

The Adventure Zone: Ethersea — Episode 6

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Griffin: Previously, on The Adventure Zone Ethersea:

[theme music plays]

Curator: Guthrie was making his way out to the gallery, not to recover the works of art located there, but rather to destroy them.

Devo: Zoon almost died, and a child is on her own, because you waited.

Curator: You sign the non-disclosure agreement, you promise to offer me right of first refusal on any recovered relics you may discover out during your travails. I will give you forty for everything.

Amber: We've got forty-two Lux in our pockets, I think things are goin' fine.

Mona: Y'all, uh, y'all in the buying mood, then?

Devo: We're here to buy ship.

Amber: I mean, I love this, the bubble tub skin it's got.

Devo: This is— I do like the bubble tub skin, this is nice, and the— a cushy bridge!

Zoon: The sphere underneath looks... so cool!

Mona: Thirty, and uh, I will throw in a pass to a very exclusive aftermarket.

Felix: My name is Felix. Welcome to the Phantom Sea Coast Co.

[Theme music plays out]

Griffin: We got a ship. Well, y'all got a ship.

Clint: Wooo!

Griffin: And— uh...

Justin: You shoulda taken care of that before the show, Griffin. If... you gotta ship.

Griffin: Oh, that's funny. Aw man, that's good.

Justin: I wasn't sure when I was saying it, so I'm really happy to hear that it landed.

Clint: See, there's a reason for people to listen to this show!

Justin: Now there's jokes in it! See I'm—

Clint: Now there's jokes!

Justin: I'm ruining it now! People will be like, "I was promised I should listen to this, Justin's dropping this great potty humor."

Griffin: Uh. So, y'all's bathyscape. Bathyscaphe. Bathyscaphe's a fucked up word.

Clint: Yeah it is!

Griffin: That word's got— that word's got a Y in it, and a PH in it, but not where you would think it is. Anyway, I have created a ship sheet, here for you! And as you can see, this gently used vehicle is not quite the turbo yacht that the Dreams of Deborah was. Y'all got affordable sensors, you got a weak engine—

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: You got— you got a sheer bladder. On this one.

Travis: Oh, just like me...

Clint: That's for damn sure.

Griffin: Yeah, so. Uh, you know, the stats aren't as choice. Your hull rating is much lower. That's your HP.

Travis: That's not as bad as I thought it would be, though.

Griffin: Yeah, no, it's, I mean it's still a— it is a sturdy vessel. And it comes with some stuff: you got a slug launcher, just a very basic weapon, on board. And of course you have a tool here, which is the bathysphere bay, which contains a single pilotable bathysphere attached to the ship with an extremely long extremely durable cable, and actually if you look at the bottom, there's a bathysphere tab, with a little blue line on it, if you tap into that, whenever somebody pilots the bathysphere, here is a separate ship sheet!

Clint: Aw, man!

Griffin: For the bathysphere. Uh—

Clint: And if I may also say, really crummy crew quarters, compared to what we're used to.

Griffin: Yeah, no—

Travis: Yeah, Spartan.

Griffin: Spartan crew quarters, bare bones living quarters, food storage, and washroom, that's a minus two to your readiness rating.

Travis: Oh boy.

Griffin: Yeah. You also, you know, you don't have supplies for the ship yet, and when that is true, you also have meager— "meager rations" which is another minus two to readiness, so. Uh, okay! So!

[music begins]

Griffin: You guys though— forget about the flaws in your ship, because you're about to fix those all up. 'Cause y'all got— y'all got twelve Lux to spend here at the Phantom Sea Coast Co. Uh, and the catfish worm creature, Felix, has welcomed you in, summoned your vehicle— it sort of pops up through the floor, which is, you know, just water, here in this grotto.

Travis: Oh, okay, thank God. I thought you meant that it just like— phased through? I was horrified.

Justin: I hope... that your wife and children weren't around to hear the squeal of self-congratulatory delight you made, when you came up with Phantom Sea Coast Co. [chuckles]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, it was literally... It came to me in a dream. It was like, in the morning, me and Rachel woke up, and I was like, "hey check this out," and she was like "yeah that's ballin'."

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: [laughs] And then she starts texting her parents...

Griffin: Right. Exactly.

Travis: And she's like, "I've never loved him more than I do right now."

Justin: "Guys, you'll never believe this dope shit my man—" And then Dave and Linda start texting everybody THEY know...

Griffin: Right. Um.

Travis: Pretty soon it's in the newsletter! Um, before we start negotiation, I thought about something, and I'd like to have a little conversation, between the three.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Um.

Justin: Okay.

[Solemn music plays quietly]

Devo: Amber, Zoox? It's a— it has occurred to me that we have this Lux to spend on the ship, but a big part of the reason we were given it was because of Beck's situation. Um, and so I was thinking that instead of spending this money, I would try something. And if it works, we could save that money, and give that to Beck, and if it doesn't work, then we can spend the money, and make sure Beck is provided for in a different way. But I wanted to check with you before I do this?

Amber: Well that's— that is so sweet. Go ahead and give me my third, and then you can do what you will with the remainder.

Devo: This is fair, it is your... yeah. Zoox?

Zoox: I would like my third as well.

Amber: Yeah, if we're gonna be investing it in a... in a business, y'know, with hopes of future returns, I can get behind that sort of... thing. But I... it's not a charitable organization.

Devo: Well, it's just that when we were negotiating with the Curator, originally we were going to be given twenty-five, and it was by telling him that, you know, he needed to provide for Beck, that I was able to negotiate the price.

Amber: Mmm. Mmhmm. Perfect. So, I don't actually know Beck. So, I think what I'll do is go ahead and take... my third. Yeah...

Griffin: [snickers softly]

Devo: I see.

Amber: Yeah, that's what I'm gonna do. I thought about it— you wanna know something? And this is prob— I thought about it. Honestly, for a second, 'cause I was wonderin' if I'm that sort of person, but it turns out that I'm not.

Devo: I see. And Zoox, you are not this person?

Zoox: Um. May I inquire— could I ask what you are going to do with the eight remaining?

Devo: Well, I am going to give this to Brother Seldom to provide for Beck, but I am going to... attempt to negotiate a line of credit. With this catfish person.

Zoox: Hmm.

Amber: I... I'd rather... I mean. I'd rather have it free and clear if that's okay by you.

Devo: Okay, very well. You can have your third, and Zoox, you can have your third.

[Justin vocalizes clicking noises]

[Sound effect: clinking]

Justin: So we're not gonna spend it on boat?!

Travis: What.

Justin: I mean, like, I was prepared to spend it on the ship, 'cause what else am I gonna do with money but adventure shit! But if we're all looking out for ourselves here! Then I'll just spend it on boat shit that I want!

Travis: That seems like that's what's happening. It's just— I, I'm saying, that for me—

Justin: Fine! Fine! You know, Travis, fine!

Amber: Alright, cat! [laughs]

Griffin: [chuckles]

Amber: Here's the deal! We're all spending it on boat shit that WE want, and we're not working together!

Felix: That is an unorthodox way of doing this, but, uh, that money still spends, yumma yumma.

Clint: [laughs]

Felix: What can I interest you in? Maybe perhaps a big cannon? Or several smaller cannons?

Amber: Mmm...

Felix: This thing—

Clint: Can we get some price quotes?

Felix: This thing here is called a sextant, and that's kind of funny.

Justin: Um, is there a sheet? Griffin?

Griffin: Yes, all of those tabs at the bottom of this spreadsheet include things that you can buy at the Phantom Sea Coast Co. Uh, except for the things that are grayed out, which you do not have access to. Basically, this is a whole-sale after-market retailer, that... you know, gathers certain goods, certain upgrades, from other vendors in the city of Founders' Wake, and outlying suburbs, and sells them here, but your ship needs to be licensed to— in order to equip certain things, like magical weaponry, or big big bombs. Uh. Those are things that you do not have access to until you get sort of special permission, from the city's different sort of, uh, groups, to equip those.

Justin: Okay, got it. Okay.

Griffin: So, just for the listeners at home, we have weapons, that you can toss on, you have a certain number of hard points on the ship that you can, you know, attach weapons to. You have tools, which are, you know, things that are not weapons but are useful aboard the ship. You have parts, which sort of dictate the stats of the ship. You have facilities, which are mostly sort of narrative opportunities, right?

Like a medica, which you can use for, you know, help with first aid, or to make potions and stuff like that. And then there's consumables, which, you know, you can set money aside for right now, you can pick up some in anticipation of your next mission, but these are things that are, you know, you buy them and then at the end of the mission they are all used up.

Clint: I have a first suggestion. I say, since it's a detraction, the spartan crew quarters is taking two points off our readiness... right now our total readiness is one, whereas maybe if we fix the spartan crew quarters, our total readiness will go up? And that will make us more effective in ship shit.

Justin: Where are you seeing the... spartan crew quarters? 'Cause I see, bridge and a cargo chamber, and that's it.

Clint: Look over next to the calculator—

Griffin: Oh, you're looking at the bathysphere. If you look at the tab to the left— the bathysphere is the small deployable ship.

Justin: Oh, right, okay, yes.

Clint: Yeah. Uh, right now under readiness calculator, we got "Zoox expertise," you're welcome, five, spartan crew quarters, minus two.

Justin: Mmhmm.

Clint: Where it seems to me that if we correct the spartan crew quarters, while it sounds selfish, that automatically goes to the bottom line, as we

remember, from, uh, from previous adventures. And improves our total readiness, which improves us, in...

Justin: Well, Dad, I got great news for ya. That improved, the, uh— The basic crew quarters is three, you can absolutely afford that with your four.

Clint: M'kay.

Griffin: Why— can I ask a question, just to not— not just metagame this decision, is why Zoox would be... why this would be sort of the upgrade that Zoox would concern himself with right now.

Clint: I'm not saying Zoox is concerned with. I'm—

Justin: There you go!

Clint: He's just bringing it up.

Justin: Think about what Zoox would get! Because I— we're... I think it's funny, that we're— we decided to do it this way, and I get— I'm getting a kick out of it.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, I— I think— I get why Clint would want to do this, but I don't know that it is necessarily the decision that Zoox would make.

Clint: Alright, that's a good point.

Justin: Alright, yep, here, think about it a little bit Dad, and I'll go, I'll go ahead.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Okay.

Amber: Alright, I know what I want.

Felix: Yes, madam?

Amber: I'm gonna call it Amber's Pad. I want the basic crew quarters. Except there's only gonna be one bunk in there, and it's mine!

Felix: The basic crew quarters is enough to sustain a crew of four...

Amber: Perfect. Yeah. They're on the floor.

Clint: [cracks up]

Amber: Doing charity work. And I'll be in Amber's Place. Can I use... Can you put, can you do etching?

Felix: Uh... of... like, personalization of the crew quarters?

Amber: Yeah, can you do personalizations?

Felix: I suppose so?

Amber: Alright. Write on the door, "Amber's Place, no boys allowed."

Felix: I can certainly do that.

Amber: Hell yeah. Make the— you said it could do four?

Felix: Yes?

Amber: Just a big ass bed then. Like, super nice.

Felix: A turbo bed, made of four smaller beds!

Amber: [crosstalk] The turb— yeah. Hell yeah!

Felix: Excellent.

Amber: This is good, I'm gonna be ready as fuck.

Griffin: He lowers his barbels down into the water, and they vibrate. And when that happens, a bunch of these little... like, shipworms, pop up from the water below, and like, some of them are holding welding torches, some of them are holding big, big plates of metal, and just dozens of these things start working on the ship as you are still talking to him. So that is three Lux. You are down to one, if you are... not pooling those resources.

Justin: Definitely not. Is there anything for one?

Griffin: Uh, I mean, there's—

Justin: I feel like that's the point at Billy Bob's Wonderland, when you're like, "I guess I could go with some Laffy Taffy. I got twenty tickets to spend."

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] "I guess I could get a ring pop!"

Justin: "I'll get a ring pop, fuck it!" [laughs]

Griffin: Alright.

Justin: "I could use one of these, uh, gooshy guys that stick to the wall, that roll down the wall, that's cool."

Griffin: Uh. I am writing here in facilities—

Justin: Affordable sensors!

Griffin: Uhh... I am writing... Amber's Place! Bare bones living quarters, food storage, and washroom. Uh, you already have affordable sensors. That is the... that is what you... your ship comes equipped with.

Justin: Okay, [laughing] do we have brittle plating?

Griffin: Uh, you actually have better than brittle plating. Because—

Justin: Nice! Okay, I'm good, I'll just save my Lux.

Travis: Well there's basic rations, we don't have—

Griffin: Yeah, you may want to save it for when, y'know, the next mission rolls around and you want to... get rations.

Justin: Yeah, I'm gonna keep a Lux in my back pocket.

Griffin: Okay, cool. I am removing the spartan crew quarters penalty from the readiness calculator. So. You're back up to three. Uh...

Felix: What about you two? I hear that sweet jingle jangle of Lux in your pocket, or... cavity inside of your body.

Justin: Nice.

Clint: Um, okay. So, current weaponry we have is just the slug launcher? Correct?

Griffin: Yes. Correct. And weapons can only be used once per turn, so like, you all can't just take turns firing this, this slug launcher—

Clint: Right.

Griffin: If you are in ship combat.

Clint: Um. Okay. Zoox is going to... buy a broadside cannon.

Griffin: Uh, okay! That is a... sort of middle of the road piece of weaponry. It has the "reload" tag, so it can't be used two turns in a row. But it's a little bit stronger than the standard issue slug launcher.

Clint: Yeah. So he wants the broadside cannon.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Uh. He wants to name it Marlene.

Griffin: Marlene, the broadside cannon?

Clint: Marlene the broadside cannon. And he's gonna give his fourth Lux... to Devo.

Griffin: Oh! Okay, yeah, that's only three Lux—

Devo: Oh, I appreciate this.

Griffin: So, uh...

Zoox: This— here. I figure, y'know, our protection is primary, but you helping Beck is secondary, so here's... here's a whole Lux.

Devo: I appreciate this. It is... y'know, one twentieth, 20 percent, of your money, so this is a good charitable donation—

Zoox: Twen— 25.

Griffin: Wait, wait— 25.

Zoox: 25.

Griffin: Is, is there—

Devo: Oh, yeah, four, yeah.

Griffin: Oh, is this like a thing with Devo where he's bad at math? Because that's cool. That could be funny.

Travis: No, he's bad at money.

Clint: [giggles]

Griffin: Okay. Um, alright. Devo!

Travis: Um...

Griffin: Oh! By the way, the sh— as soon as you say broadside cannons, the shipworms, like, a fleet of them sort of peel off the work that they were doing on Amber's place, and some of them begin like boring holes in the side of the ship, that they are now installing these broadside cannons on.

[Sound effect of drilling and construction noises]

Felix: And you there? Devo? What will you be having today?

Devo: Um. Well. Um. Uh.

Amber: Listen, why don't you just... get something for yourself? She'll be fine.

[solemn music plays softly]

Devo: It's... [sighs]

Amber: You saw how she handled those knives, she'll be able to handle herself out here.

Devo: It's, it— [sighs] Excuse me for just one second, Felix. Um. Amber, it's not about... [sighs] What I don't want is for her to be in a position where she doesn't have... she has no choice, right? Because she has no money and no power. I— I have been there. I was— I was a child who did not get to make my own decisions, and suffered for it quite a bit. And it is because of our bad decisions that we... trusted Guthrie, we went on the ship, we... we did everything wrong. And as a result, her home, her job, her friend, all of these were taken away from her. Because of us.

Amber: I understand you feel bad. I do. I understand that... y'know, you'd like to fix everything for her. But... that's not the world we're in, hon. Listen. I was a lot younger than her before I had to start figuring things out for myself. She'll be fine. But... A little help, y'know, now and then, that makes sense, but... you can't be her world now. Y'know? You can give her... a leg up, but you can't be... You can't be her parent.

Devo: Yes, I understand this. It is not...

Amber: And also they got a lot of guns...

Devo: No, I do like this, yes.

[somber music begins to fade out]

Amber: They're so... they're so cool. And like... I'll get— can I tell you something? Don't tell Zoox, but I'll give you my extra if there's like a big gun that you really want. You know what, hey, hey! Listen. I got one extra, I'm not doing nothing with. Give this to her. You know, I'll kick— I'll kick you— fuck, I'll kick in a little bit if it'll let you get the big gun of your dreams.

Felix: This is hugely uncomfortable for me.

Clint: [laughs]

Amber: You stepped away! Oh my god...

Devo: Have you been listenin'??

Travis: Wait, who's voice am I doing?!

Amber: Shhh— don't look! Don't look up! Oh god don't look up. Oh god, I wish I hadn't looked up.

Felix: I'm kind of everywhere.

Griffin: And he pulls his body back into the hole above you, and then pops out of a different hole, to the side.

Travis: Jesus Christ! Alright.

Felix: Yeah, my body's confusing.

Devo: Here's— here's what I will say. I will— I then, have— I will say, three Lux to spend. And then give three Lux to Beck. But I would also request... an eight Lux line of credit.

Felix: Oh ho hooo!

Justin: God almighty! Why?? Sorry, this is Justin.

Travis: I wanna buy more shit.

Felix: What about fifty Lux? Or a bajillion?

Devo: I do not want to be this deeply in debt. But I do have this!

Travis: And he pulls out the gold plate that Brother Seldom gave him...

Griffin: Okay...

Devo: ... That I can use as collateral.

Clint: [in the distance] Ooh!

Felix: Hmm.

Devo: And along with this, if I die, before I am able to pay you back, you can take this—

Travis: And Devo writes out a note.

Devo: ... To the Cern family. And they will pay my debt, no questions asked.

Justin: Can I metagame for a second? Like— [sighs] I like, and this is in-show. An in-show metagaming. I think that it's... this, this feels a bit, um... okay, so the ship thing is so mechanical, this feels a bit "cheat code-y" to me? In a way that's like, will be less... it makes the other... It kind of makes the upgrade process of the ship like less satisfying and crunchy...

Travis: Right.

Griffin: Oh, I got—

Justin: To boost it, this much, early, to me.

Griffin: Let—

Justin: Is my concern.

Griffin: I— I— I got a— I got this.

Justin: Okay good!

Griffin: Felix smiles—

Travis: Well, I also— just to answer that real quick, the justification for me is in character, Devo— what Devo brings to the table, is like—

Griffin: Is this.

Travis: Negotiation.

Griffin: Right, exactly.

Travis: And like, this is it. He's not good in a fight.

Justin: That makes sense. Okay yeah, I get that, I get that.

Griffin: Uh. The... Felix smiles. And he says,

Felix: You can keep your plate. I would be happy to offer a line of credit for... five Lux. However, there will be interest applied to the loan. If you find—

Zoox: [whispering] Don't give him your blood.

Felix: If you find this— no, I don't roll like that, I'm a catfish.

Clint: [laughs]

Devo: What would the interest be?

Felix: Oh, a reasonable... interest.

Griffin: I don't— this is me Griffin saying, I don't know. He will give you—

Justin: [imitating Felix] The usual interest, that people do! [laughing]

Griffin: "The usual, the normal amount!"

Justin: "Business!"

Travis: [laughs] "You know! A perfectly fine amount." Uh, I—

Griffin: Mechanically, it's this. He'll give you credit, of five Lux. But until you pay that back, that, the, uh, you know. The interest is going to compound one additional Lux per, like, mission that you go on...

Travis: That makes a lot of sense, yes.

Griffin: Without paying this.

Devo: This is fine and acceptable to me.

Felix: Ooookay!

Griffin: And he rattles his, his barbels, in the water again, and like a single shipworm pops up right in front of you, and he's wearing a little business suit and a little green visor.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: And he opens up a book, and like... jots something down in it, and then eyes you over, and then holds it toward you, offering you the pen.

Travis: Devo signs.

Griffin: Okay!

Travis: Um. And so, Devo is going to take...

Devo: I would like the twin turbine.

Felix: Uhh... yes... It looks...

Devo: I would like—

Felix: It looks like your ship is bladder controlled. But... perhaps the turbines can fill the bladder faster?

Devo: This makes complete sense to me.

Felix: I love it!

Devo: Yes. I will also take—

Felix: [calling out] Boys! Put the engines inside of the bladder! Yeah, I don't know, but it seems like it should work!

[sound effect of power tools whirring]

Devo: Uh, I will also—

Clint: As a kidney stone sufferer, I would like us to stop putting things in bladders.

Griffin: [laughing] Yeah, sure.

Justin: [snickers]

Travis: That's fair, that's fair, Dad. Uh,

Devo: I will also take... uh...

Griffin: That is four Lux, by the way, which brings— if you're giving three to Beck, that brings you down to four to spend, with your line of credit.

Travis: Correct. Uh, let's see. So that brought up our speed, which I would be worried about. Um... and you know what? I think I'm also... uh, how much is the... repair sprite?

Griffin: Uh, repair sprites are not available to you. That—

Travis: Ah, damn it.

Griffin: That level of technology, you can see, it's grayed out. Some of the sort of more arcane tools are... are, uh...

Travis: Okay. Yeah yeah.

Griffin: Are unavailable at the moment.

Devo: And I will also take... the depth charge.

Felix: Oh! A fan of `splosions, are you?

Devo: Well, this is more for future planning. There is a gentleman that, when I find him, I am going to blow him the fuck up.

Felix: [gasps] Dramatic irony, I love it!

Griffin: ... I don't think that's what dramatic irony is. Okay! You buy the depth charge—

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: No but see, Griffin knows that, but Felix doesn't.

Griffin: Right, Felix does not. Felix just says shit like that a lot, to try and impress people. Um, okay! As you say that, a very nervous-looking shipworm starts installing a bay below the ship to deploy explosives, and...

uh, yeah! The depth charge was on the Dreams of Deborah, but as a reminder, you can only use it twice per mission. But it does, it does a good amount of damage. It's also positional. So that means you have to be in position. But it does 4d10 plus 6 force damage, so it's—

Travis: But it gives us a little more options.

Griffin: Yeah! And it also attacks— it can also attack multiple targets, if that ever sort of comes into play, because it hits a 60 foot sphere. Damn, a 60 foot sphere— phbbt— Emery's ship would— [laughing] should have gotten fucked up, by one of— okay, whatever. Maybe it was a weak depth charge. Anyway. Okay, that is all your money. It takes, you know, about— it takes about, weirdly, like 15 minutes. And there's some nice, there's a nice little cushy, like, side room, for you to sit in and wait for these upgrades to be installed. But when you come—

Clint: A lot of magazines.

Griffin: Yeah! When you come back out though, you can see there's not a ton of aesthetic differences to this ship. You know, you can't see Amber's Place from the outside. Maybe you can through— maybe there's a new porthole, or a couple portholes, where you can see into this living quarters, where there were—

Justin: You can't see into it.

Griffin: Oh, okay!

Justin: But she can see out of it.

Travis: Oh!

Justin: Because she wants— it's like—

Griffin: Two way mirror situation?

Justin: Two way mirror. Yeah.

Griffin: I like that, okay.

[music begins playing]

Griffin: But there are, you know, you have this new bay on the bottom of the ship, you have these broadside cannons sticking out of the side. Uh, and... not only that, the ship has been cleaned! It's been once-overed. So it is clean and shiny. Which, uh...

Clint: So we can see that rad paint job?

Travis: Oh, yeah.

Griffin: That rad magenta and green paint job.

Clint: With the flames.

Travis: It— it's fuchsia and deep purple, with green flames. Just to clarify.

Griffin: And the bridge is, you know, the cylindrical bridge sort of raises out of the top of the ship as you all enter, and it senses you. And Felix says—

Travis: What?!

Griffin: It— yeah! It's got a, that's like your key fob. For the ship. That's like, instead of going [imitating a car beeping] "whoop whoop!" The actual bridge, like, pops up, so you guys can climb inside.

Travis: Okay!

Griffin: Uh, and... Felix says,

Felix: Ookay! Have fun out there! And remember! Devo! Clock's ticking! The juice—

Devo: Yes, I know.

Felix: The juice is flowing!

Devo: Yes, the juice must flow. Yes, I know.

Zoox: Looking for the fig—!

Devo: Yes, I know.

Felix: The fig— it's ripening, Devo.

Devo: Yes. I am aware.

Felix: Oookay!

Griffin: ... You are never going to pay this debt back.

Travis: I don't know, I might!

Griffin: [doubtfully] Okay.

Travis: You don't know what Devo can steal.

[Phantom Sea Coast Co. music plays out]

[ad break]

[music plays]

Griffin: Okay, so you have spent all of your money, save for the three Lux that you will dispense out to Beck as her cut for the job. Why don't we do this— why don't we talk about our characters? Because you all started out as level one adventurers, to sort of get the lay of the land, you've been on a mission now—

Travis: Now we're level eighteen!

Griffin: And now you're level a thousand.

Travis: It's amazing.

Griffin: Um. No, you are level three now. And so I want to talk about your characters a little bit more in detail, because by level three now you have picked your subclass, which is going to sort of inform the mechanical flavor that your adventurer is going to bring to the table. So why don't we start with... um, Zoox! Why don't you tell us what you got going on? To— as a reminder, Zoox is a ranger, with a sort of oceanic proficiency. But now you've, I imagine, got some more stuff going on.

Clint: Yeah. The subclass that Zoox has chosen is Swarmkeeper.

Griffin: That sounds cool!

Travis: Ooooh!

Clint: Yeah. Um. And now I can't find it... so I can tell you all the cool stuff that Swarmkeeper does... um... anyway, it controls like swarms of animals? And, I guess, in our case, we'll make it fish...

Griffin: Interesting!

Clint: ... of some kind.

Griffin: Okay...

Clint: Um. And so... in "spells," it— he now has spells.

Griffin: Yes.

Clint: Zoox now spells... um... which are—

Travis: Now Dad, it's gonna be hard for you to play a caster, but we can talk about like, how the spells work and stuff.

Griffin: Sure...

Clint: You guys can help me out that, right?

Travis: Sure.

Clint: So his proficiencies are Animal Handling, Nature, and Survival.

Griffin: Right.

Clint: Uh... Natural Explorer... uh, fighting style, he's chosen Archery... Spellcasting... he has chosen— and I understand— having, uh, having this makes it so much easier.

Griffin: This is different by the way, this is— I just want to say, because I didn't even think about the fact that Zoox as a ranger would get some spells? This has gotta be different from what Devo does. Like, this is maybe not... uh... salt magic, as taught by Benevolence? This is like, these are— maybe we can frame your spells as sort of evolutionary... you know, biological things, that you can do... because of your...

Travis: It's electrical impulses and shit! Y'know! Fish.

Griffin: Yeah, I mean, we can do— we can say whatever we want. But, uh. I—

Clint: Well, yeah, but you— remember the stuff that is, uh... infused in the water...?

Griffin: Is magic, yeah.

Clint: ... is what it...

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Clint: Is what put life into the coral in the first place.

Griffin: Yeah!

Justin: It's biomagus.

Travis: It's biomagus!

Griffin: Biomagus! That's cool.

Clint: Ohhh!

Griffin: So—

Clint: [loudly, in a strange voice] It's biomagus!

Griffin: So the swarm is like a big mechanic then. For your subclass.

Clint: Right. The swarm... the swarm that he has... um... and I'll decide, I haven't decided on what they are. It can attack with piercing damage. Um...

Griffin: This is so fuckin' cool! This is a new— this is a new subclass.

Clint: And it also— yeah. Swarmkeeper is fairly new. And... um... if you attack and succeed on a strength saving throw, it also will move... the attacker fifteen feet away.

Travis: Nice.

Clint: Or in the direction of your choice. It also knocks—

Griffin: Well, it can move— it can move the target five feet away, or move you five feet.

Clint: Right. Right.

Griffin: So after you hit a creature with an attack, you can have your swarm do a followup attack—

Clint: Right.

Griffin: You can have the swarm try and push them fifteen feet, and knock them prone... oh no, that's at eleventh level. Or you can move yourself, five feet.

Clint: Right. Move... five feet. And...

Griffin: That's cool, that can get you out of, like... an attack of opportunity situation.

Clint: Yeah, ranger has some really cool spells. And now that I know I can only load up so many at this level...

Griffin: [laughing] Mmhmm!

Clint: Well, he's gone mostly heavily into the animal...

Griffin: Right.

Clint: ... stuff. He's got *Animal Friendship*, *Speak with Animals*, um... but he also has a thing called *Faerie Fire*?

Griffin: Sure!

Travis: Oh, yeah!

Justin: Mmm, yeah.

Clint: Which surrounds the target and allows other hits advantage.

Travis: [mumbles unintelligibly]

Clint: And *Hunter's Mark*! I figure *Hunter's Mark* will come in real handy.

Griffin: Sure!

Clint: Because it puts a mark on the target, and it helps you to track 'em.

Travis: Yeah, *Hunter's Mark*, you will use... nigh constantly.

Griffin: Yeah, I'm— I bet. You also get the cantrip *Mage Hand*? Which...

Clint: Yeah.

Griffin: For you, I think— but it is a Swarmkeeper spell, so for you like, your mage hand is not some glowing invisible hand. Like, it's your swarm.

Clint: Yeah.

Griffin: You can make your swarm grab shit, and bring it to you. This is really cool, Dad. This is really sick. Uh...

Clint: Thank you!

Griffin: So do you get, I guess this is what you get in lieu of... of a pet? I guess so.

Clint: Well... there's... there's stuff coming later on.

Griffin: Yeah, I guess so. Okay. Cool.

Clint: Where... where the pet comes.

Griffin: I want you to think about your swarm. Right? Because you are a walking... you are a walking ecosystem. You're a— you are made of coral. And so there is an opportunity here for just like... your swarm just lives with you and in you. Because fish, y'know, that's not really gonna help you in a battle where you're inside a ship or something, unless they are flying fish, which, this is magic... This is a magic world, so maybe it is that.

Clint: Yeah, I figure on land or in the air, they'll just... maybe summon... something air based?

Griffin: Yeah. We—

Travis: Cormorants!

Clint: [unintelligible] or something?

Griffin: Why don't you think about that while we talk about the other...

Clint: I will. I will.

Griffin: The other characters. Uh, Devo! Uh—

Travis: Well, Devo went to college, Griffin.

Griffin: Yes, yes.

Travis: It's very exciting. He was... he minored, um, in bowling. But he majored in the College of Whispers.

Griffin: Okay. Is one of the features, College of Whispers, your fuckin' ability scores... or your skill scores go, like, through the roof?

Travis: Yeah. Um, so... I now have a couple things, including Jack of All Trades, which you can add half your proficiency bonus, rounded down, to an ability check you make that doesn't already include your proficiency bonus, which is pretty cool.

Griffin: That's wild.

Travis: Song of Rest, which— my soothing music or oration, to revitalize my wounded allies during a short rest. Um. And then the bard college, it basically gives me a couple of like, varied special things? Oh, the one you're talking about, by the way—

Justin: Special things?

Travis: Expertise. At third level, you choose two of your skill proficiencies and your proficiency bonus is doubled...

Griffin: Wow. Okay.

Travis: For those ability checks. That's where persuasion and insight come in.

Griffin: Yes. They are... through the roof.

Travis: But the special things that I've gotten are Psychic Blades, and Words of Terror!

Griffin: Yes! Psychic Blades... Psychic Blades is very fascinating to me. Because it seems very anti-bard. But... can you explain what it does?

Travis: Yeah. So basically, when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, your bardic inspiration infuses your attack, to hit them with 2d6 psychic damage as well. So it expends one of your bardic inspirations, but adds 2d6 to the hit. So you're hitting with a physical weapon, and you're dealing psychic damage as well.

Griffin: And exchanging kinda like your support capacity...

Travis: For damage.

Griffin: In doing so. For damage. Yeah, that's cool. And then... I imagine Words of Terror is just what it sounds like?

Travis: Yeah, basically as you're talking to someone, you weave magic into your words, and you can make them paranoid. And they have to succeed on a saving throw against my spell save DC, or they're frightened of me, or another creature of my choice, and they're frightened for an hour, until attacked or damaged, or until it witnesses its allies being—

Griffin: You're gonna use that all the fucking time, aren't ya. Okay.

Travis: Oh yeah! Basically, I'm gonna talk to people, and I'm gonna make them scared of me.

Griffin: Cool. That was a cool seminary that you went to, Devo.

Travis: Well, there's a lot—

Griffin: You learned some cool and not troubling stuff there, sort of conceptually.

Travis: Yeah. There's a lot of—

Clint: Freddy Krueger Prep!

Travis: There's a lot of really fucked up stuff. Um. And as far as spells go, I get new spells, but— with Devo, I kinda made a decision, and I told Griffin this; I don't want him to just... suddenly like remember the spells or whatever? I think he has to like, learn them.

Griffin: Yeah! And there will be, certainly there will be time to do that. But you get— you get— yeah, you're up to second level spells. You're a proper spellcaster at that level, three, here.

Travis: And what's really fun with— [laughs] with the Psychic Blades, is, the weapon I've chosen for Devo is a boomerang...

Griffin: Right! Yeah!

Travis: So that'll be fucking fun! [laughs]

Griffin: [laughing] For sure!

Travis: [laughing] Bonk! "Ow, my heart!"

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: "Did you just— did you just throw a boomerang at [yells] my brain?!"

Travis: "Oh no! I remembered the mean thing my coach said that one time!" [laughing]

Griffin: "Your boomerang hit me in the knee—"

Travis: "That's the most fucked up—"

Griffin: "Your boomerang hit me in the knee but I got a nosebleed! What the fuck's going on?"

Travis: "How'd you do that? I'm crying!"

Griffin: Uh, Amber! What do you got going on?

Justin: So, I... there's a lot of different bardic... not bardic. Monk... monastic, how's that?

Travis: Oooh!

Griffin: Yeah. Monastic traditions.

Justin: Monastic. Schools you can go with. This is finally when I'm integrating ki. Not that I've... punched anyone yet— I guess I punched that box that one time, right?

Griffin: You punched a cube.

Travis: You punched a yumnut!

Justin: No, I pushed the yumnut.

Travis: Oh.

Justin: I didn't punch it.

Travis: Oh, you kicked it, that's right.

Justin: But I decided to go with— and I know everybody's been on, y'know, pins and needles, waiting to find out. What... what monastic discipline I chose. But I went with Arms of the Astral Self.

Griffin: Mmm, thank God.

Travis: Yeah. Yeah yeah yeah.

Justin: That seemed like the one that was best fit for Amber and her history of... you know, psychic warfare. I just basically... um. My arc for

Amber is— and my sort of like, thought with her, is that... she discovered these powers when she was first with Ol' Joshy?

Griffin: Mmhmm.

Justin: And like, they've sort of gone latent? In... in the sort of long period of inactivity. And so I'm thinking of this more as like a re-discovery.

Griffin: Yeah, of course!

Travis: Mmhmm.

Justin: If that makes sense.

Griffin: Sure.

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: So, I mean, basically she was out with Uncle Joshy, he was trying to teach them, in his... y'know, obviously completely bullshit way, of how to manifest their psychic powers to battle the blink sharks. And she was like, furrowing her brow, and squeezing her muscles really hard just like he told her to, and all of a sudden two fuckin' spirit arms just popped out of her stomach, like...

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughing] Right.

Justin: Oh my God. I just sprouted two, y'know, astral arms. So basically, like, these cool other arms... um... which she calls Lefty and Puncho.

Clint: [cracks up]

Travis: [laughs]

Justin: They can... they—

Travis: Now, which one is Lefty?

Justin: Exactly. So they will... they can do like their own attacks. Um. You can also use your wisdom modifier in place of your strength or dexterity modifier for the attack and damage rolls! While you've got your arms summoned.

Griffin: That's so wild— and also your reach is much longer now, it's five feet. So you could punch something five feet away with your ghost hands! Do they always come out of the same place?

Justin: Mmm... that's interesting, I hadn't thought about that. I mean... probably usually out of the stomach, seems like the best place if you're gonna have—

Travis: Yeah, tummy arms!

Justin: Spirit arms.

Griffin: Well, I was thinking like, Doc Ock. Like...

Justin: Yeah...

Griffin: From the back.

Justin: Yeah, no, I think I like it growing out of her tummy, that's fun.

Travis: Tummy arms!

Griffin: Yeah, I think that's great too. What do the actual hands look like?

Justin: Um... that's interesting... I was kind of imagining like, um... Okay, when I imagined it, I imagined the... You ever go to one of those Body Works, or something like that, where they have the bodies on display, and you see the circulatory system?

Griffin: Oh, yeah.

Justin: So I imagine like, if you can imagine arms created like that, but they have sort of a green bioluminescent hue? Um. Like you would see in some sea creatures that have bioluminescence. So like basically a green circulatory system, indicating these arms. It's sort of like a green glowing spirit arms.

Griffin: I— boys— fellas, I can't wait to see what shit— these subclasses are all very exciting to me. And I cannot wait to keep playing with these characters. You also get Deflect Missiles, which is my very favorite monk skill. That's not tied to your school, but you just get...

Justin: No.

Travis: So it's not like the ghost arms grabbing arrows?

Griffin: I mean it could be!

Justin: Could be! Why not.

Griffin: Yeah. And you— if you roll good enough, you can also throw the projectile right back at who shot you—

Travis: Get out!

Griffin: Which is—

Justin: Yeah, it's cool.

Griffin: Good shit. Alright!

Travis: That rules.

Griffin: Um. Let's do this! Y'all have— your ship, and you hop in this newly cleaned and waxed vessel. There's like a whole— there's a new room in here, that has been slotted into these modular kinda blocks, that you described, Trav. And it is Amber's Place. And sure enough, it has a— it has a wooden door, which like... wood's not something you see a lot down here.

But it had to be because they have etched directly into the door, the words "Amber's Place." And—

Justin and Travis simultaneously: No boys allowed.

Griffin: "No boys allowed." And... uh... it has a hand sticking up, like a "Stop" hand, but it's the circulatory hand of your, uh...

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: [chuckles]

Griffin: So you all pilot your ship back to... the docks. And you are guided there by a... like a pilotfish, for the Bluespan Brokerage. And...

Travis: Hey Griffin! Griffin?

Griffin: Yeah?

Travis: How's she handle?

Griffin: Uh, you tell me! It's definitely a different propulsion system— like, you have a ship that can go sideways now. Uh... and it's not, it's definitely not as fast and tight as the Dreams of Deborah. But you think you can make it work.

Travis: Yeah, I think, just from talking about the propulsion system, it seems like it'd be kind of thing, of like... the controls are maybe a little too responsive at first?

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Where like, if you turn too far, instead of just turning, you'll start spinning. In like a hundred— like a 360 degree— just like, axis in the middle of the ship?

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Because you can do that. If the propulsion's everywhere. And so it probably is gonna take a while to get the... exact...

Griffin: Sure!

Travis: Kind of steering, correct.

Clint: But safe to say, we already love the Littlest Baby.

Griffin: Yeah. Aesthetically speaking, this thing's shooting off lots of bubbles.

[Bluespan Brokerage theme music starts]

Griffin: Um, so you all dock this unnamed ship in the spot that this sort of pilotfish guides you to, and it is— it's a primo spot. It's pretty close to the Ascension, and therefore the Bluespan Brokerage headquarters. Which—

Travis: How's the school district?

Griffin: Uh... you know, it's— it gets a B on... the Zillow. So.

Travis: Ugh. That's fine. Yeah. Okay.

Griffin: You walk in, and enter the office of Ravi Montrelle. Who smiles, and says,

Ravi: I heard the news! I heard the excellent news! I heard it's kind of a... kind of a beast, this ship! Kind of a big one, and it has— it has— it's bright and it's colorful, just as bright and colorful as you three, and the opportunities that you're going to provide me, as your broker. I'm— I'm over the moon!

Amber: ... We live to please.

Griffin: He pulls out a clipboard, and just starts speed writing through different things. And he says,

Ravi: Okay. Um... so, your ship... uh... let's see, deep sea exploration, got a bladder, it's got Amber's Place... got [mumbling indecipherably] ...Okay! Um. Who's the captain?

Griffin: He says.

Devo: Oh. Amber.

Zoox: Amber.

Devo: Amber is the captain.

Amber: Cool.

Ravi: Did you all just decide that right in that moment?

Amber: Makes sense, doesn't it?

Ravi: I guess so.

Zoox: I think fate decided it for us.

Devo: Yes.

Zoox: We saw who was most capable...

Ravi: Sure sure.

Devo: Yes. This feels right, and she is also the only one who has... any real life experience. Um.

Ravi: I see.

Devo: I—

Amber: Also—

Devo: I've basically been in the same room for about twenty years, and Zoox only just woke up. So.

Amber: Also, I was thinking about it, and if one of them was the captain, I'd feel bad sleeping in the only kick-ass room.

Devo: This also makes sense, yes.

Ravi: Um. Okay. Just... this is, just so we're clear, this is still part of the job interview, kind of. So talking about your lack of experience... is not the best tactic, Devo. I like you though!

Devo: Okay.

Ravi: Because I think you've got potential, and promise.

Devo: Would you like—

Zoox: We bring a fresh perspective!

Devo: Would you like me to persuade you that I deserve the job?

Travis: And Devo's eyes start to glow blue.

Ravi: Nope! We're good. You all passed that. We just need this ship filed away... It needs a— what's the name of it?

Devo: Oh this is a good question—

Zoox: Uh...

Ravi: I'm just gonna write "The Littlest Baby" in here, and...

Devo: Ohh!

Amber: Eugh.

Devo: No, this is... uh...

Amber: Nope.

Devo: That's the subtitle. [laughs]

Justin: [giggles]

Devo: Um. Which takes on a different meaning when you're talking about a submarine, I realize. But, um.

Ravi: Right.

[Music fades out]

Justin: Alright, can we table talk this so we don't have to do it in character?

Clint: Yeah.

Justin: And we'll just pretend like we agreed on it before, beforehand.

Travis: Uh huh.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Alright, I have one, but I'm also open to kind of a round table.

Justin: Yeah, let's not be too precious about it. Let's just throw out some options. What did you come up with, Travis?

Travis: The Siren's Song.

Justin: Mmm! Okay. I like that.

Travis: And we could just call it the Song, y'know, for a nickname, for short, that kind of thing. Or the Siren, I guess.

Clint: Um. I came up with, The Fineas Cawl.

Travis: Hmm.

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: Now... Hmm.

Clint: Um. And... going back to our past, The Gooshie Wolf?

Griffin: Hmm!

Travis: Okay...

Griffin: Okay...

Justin: Hmm. Okay.

Clint: You know, from the school? They were the Gooshie Wolves?

Travis: Yes, yes.

Griffin: Yes.

Clint: Or the Horseshoe Dog? Which I think is... kinda cute.

Griffin: Right.

Clint: And a serious one would be The Humboldt.

Griffin: The Humboldt! H-U-M-B-O-L-D-T?

Clint: Yes. Humboldt is a swift moving current.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: I like that!

Travis: And it also sounds like "humble," which is nice. What about you, J-man?

Justin: Uh, so I had two that I like. Um. One is The Coriolis.

Travis: Oooh!

Justin: Which... the coriolis effect is... what... like, basically, creates... it's from, the way the water shifts from the planet spinning? So like, when something, uh... it shifts water. The coriolis effect can be anything where it, like, the rotation of something shifts its trajectory. But that's the basic idea of the coriolis effect, is like, the rotation of... uh, the Earth, or whatever, creating— like, hurricanes, are because of the coriolis effect. Because of their— rotation of the earth. The other one I had was Tideshifter.

Travis: Ooh. I like that one too. I also thought of two more, just based off of looking at like, the shape of a bathyscaphe? And the things, like, attached to it? I thought of The Barnacle, or The Lamprey.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: ... Boy, I like Coriolis. [laughs]

Travis: I like Coriolis a lot too.

Justin: Yeah, of the two that— Tideshifter's good, but it's also sort of like, generically D&D to me?

Travis: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Justin: Like I bet if I googled "Tideshifter D&D" right now, like...

Griffin: Yeah, there's a subclass— I think it might be a fan made subclass, uh...

Justin: Yeah, that tracks. That tracks.

Clint: Could we name the bathysphere Fineas?

Griffin: Sure.

Clint: In honor of Fineas Cawl?

Justin: Aw, that's cute! I like that actually!

Clint: The father— the father of my race, in a way?

Griffin: Um, yeah! I, I mean, it's up to y'all.

Clint: I say Coriolis.

Justin: I— I like The Coriolis, if you guys are comfortable with it.

Travis: Yeah, I like it too. How do you spell it?

Justin: C-O-R-I-O-L-I-S.

Travis: I'm just gonna call—

Griffin: Is it just—

Travis: I want you to know Dad, I'm gonna call the bathysphere The Fin, um, 'cause calling it Fineas— "hey let's go take Fineas for a drive!" Makes it sound like we're taking our baby out for a stroll.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: Also! By the— can I just stop real quick? If you're a science person...

[Someone snorts and laughs]

Justin: And you're about to message me about how I was not correct in describing the coriolis effect. Please! Please keep it inside your pocket protector, okay?

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: I don't need it. Thank you. I got the basic— it's the basic thing of the thing, okay? I don't need it. Thank you.

Griffin: Uh, okay. Do you want to tell Ravi Montrelle, do we want to do that in character, at least?

Justin: Yeah, let's do that.

Devo: We're calling it The Littlest Baby.

Clint: [cracks up]

Justin: [cracks up]

Amber: Sorry, we're wedded to it! No. It's *The Coriolis*.

Ravi: The Cori— that is... that is bad ass.

Devo: Now, The Coriolis, is that how the rotation—

Amber: Cory Olis is a kid I went to school with. [laughs]

Devo: Oh, okay.

[All giggling]

Travis: Cory, Olis.

Clint: You don't remember Cory, he was one of the Cory's!

Justin: He was Cory Olis—

Travis: One of the Olises! You remember.

Clint: Cory Nemmen , Cory Feldman, Cory Olis.

Amber: It was really sad, he died on a roller coaster in 3rd grade.

Devo: Aw, man.

Amber: So it's in his honor.

Devo: This is beautiful, Amber. We will remember him. We will put his painting up...

Clint: [laughs]

Devo: In, in the... where we eat. What is this called? What is the... it's not important. Galley!

Clint: The mess!

Justin: Gulley? The mess! Ah, mess. Yeah.

Griffin: Uh.

Justin: After I watch fuckin' Zoox shove baked beans into his coral, it will be the mess.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: [chuckles] Hey, there's a hole for that! He, uh, Ravi Montrelle smiles, and he... he rips out a like small, like notecard, perforated—

Travis: [laughing] Huge fart.

Griffin: [laughing] He rips out a huge toot. Uh. And he opens up his rolodex, and slowly, like, making eye contact with you all the whole time, like he's performing some sort of sacred ceremony, he lowers this index card into his rolodex. And it snaps into place. And he clasps his hands over his mouth, like,

Ravi: [choked up] It feels like something big just started, doesn't it? That's what it feels like. Look how— look it—

Griffin: He turns the rolodex around.

Ravi: Look at how it looks in here! It looks good! It looks real good!

Amber: Yeah...

Devo: Uh, you are coming on very strong? Um.

Clint: [laughs]

Ravi: Uh. I suppose so.

[Bluespan Brokerage music fades out]

Griffin: And he claps the rolodex shut. And he reaches down, into his desk, and he pulls out like a drawer, like a whole drawer from the desk, and inside of it is... just a bunch of file folders. Like a ton of 'em. And they are color coded, there are... there are different markings, on tabs, that you don't quite understand, but he reaches down, and pulls out a few of them that have like light blue tabs on them.

[theme music plays]

Griffin: And he sort of stacks them up on the table, and he says,

Ravi: I know y'all have had a long couple days. But, uh... if you're ready to get back to work...

Griffin: And he lays down these light blue folders. Just a handful of them on the table, in front of you. And he says,

Ravi: Who's ready to get their feet wet?

Griffin: [singing the first few notes of the theme song's melody] Ba ba baaa...

[Theme music plays out]

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