh, wait—

**Griffin:** I like it. I'm into it.

**Travis:** Wait, let me think real quick. It's called Grotto.

**Griffin:** Grotto! Ooooh, I like it! Alright.

**Travis:** Grotto. But everyone agrees, we're definitely not going to use this for recreational purposes.

**Griffin:** Um... okay, cool. Uhh, Justin. The boat PR project has finished.

**Justin:** [sighs] Yeah... you're not gonna like it...

**Griffin:** [sighs]

**Travis:** Big Baby was the best option?

**Justin:** No... Biggest Baby.

**Travis:** Oh!

**Justin:** They went back and forth. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Alright.

**Justin:** They went back and forth, and um, a lot of people liked Big Baby so much, and other people thought it didn't sound big enough.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Justin:** So they fought and fought and fought, and y'know, if they had had four weeks to figure it out, they probably would've come up with something way better. But because *some* people were rushing the time table, it ended up at Biggest Baby. And the baby is like—the logo for it is like, a regular baby, and he's... [laughing] And he's carrying a bunch of small babies in his arms.

**Travis:** Now, wait. Does the boat have other, smaller boats on it?

**Justin:** No, it has people.

**Travis:** The people are the big babies.

**Justin:** The people are the babies, and Biggest Baby carries the other babies.

**Griffin:** This is a battleship. Just so everybody remembers, this is a fuckin'—

**Travis:** Big Baby Battleship.

**Justin:** The Battlin' Big Baby. Yeah, for sure.

**Griffin:** Okay. It's a battleship made out of the rarest god-body metal...

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Justin:** [laughing] Yeah. Which is why other people didn't want to call it Big Baby, but there were so many people that were so into it that they—

**Travis:** Yeah, definitely got outvoted.

**Justin:** They just settled on Biggest Baby.

**Griffin:** Alright.

**Travis:** And they had a chance to overturn the results of the populous, basically, but y'know what? They said, we voted, and the vote was Biggest Baby. That's where we are.

**Griffin:** That's great. No, I didn't have a rad name that I thought of. And this is—I've earned this, I think. Everybody needs a chance to poop on everybody else's dreams, and y'know...

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Um... okay.

**Justin:** But you have had lots of those. We've discussed it at length.

**Griffin:** Right, exactly. Right. This is—it's my turn.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** So, that is it. Travis.

**Travis:** I would like—

**Justin:** You know that I did just use the game mechanics to get myself an excuse to—I basically bought naming rights to the boat.

**Griffin:** To the Big Baby, using your turn. Right.

**Justin:** Now, you can undo this. I would like it if we just started having a bunch of contrasting marketing projects. [laughing]

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Um, I would like to have a discussion!

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** And I'm going to lead it off with a question.

**Griffin:** `Kay.

**Travis:** The Hominine know powerful magic that could assist us in the build. Should we allow it?

**Griffin:** For the price that they have outlined?

**Travis:** Yes. All—all they're asking is to...

**Justin:** And what is that price?

**Griffin:** They want a church.

**Travis:** ... be able to build a church to Benevolence in this. Nobody even has to go to it.

**Griffin:** We're using a lot of... just for future, y'know, reference, we're using a lot of sort of language, like, real world language here, but I think that's just because we haven't really talked about the church of Hominine. Like, whether they call it a church, what the terminology, I guess, is. But that—

**Travis:** Could be temple. It could be whatever. But they want to have—they want to have a place that observes the rites of Benevolence.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Travis:** And they offer us great magic to help. Should we take them up on it?

**Clint:** Um... we stand against the idea of putting the church in there. It seems that would give a cultural toe-hold to just one phase of our community, and we're trying to blend, and we're trying to put it all together and be something brand new. We of the Southern Archipelago feel that... I may just be a country lawyer, but...

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughing] I felt a little Matlock coming on, there.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** We don't think it's a great idea.

**Griffin:** Anybody who throws their lot in with us is a part of this project. And nobody here is in any position to turn away help.

**Justin:** [in a strange accent] Metal... roan... wood... these are the things that make a boat.

**Griffin:** This fuckin' guy again!

**Justin:** [laughs] [in a strange accent] It's how my pap built boats. It's how his pap before him. Don't reckon we need magic gummin' up the works. The Biggest Baby will arrive the same way we've always made 'em... without magic.

**Griffin:** Sir, we're not even talking about the big baby, sir!

**Travis:** This has nothing to do with the big baby!

**Griffin:** Sir! It's okay if that's what you want to say, sir, but...

**Justin:** [laughing] I thought they wanted to use magic to speed the big baby building!

**Griffin:** No!

**Travis:** No. This is just like, we will use magic to help you build this underwater city.

**Justin:** Of which—okay, so the big baby won't be a part of that. Okay. Let me try again.

**Travis:** [laughs] Okay.

**Justin:** [in a strange accent] I stand by what I said before.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uhh... you get to talk last, Trav.

**Travis:** I don't think we can afford to turn down help. They aren't forcing us to do anything. No one has to go to the church, and the power that they could offer could be literally lifesaving.

**Griffin:** `Kay. Uh, next card. Clint.

**Clint:** Oh! My turn already?

**Griffin:** [bursts into laughter] You're fucking kidding me! Kismet! Are you kidding me?! Enjoy, Clint! Clint!

**Clint:** Second of autumn. "Someone returns to the community." [bursts into laughter]

**Justin:** [laughs]



**Travis:** Wait. The orb would also apply!

**Clint:** Yeah, wait a minute. "Someone returns to the community. Who? Where were they?" Or, "You find a body. Do people recognize who it is? What happened?"

**Justin:** Wow. Big choice, Clint. Take a second to think.

**Griffin:** This is fuckin' big, bud.

**Travis:** This is a huge choice, Dad. Don't fuck it up! [laughs]

**Justin:** I got a bunch of t-shirts I made, just hangin' over the shredder, Mac. Just let me know which way they're goin', baby!

**Travis:** Yeah, it's like when they make the t-shirts before the Superbowl?

**Justin:** Exactly. I got a bunch of Fineas Caul t-shirts! I just need to know if I'm gonna be shippin' these babies out, or if I'm turnin' them into denim.

**Travis:** Now, to be fair, I've made a lot of "I Hate Fineas Caul" t-shirts, so... just let me know who's shreddin' who.

**Clint:** Okay. The ancient bathysphere washes up on shore. Much like it did ages ago, when they first discovered it.

**Travis:** Over five weeks ago! [laughs]

**Clint:** Right. [laughs] And inside, they find a comatose Fineas Caul.

**Justin:** Yesss.

**Clint:** And an unidentified body, and... they have obviously been struggling.

**Travis:** Ooh.

**Griffin:** Wait, they like, fought inside of the bathysphere?

**Clint:** They fought inside the freakin' bathysphere.

**Griffin:** Does anybody recognize the other body? Right? 'Cause it's either somebody who defected and joined the Vanguard, or it is somebody who went out from Ol'Joshy's school.

**Clint:** Um, I'm gonna say that it is the uh... the Vanguard spy.

**Griffin:** Oh, the one who sank the ship. Okay!

**Clint:** The one that sabotaged the ship. We don't know exactly what happened.

**Griffin:** Sure. Okay, Fineas Caul is gonna have a fun story for us someday. But uh, right now, he is...

**Travis:** Assuming he wakes up.

**Griffin:** ... a seepy boy. Uh, can you redraw the bathysphere, Dad?

**Travis:** It was, if I remember correctly, a donut.

**Clint:** I sure will.

**Griffin:** Yes, it was very donut-like. Uh... I cannot believe you got that fucking card. That is unbelievable. Uh... none of the clocks hit zero, so Dad, once you're done drawing your bathysphere, you can take an action!

**Clint:** Alright, I'll draw the bathysphere. My ac—what are the three choices?

**Griffin:** Uh, discover something new, start a project, or hold a discussion.

**Clint:** Okay. In... [laughs] Okay. The bathysphere, when they opened it, was um... partially full of water. Um, and this big struggle they had had had been in water. And in this water, along the bottom of the bathysphere, they find an enormous amount of oxygen in the water. And... they discover that it has a very mysterious kind of phytoplankton in the water, that obviously has been, like the coral was infused with the prestige salt, that this phytoplankton is as well.

**Griffin:** Gonna make my ass Google phytoplankton.

**Clint:** Phytoplankton are tiny microorganisms that create oxygen.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** Ooh!

**Griffin:** Is this, um... so, are these different from, y'know, the kind of creatures that have been observed in the tide pool? Is this like, a different, y'know, deep sea mystery type thing? Or does this resemble what they had in the tide pools?

**Clint:** Um, I kind of thought, in the tide pools... okay, tell me again what was in the tide pools. I'm sorry.

**Griffin:** I mean, tide pools is just a very bio diverse, like...

**Travis:** No, phytoplankton are micro, like...

**Clint:** Yeah, they're microorganisms, and they're all through the ocean. They're in all the water.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** Phytoplankton basically serves as the oxygen creating part of the oceanographic world. Like trees and plants do on land, phytoplankton serve basically the same purpose in water.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** And these are like, hyperactive...

**Travis:** Magic.

**Clint:** Super phytoplankton. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Okay. Uh, so, are you starting a project to...

**Travis:** That feels like a big discovery.

**Griffin:** ... study them, or is this a discovery? Yeah.

**Clint:** The coalition that was working on—I'll come up with a name for the coalition at some point. But the coalition that was working on the coral, uh, robots, decide to study this phytoplankton in the water. They are becoming like, the Cousteau of our reality.

**Griffin:** Yeah. No, the uh, the ecology of what is going on are under here. That's great. I feel like there's a... by this point, there's probably a push to, y'know, full on Noah's ark style, like, try and preserve some of the natural world. But there's this contingent of people now who are like, fuck that. Let's study the ocean world.

**Travis:** Yeah, I mean, at this point, we have people studying the seaweed, the filler fish, now the phytoplankton... and I feel like we have this ecolo—ec—ecological? Yeah?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Yes. Coalition.

**Griffin:** I believe it ecomological.

**Travis:** Ecomological, oceanographical...

**Griffin:** Right.

**Travis:** Like, coalition.

**Griffin:** They are studying this. This is a project, then.

**Clint:** It's a project to see how best to utilize this super-oxygenating phytoplankton for their life under the sea.

**Griffin:** Okay. How long do you think this is going to take?

**Clint:** Three weeks.

**Griffin:** 'Kay.

**Clint:** Fully expecting it to get screwed over at some point in the next deal of the card.

**Griffin:** Uh, I'm gonna leave this here. You can put it by the bathysphere whenever it, uh, has been redrawn.

Uh, alright. Justin.

**Justin:** Ten of autumn.

**Travis:** Mm-hmm?

**Justin:** "Harvest is here and plentiful. Add an abundance."

**Travis:** Ooh!

**Justin:** "Cold autumn winds drive out—" Or, "Cold autumn winds drive out your enemies. Remove a threatening force from the map and the area."

Um... I feel like we haven't—if I'm gonna be honest, I feel like we haven't been paying as close attention to...

**Griffin:** Abundances and scarcities?

**Justin:** Abundances and scarcities, yeah. But I mean, there's no time like the present. That is under...

**Travis:** Yeah, can you—I guess the abundance could be anything, right?

**Justin:** Weekly journal.

**Griffin:** So, uh, right now, to recap, we have an abundance of prestige, hunting gear, blink sharks, filler fish, horseshoe dogs, Delmer historical documents, Hominine performance, psychic shark warriors... we're gonna add... couple things to that.

**Travis:** Seaweed.

**Griffin:** Yeah, the seaweed.

**Travis:** And Grotto.

**Justin:** Well, good news.

**Griffin:** `Kay.

**Justin:** Uh, the word goes out from uncle Joshy that his soldiers, uh, their mission that they launched with renowned hero, Fineas Caul, is a huge success. And psychic sharks are, uh, have been banished from the waters, using their psychic powers. Psychic sharks have been banished. The waters are once again relatively safe from psychic sharks.

**Griffin:** They were teleporting sharks, but if they also had psychic powers, too, that would not surprise me. These guys were rascals.

**Justin:** Yeah, no, I forgot. We joked about them being psychic. No. No, the blink sharks. We got `em.

**Griffin:** [laughs] So the—what does that look like?

**Justin:** Here's what it looks like. Outside of Uncle Joshy's, uh, School for Psychic Warriors Against Blink Sharks...

**Griffin:** When did he become an uncle?! [laughing]

**Justin:** [laughs] He's—

**Travis:** He's Ol'Joshy!

**Griffin:** Ol'Joshy!

**Justin:** Ol'Joshy an Uncle to all...

**Travis:** He could be somebody's uncle.

**Griffin:** But his brother just had a kid, and he's stoked.

**Justin:** Yeah, he's stoked. [laughing] He's got a big—we've been making this for so long. He's got a huge, hand-written banner that reads, "Mission accomplished!" outside.

**Travis:** So the abundance that you're adding is `safety in the water'?

**Justin:** No sir. Read the second part.

**Griffin:** Oh yeah.

**Justin:** Remove a threatening force from the map and the area.

**Griffin:** So let's delete—we don't have any representation of blink sharks in here, except for the desiccated corpse...

**Justin:** We do. We do. On Uncle Joshy's, there is a blink sharks with a uh...

**Griffin:** No sign.

**Justin:** A no sign through them.

**Travis:** Now just put a check mark next to it.

**Justin:** Yeah. No, we're just gonna put—I'm just gonna write, in freehand, I'll just write...

**Griffin:** "Mission accomplished" on there?

**Justin:** Mission—yeah. Mission... accomplished.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Alright. That's fantastic.

**Justin:** We got them.

**Griffin:** How do people think about Ol'Joshy now? Because everybody hated Ol'Joshy, and his bad idea, but it seems like he just... did it. Did the damn thing.

**Justin:** Oh, nobody—no. Nobo—everyone knows. [laughing] Everyone knows the weather drove out the blink sharks. No one gives the credit to Uncle Joshy.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** Ol'Joshy. 'Scuse me.

**Travis:** It could be both.



**Justin:** We have an uncle Josh. That's the problem.

**Griffin:** We do.

**Justin:** Ol'Joshy.

**Griffin:** He can be uncle Joshy, too. Uh, okay. Uh, I counted down the clocks, and uh, we're very close on some of these projects. But uhh... not quite there yet. So, you get to take an action, Justin.

**Justin:** Um, I... what about... do we have any options for like, um, like... deep sea diving?

**Griffin:** I mean, we have the bathysphere.

**Justin:** But like, individual, like... is that something that was within our realm of possibility right now?

**Griffin:** Uh, certainly with the Southern Archipelago ships here, and them sort of sharing. Their watercraft is leagues ahead of where we are.

**Travis:** And with the magic of the parish.

**Griffin:** There's—yeah. I mean, there are a lot of reasons why that could be a thing to prioritize right now.

**Justin:** Yeah, I want to create... I want to prioritize—I want a dive suit lab.

**Griffin:** Okay!

**Justin:** Um, that'll be... I'll build it, uh... I'll say it takes place, like, around the Southern Archipelago ships.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** And they're gonna work with the parish to develop these like, magitech dive suits.

**Griffin:** Okay! Are they like, um...

**Clint:** Cool.

**Griffin:** Are they like, astronaut-sized suits, or are they...

**Justin:** Well, they haven't made them up yet, Griff.

**Griffin:** Alright. Uh, and how long do you think that's gonna take?

**Justin:** Like five days, but we can round up.

**Travis:** A week.

**Justin:** [laughs] Probably, uh... let's call it three weeks.

**Griffin:** Okay. Uh...

**Justin:** I'll draw that. Some representation of that.

**Travis:** Griffin, give us one more week, baby. Come on!

**Griffin:** Uh, okay. I'll do one more week.

**Justin:** Okay, Griff, there's a dive helmet there.

**Travis:** Beautiful.

**Griffin:** Uh, okay. I'm gonna put the three right there, then.

Uh, "Introduce a dark mystery..." This is the sixth of autumn. "Introduce a dark mystery among the members of the community," or, "Conflict flares up

among community members, and as a result, a project fails.” Again. I am the one who gets this card. It’s completely outrageous.

**Clint:** But you don’t have to choose the fail.

**Griffin:** I don’t. And in fact, I won’t. Um... introduce a dark mystery among the members of the community... okay. The... the people who became sallow... and... recovered... right? They took action, swift precautionary action to save the whole community, and nurse back to health the person who were affected by this strange disease that they had not really understood. Uh, all of the people who recovered from the sallow begin to... grow... barbels.

**Travis:** ‘Scuse?

**Justin:** And what could—what are barbels?

**Griffin:** Those are the whiskers that like, catfish and carp have.

**Justin:** Okay. [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Um... they grow... I think there are maybe slight sort of fish-like features that, uh, these people grow. But the most sort of defining trait – and all of them have it, all of them – are these barbels. And they don’t hurt, and in fact, they feel much better, now. Any lingering symptoms from the sallow is gone. It’s just that they’ve grown catfish whiskers. And uh... yeah.

Uhh... countdown clocks. The project finishes. And... sorry.

**Justin:** Which project?

**Griffin:** So, the project that the Southern Archipelago fleet was basically going to build, uh... essentially, one of their arcs, but like, as a building installed here. Uh, what they do is... one of their flagships was like, pretty

heavily damaged. Uh, they just move everybody off of it, and give that flagship to this community, right?

And I think that there are—it is a pact. It is a treaty between them, saying like, y'know, we are now buds for life. [laughs] We are going to be able to rely on each other. When we roll up, when our fleet rolls up and needs something from this undersea city in the future, remember that we gave you an ark, and we put it below the sea and attached it to the Ascension, and that's where it is now, and you can use that to build off of, right? If you want to use that as the central hub or whatever, go for it, but that is the arrangement.

So, that is how that project finishes. Um... and... god, I have to take an action, too.

**Travis:** Did the bathysphere not finish? It just came to one?

**Griffin:** It just came to one. That's right. Mm-hmm... okay.

The coral robot bodies that were discovered, basically, invented in our last session, that can house the Einarr spirits? They've been growing down here for a while. And the first one of them basically comes off of the reef, detaches from the reef, and is taken to the—this, uh... what have you been calling them, Dad? This ecological federation?

**Clint:** Just the coalition. We haven't really—

**Griffin:** The coalition. We haven't named them yet. Yes.

**Clint:** I'm gonna call them The Coral Reefers.

**Griffin:** No.

**Justin:** No, that's Jimmy Buffet's backup band.

**Clint:** Aw.

**Griffin:** We should come up with something else. Uh... sort of takes this, uh... this body, uh, ashore, and... after a little bit, it is inhabited. And the being that inhabits it... is... not like an Einarr that comes back and remembers stuff about their life and what happened to them. It's not like, um... it's not like they're talking to a single person.

What has inhabited this body is a... almost hive mind of souls, if you want to call them that, of the Einarr that all have sort of merged into this one entity.

**Clint:** Gestalt.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Travis:** Is there just one spirit, or is every spirit a hive...

**Griffin:** No, it's not every spirit. It's—this is the first of these sort of projects to succeed, right? Of putting an Einarr Spirit inside of one of these bodies they've been growing.

**Clint:** [laughs]

[music begins]

**Griffin:** Only, it's not just one spirit that came in here – it was, uh... it was six spirits, all came in at the same time, and sort of melded into someone new. And the name of this being... they call themselves, um... Tessellation. And they have joined the community.

[music plays]

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