

The Adventure Zone: Ethersea — Episode 7

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Griffin: Previously, on the Adventure Zone Ethersea:

[“The Adventure Zone: Ethersea Theme” begins playing]

Justin: But if we're all looking out for ourselves here, then I'll just spend it on boat shit that I want!

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.

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

Devo: Give three Lux to Beck. 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 have been there.

Felix: I would be happy to offer a line of credit, for... five Lux. However, there will be interest applied to the loan.

Devo: And I will also take the depth charge.

Ravi: Who's the captain?

Devo: Oh, Amber.

Zoox: Amber.

Devo: Amber is the captain.

Amber: Cool.

Ravi: What's the name of it?

Amber: It's the Coriolis.

Griffin: And he lays down these folders, just a handful of 'em, on the table in front of you, and he says,

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

[Ethersea theme music plays out]

Griffin: Across his desk, Ravi Montrelle slips you all a handful of little folders, of various colors, all with the Bluespan Brokerage insignia on the front of them. He pushes those across the desk, toward the three of you, navigating them between his many, many desk toys. Professional business desk toys. And he says,

[Bluespan Brokerage theme music fades in]

Ravi: Alright, so listen. You all know your capabilities better than myself. And so you know how far you can push yourself. And your team, and your crew, and your ship, beautiful ship by the way. Is that mauve? Am I saying that correctly? Moh-v? Mahv? I've never actually seen something that's that color, so I don't know how to say it good I guess.

Amber: [quietly] Marv...?

Ravi: Marv.

[someone snorts with laughter]

Zoox: Marzipan!

Ravi: That's fun.

Amber: Mah— moo-ahve. ...I can't get it either.

Travis: Mo-ah-dibe.

Ravi: Okay.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: [giggles] That's good. We can establish that Devo—

Amber: Pink-ish?

Griffin: Devo's not French, Devo is...

Travis: That was not Devo, that was Travis.

Griffin: —Mo-ah-dive. Oh okay. Cool.

Travis: Yeah. I'm a fremen.

Griffin: He says,

Ravi: Not all of our contracts are equal. They all should be doable by someone of... a team of your... let's say, unique skill set. But some of them are a little bit more, let's call them taxing, let's call them... dangerous. But risk and reward is the backbone of business! Y'know?

Devo: I suppose this—

Ravi: You don't know.

Devo: No, I... yeah, if you say so. We have no reason to say no, I guess.

Griffin: He fans out these folders and now you can see that there are five of them. And he says,

Ravi: Basic brass tacks stuff: people in this city, they need stuff done, outside the city. That's where you come in. 'Cause you can go outside the city, in your beautiful mauve-er ship. And you take a contract, execute it, go out there, do the dang thing, come on back, you get the money, we get the money, and... rinse and repeat, baby!

Amber: Well. Which one... [sighs, clicks tongue] You got any spooky ones?

Ravi: Oh boy. Do I have any of the— like a ghost one?

Amber: Like— no, like...

Devo: Wait, are—

Amber: No, like, it starts out normal...

Ravi: Oh, yeah.

Amber: But then... it's, later it's spooky.

Devo: Oh, I like this.

Amber: And then... at the end, it wasn't spoo— it wasn't actually spooky. You know what I mean?

Devo: Oh, like maybe it was like an old man in a mask. Who was like—

Amber: It's like— yeah! It's like an old man but he's a... he's still bad, though. You know what I mean? Because I don't wanna feel bad like, oh it's a misunderstanding. I want—

Zoox: Jinkies, that would be cool!

Amber: Yeah! You get it. This guy gets it. [laughs]

Griffin: He looks through the folders, he says,

Ravi: Yes, I have just the contract for you. It's— you— it's cosigned by the Harlem Globetrotters.

[All laugh]

Ravi: And you will go— ah, I seem to have misplaced—

Devo: I have vowed never, never to work with them. They... real ball hogs...

Ravi: They embarrassed you on the basketball court and that's okay!

Amber: Do you have—

Ravi: You have to admit it!

Amber: Do you have any that won't alienate every listener under thirty?

Clint: [laughs]

Ravi: Uh, I think that describes the five missions currently in front of you. Listen! I picked these five specifically for you three. 'Cause I think you're gonna be a great fit, for what you've already accomplished! Your great deeds. Heroic, even!

Devo: Well, I must say that I like the name of this one, Rescue the Infinite Clam. Um, but I do not so much care for the fact that it is... uh, it is, you know, from the Parish. I'm not wild about working with them. Um. Is anyone else interested in this Infinite Clam besides the Parish?

Griffin: Let's, um... can we outline real quick, just log line the five missions, just so the folks at home kinda know what you guys are discussing, what you're— contemplating?

Travis: Sure.

Clint: Certainly.

Griffin: Uh, so. Each of these missions, you will see on the right side of them, has a compensation. Which explains what you will get for signing on the mission, or completing the mission, and what bonuses there are, if any. And the risk rating, next to it, which is between one to three stars, which is basically just— the danger that you might die on this mission. I want you all to know— this is obviously a different way of doing— of structuring a

campaign. And... I want you to know that... none of you are the chosen one. And so I promise you I am not going to pull—

Travis: You mean none of our characters are. 'Cause that's yet to be seen about us as individuals.

Griffin: That's fair, Travis, yes, that is entirely fair. I have, like... I have ideas of like, what people, what factions in this world want, what their goals are, that I think could be structural, for like, campaign arcs. But the three of you are not integral to any of that stuff. So. You know. Taking on a more dangerous job, while it pays better... the risk of death there is not inconsiderable. So! There's a three star job here, the Lost Laboratory, from Ampersand 5 is the client, where they... they did just that, they lost a lab. They want you to recover the ship log; it's a mobile, like, ship lab. They want you to find out what happened, talk to the one survivor from the lab, and... go figure out what happened. There's Hunt: the Alloid Menace, where an Ironwhelk, the Vice Admiral Beam, has located a scrapyard out in the ocean. One of their scouts, an Ironwhelk scout, found it, but the pile of salvage apparently came to life and attacked them.

Travis: What!?

Griffin: So they want you to destroy whatever is inhabiting that metal, so they—

Travis: I'm sorry, Griffin, did you say... it came to life??

Griffin: Yeah. So that might be—

Travis: Whoa.

Griffin: That might scratch the itch that you're looking for.

Travis: That's a spooky one.

Griffin: There's a bonus there, also, if you can figure out where this metal is coming from, because that's not something they figured out. There's Investigation: the Bio Mass Swarm, which is from Ballaster Kodeira, who's

one of the Chaperones, former leader of the Chaperones. And sort of the defense secretary for Founders' Wake. The Biggest Baby crew discovered a huge swarm of sea life that is only growing and growing and growing, outside the city, and your job is to figure out what's causing this swarm, and you will get a considerable bonus if you can dispel it. Then we have, as you've discussed, Rescue: The Infinite Clam, where you're not trying to rescue a clam—

Travis: Aww man.

Griffin: But it is from the client Hand of Guidance, from the Parish, where a higher up there at the Parish, Benefactor Orlene, was studying this ethereal energy signature, by this massive bivalve creature, and he has gone missing. So they want you to rescue him, recover— or recover his remains. Uh, and then there is Negotiation: The Abyssal Auction, from Uncle Joshy, who wants you to attend an exclusive auction and purchase an undisclosed surface relic, as his sort of representative. And he'll supply you a bankroll, and your bonus there is whatever you can sort of keep from the bankroll. So! Those are the five missions. Now—

Travis: Griffin? So with this, is this the kind of thing where we pick one of these and the rest go away? Or like, we—

Griffin: I don't know, I don't think so. I don't— I mean, obviously we're gonna have to sort of stretch... reality, and time, there a little bit, right? Because... god, Benefactor Orlene... the infinite clam... he could— who knows where he is? He could be in a lot of trouble over there! But is it gonna—

Travis: Or he could be fine!

Griffin: Or he could be fine! Is it gonna wait for a couple months though? Yeah, we can make it wait for a couple months. You're okay in there, Benefactor Orlene, don't worry about it.

Clint: Now, also, let's mention that there is a balance also. The first one, the Acquisition one, is red.

Griffin: Yes.

Clint: And has the biggest reward, 15 Lux, and more.

Griffin: Right.

Clint: The next two, the Hunt and the Investigation, are both green, and those are like moderate, and then the last two, Rescue and the Negotiation, are blue, and are the smallest, uh... the smallest reward.

Griffin: Right.

Clint: Although the one with the Auction has the potential to be more.

Griffin: Correct. And another thing to think about also for these missions and the structure of this season: like, I want you all to also pursue what you think is interesting, and not necessarily base it entirely on the compensation. Because, you know, if we do a mission where you are interfacing a lot with the Ironwhelks, like... inherently the Ironwhelks are going to be a bigger part of the world, and we'll learn more about them, and they will— you will unlock licenses in some of these cases, for like, new gear you can buy for your ship. So think about that also, like, think about what you're interested in, and... yeah, you have a lot to sort of weigh in making this decision. I am— I have created— I have devised this system, hoping that, you know, the three of you will be able to settle on one job each time and not, uh... you know. Come to blows over it.

Devo: Uh, I will say that I personally feel good about Negotiation. This is something that I am good at, that I feel pretty confident on. I'm not sure how I feel about, the... the kind of, uh... fighting ones, the ones where we attack something, that's not... we are not using the Dreams of Deborah anymore, as you know.

Amber: Hmm.

Zoox: And I have to be honest with you. I... I'm a little shaky, after, you know, almost perishing, in the last mission. I don't think we ought to, y'know, I think we ought to stay in our lane, bro, and sis.

[Someone snorts]

Zoos: I think we ought to try... I think one of the two blue ones. I don't...

Ravi: A softball!

Zoos: Until we level up, maybe?

Ravi: I love it! But you miss a hundred percent of the shots you do not take! And that's an important thing for you to remember.

Amber: I'm... One, inspiring, thank you. 'Preciate that. I would have picked something where I can... I wanted to beat up the metal monster, but. I'm a simple lady, so, I, um...

Zoos: Yeahh... like that one too...

Amber: You know what, I understand that, you lost a lot of.... [pause] You got blood?

Devo: Huh.

Zoos: Uh, no. Not exactly. When I lose, I lose my body. Um.

Amber: Huh.

Zoos: It's... it's very complicated, it's a little, tiny little organisms that make me up—

Amber: Hey.

Zoos: Yeah?

Amber: That's a tough beat. And I am sorry, I feel like I wasn't appropriately sympathetic. For real, I'm sorry about... your... body. Ugh.

Zoos: Well. [laughing] It happens.

Amber: Apparently. Um, let's— let's— um, you know? We could do the, uh... we could do a mystery. That sounds fun, right? Kind of a mystery?

Devo: Yes, there's a—

Amber: Rescue a... rescue Orlene, or, you know, maybe bring back his chunks, whatever?

Devo: If, uh, the one thing, if you want to go the Infinite Clam, I cannot be the one that... communicates with the Parish. But other than that, I—

Amber: Why not?

Ravi: Oooh! Drama, drama drama!

[Soft ambient music plays]

Devo: Uh. I... uh. I have a... history with them, that I will be... happy to tell you, that I don't really want to discuss in front of, no offense, Ravi. Um.

Amber: Naw naw naw, that's legit, you stole a bunch of candlesticks, huh? Me too.

Devo: ... You did?

Amber: Pound it.

Devo: No, I did not—

Amber: Pound it!

Devo: Did you do this?

Amber: Pound it. Pound it. ...You gonna leave me hanging?

Devo: Uh, I will pound it—

Amber: Nice. Nice, nice, nice, nice nice nice.

Devo: But I did not take the candlesticks.

Griffin: When Amber gets somebody to pound it, is she using her astral—
[laughing] astral fist?

Justin: Oh. A hundred percent of the time.

Griffin: Okay. [laughs]

Clint: [laugh]

Justin: She uses her flesh arms to just do a double thumbs up. And then you pound the spectral arm.

Travis: Yeah, I thought that was clear, Griffin. Come on.

Griffin: Sure.

Justin: It was implied through my tone.

Zoox: So, Amber, are you hungry for... for, uh, violence? I mean— or do you—

Amber: I'm hungry for fuckin' mystery now! I'm hungry for whatever meal lies in front of me. Y'all ain't down to clown with the metal monster, that's fine with me, we'll go solve—

Zoox: You know what—

Amber: Get our magnifying glass, so solve a fuckin' case.

Zoox: Devo? Why don't we—

Amber: Naw—

Zoox: Roll the dice?

Amber: 'Cause you'll die! [laughing] You'll die. You'll die— this is fine! I'm being accommodating!

Zoox: I know! But I really like the idea of fighting the metal— the— I saw the metal thing, and I thought that would be so cool. And, and I can't—

Amber: You're being indecisive. I don't— I actually— I—

Zoox: I kinda am being indecisive but I'm kinda not being indecisive.

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: Oh boy.

Amber: I don't know. Devo? We've somehow juxtaposed our positions here, so...

Griffin: [laughs]

Amber: What do you... You make the call, huh?

Zoox: We could roll for it!

Devo: I do not... uh... know how I feel about leaving it up to chance... ?

Amber: Yeah, I don't— I never—

Zoox: [laughing] In this game?

Amber: I've never left anything up to chance.

Griffin: [giggles softly]

Amber: So. Come on.

Devo: I think we should... take the, um. Less risky one.

Amber: Nice.

Devo: I... it was, um, a lot, to see Zoox... the way that he was, and I appreciate, Zoox, you being... so ready to get back out there, but I do not have a lot of friends, and I do not know that I want to... put you at risk again.

Amber: I bet you just left some of your shit there, right?

Devo: Oh, I will not be going in there. You could not... get me to go in there—

Amber: Maybe a little bit— but, you know, fate! Brings people together! You know? I love that. I love a good, like, a reunion, you know?

Devo: Uh... No...

Amber: Tearful reunion, ohhh, my, I missed you so much!

Devo: It will not be this, no. It will not be this.

Amber: Killer sigh, let's go!

Ravi: So what have we decided on, folks?

Devo: The Infinite Clam.

Zoox: The— Abyssal— oh. Yes! The Infinite Clam! Onward! To the Infinite Clam!

Justin: Coulda lived my entire fuckin' life without hearing my dad say "infinite clam."

Griffin: You're gonna hear it a lot, unfortunately. He scoops up the other four folders and files them back away, and opens up the Infinite Clam folder. And pushes it towards you. So, the description: Benefactor Orlene, a respected scholar within the Benevolent Parish, went missing while investigating ethereal energy signatures emanating from a giant bivalve,

discovered in the Phytal Flats. The Parish is seeking a team to investigate the creature, and rescue Orlene, or recover his remains, whatever the situation requires. And your payment for this, upon signing: either five Lux or the installation of vapor suits inside of your ship. And then five Lux upon the successful completion of the mission. He smiles, and slides three pens across the desk, and he says,

Ravi: Sign right there there and there. And, uh, [laughs] it's happening, for real! Oooh!

Devo: I'm sorry, sign where where and where?

Ravi: [even faster] Right there there and there. Sorry, am I pointing too—

Devo: There there and there?

Ravi: I have this sort of thing with business papers, where I point at 'em— 'cause I know where the signatures go, like, I could do it with my eyes shut. But you want to do it there-there-there.

Devo: Okay... you did not... okay. Um. Does— this was too fast. Um. Slow, please?

Griffin: He very slowly shows you where to sign. 'Cause this bit is going on too long.

Travis: Okay. Devo signs.

Zoox: Are there different flavors of the vapor suits?

Ravi: Um. That sounds like a question for the Parish, huh? The vapor suits are kinda their tech, it's proprietary.

Zoox: Okay.

Ravi: Maybe you could get a, y'know, mentholated one— well, I don't what you're looking for.

Zoox: Well, I don't know if I need them, but. If it helps the other two, I sign! Zoox, but I do my usual thing of signing it backwards.

Griffin: Cool.

Amber: Yeah. Sure.

Justin: I sign.

Griffin: And the signatures turn golden, glowing, and—

Justin: What?

Griffin: And Ursula laughs, and your voices are—

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Oh. She got us again!

Clint: [hums in a strained painful way]

Griffin: Tricked you again!

Travis: Dammit!

Griffin: He smiles, and signs it himself. And stamps it. And says,

Ravi: Okay! So, first things first, I would recommend you go speak with the client for further details. And before you leave the city, make sure you've got whatever supplies and intel you might need to help you along the way. And, um, oh boy! Uh, if you have any questions, just give a holler! Over the, over the old tonewheel. We've got dispatchers here to help you where you need. And if your ship gets blown up, we will of course have an insurance payment made out to you. For... an appropriate amount of Lux. So. Don't worry about that, just do not beef it! Ships can be replaced! But—

Travis: The Coriolis Two!

Ravi: This!

Griffin: He points at his heart.

Ravi: And this!

Griffin: He points at his brain.

Ravi: Can't— those can't be replaced, unless you do like, a heart surgery.

Devo: Yes.

Travis: Um, Griffin? Do we have, like, communication devices?

Griffin: Um, not personal ones, but you do have one aboard your— aboard the Coriolis. It comes sort of standard with the, with the bridge.

Devo: Ravi? Is there, um, any way that we could get the shell-phones for each other, so that we can speak to each other when we are in Founders' Wake as well as on the ship?

Griffin: He says,

Ravi: Unfortunately requisitions like that are not supplied by us. But I think we offer very generous health benefits, and insurance, and I mentioned the dispatch thing, and also, all the jobs. So.

Devo: Oh, I just thought we were business friends, and you would want to be able to get in contact with us, so that we could do the happy hour, or we could... you know, grab some wings one night, or maybe have a cookout?

Griffin: Uh, roll a persuasion check. 'Cause you've got his fu— you're dialed in, you've got his number.

Travis: Uh, almost a twenty. Eight plus seven, a fifteen.

Griffin: A fifteen? He says,

Ravi: [sighs] Ah, man. I tell you what. I'm... I'll tell you what I got.

Griffin: And he roots around inside of his, uh, desk, for a minute, and he goes,

Ravi: One, two... three, wow I can't believe I have three of them.

Griffin: And he pulls out three small sort of square boxes with clips on them, with a very very small tonewheel inside of them. And he says,

Ravi: With these, you all can let each other know that it's time to talk. Um. You can't do the talking through it, but it'll send out a signal, like, "hey, I need— I need you" and there— we call 'em pagers. So you can have these. And, [stutters] don't say I never did anything for ya! Uh. Alright, pal?

Amber: Yeah, alright.

Ravi: And they're stylish, too, people are gonna see those, they're gonna say, "Whoa, is that a pager?" And then they're gonna say, "Why do you have that, are you a doctor?" And then you're gonna say, "No, I didn't— I don't have a tonewheel."

Devo: Okay, yes, this makes complete sense, thank you so much.

[Bluespan Brokerage theme music fades in]

Griffin: Alright. You've negotiated three free pagers out of me. I'm being very generous this season.

Travis: Oh. Well, no, I'm being very... negotiable.

Griffin: Yes.

Travis: Negotiatory?

Griffin: Well. Yeah, I'm... but I, you know, I met you halfway. Itake the pagers back—

Travis: A pager is halfway to a phone—?

Griffin: If that's, if that's how you're gonna be, I'll take your pagers back!

Justin: You've looked— yeah! The gift horse. [crosstalk] How's that mouth lookin'?

Griffin: Right in the mouth!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: And you said, "shitty teeth, horse!"

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, he... goes back to work, now, he says,

Ravi: Alright. Let me know if you need anything.

Griffin: And buries his nose in an... um... I don't know. A fax machine. Y'all are... y'all got your job.

Travis: Yeah.

[Music fades out]

Griffin: And know what to do. So. What are you doing?

Justin: Ooh!

Travis: I feel such a sense of purpose. I—

Devo: I will go with you to, the... [sighs] to the Parish. Uh. But, Amber, you— you cannot leave me alone. With them. At any time. Um.

Amber: You wanna sit in the car?

Devo: [sighs] Honestly, without being able to communicate with you and hear what they say, I do not trust them, to be honest with you.

Amber: Right on.

Devo: Especially not the Hand of Guidance. Um. And I know her, very well. And I will know if she is lying, and I will know... um. And so, um. [swallows] I will go with you. But I... I... um. I cannot be left alone, and you cannot let them take me anywhere.

Zoox: Is this— is this a two way street? Devo, I mean, do you need to go in disguise or something? Are they gonna see you and freak out?

Amber: Ohhh, a disguise!!

Devo: Uh, I do not know about freak out, but, um... They may attempt to pressure me to come back to the church. And this I will not do.

[soft music fades in]

Amber: Right on.

Zoox: Oh, we won't let you do that!

Devo: Well, I appreciate this. Thank you very much. Just, uh... keep an eye on me, okay?

Zoox: Sure! I'm not sure I actually have eyes, but...

Travis: There's a hole for that.

Clint: There's a hole for that!

Griffin: There's two holes for that! Um—

Devo: Will you keep one of your holes on me, please?

Zoox: Uhhhh... sure! [laughs]

[music plays softly]

[ad break]

[ambient music plays]

Griffin: Uh, so the three of you hop aboard the Crystal Ascension, up to the Conservatory. And there you make your way to the headquarters of the Benevolent Parish. Uh. Which, again, is sort of... in the most beautiful district of Founders' Wake, the most beautiful building here. There's just a long lawn out, stretching out in front of it, almost like the... Capitol... what's it called, the mall? Thing? In— at—

Justin: The... mall?

Griffin: In Washington D.C.?

Justin: The mall.

Griffin: The mall?

Travis: The Capitol Mall?

Griffin: The Capitol Mall? Anyway. Yeah, it's— it's— it is landscaped to perfection here, sort of reflecting the power that the Parish holds, at least in this district. The Hand of Guidance is also a Ballaster, sort of representing the interests of the Parish and the Conservatory—

Travis: Oh shit! I didn't know that. Oh fuck.

Griffin: Yeah. So are you all going inside?

Travis: Uh, yes, but—

Justin: Yes.

Travis: I— Devo is sticking very very close to Amber.

Griffin: Okay. As you walk in, there is a young woman sitting behind a desk, and is— she looks up at the three of you, she says,

Young Woman: Hello, how can I—

Griffin: And then she sees you, Devo, and then she... stands up, and sort of briskly walks to a back room. Leaving the three of you alone.

Devo: Ah, yes, it has begun. [laughs nervously] Ohh.

Griffin: And that door opens, and out walks the Hand of Guidance.

[ambient music shifts]

Griffin: Amber and Zoox, you've never met the Hand of Guidance, I'm assuming; she is a very busy woman, the leader of the Benevolent Parish, and a Ballaster here. But she... does not look how you expected her to look. There is nothing sort of prim and proper about her. And there's nothing sort of... there is very little ritual to her garb. She's wearing, like, mom jeans, and a big sweater with a chunky necklace. And her hair is up in like a very frizzy bun. And she has these glasses on, that are very big and round, with just a lot of character. And she walks out, and she says,

Hand of Guidance: Oh my goodness! You're— you're here! Devotion, you're back! You're back and you brought friends!

Devo: Uh— please—

Hand of Guidance: Oh, it's so nice— let me take a look at you!

Devo: I— it is Devo, now. Guidance.

Hand of Guidance: Devo, what— whatever you want to be called, it's so good—

Griffin: She tries cupping your face in her hands.

Hand of Guidance: Let me see—

Devo: No—

Hand of Guidance: You look very healthy—

Travis: He jerks back.

Hand of Guidance: Oh, sorry. Uh. My— I am sorry. [chuckles] I, uh, I'm just so excited— who, who are— hello, it's nice to meet the two of you! Are—[stutters] Are you all my contractors?

Amber: ... Yeah.

Hand of Guidance: Um. Well, I'm the Hand of Guidance.

Griffin: She holds out her hand for a handshake, to the two of you.

Zoox: Um. Hello. I am Zoox. And...

Hand of Guidance: Zoox! That's a fun name!

Zoox: It is, isn't it!? And I write— when I sign my name, I write it backwards. [laughs]

Hand of Guidance: [laughing politely] What a card!

Zoox: It's just one of those things that I do! Uh. And this is my friend and partner, Amber.

Amber: Hey.

Hand of Guidance: Hello, Amber.

Amber: What's up?

Hand of Guidance: ... Pound it?

Amber: Yeah.

Griffin: When she sees you pound it with an astral fist, like, her... she breaks for like a millisecond, you see her look down, like "what?!" And then she's right back into... this, this, uh... this very friendly sort of mom mode.

Amber: Yeah. So... what's the buzz, cuz? You got a missing dude.

Hand of Guidance: Right! Right to business, I...

Amber: Yeah.

Hand of Guidance: I— sorry, this is wild for me! Devo! It's been months! I was worried about you! But I'm glad to see you're hale and hearty and making friends!

Devo: I bet you were worried. You do not need to worry about me. I'm doing very well. I do not need... your worry. Or you. And... please simply inform my friends and my captain about... this mission, and we will be on our way.

Griffin: She says,

Hand of Guidance: Oh, Devo, I hope you know, there is— there is *no* bad blood here. You know—

Devo: [cackling aggressively] Ha! Ha ha!

Hand of Guidance: You know that, right?

Devo: [cackling abruptly stops] Is this so? Is this— no bad blood, you say? Well. This is, this is excellent! You would welcome me back, is what you mean? Ohhh, excellent, excellent.

Hand of Guidance: No, no, I'm not saying that. I'm... I don't think you're a good fit for Parish leadership, Devo. You... Your tutelage was a gift, Devo. Your behavior in leaving us displayed a lack of gratitude, that... sort of... mmm, indicated that maybe you're not cut out for the Parish. Which I know,

makes your name a little bit ironic. But, uh, no. Bygones are bygones. And uh, I hope that we can move forward! Um. And... you know. At least stay in touch. But, yes! Let's— down to business!

Griffin: She says, sounding a lot like... [snickers] another character on this show.

Clint: [laughs]

Hand of Guidance: So, uh, right, the big clam. Oh, gosh. Yeah, this is a tricky one. Uh, Benefactor Orlene... you remember him, right, Devotion? Uh— Devo, sorry.

Devo: Yes, I do.

Hand of Guidance: Right. He's a scholar. He's been with us for a while, he was on the beach. Hailed down from the High Hermitage, and... he's been studying some energy signatures, weird stuff, really complicated stuff. And he found this big clam, out in the Phytal Flats. And he was staying in contact with us as he checked it out, and then lost contact with him, about a week ago. So. Here you go.

Griffin: And she pulls out a little map tablet, that has the location of the... of where the clam is located in the Phytal Flats, giving you a piece of intel here.

Travis: Uh, Devo stops, like, puts a hand out to stop anybody from taking it just yet.

Hand of Guidance: Oh, it's not— uh, sorry, it's not... cursed? I don't know what you think—

Devo: No, this is not it— what, what is this... The energy signature? Was this magical energy?

Hand of Guidance: Devo, it's the Ethersea. [chuckling incredulously] Everything is magical. But, uh, yes, it is— it is a field of study that Benefactor Orlene is particularly interested in. So... yeah, he just found a— I

guess, a big beefy signature, and went to check it out, and I guess got in a little over his head.

Travis: I'm going to roll... What would be, like, a memory? To see if I know something? Would that... wisdom?

Griffin: Um. Well... is it a thing that you would know about...

Justin: History, maybe?

Griffin: Yeah, I think that's gotta be it.

Travis: Yeah? Okay, yeah. Uh, a 12 plus four, 16. Do I know what Benefactor Orlene's, like, field of study is? Like what his main interest is?

Griffin: So you maybe met him a couple times. At, the, you know, the... cloister, where you grew up. But, uh, this— he is very, uh, reclusive. You— he does not— he is not a figurehead, right? Like, that was what you were being raised to be.

Travis: Right.

Griffin: He was like... a... "I wanna understand everything that I can understand about the gifts that Benevolence gave us." 'Cause if you remember, like, the Church of Benevolence is also the primary magical sort of institution.

Travis: Right, right, right, right, right.

Griffin: So it's not just like, you know, hymnals and campfires. It's like, study of magic stuff. And that is something that Benefactor Orlene...

Travis: It really says a lot about our Southern Baptist raising that to Griffin, a church can be summed up by hymnals and campfires. Okay.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Okay. This— some churches, then.

Zoox: I have a question.

Griffin: Is this Zoox or Clint?

Zoox: This is Zoox.

Griffin: Okay.

Hand of Guidance: Yeah, shoot, whaddaya got?

Zoox: Uh. Did, uh... did Benefactor Orlene have a room here? Or an office, or a... laboratory? Where he resided? To— and I assume, maybe I shouldn't assume it's a he, is...

Griffin: Oh, it is a he, I think she's said as much. Um. She says,

Hand of Guidance: You know, he does have a bunk here, but I'll be honest, he has not stayed in there for... pbbbt... I don't know. A while. Married to his work, Benefactor Orlene is, we always give him a hard time about it. He lives on his ship for the most part. Which... ugh! Not for me, that life. I can tell you that. Um. But... besides, I don't think it would be proper for you to poke around in his room when he's not there, I just, uh, that doesn't sit right with me. So.

Travis: Uh, Griffin?

Griffin: Mmhmm?

Travis: I am going... well, no, I haven't learned that spell yet, have I. Um.

Griffin: [laughing] it sucks that we're doing magic the right way this season.

Travis: Yeah I know, right?

Clint: [groans sympathetically] I would have already called Zone of Truth.

Griffin: Yeah, for sure.

Clint: I mean...

Devo: Alright, Guidance.

Travis: And Devo takes the tablet.

Devo: So, you're not going to tell us specifics, this is fine, we will find this out. And the mission is to return, with his body, or with him, correct?

Hand of Guidance: Preferably with him! I put that body thing in there, and then like, after— that night after I submitted it, I was like, yo that's pretty dark! Um. 'Cause I don't... I bet he's still out there, kicking. He's a... he's a wily one. The Benefactor. So.

Zoox: Was he working on his own?

Hand of Guidance: Uh, he always works on his own.

Devo: The mission does not state that we must return with his findings?

Hand of Guidance: Mmm, no, I'm just worried about him.

Amber: Can you think of any reason he'd wanna... disappear? I mean, you kinda have a bad track record.

Clint: [chuckles]

Griffin: Uh, she looks... again, you kind of broke her facade here, a little bit. Roll a... man, Amber, I don't know what that would— what that li'l jab would be. Uh. Maybe a... intimidation?

Justin: Yeah, I could see that. What have we got here...

Travis: I would say a lot of things Amber does can be—

Justin: [singing] Beep be beep be beep bop beep bop de bop.

Travis: —can be connected to that.

Justin: [sing-song] Two, minus one. The least scary thing that's ever happened.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: [singing] There are Cathy comic strips that are scarier than what I just did.

[Clint, Griffin, and Travis laugh]

Griffin: Uh. You see her... kinda grimace. And she walks back to that desk, and you see her pick up what appears to be like, a disk, like a spherical disk, and she opens up a drawer, and puts it inside and slams it. And she says,

Hand of Guidance: I don't want to play this card, but you all are my contractors, and if you're gonna come in here and insult me when I've been nothing but gracious to you, then perhaps you all can just do the job, and just... come back, and we'll issue payment, and then not have to work together again. How does that sound?

Amber: You pay us just for coming by?

Griffin: She shakes her head. She says,

Hand of Guidance: [sighs] That's right. There's a signing— here.

Griffin: And she reaches into a little bag that she's got, and pulls out five Lux. And hands it to you, Amber. She says,

Hand of Guidance: That's— the first half. Oh! I mean, would you rather have this or some vapor suits? 'Cause— you know, we got some spares.

Amber: Nah, you know, we said we would, we'll come out. I actually wasn't trying to give you shit.

Clint: [laughs]

Amber: I came up with a bunch of Finners. And I know that it's tough being... you know, a lady in charge. So I was just trying to... get to the bottom of what's going on. We'll find your guy. Eh?

Griffin: She... [sighs] Sighs, and says,

Hand of Guidance: Alright. Um. That's fine. I'm— I'm— I apologize. I'm... I'm worried about him. That's... that's... I'm on edge, and... I know you probably didn't mean anything by it. So. We're cool.

Amber: I pounded it. Keppa?

Hand of Guidance: You— and that's—

Amber: That means something.

Hand of Guidance: That's sacred. Keppa. For sure.

Travis: I say we take the money, 'cause Zoot can like, go underwater, and Devo can't swim, so Devo currently has no use for vapor suits.

Griffin: That's fair.

Travis: That's... my vote.

Justin: We can figure it out once we get to the... I mean, we're not at payment yet, right?

Griffin: No, you are actually, this is the—

Travis: This is the signing bonus.

Clint: Yeah!

Griffin: The signing bonus.

Justin: Alright, well listen. I want a vapor suit. [laughs]

Travis: Okay!

Justin: Why can't I have a vapor suit?

Griffin: One thing I will point out is, vapor suits are again, proprietary to the Parish, and not something that you all are licensed for. So this is—

Clint: Will not be able to buy?

Griffin: Would not be able to buy.

Justin: Would we have a license... like, is this gonna be like, "here's your vapor suit and now you need to get a license to use it?"

Griffin: No, it's "here's your vapor suit."

Amber: Alright. Hey, Devo. Sidebar?

Devo: Yes, sidebar.

Amber: Hey. You don't know how to swim, and I get that. It's shameful. Alright?

Devo: Oh... Okay.

Amber: Every time you say it, I think less of you. I get it. But. Here's the thing. Can I flip it on you? If you do learn to swim, how much easier would that be, if you had a kick-ass vapor suit?

Devo: This is a good point, yes, and also—

Amber: Right?

Devo: Not being able to swim, having a suit that would help me breathe if I fell in the water, would be pretty useful, I assume.

Amber: Yes. Spoken like somebody that's really never swam much at all. That's absolutely a legitimate point. You can't breathe underwater. Hey! But. If we have a suit, I'll let you— if there's one that's cooler, I'll let you have it.

Devo: Well, how 'bout this, Amber. Seeing as how there are three of us but we only need two suits, maybe we can get, uh, suits and some money?

Amber: Mix and match!

Devo: Yes.

Zoox: [calling out] What are you two talking about over there?

Amber: How we're gonna get you some money! And we're gonna get cool suits!

Zoox: Okay!

Amber: And people are gonna call us the cool suit crew!

Zoox: Oh— oh, okay. But I don't need one!

Devo: Yes—

Amber: Yeah, we know! Hey, listen. Hey. Hand? Is that your name? Do you like Hand?

Hand of Guidance: Um. I mean. Yeah, sure, you can call me— well, no, that'll get confusing, there's other Hands. Um. You can call me Guidance for short, if you'd like.

Amber: Guido. Can we have some of the in vape— two vapor suits, and some money?

Hand of Guidance: [sighs] Oh, I don't... I'm not sure I... understand.

Amber: Two Lux, two vapor suits, clean. We get your guy.

Hand of Guidance: Uh. I... but it's... they come in a set of four. Um. I suppose we could... aug— augment them? But it's— I would— we would already be in breach of contract, and it seems like you've all just kinda started. Um.

Devo: But...

Amber: Okay. Well. Hmm. What do you mean, they come in like a set? Like, they're matching?

Griffin: She walks over to a little display case, where there is a little like, holographic vapor suit being displayed. Actually four of them, that are plugged into this, like, charging plate, like this cross shaped thing on the floor.

Justin: Are they bonded?

Griffin: No. No. She says—

Amber: Hey, hey, sidebar sidebar—

Devo: We will take the suits— Nope— We're on the same page, Amber—

Amber: Yeah, we good— Yeah!

Devo: Yep!

Amber: Yeah— si— ge— those are so cool! I wouldn't wanna break these beautiful babies up, we'll take all four.

Devo: Yep! We will take the four suits. The set, please.

Hand of Guidance: Oh... okay. That was weird.

Amber: Nah, nah nah nah nah.

Hand of Guidance: Okay, I won't think about it too much—

Devo: No— this is just what it— this is what it looks like when people work together, instead of just trying to control one another.

Amber: It's just, we're on the same wavelength.

Hand of Guidance: Okay. Alright, sure, okay. Keppa. Tell me your lot number, I'll have it installed by the end of the day.

Amber: Seven.

Hand of Guidance: There's a— there's also a letter.

Amber: —teen.

Travis: Point five.

Hand of Guidance: But... the letter?

Amber: 17 point...

Travis: Double A.

Amber: Double A—

Hand of Guidance: Do you not know your lot number?

Amber: Nah. That's embarrassing.

Travis: That's for nerds.

Amber: I didn't even look where I parked it, I just kinda...

Travis: Oh, we're in Goofy Seven. [laughs]

Griffin: [cracks up]

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: G Seven!

Clint: Do you have a key fob that you can hit the alarm, and we'll be able to find it?

Justin: Yeah. [laughing] Push the panic button.

Griffin: Your ship is a giant purple and green bathyscaphe, I think it will be... easy to find your ship, once you get down there. Uh. You can do G7. That's a weird... crossover...

Clint: Bingo!

Griffin: [laughing] Like, uh... but we can rock that way if you want. Uh. Okay!

Hand of Guidance: I'll have it installed— here, I'll just— one second.

[music fades in]

Griffin: And she walks in the back, and pops out, and she says,

Hand of Guidance: Okay! I'll have it done. I guess, contact me if you have any more questions? And, uh, good luck. Devo! Seriously, come by sometime. I would love to catch up.

Devo: Oh, fuck no.

Hand of Guidance: Oh, wow.

Clint: [laughs]

Amber: Jeez.

Hand of Guidance: Ohhhkay.

Amber: Who hurt you?

Devo: Her!

Amber: Oh, her, right on. Okay.

Zoox: Oh! Okay.

Clint: And Zoox puts his hand on his crossbow.

Devo: No no. No. No no no.

Zoox: But you said she hurt you.

Devo: Yes, but she is also a.... incredibly powerful. In a variety of ways. Uh. And before you could twitch, you would most likely be dead.

Zoox: Oooh! Again.

Hand of Guidance: That's right! Yeah. Um. This is getting really weird now, I thought we were ending on kind of a high note.

Devo: Uhhhhh....

Zoox: We need our money, though, right, folks? Don't we need money?

Devo: Nope! We got the, we got the suits and are going to go.

Amber: Good, real good.

Griffin: Okay.

Zoox: But... you said... uh...

Amber: Come on! God.

Griffin: I'm not sure what this gambit is y'all are playing, but I can't wait to find out.

Travis: Oh, we only need—

Justin: You're thick. It's pretty obvious.

Travis: Yeah, we only need two suits, and there's two more, we can sell those two!

Justin: Yeah! Let's fuckin' sell them!

Griffin: Oh, okay! Sure! Yeah, why not!

Justin: Yeah.

Travis: [laughing] We know literally a black market dealer!

Justin: She wanted to be boring and not give us the money and some suits, we'll just fuckin' sell some suits, probably for better— a better profit.

Griffin: Yep. Uh, okay! So, I guess, yeah, you're done here... I'm not gonna, y'know, immediately push you off. What do you want to do? I— just to sort of, again, this is the first time we're doing this in proper, this would be a good time to do any sort of preparation that you want, stock up on any cargo, consumables, supplies that you might need, gather any additional intel that might benefit you, out there. All of that stuff can impact your readiness rating.

Clint: Well I think first we have to sell the... sell the two suits, right?

Justin: We can wait on that.

Clint: Okay.

Justin: I'm not in a big rush.

Clint: Well, we have nothing to spend, if we're gonna buy supplies and all that other stuff, do we?

Justin: Huh.

Travis: Is there a pawn shop anywhere? We have a gold plate—

Justin: There's not— there's something better than a pawn shop.

Griffin: I think we just use the Phantom Sea Coast Co.

Justin: That's what I was about to say.

Griffin: I think— yeah. We don't need to add another shop in there.

Justin: We got the Phantom Sea Coast Co.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Alright, you swing by there, and Felix the catfish swoops down, and says,

Felix: Back so soon? Ah, Devo, got that money, buddy?

Devo: It's... has been... like, two hours?

Clint: [laughs]

Felix: The juice is dripping, dribbling down!

Devo: Is it hourly??

Felix: It's— mmm, who knows!?

Devo: Okay. Uh. So, do you remember the gold plate that I showed you and then you were like "I do not want the plate, I want the juice."

Felix: Yes.

Devo: Would you... still give me money for the plate, and then I could pay you back for the plate later, and... eh, more juice!

Felix: Does the plate shoot out, like, bad-A lasers? That can like, blast a ship, and you can put it on your ship?

Devo: No, it's— it is just a...

Felix: A plate, huh? Nice...

Devo: Well, it's a— it's Parish of Benevolence plate. It is a... very... unique...

Felix: Ohhh! So it— yeah! And you put it on your ship and it makes it go faster.

Devo: No. It is decorative. But it is gold.

Felix: Oh, just a plate, then?

Devo: It's a gold plate.

Felix: I don't want that.

Devo: Is this not useful? Because my very dear friend, Brother Seldom, gave it to me, and said "Hey this will be useful." And now it seems that—

Felix: Not to me! I'm a big catfish monster worm thing. Why do I need a plate?!

Devo: 'Cause you could sell it. If I do not buy it back.

Felix: I sell ship stuff! This is crazy! You can't go to a sporting goods store and try to sell them some ham!

Devo: I guess this is a good point. Brother Seldom is a real idiot.

Felix: I mean there might be a plate store on this shop, no need to denigrate your, your kind—

Travis: Okay Griffin, I just asked, and you said "No need to create another store, there's a store, with a giant catfish."

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: And then I get there and you're like Nope! [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Um—

Travis: Excellent "No, No"-ing. Griffin.

Griffin: I thought you were— I mean, you all said you were gonna sell these vapor suits. Not a fuckin' plate. So.

Travis: Oh my god. Okay. Fine.

Devo: We have two vapor suits that we can sell you. How 'bout this? We got a set of four, we only need two. This leaves two.

Felix: So you're just gonna cut— like, cut the thing in half?

Devo: Uh... the thing?

Felix: The, the— the set, of vapor suits, it's got a bunch of— oh, that's I suppose not your problem, I'll take a couple vapor suits off your hands. Uh... how does... uh... how does... two Lux sound? One per vapor suit?

Devo: It sounds about half as much as we want.

Felix: Mmmm!

Amber: Let's save everybody a lot of trouble, it's gonna be three. Right? You want three—

Felix: Yeah.

Amber: Well that's two. Let's move on with our lives and just— Everyone, just say three out loud. Yeah?

Felix: That's— that's, yeah, I think we could get through—

Amber: Yeah, just say three out loud.

Felix: Just get on with our day. Three?

Amber: Devo, say three out loud?

Devo: Three, yes.

Amber: Yeah, cold.

Felix: Yeah— okay. Cool.

Zoox: Three?

Felix: Yeah.

Amber: Nice, Zoox, nice. Is that— you're here to witness.

Griffin: A little shipworm pops up from the bottom, and uh... has a little tiny pair of spectacles that he looks over the paperwork for the vapor suit—

Travis: So cute.

Griffin: And nods his head. And another one pops up, that's holding like a cash register. And the drawer opens, and they grab three Lux, and slide it to you. And he— the— Felix the catfish says,

Felix: And I'll make sure I'll take those off your hands, literally right now while I'm talking to you.

Griffin: And he nods to a few other ship worms, that dive down and head towards your lot.

Felix: Anything else I can help you with?

Clint: Will we need ammo for the weapons? Or is that just kinda...

Griffin: No. That is one thing—

Clint: Okay.

Griffin: You do not have to sweat. The weapons that you have that, like, the depth charges, that only have two uses per re-supply... "resupply" just means docking at the city. You are not going to have to buy new depth charges or cannonballs or whatever. Same goes for fuel. The ships in this world are powered by the sort of salt that they are... uh, you know. Surrounded by. The things that I've got, so far at least, for consumables, are rations, which affect your readiness rating. Right now you have no rations, which is...

Travis: That's bad.

Griffin: Which is— [laughing] which is a penalty to your rating.

Travis: Because we get— we get hungry!

Griffin: Right. And the other two things are repair kits, which can be used to sort of skip a check on a damaged system, you just use an action and fix it without having to roll, and that takes up cargo space. And there's also a hull patch, which is when you're not in combat, you can... fix up the ship equal to half of its hull rating. Those are the things that you can purchase at the moment.

Travis: So, just real quick. Devo needs to drop by Brother Seldom's and the thing. Does Zoox and Amber, do they want to go buy the consumables? Or?

Clint: Do we buy them from Felix?

Griffin: Yeah. You can.

Zoox: I don't eat. So...

Griffin: Ummm...

Zoox: You folks get what you want to eat—

Griffin: Mmm, no, I think you've gotta eat. I think that your—

Travis: You gotta eat!

Griffin: I mean, it's not... the usual stuff. There is special food for Brinarr, definitely. But like, you are a living organism, you gotta eat somethin'.

Travis: Yeah, you gotta filter-feed.

Griffin: Right. So. Nice try.

Travis: Yeah. But you can just lower down in a big vat of yogurt, and filter-feed that way.

Griffin: That's it. There's, yeah, the macro-organisms in there will feed you up, yum yum good.

Clint: [laughs]

Devo: I say we get, uh, the repair kit and the Basic Rations.

Felix: Okay. We can do that. Are you sure I can't interest you in these... Delicious Rations?

Devo: Uh, this will be up to the captain. We just, uh, then won't be able to fix the ship. But we're not going to fight...

Amber: But they're delicious!!

Clint: [laughs]

Amber: Hnnrrr!

Griffin: The delicious rations cost—

Clint: They're not just rations!

Griffin: They cost three Lux, for the...

Amber: Ahhhh...

Travis: Is this the kind of thing, Griffin, where rations expire at the end of a trip?

Griffin: Yes.

Travis: And we have to—

Griffin: Yes, all— all these consumables will go away at the end. Not the, uh, stuff in your cargo hold—

Justin: So what are our choices? Bad rations...

Griffin: Bad rations, which basically negates the penalty. You will have a plus zero to readiness. Uh, for two, you can get Generous Rations, which gives you plus two readiness. For three, you can get Delicious Rations, which gives you plus four readiness. Um.

Travis: Will you remind—

Griffin: The Exquisite— the Exquisite Rations, are out of your price range.

Amber: You know what? We're still trying to figure stuff out, let's get Generous Rations.

Devo: And hold onto one Lux?

Amber: The Lux don't disappear at the end.

Felix: Alright, I will have these Generous Rations sent your way. Big—

Amber: Oh! Wait, I'd like— before we finalize that. I would like to sample one.

Felix: ... Oh.

Amber: You got any—

Zoox: Yeah, surely you do tasting!

Amber: You got any samples?

Felix: I mean, my goods are of the highest quality.

Amber: Just let me get one li'l nibble. I've just got a little bit of a peckish streak right now and I'd love to get a little bit of the, uh, [smacks lips] you know?

Felix: Alright, hold on.

Devo: Let the captain get her snoot into your rations.

[playful music plays]

Griffin: A bunch of shipworms pop up, and like, fourteen of them are holding up a little warming table, and one shipworm with a plastic shower cap pops up, and they hand you like a tiny folding paper cup, with a... a little orange cube inside of it. And they have a little display, showing you the Generous Rations right next to it.

Amber: [smacks lips] Hey. Do I detect sea beef?

Felix: I suppose yes!

Amber: Nice. Nice. These are choice, thank you. I feel much better, thank you so much.

Felix: Yeah, sure.

Amber: Yeah, we'll take 'em.

Felix: Cool.

Griffin: And the ship worms drop back down.

Felix: Alright, I will have this sent to your ship. Good luck out there, don't die, because you owe me money.

[Phantom Sea Coast Co music plays]

Amber: [whispering] Hey, Zoox.

Zoox: Mm?

Amber: [whispering] I wasn't that hungry.

[someone snorts with laughter]

[music ends]

Griffin: While you all are sort of loading these rations onto the ship and giving it sort of a once-over, Brother Seldom approaches you, Devo, and he says,

Brother Seldom: I got your— I got your page. That was weird. I haven't used one of these since the eighties.

Devo: They are coming back. They are very cool now, is what everybody is saying. Did you bring my lute case?

Brother Seldom: Uh, yes, as you've requested. I don't know... are you playing some private concerts somewhere? Out in the... great blue?

Devo: No, I just... I feel that I will have some down time on the ship and I want to be able to practice. In the meantime, please, I will return your plate to you, because uh... well. Several times we attempted to give it to people in exchange for money, and it seems— and I'm sorry to say this to you, my friend— your plate is, uh, absolutely worthless. And, um. Nobody wants it. Um.

Zoox: What— I— I wanted it.

Devo: I— he's not trying to get rid of it, he says that it—

Brother Seldom: Yeah, it's not just a free plate, that I'm— it's a nice plate— but I suppose—

Zoox: Oh. Oh, I thought. Okay.

Brother Seldom: Yes.

Zoox: I was gonna give it a good home.

Brother Seldom: Alright.

Zoox: But that's okay.

Brother Seldom: I'll take it— I'll take it back.

Griffin: And he takes the plate back. And, um, he says,

Brother Seldom: Do you need, um... [whispering] S-A-L-T...

Devo: Yes, you can just say it. I trust them.

Brother Seldom: Oh. Okay.

Griffin: He palms you a few small little... capsules of salt. I forget how we described it.

Travis: I— yeah. It was like hunks of— yeah.

Griffin: Yeah.

Devo: One more thing. There was a young girl named Beck that came to the school—

Brother Seldom: Yes! She has stopped by. She has, uh, she has been extremely helpful. Actually. Around the school.

Devo: Oh, this is excellent.

Brother Seldom: Her and Skittles the octopus, has— have— he's really earned a place in my heart.

Devo: Well, he has for everybody. He is a very charming young octopus. If you would be a bit of a go-between for me, I would like to offer Beck a job. That I can pay her for, if she is interested. Uh. It seems that the time has come for me to take swimming lessons.

Brother Seldom: Ah, yes.

Devo: And for this, I can pay her three Lux.

Brother Seldom: Ah, yes, let's... I will... this is a weird... I am... I'm like, sort of the headmaster of the premiere educational institution in this city. So I am a bit busy. But I will... hand her your... flyer, or whatever, for swimming lessons—

Devo: No, I— this is the money.

Travis: And I hand him the three Lux.

Brother Seldom: Alright. Yes. I'll uh...

Devo: If— if you would make this offer to her.

Brother Seldom: Yes.

Devo: Uh. And... anytime... if she gets sick of the school and wants to leave, just let her go. Um. Do not force her to stay. Um. If you would... do this for me, I would very much appreciate it.

Griffin: He... smiles kinda sadly. And he says,

Brother Seldom: Of course. Uh... Alright. Good luck out there. Have fun! Let loose! See some stuff! What are you— what's your mission, by the way? What are you doing, are you allowed to say?

Devo: Ohhh, you are not going to like this. Um. We are working with the... Parish. To go—

Brother Seldom: Fuck off!

Justin: [laughs loudly]

Devo: Yes, I know, yes. To go and rescue Benefactor Orlene. Do you know anything about him?

Brother Seldom: Yeah, I know... I know him. Good luck with that. Yeah. Wow. Orlene, they got Orlene, huh?

Devo: What do you mean, what do you know about Orlene?

Brother Seldom: I mean he's... he's a very powerful magic user, and scholar, and... I'm just surprised that he got... got. What was it, a blink shark? Are they back? I heard rumors.

Devo: No. A very large clam, I think.

Brother Seldom: [blows a raspberry] What a dingus. Alright. Well, good luck.

Griffin: And he heads back to the Ascension.

Travis: Uh, so let's get on the ding-dang ship.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, you all— I mean, we described in detail, I would say, the Coriolis, but I'm curious, like, what the bridge set up looks like for you all. Um. I think we described the Dreams of Deborah one as being almost... like Enterprise-esque...

Travis: Mmhmm.

Griffin: With different stations, and... very nice, very modern aesthetic. When you walk into the Coriolis bridge... Captain. How does it look?

Justin: You know what it is? You know what it is? I just decided.

Griffin: Hm.

Justin: It's got a vibe like... you know how, like, uh, if you go to an office that hasn't been updated for a long time?

Griffin: Yes!

Justin: Like, seventies, but not in a cool way?

Travis: Mmhmm.

Justin: You know what I mean? Like, it's just sort of like... run down but not in a dilapidated sense, like run down like, creaky wood... that kind of vibe. But more like, run down office that hasn't been updated. Like it's got cork ceilings...

Travis: Yes.

Justin: With water damage, that you can see poking through it—

Griffin: Hell yes.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: And there's like file cabinets that have been chained to the wall so they don't tip over at unsuspecting moments. And there's like... probably a bean bag, somewhere.

Travis: Mmm, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Clint: [guffaws]

Justin: So that's like the... the... and it's got, like— this is what's really the fuckin' weirdest about it. The bridge has carpet. And it's like... why...

Griffin: [cracks up]

Clint: Aw, shag! It's gotta be shag!

Justin: Why...

Griffin: What— what color?

Justin: WHY would it even be carpeted.

Griffin: What color?

Justin: No, shag would imply Dad, like, residential.

Griffin: This is strictly business.

Clint: Oh, okay.

Justin: And I'm thinking more like...

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Real industrial...

Justin: In a business center.

Clint: Yep. Yep. Okay.

Travis: Like if it caught fire it would melt into one hunk.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Right.

Travis: You know? Like...

Griffin: I'm envisioning like, any small town's city hall.

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: Like that level of... of...

Justin: Yeah, exactly.

Griffin: Of decay. Uh, that's—

Clint: I love it!

Griffin: That is fantastic.

Travis: Some of the chairs are sun-bleached...

Justin: There's— there's— the different stations are actually cubicles.
[laughs]

Griffin: [cracks up]

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: [laughing] We're going deep in it!

Griffin: This is so good. Okay. Alright! You all make your way to, obviously... Devo, I assume you're still taking the pilot's seat.

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: Where is your cubicle, Amber? As the... as the captain?

Justin: Hmm.

Travis: Oh, and I'm gonna say too, if I may. That this one, instead of having like a sleek sphere—

Griffin: Right. Yes.

Travis: For the steering. This is just like a flat, big disc. That you can still tilt different ways, but you have to hold the edges.

Griffin: Ah that's nice. You're on the ones and twos, piloting this ship.

Travis: Yeah, a little clunkier.

Justin: It's like—

Griffin: DJ Devo.

Justin: The captain's thing is like a slightly elevated desk, with, like, a barrier around it, like... if you're at the help desk at the library.

Griffin: [laughing] It's like that desk that they make Ron Swanson use, in that one episode of Parks and Rec.

Travis: Yes!

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: Yeah, sort of like that.

Griffin: Yeah, that's awesome.

Justin: More angular, less round.

Griffin: And Zoox, where's your li'l station on the bridge? We didn't really necessarily get into your... uh... Obviously, our specialities here are not binding us to specific... um... you know, roles aboard the ship. Um. But what do you... what do you think your sort of station looks like here?

Clint: I think Zoox would probably be somewhere... doing something along the lines of monitoring?

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, the ship has sensors on it that are sort of the "eyes" of the ship. And I think there's prob— definitely a station for, y'know—

Clint: And he would be more apt to recognize things...

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: And, you know. See those things.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: So it's— [laughs] So, it's... it's... instead of a desk, it's like a kidney shaped table. Like from the—

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: From the seventies.

Travis: Aw, boy, yeah.

Clint: And a— one of those hard plastic chairs...

Travis: Uh huh.

Clint: That kinda swoops— you know what I'm talking about.

Travis: How many coffee rings are on the table, Dad?

Griffin: So many.

Clint: There's like... half a dozen...

Travis: Oh boy. Okay.

Clint: And one ash tray that is a bean bag ashtray.

Travis: What?

Clint: Trust me, my dad used to have one.

Travis: That sounds horrifying. Okay. Great.

Griffin: Uh, okay! Are you all ready to push off?

Justin: Let's go.

[music plays for a few seconds]

Griffin: You all... head out, down through the water, the moon pool of the Gills, and... maybe it takes a couple tries. For the weak engine of the Coriolis to turn over. But it gets there. And you all submerge, on another adventure.

Alright, it's time again for you all to... roll your random encounter here. Again, if you... [laughs] weren't listening, I guess, to the last time this happened, every time you leave the city on a mission, you will encounter something along the way. You will roll a d100. Adding or subtracting your total readiness here.

Uh... I have removed the "inexperienced crew," since you all have gone on a mission before, and you still have the "Zoox Expertise," that's always going to be a flat five additional to it. You have the Generous Rations, which add two more. And the intel that you acquired, which... is... a sort of, uh, abstract system, but I also think there's ways to get bad intel, that will reduce this score. You all got one piece of good intel here, which is the

location of the clam. Which brings your total readiness up to eight! So, um... who rolled it last time? I think maybe Dad rolled it?

Travis: Yeah, Dad rolled it last time.

Griffin: Uh. Okay. Trav, you want to roll this one?

Travis: I do! Can I set the scene a little bit?

Griffin: Okay, roll a d100.

Justin: Oh my gosh.

Travis: Okay. [sound of dice rolling] A 28.

Griffin: Okay...

Travis: Still fairly low.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: But...

Justin: It's higher than it was.

Griffin: So that's a 36 total. Yeah, I mean, last time you rolled a fuckin' six.

Travis: Right.

Griffin: So there's a lot of numbers that are bigger than that number.

Travis: Whole lot of 'em.

Griffin: 36... 36 is one of 'em.

Travis: 94 percent of 'em.

Griffin: Uh, I need... everyone to make a perception check, please.

Justin: Nine for me.

Travis: Eight for me.

Justin: Six plus three.

Griffin: Wow!

Clint: Zoox rolled a nine. No, Zoox rolled an eight.

Griffin: Jeez'um Pete... okay!

Travis: Still not good at... Though I will say, Griffin, my passive perception is 13. So. It's higher than what I rolled, I dunno if that helps.

Griffin: Uh, I'm trying to decide if passive perception's gonna do anything here.

Travis: I mean, I'm looking out the window! Also, I just realized, my passive insight, my passive— is 16.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: So it's gonna be hard for people to get shit by ol' Devo.

Griffin: Yeah. Uh, okay. This is— this is an old ship, right? Or at the very least, maybe it's not an old ship, but it is in a state of still sort of relative disrepair. So there are some sounds that it makes.

Travis: It's vintage.

Griffin: It's vintage. There are some sounds that it makes while you all are cruising it through the Ethersea. And some of these groans you just kinda get used to, it's just kinda the... the, you know, material of the ship sort of settling under the weight of the water, which it has not felt for quite some time. And... there's a sound that gets mixed in there, that is... different. It is like... more tinny, and like, scraping? And you just kinda dismiss it, as like,

more of the ship settling. But... the longer you hear it, it becomes unmistakable, that there is a— the sound of something moving, on the... you know, the equivalent of the gunnery deck, which I imagine is fairly bare bones for the ship right now.

Travis: Inside the ship?

Griffin: Inside the ship. What do you do? I think with all your rolls, it takes a while. Uh. And... so, whatever this this that is making this sound, is been doing something for a while. But you know, you all rolled basically the same thing, so you all hear it at the same time.

Travis: I'm gonna do whatever the equivalent is, of like, parking. So that we're not like... 'cause I don't want... I want all three of us to be able to go investigate, without somebody having to stay on the bridge.

Griffin: Okay. You can do that, for sure. Uh... you are sailing fairly close to the ocean floor, since this is a deep sea vessel, that is no sweat. And the four thick, dummy thick, legs, slide out of the sides of the ship, parking so that the bathysphere is not crushed under its tremendous weight. As you bring it down. And you are stationary.

Devo: Should...

Griffin: You hear the sound again. It sounds like— actually, the sound you just heard sounds like a... something being dropped, like a metal thing being dropped to the floor.

[sound effects of metallic clanging]

Clint: Oh, Zoox heads down there, pulls out his crossbow and heads down.

Griffin: M'kay.

Travis: Yeah, Devo follows at a safe distance.

Griffin: Amber?

Justin: Yeah. Same.

Griffin: M'kay. Um...

Clint: Zoox kicks open the hatch door, says,

Zoox: Freeze, scumbags!

Justin: Yes...

Griffin: Yeah, it's like, pitch black in here. This is not a... this is not a room. You described the skeleton of this ship as being basically empty cubes...

Travis: Yeah. Cubicles.

Griffin: That you could fill with other chambers. So you have these weapons, aboard the ship, but like. You have to be standing on, you know, beams. [laughs] To use it. Like steel beams. Uh. And... yeah. It's... I think it's a little too dark... Do any of you have like, darkvision? Is that a trait? Maybe Devo? He's a... you know. The ancestry that you kind of picked up, was a...

Travis: Uh... do I?

Griffin: Yes, you have darkvision!

Travis: Yes I do!

Griffin: Um, alright, then Devo—

Travis: It's 'cause of my glowing, my m— my glowing blue eyes.

Griffin: Your beautiful blue eyes. Your special eyes. Yeah, okay. You see... uh. You can see traces of things, you can see shades— “you can see in darkness shades of gray up to 60 feet.” So it's hard for you to like, really pinpoint what this thing is. But you see something... small. Like, knee-high. And... kind of round. With... what appear to be needles sticking out of its back. And it has what appear to be arms, again it's kinda hard to make this

out with just your darkvision. And is it... digging around the depth charges. The machinery that deploys the depth charges. And... you k— you said you kicked open the door?

Clint: Yes.

Griffin: Okay, as soon as you did that, it curls up and those arms disappear, Devo, and now it's just in a ball. With these needles coming out of it. And it... very quickly, starts to roll up the inside of the hull of the ship, heading for a vent in the ceiling.

Devo: Oh, you scared it.

Clint: Um... Zoxx casts *Speak with Animals*.

Griffin: Okay. How does that work?

Clint: Uh... "you gain the ability to verbally comprehend and communicate with beasts for the duration. The knowledge and awareness of many beasts is limited by their intelligence, but at minimum, beasts can give you information about nearby locations and monsters, including whatever they can perceive or have perceived within the past day. You might be able to persuade a beast to perform a small favor for you, at the GM's discretion."

Griffin: Okay, you hear this spiky ball, rolling up the wall, going,

Spiky Ball: Oh no, oh no oh no oh no! Oh gosh!

Clint: And, uh, do I need to roll anything?

Griffin: Nope!

Travis: You're speaking with it, baby!

Clint: Zoxx says,

Zoxx: I'm sorry I called you a scumbag!

Spiky Ball: Waaahh!

Zoox: I really don't think you're a scumbag! Please come back and be our friend. Are you hungry? Do you want some— some food?

Griffin: You freak its fuckin' bean, when you speak in a language it can comprehend, so much so that it falls off the ceiling, and crashes to the floor.

Travis: Well now, hold on, let me make, let me make a dex check to see if I can grab it.

Griffin: You wanna try and grab this thing? Okay!

Travis: Oh no wait it's got... needles...

Griffin: Nope! Go ahead!

Travis: Oh, boy...

Clint: [laughing] Do you have gloves on?

Travis: Uh, so it would be a saving throw, right, because it's happening in the moment?

Griffin: Uh, not a saving throw, because it's not attacking you. But you can make a sleight of hand, let's say, dexterity check.

[Sound of dice rolling]

Travis: Uh, 17 plus two, a 19.

Griffin: Okay, yeah! As this thing falls, it... you manage to grab it around the needles, which is saying something. 'Cause now that you are looking at it, straight up, like... you can see it very very clearly with your dark sight. It uncurls, as you grab it.

[“The Adventure Zone: Ethersea Theme” fades in]

Griffin: And you see its body now, is almost furry, and almost rat-like? And as it unfurls and it sees you, and it looks at Zoox, it's looking for the voice that spoke, and it doesn't think you're it— it holds its hands out, and in it, you see... a glowing ball, which you recognize as... the explosive, at the heart of this depth charge that it was rooting around in. And this little creature says,

Urchin: Nobody move! Or Urchin's gonna blow us all to hell!

[theme music plays out]

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