

The Adventure Zone: Ethersea – Episode 9

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Griffin: Previously, on the Adventure Zone Ethersea:

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

Griffin: A stowaway appears, who siphons away resources.... And also, notably, there is no sign of the Benefactor's ship anywhere— there is *nothing* in this crater. And sitting right smack dab in the middle of it, is a big clam.... You pick up what this thing is feeling, with this spell. It's hungry? Like, insatiably hungry.... Devo, you are suspended in this stream of water falling down. And from the way that you are sort of dangling, you see Zoox just plummet over the edge, and fall into the abyss.

Amber: Here goes nothin’.

Devo: I should have mentioned before now! I do not know how to swim!

Amber: Hey.

Devo: [gasps for air]

Amber: Shhh. We're just inside a giant clam.

Zoox: We have company! We have underwater swerving... red company.

Griffin: And another huge, just jet of water shoots down, right near the three of you as you see its mouth open up. And just as the lionfish is about to come back and attack again, it looks up, and starts to... move away. Because it sees the Coriolis in freefall above you.

[theme music plays]

Griffin: So, um. Y'all's ship... has...

Clint: Oh yeah!

Griffin: Just been sucked into the mouth of the infinite clam, where you all were... sort of treading water below. A lionfish, a massive lionfish, had just attacked you with these glowing spikes, and...

Justin: Okay. Can I... can I... if I can try to... I wanna repaint this— like, I can understand the... um, basics of the scene, but I want to try to repaint it in a way...

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Where I understand the physics of it.

Griffin: Yes, sure.

Justin: Um, so. We're in the ocean.

Griffin: ... Yeah.

Justin: And... we're... [snickers] A good start. We're inside a clam. There is a... is there breathable air in clam?

Griffin: Yeah. You all are basically on the surface of a giant lake, inside of this...

Clint: Like a grotto! Under the clam?

Griffin: Like a grotto, inside of this clam, yes. Every time it opens its mouth, water pours into this... this grotto—

Justin: But it's much bigger... [laughs] this clam!

Griffin: It's infinite— it is infinitely large, this clam, you would say.

Justin: Okay.

Clint: Oh yeah?

Griffin: And as it opened its mouth, the bathysphere that was sort of dangling down into it, fell in, and moments later, the Coriolis got sucked in. And is now actively falling toward you.

Justin: But the orientation of the thing is that we are... at the bottom of it? And the gravity of the Earth...

Griffin: Yes, the mouth of the clam is, is...

Justin: Or, not Earth, but... whatever. Name your planet. What's the planet?

Griffin: J— Jeff. We don't need a fuckin' name for the planet, come on. You can't throw that at me three minutes into...

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: You can— I was gonna say Earth Two, but that's taken. You could do Earth Three.

Justin: [muttering quietly] Tamriel.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah?

Griffin: You're in a giant clam. And your ship is falling on you. I need... Zoox and Amber— Amber, you're holding onto Devo. I need the two of you to make a dexterity saving throw. Amber, if you are going to be holding Devo, during this save, I need you to take disadvantage.

Justin: I will—

Devo: You are going to be great!

Travis: So you get—

Justin: I will be holding him. I think that... I wouldn't think to let him go.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Remember...

Travis: Yeah. But I do give you bardic inspiration, 'cause I'm smiling at you, and batting my blue eyes, and sayin', like, hey...

Griffin: As if to say, "please don't let me die. Please don't— please don't let me die."

Justin: 'Kay. We got... here comes Amber's... we got... [sound of dice rolling] Well, okay. No need for another roll, I think.

Griffin: That's...

Justin: Got disadvantage on it, and that's a one. So...

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Gonna be a real— [wheezing unintelligibly]

Travis: You can— you can let me go now, if you want.

Clint: Does that mean I have advantage?

Griffin: Uh... no. You don't have advantage. So that's a six from Zook, and a five from Amber Gris. Did you roll a crit one, Juice?

Justin: Critical one.

Griffin: Oh, yeah, it doesn't matter what Amber got. That is a failure, and by extension, a failure for Devo.

Travis: Fair.

Griffin: So, I need all of you to take...

Justin: Wait, did I really have bardic inspiration?

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: It doesn't— there's nothing you can add—

Justin: A fail is a fail is a fail.

Griffin: —to this critical— a fail is a fail is a fail. Well, hang on to that bardic inspiration—

Travis: Well now you have that bardic inspiration that you can still use another time.

Griffin: Yeah sure! Um, all of you take 11 points of bludgeoning damage, as...

Clint: Is there no action we can take, is there nothing we can— we have time to do?

Griffin: Not right now. There is not.

Clint: Okay.

Griffin: Your ship has just fallen down. All of you take— what did I say? 11 points of bludgeoning damage. As the ship falls down, and it doesn't land on top of you, but it sends off just this concussive wave of force, that knocks the three of you backwards, like... 20 feet. Yeah.

Travis: Cool.

Griffin: You okay? Everybody okay? How's everyone doin'?

Justin: Shooooo... yeah man, it hurts!

Travis: Yeah. I'm hurt.

Clint: Zoot is down to 12.

Griffin: Alright.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: So you all go flying through the air, and come splashing down about 20 feet away. And it takes you a while to sort of get your... bearings, as you all land in the water. Devo, you are still just like, free-floating. In fact, Amber, make a... um... make just a... dex check to see if you can hang on to Zoox— er, to hang on to Devo.

Travis: To see if you can hang.

Griffin: To see if you can hang onto Devo during this, this... this wild throw. Just a dex check, just to see.

Justin: Just a quick dex check. ... Got an 11 plus two, 13.

Griffin: Yeah, that's enough to— it's clumsy, it's awkward, but you are able to stay holding onto Devo so he does not go sinking like a stone. And you all float back up to the surface of the water. You can see flickering lights of the Coriolis below the surface of the water. It is now sinking down. And... it hasn't pulled the bathysphere down with it, I think that the wire is a bit longer than that. But in the distance, you do see that lionfish, that crashed into the wall of the clam which sort of forced it to open its mouth. Um. That lionfish is starting to circle back around. What do you all do?

Devo: We— we should get to the bathysphere as quickly as possible, and then get in the ship, and then shoot... ev— just shoot everything.

Amber: Um. Yeah, I'll get you back, first off.

Justin: I'm gonna start swimming with Devo back to the ship. I mean, that's the only sane thing right now. I can't do anything... hauling his... this, this cordwood dumbass around.

Griffin: [audibly smiling] Yeah, sure. Um, okay—

Devo: I really appreciate that.

Travis: I cast—

Justin: You didn't hear that! You didn't hear that! That was Justin talking to Griffin. [unintelligible crosstalk]

Travis: No, as long as you're holding onto me though, I'm gonna cast Cure Wounds. Uh...

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: And... heal Amber... for... [sound of dice rolling]

Justin: Nice.

Travis: Uh, six plus three, nine points of damage.

Justin: Okay!

Griffin: Excellent. Cool. Amber, recover nine points of damage.

Justin: Love it. Love it. Love a healing— love a heal.

Travis: Yeah. Thanks for keeping me alive.

Justin: Probably single digits in the number of heals in the history of The Adventure Zone, right there.

Griffin: [laughs] So are you swimming to the bathysphere or the bathy—the Coriolis itself?

Justin: Fuckin', I'm swimming to the Coriolis! It's...

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: The stupid ship fell in, least I can do is... get back in it. [laughs]

Griffin: I only ask— the Coriolis is below water, sinking; the bathysphere is still on the surface of the water, and has not yet been pulled under yet.

Justin: I don't know where it's going, honestly—

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: I feel like we have to get the ship, like, it, you know what I mean? Like...

Griffin: Yeah. Sure.

Travis: Well, but if we get to the bathysphere, the bathysphere we can reel into the ship. And then I could steer the ship, right?

Justin: Yeah, but like... it's six to one, right?

Travis: Okay, yeah, go for it.

Justin: Because I could use my suit to get... to the...

Griffin: Devo is going to need to make a constitution saving throw, if you dive down with him.

Amber: You wanna come down with? Or you wanna float here?

Devo: Uh, no, let's go... uh, yes— we could do this. Deep breath.

Justin: Weird. It's weird, you don't really think of dragging people... down...

Travis: [sound of dice rolling] Ohhh... [sad chuckle] That's a...

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: No, I better... yeah okay, come on.

Travis: Ten.

Griffin: Alright, make a constitution saving throw, Devo.

Justin: He did. It's... a ten.

Travis: I did, it's a nine plus one, Griffin, a ten.

Griffin: Yeah, that's not... good... enough. Uh. [laughs]

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: Oh boy.

Griffin: You... take... five points of damage.

Travis: Whewww!

Griffin: That is... difficult to classify? You... you are so shitty at being in the water that, like, I don't even think your eyes reflexively close. And so you just see, like, the flickering lights of the Coriolis, and the glowing... what is it, green light? Of your vapor suit, Amber? You also catch a glimpse of your hand, Devo, and... it's almost like in *Back to the Future*, when Marty McFly's hand starts to disappear 'cause he's doing a shitty job of... making his parents... hump. It's a— a little bit like that. Like you feel like you can see through your hand, almost like your hand is turning into... the... very water that you are currently submerged in.

Travis: Uh, you know what? In a panic, I'm gonna cast *Cure Wounds* on myself then, because—

Griffin: I think— hold off, hold off, I think everybody's taking one sort of action here—

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Amber's diving down, you cured Amber—

Travis: It's just that I only have one hit point left.

Griffin: Oh, really? [laughs]

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: That's not very many—

Travis: No.

Griffin: Yeah, you should make sure you don't get hit by anything else. Uh, Zoox! What are you doing? You got this lionfish circling back around, you see Amber dive down with Devo to head back to the ship. Amber, with your vapor suit, I think you'll be able to get there, like... in another sort of turn, another move.

Clint: How close is the lionfish to Zoox?

Griffin: Uh, it will be on top of you in a matter of... like, all of this is happening, in real time, in like a few seconds. It's coming at you fast. And in fact, because you were the one that shot it, [laughing] in the face, or in one of its barbs, it's coming at you first.

Clint: Well in that case... he needs to make up for his mistake, and casts Animal Friendship. On the lionfish.

Griffin: Okay... So, something... odd. That happens. You know what it's like to sort of converse with sea creatures in this world. When you cast Animal Friendship, it just doesn't... it doesn't do anything. Almost like you've just cast it on a rock. And, in fact, let me give you this, Zoox. Zoox, make a dexterity saving throw for me.

Clint: 23!

Griffin: Fuck yes!

Clint: 18 plus five!

Griffin: Okay, you—

Travis: Finally.

Griffin: You try to cast this spell, and it's like a game of chicken, like you're just holding out your hand trying to... chill this thing out magically, and just feel like nothing coming at you in return. Except for... this lionfish, which whips some of its spikes up, these glowing red-hot spikes, towards you. But you just, like... slalom through them, with your bubble jets. And in fact, when you do that, you realize... you get a good look at this thing's face. And its eyes... are... illuminated. And... they're— it's not just some bioluminescent effect, you can see into the eyes, and you see what appears to be a cockpit. Being piloted by something that you can't see. And you put together that the reason Animal Friendship did not work on this thing is because it is... a... vessel. It is a— it is a ship that is being controlled by someone.

Amber, you have finished pulling Devo down to the Coriolis. The... I think the elevated bridge is probably just up, allowing you access in. You head inside, I'm guessing?

Justin: Yeah. I wanna bring— get Devo in.

Griffin: Okay. Make a— roll a d4. For me. Just a... good d4.

Travis: Just a plain old American d4.

Justin: A four.

Griffin: A four.

Justin: Nat four. [laughs]

Griffin: Nat four.

Travis: Nat four! [laughs heartily]

Griffin: Uh, okay! As you get into the ship, a little bit of water gets in, obviously, through the airlock, as you come in. But as you step foot into the actual body of the ship, like the, you know, the common area, you realize

that water hasn't just gotten in through the... through the airlock? Water is pouring into the ship through a leak in the hull. Because the hull is damaged. It took this damage as it fell down into the water. So I'm gonna mark one point of damage for the hull. Which really only affects you if you're aboard the ship when it happens. So luckily, this is one of the [laughs] better things, I think you probably could have rolled here. But the ship's taking on water. Um.

Travis: Um. And, and, Devo looks at Amber, and says,

Devo: Ah. On the bright side, ah... maybe the fall killed Urchin?

Griffin: [laughs softly]

Amber: Yeah. I mean, we can hope.

Urchin: [screeching with terror] What happened!?

Devo: [grumbles unintelligibly]

Amber: Hey! Dum-dum! You wanna drown?

Urchin: No! Not really.

Griffin: He swings down from a vent.

Amber: Start working on this hole for me, alright? Earn your rations!

Urchin: Uh, okay... I'll do my best!

Griffin: He... takes a ration and he chews it up, and he like, throws the spitted ration at the hole, and it just... shoots right off. He says,

Urchin: Well I'm out of ideas.

Devo: So you can take apart a bomb without blowing yourself up but you cannot, like... tape up a hole or some shit? Come on!

Urchin: I don't... I mean... shaming me isn't gonna make me perform any better.

Devo: [muttering] No time. Uh— okay, I'm going to—

Amber: He's right. You need to be hearty with your affirmations and lavish in your praise.

Urchin: That's what I'm always saying!

Devo: ... Jesus. Okay.

Travis: Um. We're in the bridge?

Griffin: Uh, yeah. I mean, you're in the ship, you can get wherever you— wherever you want, right now.

Travis: Okay, yeah, Devo heads to the bridge to try to like, get control of the ship.

Griffin: Okay. Amber, what are you doing?

Justin: Ummmm... I'm gonna start trying to... [laughing] fix this fuckin' hole, I guess!

Griffin: Okay! Describe to me what that... what that looks like. You all don't have any sort of repair...

Justin: Right. So...

Griffin: Like, kit. But— if you can tell me sort of how you... patch up a... small sort of tear in the outer hull? Paint that picture for me.

Justin: Um...

Griffin: We can say Urchin's there too, just sort of...

Urchin: Mmhmm! Mmhmm!

Justin: I scoop— well, Urchin just ate— does the ration have some sort of wrapper or something?

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Justin: Okay, so Urchin did that, and I... I, uh... grab some... We got tape.

Clint: [bursts into laughter]

Justin: We have to have tape. Like... we have to have tape, right??

Griffin: Yeah! I mean, you all have tools aboard the ship, it's just a question of like... you don't have necessarily—

Justin: I'm gonna tape— I'm gonna grab a ration wrapper...

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: And just tape that on with some duct tape.

Griffin: I love that. Okay, roll a—

Justin: And tape... tape over the hole.

Griffin: Roll a d20, plus one, for [laughs] the incredible help afforded to you by Urchin here, with his eating the ration.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: [simultaneously] Holy shit...

Griffin: [simultaneously] The number you're looking to beat is a five.

Justin: Well, bud, it's a two. It's a two. It's a two.

Griffin: Oofa doofa. Uh. Do you want to take that bardic inspiration here?

Travis: It adds like, a plus d6, I don't know...

Justin: [sighs]

Griffin: I mean, the number to beat here is a five. So... this would be a good time— in fact, two is—

Justin: Yeah, let's try it, just try it. It's a d6?

Griffin: Yep. So you need to get a— anything but a one.

Justin: [sound of dice rolling] ...Two. [laughs]

Clint: [cracks up]

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: [laughing] The low bar kid! Just scootin' right under! As always!

Griffin: [laughing] So good...

Justin: The least amenable effort!

Travis: "Scuse me, `scuse me, if I could just— okay, I'm just gonna squeeze past ya... "

Griffin: Okay, you put the wrapper on there—

Justin: It's like, it's like— so bad, that I can't— it takes me like ten minutes to figure out if it's leaking or just condensation. I'm like, right at the edge of like, "is that cold or wet?"

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: It looks like when the partner in the relationship who doesn't normally wrap presents, wraps the present. And you're like, "that's a lot of tape. Hey, that's a lot of tape, are you sure?"

Griffin: It has formed an inexplicable sagging balloon, this wrapper, that is like, very slowly expanding? And you're like, "Ehhhhh... that's probably not good..."

Justin: [laughing] It's like a skin tag, just kinda hanging down from the ship.

Griffin: [laughing] Exactly, yeah! But you have patched that hole. I will remove the hull damage here. And... Devo, you've raced up to the room? I think that's probably, you know, in real time probably a turn to get back up to the bridge. And get this ship going again. The engine turns over— in fact, the engine I think was still running. Like, you didn't necessarily power shit down—

Travis: Yeah, I took the wheel with me, if I remember correctly.

Griffin: Uh, okay. You— I mean, the lights are on in the ship looking through the viewport here: it's just infinite black below you. This grotto that you're in is deep beyond sort of... your current way of measuring things right now.

Travis: Yeah, I'm just trying to get back...

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Travis: ... to whatever the quote-un-quote "surface" is. You know what I mean? I'm...

Griffin: Yeah, you—

Travis: Get a sense of up and down and stop our freefall.

Griffin: Okay cool—

Travis: Or free sink?

Griffin: Yeah, free sink. Zoos, you see that then, you see the Coriolis sort of like, right itself, and start to raise back up, toward the surface of the water.

You're underwater right now, right, Zoox?

Clint: Right.

Griffin: You were when you cast the spell? Okay. And Devo, are you retracting the bathysphere back to its...

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: Spot? Okay. Zoox... you know, you've just dodged this lionfish's attack, and it is swimming away from you right now, you can't tell just yet if it is gonna be making a return trip or not. What are you doing?

Clint: I don't want to... waste, like, an investigation or anything like that. But can you describe the lionfish a little bit more to me, as— fro— based on things that Zoox would be able to perceive, just looking at it, like its size...

Griffin: Yeah! I mean, it's a— it is a little bit smaller than the Coriolis, like it's a big— it's huge. And it has these, probably about I think a dozen? Of these barbs, that are glowing red at the tips. And those appear to be, you know... almost lightsaber-like. Like, they are incredibly powerful burning hot spears. You can't seem to make out any kind of like, jet propulsion? It seems like it's like, actually using some sort of... mechanized tail, to— and fin, to propel itself through the water. But um... that's what you can see from it.

Clint: Okay, then I am gonna... how close... is... Zoox within... closing distance?

Griffin: I think it would take all of Zoox's movement but he could reach this lionfish if he really pushed it.

Clint: Okay. Is there a place on the... the tendrils that you were talking about, where he could safely grab ahold of them?

Griffin: Yeah, sure, if you grab them close to the base, like close to the hull. Of this thing. Uh, you could, for sure.

Clint: [laughing] Okay. Um. I think he... uses all of his speed to get to... the, uh, the lionfish, and... grab ahold of one of the tendrils, to be like... riding it like a bucking bronco. And he grabs ahold of one of those tendrils.

Griffin: Um... I think... I was gonna make you do an athletics check here, but I think this would be more acrobatics, to like get through the tendrils to a spot where you could grab onto it. So, make an acrobatics check for me.

Clint: Acrobatics check...

Griffin: And I will give you ad— I will give you advantage on this, because you kind of saw through this thing's ruse, with your last roll.

Clint: Okay. The first roll is an 11.

Griffin: That is not good enough.

Clint: And... that's a 19!

Griffin: That is good enough, okay! [laughs] Then, as you are floating to the surface, Devo, in the ship, and Amber, we can say that you're up there too now in the bridge, you see Zoox shoot off in his bubble stream like a rocket, and then grab onto the lionfish, and then just, whoop! The lionfish starts running away. It is swimming away from you, the Coriolis, it does not—

Clint: Yeeeeeee-haw!

Griffin: [laughing] It does not seem to be about to make another pass, it is making away with your ranger.

Devo: [sighs heavily] Ah.

Travis: Devo follows... [laughing incredulously] in the Coriolis.

Griffin: Okay! Why don't you roll plus speed for me? A d20 plus five. That is the speed of the Coriolis. I don't know that you've rolled speed, in this bladder-propelled... beauty.

Travis: Agh! Ugh! A three! It bounced off the corner of my screen, like... [sighs] it's all bits and bytes and light! It was almost a 19! No. It's a three. Plus five, that's an eight.

Griffin: Um. Okay... hmm! [giggles] Interesting. Zzzzrp. Yep. You, uh, you are following this lionfish, but... maybe the Coriolis is a little bit more banged up than you thought. It's taking a while for the bladders to refill with air. And after a few seconds, you have lost this thing's trail. Amber, you're back up in the bridge now too, is there anything you want to... do? As you watch this lionfish sort of fade from sight in front of you, with Zoox riding it like a rodeo?

Justin: Um. I mean, Zoox has got it, seems like. [laughs]

Clint: [bursts into laughter]

Travis: Yeah, Zoox is gonna be fine!

Justin: Seems like Zoox has got it! I don't— you know, I don't wanna step in the... in the path there, you know? Seems like Zoox has got it.

Travis: He's got a plan, or else he wouldn't have just grabbed on to the spines of this wild fish, if he didn't have something planned.

Clint: Aw, that's very kind of you.

Justin: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Griffin: Alright, then let's jump to Zoox! Zoox, this thing is swimming pretty steadily in one direction.

Travis: I love that band.

Griffin: They're so great. I knew that was coming. Again, like, it's not a fish, just swimming all over panicking, like this is a ship that is going to a destination. That you can tell. But... it has not seen you, because you approached it from the rear, so whoever is piloting this thing, whatever

sensors they've got, they don't seem to know that you are... on top of it. What do you do?

Clint: Okay, I tell you what I'm gonna do! First thing I'm gonna do is cast Faerie Fire.

Griffin: Whoa! Okay.

Clint: Around the lionfish. Faerie Fire—

Griffin: Oh, interesting! That's great!

Clint: —outlines an object in blue, green, or violet light. I'm gonna go with, um, violet?

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: And any creature in the area where the spell is cast is also outlined in light.

Griffin: Okay, then—

Travis: Can I make a suggestion, Dad? Just like a— a world, like a... that it's your swarm— little phosphorescent— uh...

Clint: Oh!

Travis: Little swarm? Surrounding it?

Clint: That— well you know I've been thinking about that. And, you know, I know it's table talk, but I think I'm gonna try to make all of Zook's magic...

Griffin: Oh, sure!

Clint: ... be swarm based.

Travis: Yeah! Yeah yeah yeah.

Griffin: Yeah! I think that's— I think that is... we talked about this a little bit—

Clint: Yeah! Yeah.

Griffin: About how it's different from Devo's magic, like this is all biological... I mean... arc— arcano-biological sort of stuff.

Clint: So what does—

Travis: That old chestnut.

Griffin: [laughing] Right.

Clint: What this is, is... creatures that live in coral reefs... these are thousands of phosphorescent seahorses.

[Bright chime music plays quietly]

Travis: Oooh...

Griffin: Okay!

Clint: That manifest...

Travis: Yeah, yeah yeah yeah.

Clint: And surround the lionfish, in this violet glow.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Which— I would think they would not be able to still perceive... from inside...the lionfish.

Griffin: Well, I think the tradeoff here is that they would definitely tell if a thousand bioluminescent...

Clint: [cracks up]

Griffin: [laughs] Seahorses... swarmed around their vehicle. But the tradeoff is, that the Coriolis crew, you all can now see... you can now see this fish. You could see this fish from a county mile away.

Devo: Ah, see, I knew that Zoox had a plan! Ah, we needn't have worried, eh?

Griffin: It is not going to get away from you again. Zoox, make a... [audibly smiling] This is going to be... maybe not Zoox's strong suit, but make a stealth check for me. Because you hear some movement in this cockpit, and you see light sort of shining upward, in the direction of the top of this lionfish.

Clint: You mean stealth, which Zoox has a plus three on? Sure! I'll roll that! Here we go...

Travis: Ah ha!

Griffin: Thankfully it's better than a minus one.

Clint: It's 18!

Griffin: Uh, okay! Maybe it's that these seahorses are also on you? So in a weird way, like... that makes you blend in to the hull a little bit better, and also sort of, you're in this... y'know, this forest of spines, on this thing's back. But that light shines around the top of the ship, and then it shuts off, and keeps on going, in the same direction. It does not seem to take evasive maneuvers or anything like that. Devo, you can see this fish now, real close. What's your, uh... or, not close, it's... it's a good distance away but you can see it very clearly. So what's your... what's your approach here?

Travis: I'm gonna tail it. I think.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Uh, I don't know if we have any floodlights— I know there are floodlights on the bathysphere, but... I'm gonna try to tail it as stealthily as a submarine, silent-running...

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: You know? I'm also going to, before I forget, just go ahead and cast Cure Wounds at a second level—

Griffin: Okay, fine. Yeah.

Travis: For old Devo! That's 2d8, plus three...

Griffin: Go ahead.

Travis: On that one...

Griffin: Oh, yeah, you do have second level spells now.

Travis: So that's gonna be plus 15.

Griffin: Okay! Good!

Travis: Which feels pretty good.

Griffin: That's gonna bring you... bring you hale and hearty. So you're turning off the lights? Like, what's your... you're shutting off the headlights here and just going by the light of the seahorses?

Travis: Yeah. If— if I can stay in a line behind it, right—

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Then I don't have to worry about running into anything.

Griffin: Roll plus speed with advantage, because you're— you have, you have everything you need here to take this stealth approach.

Travis: So first that is... ugh, a nine, jeez, okay. And then... okay, a ten, plus five, so 15?

Griffin: Uh, yeah, that is sufficient. You are able to follow this lionfish, this beautiful glowing purple lionfish, in the Coriolis, all of your lights shut off, the... y'know, bladder set to minimum—

Travis: Oh, and I can see in shades of gray too! So.

Griffin: Shades of gray and purple. Um. And... the three of you follow this lionfish and after... uh, about ten minutes or so, of it sort of heading in this direction, at a pretty steady speed, it starts to slow down. And Zoon, you can see up through the spines, what looks to be... almost like a cluster of... ships.

[ominous rhythmic music fades in]

That have all sort of... not “anchored,” because there is no bottom to this water that you can see below you, but they are floating on the surface of the water, and as this lionfish gets closer, you realize that they’re not just floating close to each other. What you are approaching is... a bunch of ships, of different sort of makes and models, and different sort of functions, that have all been sort of welded together. Into a large platform. And this lionfish is... swimming toward the surface, to dock at a long pier.

[ominous rhythmic music plays out]

[ad break]

[somber organ music begins]

Griffin: Okay. Zoon, this thing is docking. Are you staying put, or... ?

Justin: The fish is docking?

Griffin: The fish— this—

Travis: The fish is a ship.

Griffin: The fish is a ship, it is docking.

Justin: The fish is a ship!

Travis: [simultaneously] It's a fish ship.

Clint: [simultaneously] Fish ships.

Travis: ... Justin? Do you only listen when your character is actively doing something?

Clint: [cracks up]

Griffin: [laughs] Uh, Zoot, are you going to stay put? What's your plan here?

Clint: Yeah! I think he's going to... hunker down and still try to... to blend in, I'm— just to get information.

Justin: I do— I want to step in here, and say I serve an important purpose, for some of our more easily distracted listeners of the show.

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: It's important to resurface some of these key details...

Travis: Mmhmm.

Justin: You know what I mean? So I just think it's really...

Travis: You never know when somebody's paused, and...

Justin: Yeah!

Travis: Yeah, maybe it's been a while.

Clint: I think you owe him an apology, Travis.

Justin: Hmm...

Travis: No, I don't think I do.

Justin: Thank you, Dad...

Clint: Okay, alright.

Justin: That won't be necessary, but I do appreciate the gesture.

Griffin: Uh... we will let your other stealth roll ride here, as this thing docks, and... I mean, I— I say docks, it is still below the surface of the water. This lionfish ship doesn't fully surface, but the cockpit opens, and you see...

[ominous rhythmic music starts]

I mean, it's tough for you to sense things, being under the water, as this thing gets to the surface, and then from above the surface of the water, you hear voices, that you can't quite make out. But you hear two voices, talking to one another. But because you're, y'know, underwater, you can't really make out what they're saying.

Clint: 'Kay.

Griffin: Devo and Amber... I mean, same sort of deal. You see this thing dock, and nobody has taken note of your ship quite yet, because it is very stealthy under the water. What are you all doing?

Travis: What is the shape of this, like, conglomeration of boats?

[music fades out]

Griffin: Um. I mean, it is... tough for you to tell, from being under the water, but it is—

Travis: I just mean like, are they— is there open in the middle anywhere? Is it like a circle, is it a... combined—

Griffin: It is not clean. It seems like a bunch of ships were... latched together? And some of the— in fact, make an investigation check. What am I doing? What am I doing?

Travis: You're giving me free information is what you're doing.

Griffin: We're playing— we're playing D&D here, I know. This is a sucker's game.

Travis: 18 plus three! 21!

[ominous music starts again]

Griffin: Okay, yeah! It's... it is very rough, it is not... this was not planned, by any kind of architect or something like this. And you can tell that some of these ships are pretty old. And some of these ships are pretty new. And some of the welding jobs are closer to the center, are really rough and tumble, and some of the ones closer to the outside are a lot cleaner. So like, this is... an expanding operation, as far as you can tell. And, y'know, it doesn't seem like a fleet of ships that got in here, because if it was a fleet of ships they would be similar in any way. This is a beautiful patchwork quilt of ships of all different shapes and sizes.

Clint: May I ask another question—?

Griffin: Sure.

Clint: And it has nothing to do with what— so... this is floating on the surface of the water?

Griffin: It's floating on the surface of the water, yes.

Clint: Okay. Cool— that's cool. That's cool. That's what I wanted to know.

Griffin: And it's huge. It is— like a city block. Like, it is a huge cluster of ships.

Devo: Amber?

Amber: Mmm.

Devo: As the captain, I will leave this up to you, but I am... um... one, pretty pissed, about the lionfish ship thing attacking us.

Amber: Mmhmm.

Devo: And I really want to yell at somebody, or...

Amber: Wait. Did you say the lionfish... ship?

Devo: It's a ship, yes. Um.

Clint: [wheezes]

Amber: Ohhhkay. I was pretty distracted.

Clint: [laughs]

Devo: No, that's fair, we were in the middle of a battle, there was a lot going on.

Amber: Yeah.

Devo: Um. And I also...

Amber: Makes more sense now, honestly, a lot of it tracks.

Devo: Yeah, yeah, yes. Um. I also want to... get... things figured out, and then get the fuck out of this clam. Which is not a thing I thought I would ever say.

Amber: Phhh. Speak for yourself.

Devo: Yes. So let's just, like... surface, and point a big gun at them, and be like, "Hey, is Orlene in here? Give him to us, and we'll fuck off."

Amber: Mmmmmm.

Justin: I wanna roll... um. I wanna roll— Amber's been around a long time.

Griffin: Yes.

Justin: I wanna roll investigation, to see if I recognize any of the... the ships. Be it, like, actually specifically the ships, or like... the... the type of ship...

Travis: Like, make and model?

Justin: Yeah, sort of, yeah.

Griffin: Okay, roll an investigation check for me.

Justin: 16. [sound of dice rolling]

Griffin: 16! Okay. Um. I... You don't know so much about the types of ships that are all around. You— obviously, you were there at Founders' Wake since it started, like, you have seen all manner of ships. I'll tell you what you do see a lot of. You see a lot of trade vessels. A lot of delivery vessels, a lot of... um... just a lot of cargo haulers. And so with that, you... y'know, piece together that maybe these are ships that were... that had trade routes that took them near this clam. And therefore they got sucked in here. Um. You also see something... that you don't see a lot of, in Founders' Wake. Amber. You see a lot of, like... wood. You see...

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: You see like, planks... you see planks of wood, patching together—

Justin: In the ships? Or just like floating around?

Griffin: In this, like, cluster of ships, like forming a rough sort of walkways, between them. But like, you see... some of it is like, reclaimed. Like you see wooden doors. That are— that have been turned into bridges. And like... you know, trees don't grow under the ocean. So...

Travis: Trees don't grow on trees? Is that what you were gonna say?

Griffin: ... Right.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: I was not going to say that. Because they explicitly do, do that. But so you, Amber, you're seeing some stuff that I don't know that Devo and Zoox have ever seen before.

Amber: Alright, listen. I celebrate your enthusiasm. Absolutely. But look at some of these ships, and look at us. We got a... what? The slug launcher, and a cannon. Nothing special, right? Like... if you could blast your way out of here, I know any of these cats probably would have already, right?

Devo: So, are we going to sit here and wait for someone to spontaneously just throw Orlene into the water?

Amber: Nooo. We're gonna go in, say "kela sai," and see what's what.

Devo: Okay, yes. Let's do this. I... am much better talking to people. I just thought it would be easy to, you know... blow them up.

Amber: Alright, guppy, stay seated, and let's get in there.

Griffin: Uh. So, what are y'all doing?

Travis: The Coriolis surfaces!

Griffin: [laughing] Okay! The Coriolis surfaces. Zoox, you see that from your hiding spot still on top of the lionfish just under the surface of the water, you see... [laughs] The bladder activate underneath the Coriolis and push it toward the surface. And as you come to the surface, Devo and

Amber, you see through the viewport, two sort of humanoid-esque figures, standing on this pier. Sort of having a conversation. Not looking toward the water. These two figures though... are... there is something wrong with them. They are...

[ambient music plays]

Travis: That's not very nice.

Griffin: They appear to be, like, almost superimposed on the rest of reality. They are—

Justin: Whoa.

Griffin: They are person-shaped renderings of a starry sky. With these glowing white... skeletons, inside, that occasionally surface for a moment. In this swirling void. Make...

Travis: Is my hand still fucked up?

Griffin: Devo, make an arcana check.

Travis: Okay. Uh... that's a nine plus— or a six plus four, ten. Jeez.

Griffin: Okay. With an arcana check, I will tell you, your hand is not fucked up anymore. You— since you have gotten out of the water, it has slowly sort of re-appeared. You don't know what's... this is, but what was happening to your hand has happened to these peoples' entire bodies, in a way that seems to be permanent. Um...

Travis: Do I know enough to think that this is connected to the Ethersea?

Griffin: You all know enough to know— I'll tell, especially you Amber and Devo, you know enough to know, like, this is why you do not get into Ethersea water. Because weird magical shit happens to you, that is... still not quite understood. [laughs] What it is.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: But these sort of ethereal-looking humanoid beings turn and see the Coriolis, and one of them bolts off running down the dock.

Travis: They're both gonna need to make... charisma saving throws, Griffin.

Griffin: Ohhh...

Travis: As I cast Calm Emotions.

Griffin: Oh ho ho! What's the range on that there spell?

Travis: Uh... the range is 60 feet. But... and it's a 20 foot radius. Sphere. Centered on a point you choose.

Griffin: The one that was not running rolled a... seven.

Travis: Uh huh.

Griffin: The one that was running got... a... 21!

Travis: Okay, well the one who's running can keep running. And the one who's not— is there like a hatch or something I can pop open and talk to this fool?

Griffin: Um, I mean, you can... lift up the cockpit out of the water, and... you know... There's prob— we'll say there's like a loudspeaker that functions not in the water. Right?

Travis: Okay. So he's currently... just like, indifferent.

Griffin: Yeah, what does Calm Emotions do?

Travis: So I can either suppress an effect, or I can make a target indifferent.

Griffin: Okay. That's both your level 2 spell slots by the way, now.

Travis: Uh... correct.

Griffin: Okay. Go ahead and mark both those off for me. Watchin' like a hawk. Ain't nothing gets by me. Uh, okay! He is... pretty chill. And in fact, he waves.

Devo: Yes, hello!

Man #1: Hello!

Clint: [chuckles]

Devo: We are looking for Orlene? Do you know Orlene?

Man #1: Uh... hehehe. Hey, this guy asked for— if we know Orlene! Do you— hey! Teddy? Teddy, where are you going??

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: You see this—

Devo: Do not worry about him!

Griffin: The other ethereal person, you see has hopped into a slug launcher that is on the dock, like looking over the water. And fires off a bright red slug... towards you... in the Coriolis... yeah that's gonna hit.

[explosion sound effect]

And... you all feel the ship rock, as the ship is hit for... [clicks tongue] 11 points of bludgeoning damage.

Devo: If you would please tell your friend Teddy, I believe his name was, that he needs to—

Travis: Once again, 69, nice Griffin.

Griffin: Yeah, thank you.

Devo: That— we are here to HELP you get out of this big clam—

Man #1: Teddy! Teddy, don't do that, man!

Griffin: And you hear the other one say,

Teddy: But they— they did a spell on you I think! Because they tried to do one on— hold on, I'm gonna shoot 'em again!

Devo: If you shoot us again, Teddy, then we will not help you escape!

Griffin: Um, make a persuasion check.

Devo: Thank you. Uh, 14 plus seven, a 21.

Griffin: Teddy is so charismatic... no, of course that... that works. That's enough to give Teddy pause. And he... he stops reloading the slug launcher, and he says,

Teddy: Oh— alright, I'll— I'm listening.

Travis: [imitating Teddy's voice] Teddy's listenin'!

Clint: [laughing] Teddy's a'listenin'.

Griffin: Uh, Zoox, Zoox you can— the loudspeaker is now loud enough, and these dudes are now shouting; you can hear all of this under the water. By the way, still neither of those people know that you are down there. Are you doing anything else, or are you still holding steady?

Clint: Um... I thought Teddy was running away, is what I thought...

Griffin: No, Teddy was running to... blow your ship out of the water.

Justin: Um. I am going to... while this conversation is happening, I'm going to see if I can... stealthily exit through the moon pool, and get to the... the controls that I just saw Teddy go for.

Clint: [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah. Uh... okay. You're still wearing your vapor suit, I'm assuming. There's no moon pool here, there's just sort of like—

Justin: I wouldn't be wearing my vapor suit, because once I got aboard the ship, you can't wear a vapor suit in... dry... dry land.

Griffin: Oh, sure, sure.

Justin: It becomes immobile, I think we said that.

Griffin: Right, but I also think we said it's like, a collar, or something like that, so you can have it on—

Justin: Yeah, yeah yeah yeah, I can reactivate it—

Griffin: Right, exactly.

Justin: But yeah.

Griffin: Okay. There's no moon pool on this ship, but you can sort of... squeeze—

Justin: You know what I mean, the hole that we had...

Griffin: Squeeze through the hatch, down...

Justin: Well what was the hole that we got the yumnut up in?

[Travis, Clint, and Griffin reply simultaneously]

Travis: That was—

Clint: That was on the other...

Griffin: That was on another ship. That was on the Dreams of Deborah.

Justin: Well, I'm gonna— job one is gonna be to add one of those back, in case [laughing] we find any other nuts.

Griffin: Yeah, you guys had a lot of fun down there. But you can sort of squeeze out the hatch of— you can like, deploy the bathysphere a little bit, and like...

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Go through that hatch.

Justin: I'm gonna try to slip out that way.

Griffin: Okay. Make a... a stealth check for me.

Justin: [sound of dice rolling] Nice! Nice. [laughs] It's a good one.

Griffin: Okay, that's a four plus two equals six. You manage to get outside—

Justin: I thought maybe if I seemed positive about it...

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: That maybe it would rub off on you, like, "maybe it is a good one!" You know?

Griffin: Um.

Justin: [laughing] Kinda convince you it was a good roll.

Griffin: Make a dexterity saving throw, Amber.

Justin: I feel like we just can't catch a fuckin' break in this one!

Travis: I know, right?

Justin: [sound of dice rolling] I mean that's a 17 plus four, good, yes, thank you.

Griffin: Ohhhhh yeah, okay that's a very good roll Amber! Because you are like crawling along the bottom of the Coriolis, but your vapor suit is like, on? And so Teddy sees this little green person climbing around the bottom of the Coriolis, and without missing a beat, whips that slug-launcher around, and you feel the heat of this projectile just sort of zip past your back, and very very narrowly avoid hitting you.

This is a good time for me to mention something that I haven't talked about before. The way I've sort of balanced ship versus human combat? Or ship versus creature combat? Other than, like, big, you know, big leviathan-esque sea creatures. If you are shot with a cannon, it does double damage to you. If you swing an axe at a ship, you do half damage to it. Just—

Travis: Okay... That makes sense.

Griffin: Just a flat, flat rule. So if that slug launcher had hit you, Amber, that would have been very, very bad for Amber. But you have very narrowly avoided being blasted by this.

Devo: Excuse me. Um. I would—

Man #1: You 'kay??

Teddy: They're trying to sneak somebody— there's a sneaky lil stinker down there!

Devo: This is our repair person!! And she is trying to fix the damage that this zebrafish— lionfish, did to our ship, when we were attacked. We came here on a rescue mission, we were sent to rescue people, and we were attacked first!

Travis: I—

Griffin: Um...

Travis: Just real quick. I felt like I was trying to do like a deception check or something, and it... like, the outcome of what I...

Griffin: That was sort of like two truths and a lie that you told. I'm not gonna make you roll deception on that, I think that you have given... you have given Teddy pause here, and...

Travis: Yeah. As long as he's not fire— actively firing at us??

Griffin: He's not actively firing on the ship, yeah. Yeah. Zoox, what are you up to?

Clint: Zoox just... goes shooting up at top speed as hard as he can, and slams into the... slams into the boat that Teddy's in.

Griffin: Teddy's just standing on the dock. Teddy— yeah, he's not on a boat, he is standing on the same dock that the other person...

Clint: So the slug thrower is on the dock?

Griffin: Yep. It's like an anti-ship weapon, that is here for this exact reason.

Clint: Well in that case! Zoox is just gonna go flying up out of the water to slam into freakin' Teddy!

Travis: There you go!

Griffin: Okay! I like that.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: Um... why don't you... let's make a— just make an attack roll. Against Teddy. Um. We'll do it as... let me think. Just as an unarmed strike.

Clint: Unarmed strike...

Griffin: Yes.

Clint: Unarmed strike... that is a 15.

[upbeat music begins]

Griffin: Uh, yeah! That is gonna hit Teddy. He's not armored or anything like that. You launch out of the water like the most beautiful dolphin. And... tackle Teddy off of the... cannon that he was sitting on. And seeing that, the other guy, that you have hypnotized Devo kinda, sees that, and he's like,

Man #1: Now see Teddy, this is why I told you!

Travis: Well. When he sees that, it does break the spell.

Griffin: [laughing] Oh, it does?

Travis: Yeahhh. If he witnesses any of his friends being harmed.

Griffin: Oh, okay.

Clint: I didn't hurt him!

Griffin: [bursts into laughter]

Travis: You literally rolled damage, Dad!

Griffin: It's not even being hurt, if— "if anything harmful to it... " yeah, okay...

Travis: If it is attacked or harmed, and you were—

Clint: Okay.

Griffin: Then this other figure sees what has happened, over with his friend Teddy... seeing that you have attacked his friend, Zoox, this other ethereal figure is going to charge at you, and draw a cutlass out of a scabbard at his waist. That is a 21 versus AC, Zoox.

Clint: That would hit.

Griffin: Yep. Okay. You, as you are trying to pin this dude down, you feel just a slash across your back, as this big heavy sword gets— gets you just a little bit, for eight points of slashing damage.

Clint: 'Kay.

Travis: Devo looks at this fool, who just attacked him.

Griffin: Mmhmm.

Travis: And says,

Devo: I... have had it up to here today. I have had to talk to the person that I hate most in this entire world. We have been sucked into a giant clam. We were attacked by a lionfish which apparently was being piloted by one of yours as we came here to help, you shot us with a slug launcher, and now you attack my friend. If you do one more thing, we will wipe you out of existence.

Travis: And uses Words of Terror.

Griffin: Yeah!

Travis: And you are—

Griffin: On me! On Griffin!

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Yeah. Make a wisdom saving throw.

Griffin: Which one of these guys are you—

Travis: The one who just attacked Zook.

Griffin: Okay. Uh... that is a 12.

Travis: It fails.

Griffin: Ooh hoo hoo. Okay!

Travis: Yeah. So now he is Very Frightened of us!

Griffin: Uh. Okay.

Devo: Now that I have your attention. Drop. Your cutlass. And get. Me. Orlene.

Griffin: He... drops the cutlass. And... it splashes into the water. Amber, you watch it sort of sink past you. What are you doing, Amber?

Justin: I get it. I'm gettin—

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: I'm grabbing that sword. Hey, fuckin—

Amber: Hey, fuckin' free sword!

Griffin: [laughing] You pop up out of the water, saying that...

Amber: Hellllllll yeah! Free sword!

Clint: [laughs and claps]

Griffin: Then... Teddy backs up, and sort of like, taps the other guy on the shoulder, who sort of scrambles out from your grasp. And—

Travis: Wait, are they both named Teddy?

Griffin: Uh. No. What? No. You've—

Travis: Teddy was the one that Zoox tackled.

Griffin: Yes, okay. Then the one who you've— just— ugh—

Man #1: By the way! My name's— my name's Crumb!

Travis: Okay. yes. I was addressing Crumb.

Griffin: Yeah, Crumb, yes. So, Crumb, you know, steps backward, and taps Teddy on the shoulder, who kind of scrambles out from your grasp, Zoox. And... Crumb says,

Crumb: Okay. Um. So you all... you all know the Super Captain?

Devo: I don't remember saying that you could ask me questions.

Crumb: I—! Do— you don't! Okay, I'm sufficiently terrified of you!

Amber: Hey scare, you need to back down! Come on!

Clint: [laughs]

Devo: This coming from you, Amber?

Amber: Hey, I got a free sword, I'm feeling pretty fucking good!

Clint: [laughs]

Amber: Be nice to these 'lil claspers, come on!

Crumb: You want... you need to talk to Super Captain Orlene?

Devo: Yes.

Crumb: Okay.

Griffin: By this time, by the way, hearing the slug launcher, you see... like, five or six more of these ethereal figures, like popping out of compartments of this super structure, which now you can tell, is like... a j— a living junkyard of ships that have been... scavenged. And bolted together here, to form this thing. You see no... non-ethereal beings in this, this structure.

Justin: We have a bit of an opening, I want to try to get control of the slug launcher.

Griffin: Yeah, you can do that. You can just grab the— nobody's at it yet, so you can sit at the slug launcher.

Justin: Great. Perfect.

Griffin: You doing anything at it, or just—

Travis: And as that happens I'm gonna make my way onto the dock at this point.

Griffin: Okay, yeah.

Justin: I wanna spin it away from us!

Griffin: [laughing] Yeah.

Justin: Chiefly.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: And... y'know.

Griffin: You can, in fact—

Justin: I don't think I wanna be, like, threatening, with it. Like I'm just trying to not... you know, not get blasted.

Griffin: No, it would not be difficult for you to disable this thing. Like, you can just kick the ammo into the water. [laughs] And then that's it.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: Um. Okay! Cool. You all have diffused this situation. Crumb stands up, and sort of pushes... Terry? Shit, what was his name?

Travis: Teddy.

Griffin: Teddy, thank you.

Justin: Teddy!

Griffin: Uh, pushes—

Justin: He's a beloved character!

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Come on, Griffin!

Griffin: He says—

Travis: Not since Dr. Shaq has there been an NPC as beloved as Teddy.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: He says,

Crumb: Okay. Um, Sorry for all the... sorry for all the trouble. Y'all seem nice. Usually we would take your ship and kill you all, and, um. You know. Just... you know. Keep building onto this great beautiful clam-based city that we got here. But, um. Yeah. I'll— you wanna see the Super Captain? He's so great. I think he's the best... like, person. [pause] I think he's the best person, and we all love him, he's the best Super Captain ever, and we all have crushes on him, big crushes. So, um. I guess follow me.

Griffin: Hey Devo, make another arcana check for me.

Travis: 12 plus four, a 16.

Griffin: Yeah, you felt this actually, when you cast Calm Emotions on this thing, and then you felt it again whenever you used... uh, Words of Terror

on this thing. By “this thing” I mean of course Crumb. Crumb has been... orated.

Travis: Yeah. Okay.

Griffin: Like, your, your control over him? Was stacked on top of another magical persuasion. You can tell that.

Travis: Yeah. I would say, even though I rolled arcana for that, to find that out, I think that Devo with all of his study, with the magic of the mind and stuff, as soon as they’re like “we love him so much,” Devo’s like,

Devo: Oh fuck. Ugh.

Griffin: Yeah.

Devo: I don’t even need to sense the magic to know that this is not like a normal thing.

Griffin: Yeah.

Devo: Ugh... you do not get the title of “Super Captain...” That is not... ugh.

Crumb: Yeah no, I thought it was weird too, ‘cause I’m the captain. But then Orlene showed up, and... but he was so— he’s so fucking cool!

Devo: Amber, I just want to say that this is very indicative of the Church in general. This kind of shit. Um. I just— I needed to say this out loud.

Amber: Spooky space ghosts?

Devo: No— I mean, the weirdness yes, but I mean like this... like people being assholes because they are controlled by the Church. The Church fucking sucks, is what I’m saying, okay?

Amber: Yeah, I know you got some baggage with them. I’m just, like, I love them so much, [audibly grinning] it’s weird, for me.

[Someone snorts with laughter]

Devo: Oh, boy.

Griffin: [laughs]

Amber: You— why are you— you can stop selling, bud, I'm not a big church-o either. You've made that extremely clear; you terrified that poor space ghost...

Devo: Don't say "poor space ghost!!" He was— they attacked— he hit—

Amber: Felt bad at first, now I feel bad for him.

Crumb: I'm a—

Zoox: He's kind of an ocean ghost.

Crumb: I've murdered—

Amber: Sorry?

Crumb: I've murdered. I've murdered a lot.

Devo: See?

Amber: Yeah.

Zoox: Um. Is there any way that we could stop by an Emergi-Care? Uh, on our way?

Devo: Oh, yes, sorry, oh, Zoox, come here.

Travis: And I cast Cure Wounds on Zoox.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Uh... let's see. That's another d8... uh... plus three... So, plus five?

Griffin: That's a first level spell, yes?

Travis: Yeah. Yeah yeah yeah.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: I cast it at second level on myself because I had one hit point left.

Griffin: Yeah, sure sure sure. Zoox gets the—

Travis: So you pick up five more.

Griffin: Zoox gets the snicklefritz, is what you're saying.

Travis: [laughing] Exactly. You get the children's Tylenol—

Clint: How much?

Travis: of my... uh, five. Plus five.

Clint: [sadly] Okay.

Travis: Oh, I'm sorry, is that not enough for you??

Clint: No! No, I— I've gone from being— from having the flu to having a cold.

Griffin: Good.

Clint: That's good!

Griffin: Upgrade.

Clint: I'm okay!

[soft ambient music plays]

Griffin: Okay. Captain Crumb walks you through this... this junkyard city. And as he does, you see... maybe a dozen of these ethereal figures, just kind of like... some of them are kicking it inside of the cockpits of various ships. Some of them are like, doing some work, patching up some of these different structures. But as you all, y'know... non-Ethereal beings walk by, you catch all their eyes. And they look kind of like— well I mean, they don't have faces that you can see, but you can tell just from body language, like they stop doing what they're doing, and look at you very concerned. But Captain Crumb's like,

Crumb: Don't worry, guys! I got it. Just taking them to see the Super Captain.

Griffin: And every time he says that, they're like,

Ethereals: Oh yeah, Super Captain! So good! So cool! God, I love the Super captain, yes! Baby!!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: And they walk to you this ship, at the very center of this structure. Which you all can see, is like... this is a pirate ship. Like. It is a heavy black metal looking, combat rig, for sure. And as you approach it, they... Captain Crumb walks you up to a door at the rear of the ship, and opens it up, and ushers you into the captain's quarters. Which are... dank, and dirty. You get the impression that these folks are not quite as concerned about luxury and comfort as you are.

But there is soft candlelight at a desk in the back of the room, and there, Devo, you see... you see Benefactor Orlene. Who— we, I mean, we mentioned that you knew him. How did you know, what's your relationship with Orlene?

[music ends]

Travis: Uh. He was one of Devo's tutors. Um. And I'm going to say that he is the one that taught Devo to speak Celestial.

Griffin: Okay. So he was just an educator at this deep cloister where you were... raised.

Travis: Yes. So primarily Devo was taught by the Hand of Guidance...

Griffin: Right.

Travis: And then specialists were brought in from time to time to focus on specific...

Griffin: Right. It takes a village to brainwash a child. [laughs]

Travis: Exactly, yeah yeah, very much so.

Griffin: Okay. Um.

Travis: So in Celestial, Devo says,

Devo: Orlene, you absolute piece of shit. It is time to go. So grab whatever, I don't know, garbage you have in your little hovel, and come get in our ship so that we can be done with all of this.

Griffin: Uh. Make a... charisma check.

Travis: Oh, is he trying to charm me?

Griffin: A contested charisma check. Not a saving throw. Just a contested charisma check.

Travis: Okay. That's a 16 plus three, a 19.

Griffin: [giggles] He says,

Orlene: Close the door.

Griffin: And you close the door. Reflexively. Um. And...

Travis: Then Devo draws his boomerang.

Griffin: [nervous chuckle] Okay.

Travis: And says,

Devo: Do this again, and I will remove your head from your neck.

Griffin: He stacks up some papers on the desk, and sets them down, and he sighs, and he says,

Orlene: [deep sigh] Hello Devotion. I take it that... you're here to rescue me.

Devo: Well, this is one way to put it. One, it is Devo now. Two, we were told to bring you in alive or dead, and this does not matter to me. If we say we found your body, then they have no proof otherwise. So as far as I'm concerned, all I need is to drag you back to our ship. You can do so under your own power, or you can do so bleeding out on the dock.

[spooky music fades in]

Griffin: Um. Zoox. Make a charisma saving throw for me.

Clint: Sure! With my... [mutters unintelligibly]

Griffin: In fact, Amber, you also make a charisma saving throw for me. [laughs] Let's make... both of y'all.

Justin: Alright.

Clint: Mine's 16.

Justin: 13.

Griffin: Devo, you realize that... Zoox has his crossbow trained on you. And Amber's holding that cutlass that she just pulled out of the water, and pointing it in your direction. And he says— and Benefactor Orlene— Super Captain Benefactor Orlene says,

Orlene: Why don't we all calm down a little bit. Huh? Why don't we just.... talk.

Amber: He seems reasonable.

Griffin: [laughing] You say, as you're holding your cutlass toward your friend. Both of you feel this control just wave off of you, and now you're just pointing your weapons at your friend Devo for no reason.

Zoox: [sadly] Aw.

Griffin: He says,

Orlene: We don't have to have this dynamic anymore, Devo. We don't have to treat each other like this. I'm as eager to get out of here as you are to be done with me and the Church. So... let's... start over. I'm assuming you are here to rescue me. Sent by the Hand of Guidance. Yes?

Devo: Yes.

Orlene: Okay. Then... here's the bad news. We're all stuck inside of here... forever, as long as the magic sustaining this big big big big big big clam continues to operate.

Griffin: And... he shows you— he fans out these papers on his desk, and lights a couple more candles, and he says,

Orlene: But the good news is I think I know how to... deactivate it. There's more bad news: it's that I've sent a few of these Ethereals in, to execute my plan, and they have all failed. So. You might do the same.

Devo: This is— this— this! This is exactly what I'm talking about!

Travis: And he looks at Amber and says,

Devo: The church! They send others, right? They send us to get Orlene, Orlene sends these Ethereals, and now us, to die! Why don't YOU go do it, Orlene?

Orlene: This is why.

Griffin: He reaches over to a table behind him, and at this table, you can see... some clear, almost glass like, prisms? Of different sort of shapes and sizes. And one of them is like, several of these like cube, clear cubes, that have been sort of fused together into this rough shape. And he sets it down at the desk, and he says,

Orlene: There's an anomaly. Inside of this clam. And... in order to get rid of it you have to have it manifest and take shape. So. *I*... can make these seed crystals. You get one of these to the anomaly, and it takes shape. You, you know, contain it, and then we're all free. If I go in and do it myself and fail, everyone in here is trapped forever. So. Does that answer your question? [long pause] Great. So, you all—

Griffin: He sets it down. He says,

Orlene: You take this...

Griffin: And then he reaches up to the wall, and you see a, like, super detailed anatomical drawing of the inside of a clam?

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: And he sets it down. He says,

Orlene: And there's your map. Take this crystal down to the anomaly. It's a bit further back down in the clam, as far as I can tell. You contain it, with that crystal. And. How's this for an offer? You bring me back that... that anomaly inside of this thing, or, you know, however it manifests, and... How much are you getting paid for this gig?

Devo: Eight Lux.

Griffin: Roll a deception check for me?

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: [sound of dice rolling] 19 plus four, 23.

Griffin: [laughing] Fuck off...

Justin: Daaang!

Griffin: Yeah. I mean, it takes a lot to get one by Benefactor Orlene, but he kinda— he chuckles as if he thinks maybe you're lying, but he goes along with it anyway. He says,

Orlene: Alright, I'll double that. You know. We'll keep it quiet, maybe, just between us, us Orators. Huh? That sound fair?

Devo: [pause] It sounds like the best offer there is.

Orlene: Great. Are you Amber Gris?

Amber: Yeah!

Orlene: That's bonkers.

Amber: Oh yeah? Why?

Orlene: It's just— I remember you from the beach. I was up there...

Amber: Yeahhhh! Right, right right right right right. How are you?

Orlene: I'm stuck inside a—

Justin: She does NOT remember him, by the way.

Griffin: Yeah. [laughs] Yeah.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: This is fully... fully, like, yeah, for sure.

Orlene: I'm stuck inside of a magically infinite clam. So. I'm...

Amber: Hey. Hey, makes two of us, right?

Griffin: He...

Justin: Is he still charming me?

Griffin: No. I mean—

Justin: Okay. So we're just regular talking...

Griffin: Just with his smile, and his wit. [laughs] But you are not under any kind of magical effect.

Justin: Right. I'm gonna get closer so I can go... shake his hand.

Griffin: Okay.

Amber: It's been too long, how've you been?

Orlene: Uh. I've... I mean. I've just kinda been. Just been busy.

Griffin: And he reaches out to shake your hand.

Justin: I'll pull him in for like a, you know, kinda like the pound? Like the hug?

Griffin: [audibly smiling] Okay?

Justin: Alright. Does he go for it?

Griffin: [audibly smiling] Yeah, sure.

Justin: Cool.

Amber: Ya know, I'm same as always. Always got a fuckin' knife.

Justin: And I've got a knife to his throat.

Griffin: [laughs] Okay.

Amber: Hey listen. I love the deal. For sure. It's all soundin' good, 16 Lux. But. Listen close, alright. You ever try to control me again, I'll cut you right down, alright?

Griffin: Uh—

Amber: I don't— hey hey hey hey. I got four arms and no fucks. You get me? Keppa?

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Orlene: Keppa, keppa.

Amber: Keppa.

Griffin: He backs up. And he says,

Orlene: I have to say you live up to... every ounce of the reputation that precedes you.

Griffin: And...

Amber: Well. Unless I'm mistaken... I think you're Orlene.

Orlene: Ye— yeah?

Amber: Hey, we got 'im, guys. This is Orlene.

Devo: Yes... no, this— yes. Okay.

Griffin: He laughs, and he walks back to his desk, and you see him kneel down, and he picks up a big crate, that he sets down on the desk. And he looks at you, Amber, and he says,

Orlene: Hey, um... Do you... realize where we are?

Amber: A big... A big clam.

Griffin: He shakes his head, as if he did not expect you to get this question right. And he starts pulling things out of this box. And it's just like... it's like a lost and found, in that just none of these things have anything to do with each other. Like he pulls out a wooden doll. He pulls out like a tattered dress. He pulls out... just some nails that he sets down. And he says,

Orlene: The power that's sort of creating this, this... huge compression chamber that we all find ourselves stuck in... I thought it seemed familiar at first, but. It wasn't until I found this that I realized exactly where we are.

Griffin: And the thing he pulls out of this crate next, Amber, you have seen before. And he takes it out and he throws it to you, and you catch it. It is a lettermen's jacket. For the Gooshie Wolves.

[ethersea Theme music begins to fade in]

Griffin: And it is... it's over 25 years old. And it's dirty, it's been, you know, flooded, but you have not seen one of these things since you were on the surface. And then you look at the pile of other sort of debris that he has stacked up on your desk, and then the pieces start to click together. And Benefactor Orlene looks at the three of you, and he says,

Orlene: Welcome to the Trash Hole.

[theme music plays out]

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