

## **The Adventure Zone: Ethersea – Episode 10**

Published on September 30, 2021

[Listen at TheMcElroy.Family](#)

**Griffin:** Previously on the Adventure Zone Ethersea:

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

**Griffin:** You’re in a giant clam. Water is pouring into the ship through a leak in the hull.

**Justin:** I’m gonna grab a ration wrapper...

**Griffin:** Okay.

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

**Clint:** I think he... uses all of his speed to get to the lionfish, and... riding it like a bucking bronco.

**Griffin:** The fish is a ship; it is docking.

**Justin:** The fish is a ship!

**Griffin:** What you are approaching is a bunch of ships, of different sort of makes and models, that have all been sort of welded together into a large platform.

**Devo:** [furiously] Get. Me. Orlene.

**Griffin:** Your control over him was stacked on top of... another magical persuasion.

**Captain Crumb:** You need to talk to Super Captain Orlene?

**Orlene:** There’s... an anomaly inside of this clam. 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.... Do you realize where we are?

**Amber:** A big clam.

**Orlene:** Welcome to the Trash Hole.

[theme music plays out]

**Griffin:** Amber. Let's flash back. You are...

**Travis:** About to punch a shark! Go on.

**Griffin:** [laughs] It is early days, on the shoreside. Like the first week there. And... a lot of the Finners that you came here with are, y'know, starting to get a little bit comfortable. The water is receding from the shore, which is making y'all's job awfully difficult, but this is a weird time for everyone, and so you are trying to be adaptable.

[music from the Ethersea Prologue episodes plays softly]

**Justin:** Sorry, what— what time— when— where is this? In the grand scheme of things? When is it, I guess?

**Griffin:** This is on the shore. This is during the Quiet Year.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** And... you have been called to the edge of the Trash Hole, by a friend of yours, an Einarr, named Oxana.

**Justin:** Hmm.

**Griffin:** And she is panicked, when you roll up. And she explained to you that... she saw something in the Trash Hole, this, like, shiny brass lantern, that she wanted to grab, so she reached down with a sling blade, like a kaiser blade? But dropped it. And... y'know, resources on this beach, especially tools like that, gathering tools, brush clearing tools like that, are...

in short supply, and she is terrified that she will be... in a lot of trouble with the Council of Four, if she doesn't... get it back. Um. And... she is begging Amber to climb down and retrieve it. Because she knows that, [laughs] Amber is much more equipped to do something like that.

**Amber:** Aww... bubba, I'd really rather not.

**Oxana:** Please, it's— if you don't do it, I'm gonna— they're gonna— please—

**Amber:** What's the first thing they tell you when you showed up here? What was the first, number one thing? Most important thing above all other things? When you showed up here? What did they tell you first off?

**Oxana:** Don't... don't drop...

**Oxana and Amber simultaneously:** Don't drop— things— down the Trash hole.

**Amber:** And if you DO drop things down the Trash Hole, what's the number two rule that they told you? Bubba?

**Oxana:** Don't—

**Oxana and Amber simultaneously:** Don't go in—

**Oxana:** To fetch things from the Trash Hole.

**Amber:** There's nothing that's worth you losing a limb, or... something worse! I don't know what's worse than a limb— your butt?

**Oxana:** It's just— it's just— it's just!

**Griffin:** She hangs over the side and points down.

**Oxana:** It's RIGHT THERE!

**Amber:** Auuwww!

**Oxana:** I— if— I— please, I'm begging you, Amber, I know I— [stutters] I will not ask you for nothin' again. Please, it's— [stutters, laughs nervously] I'm gonna... they're gonna take me off gathering duty, I'm gonna be in a lot of trouble, please, please please.

**Amber:** [blows raspberry]

**Oxana:** I know you can do this! I've seen you climb trees and stuff. You're— you're slick!

**Amber:** ... Get me a stick.

**Griffin:** She smiles, and runs off into the brush. And you hear,

**Oxana:** [distant] Ow! Fuck! ...Ow!

**Amber:** Be quiet! Will you be quiet!? If somebody busts— if somebody busts us out here I'm not going down for it!

**Griffin:** She, like, laboriously drags back this huge tree limb.

**Oxana:** Like this?

**Amber:** I mean, that's extremely big. Think about the navigability that you just had, hauling that through. You want me to—

**Oxana:** You're right, you're right, you're right.

**Amber:** Just break some of the little— [sighs] Fine. Here, I'll get it.

**Justin:** And I— I want to try— you know, find a reasonable pokin' stick. You know? Br...

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** We're going— we're looking like, broom handle, is what we're shooting for.

**Travis:** Ahh, like a classic pokin' stick.

**Justin:** One of your classic pokers.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Um, because you are... explicitly in... the single place, in maybe the entire universe, where a broom handle would probably just be laying around, [laughing] I'm going to give you that, for sure.

**Justin:** Hmm, that's true.

**Griffin:** Um. Yeah, you're...

**Justin:** I meant, as a reference. I didn't mean that, like... a literal broom handle would be here...

**Griffin:** A literal handle of a broom? Okay, sure. Yes, you are able to fashion a good pokin' stick out of this huge tree limb.

**Clint:** Like I used to spank you guys with!

**Justin:** Exactly!

**Griffin and Travis:** Noooo...

**Justin:** Yeah, the old— in the olden days.

**Clint:** [facetious] When I used to give you your canings!

**Justin:** Yeah...

**Griffin:** Jesus.

**Justin:** In the old days.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** What's... so now you've got this cool stick. What's—

**Justin:** So yeah, I'm gonna reach in and try to fish out the... what was it? A... like a scythe? Sort of...

**Griffin:** A kaiser blade. It's like a... like an axe handle, and then at the end of the axe is like a... uh... sort of a sharp hook, kind of. It's used for... you know... cutting brush.

**Justin:** Thresh— threshin'? [laughs]

**Travis:** Threshin'?

**Griffin:** Threshing. Yeah. For sure.

**Justin:** Oh, Griffin!

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** You mean a sling blade! [laughs]

**Travis:** Ohhhhh!!!

**Griffin:** I also... I did say— I did say sling blade.

**Justin:** Ohhhh!! I know! Okay. So you were saying "kaiser" in the hopes that we wouldn't talk about French Fry and Potaters et cetera.

**Travis:** Ahhh!

**Griffin:** Yes. I... and please, and please let's let that be our guiding light.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laugh]

**Justin:** Yeah! Yeah. There's still— there's gotta be a few twenty-somethings in our audience we have not fully, fully, alienated yet, let's try to keep them on board...

**Griffin:** Yeah...

**Travis:** "Yeah and then they said french fry and potatoes... in like a weird— I don't know, man."

**Griffin:** Over and over again...

**Justin:** God— if you haven't seen it, guys, Sling Blade is like dark Forrest Gump. Okay? [laughs]

**Griffin:** It's...

**Travis:** I haven't seen it!

**Griffin:** Yeah, we don't need to... [laughs]

**Justin:** We don't need...

**Griffin:** [laughing] We don't need to re-litigate Sling Blade.

**Justin:** Ohhkay! So I've got, I've got my handle, and I'm gonna try to reach— or, my stick, my pokin' stick. And I'm gonna try to reach in and poke that kaiser blade towards me.

**Griffin:** I think, uh...

**Justin:** What's the pokin' roll?

**Griffin:** This sort of... this act of... sort of manual dexterity... roll a Sleight of Hand check.

**Justin:** Okay! [sound of dice rolling] ...Two. Plus. Two. Rough.

**Griffin:** You drop your stick down the Trash Hole.

**Amber:** Well. I tried. Come on.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Oxana:** [stutters] Please— Amber! You— if you climb down, I know you can climb back up! It's— it's— it's friggin' ten feet! Please! I get— I got a rope! I can do a rope!

**Amber:** [sucks air hesitantly, then exhales] Alright, listen. You got dishie for a month. Keppa? Dishie for a month, say it.

**Oxana:** Dishie for— dishie for a month. Keppa.

**Amber:** Dishie for a month.

**Oxana:** Dishie for a—

**Amber:** Whether I get it or not! If I go in that hole, dishie for a month, say it!

**Oxana:** Alright. If you go in that hole, dishie for a month, guaranteed.

**Amber:** Fine!

**Justin:** Alright, I tie the rope, and I try to rappel down to get this blade.

**Griffin:** Is she holding the other end, or... ?

**Justin:** No, Griffin.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** I'm a fucking idiot. [laughing] I just tie a rope to myself, and throw myself down a hole, and Amber died, end of story!

**Griffin:** [laughs]



**Travis:** [cracks up]

**Griffin:** Yeah...

**Justin:** God!!

**Travis:** "Oh wait, the other eeeeeeeend!!!"

**Justin:** Here's what's happen— here's what is happened. I had Oxana... go, like... we wrap the rope around. So it's not like full... y'know, we've created a sort of pulley system, with the rope around a tree. And...

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** And then Oxana with the loose end, and me with the other end tied around me.

**Griffin:** Okay. Then... yeah! Go ahead and make an... athletics check for me.

**Justin:** Alright. Phhh. Five plus four, a nine. [laughs]

**Travis:** [mumbling] It should probably be with advantage, 'cause he got the rope tied on and so on and so forth...

**Griffin:** Nooo, I'm gonna try to be better about... retroactive advantage applications. I've been a little... little bit too kind.

**Travis:** It should have been proactive advantage...

**Justin:** This is how...

**Griffin:** Oh, well, thanks. Um. You... are... you're able to climb down, right? But... when you try to pull out this, this sling blade... it's sort of like, crunched down into the sand a little bit? It disrupts some of the sand, and you lose your footing, and now you are dangling, over... this... abyss. Below you. You're holding onto this kaiser blade. It's actually a lot heavier? Than you anticipated? And so you are having trouble sort of keeping your grip on

this, and also sort of righting yourself. So. You get the impression that it is either this kaiser blade or you're gonna have— you drop the kaiser blade or you're gonna have a ton of trouble getting out of here, now.

**Justin:** Okay. Um. I don't think she'd drop the blade.

**Griffin:** Okay!

**Justin:** She came down all this way.

**Griffin:** Then you hear Oxana:

**Oxana:** [distantly] Fuck! Are you okay? What happened?

**Amber:** Yeah, here.

**Justin:** And I chuck the blade up, and over Oxana.

**Griffin:** Oh! Yeah, I think that's gonna be a roll, for you to throw this... what I just said was a HEAVY blade, ten feet straight up in the—

**Justin:** Whewww! This is about to be a hell of a backstory, hold on!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah. Uh... do a... oh, God almighty. I mean, probably another athletics check, I think.

**Justin:** Bad rolls will end eventually— six!!

**Travis:** Oh my god!

**Griffin:** Yeah, that's—

**Justin:** Two plus four equals six, what a flashback!!

**Griffin:** Uh. Yeah. No, this kaiser blade goes about five feet up in the air, and then it, like... dinks off of a chair that's just like sticking out of the wall,

and you watch it just, woooo-wooo-wooo-woooo-wooooo, fall right down the pit. Uh. And you hear Oxana yell,

**Oxana:** [distantly] What was that?

**Amber:** My keys.

**Clint:** [bursts into laughter]

**Griffin:** In the... distance... you hear a lot of activity. You hear— you hear voices, shouting. Way, way off in the distance. Uh, and—

**Travis:** Wait, off in the distance above the hole or in the hole?

**Griffin:** Above the hole. Not— [laughing] not down in the hole. You don't hear somebody in the hole go, "Ow! Fuck!"

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** No. This is—

**Travis:** "Did somebody drop a kaiser blade, also known as a sling blade!?"

**Griffin:** Uh... This is... this... yeah. It's back up on the beach, whatever this thing is. You are dangling precariously, now, just like free... free floating, over the edge. Over this abyss.

**Justin:** Um. I guess I'll attempt to climb out. I mean...

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Yeah, this is gonna be a bit of a tough athletics roll, if you're just sort of hanging by this rope, free falling. But if you want to... please, please make this athletics roll, and please do better, because if you die here—

**Travis:** You die in real life.

**Griffin:** I don't know, really, how to—

**Justin:** Paradox!

**Clint:** Wow!

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** The whole thing will be— yeah. [sound of dice rolling] Thank God. 17 plus four, 21.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Finally.

**Justin:** Wooooo! When I needed it!

**Griffin:** Yeah. What you are able to do, is... just sort of, like in gym class, climb up this rope, just like straight up. Pulling on strength reserves that maybe you didn't even know you had, and you just do a straight vertical ascent. And as you are climbing up, this... this noise is getting louder and louder and more frenzied. And when you climb to the top of the pit, Oxana's not right there waiting for you, her back is actually to the pit now, and she is looking toward the shore, where you can see a bunch of people sort of running into the water.

[spooky music plays very softly]

**Griffin:** And she shakes her head and says,

**Oxana:** Oh my— oh my god. Oh, sorry.

**Griffin:** And she gives you a hand and pulls you out. And she says,

**Oxana:** What— did you get— did you get it?

**Amber:** Yeah, no, bubba, I'm sorry, it— I dropped it down the hole. I just... I was real clumsy there, for a few rolls.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Amber:** Sorry about that.

**Griffin:** She... almost like she didn't even hear what you said, she like, again, kind of takes a minute to process it, and shakes her head and says,

**Oxana:** Oh. Uh. Yeah. It's... it's alright. It... I...

**Amber:** What— what's up with you?

**Oxana:** I think... I think we've... got bigger fish to fry.

**Griffin:** And she gestures toward the shore. And you see people pulling a body out of the water. And beyond them, past this sand bar, out in the water, you see a fleet of... razor sharp fins. Sticking up out of the water. In perfect formation, as if they are trying to threaten these people that are rescuing this, this— well, not rescuing, probably retrieving this poor person. And in a flash of green light, this fleet of shark fins disappears.

[spooky music fades out]

**Griffin:** And back in the present! I think... [laughs] While Amber was going through this flashback in her head, Benefactor Orlene just continues to pull shit out of this box that looks... ancient, to you, Zoox and Devo— like he's pulling out fantasy tay-stations, and JNCO jeans.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Orlene:** Oh, do you remember these?

**Devo:** Yes, we get it, you have an extensive lost and found collection. Um.

**Orlene:** Look at this stuff. Isn't it neat?

**Devo:** Yes, I think that your collection is complete. Now we don't need to talk about it any more.

**Orlene:** Oh. Okay. Alright, fine.

**Griffin:** He— you see him take a koosh ball he was really excited to show you and stuff it back down in the drawer.

**Orlene:** Okay. So... do you all have any questions for me before you go on... this brave and heroic journey to the... to the back of a clam?

**Devo:** Yes. Is there a place where we can have a rest first? Eat some food? Um...

**Zoox:** A long rest. A long— a long rest.

**Griffin:** [laughs] He sighs and he says,

**Orlene:** I'll probably need to reapply certain... let's call them cerebral adjustments, to our hosts here. But um. Yeah. I can make that happen for you.

**Devo:** Yes, about this. Um. If we do this for you, if we are able to complete this, you are going to break the spell, as it were, and stop charming them.

**Orlene:** Devo, I have no intentions of changing my career path to becoming the Super Captain of a bunch of ethereal pirates. So. Yeah. I'm... yeah. That's— you know that's going to happen anyway. So.

**Devo:** Uh, about this. One more question. The, um... you— Ethereal, as you say, the... you know, they become see-through? The light?

**Orlene:** I mean—

**Devo:** Is this because of... the water? Or something here, in the clam specific?

**Griffin:** I'm wondering if this is something that Devo knows about. Like, I don't know what the crossover between the Oratory that you, like the Oratory magic that you learned, and the... just a general knowledge of Ether— I think it would have to be there, right?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** If Benefactor Orlene is this, like, Ether scholar. Why don't you roll an arcana check for me? Just to see—

**Travis:** Oh.

**Griffin:** Just to see what you know about this.

**Travis:** That's a natural one, babyyy! [laughs]

**Griffin:** Wow, okay. Yeah, you don't... wow. God, guys! I guess it's good that these are happening in like...

**Travis:** Well, okay, wait. `Cause there would be a certain... I'm trying to figure out just logically, a certain amount that he WOULD know about how ether works...

**Griffin:** Okay, here's what you know with a one. Is that YOU got exposed to Ether-water a minute ago...

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And your hand got kinda see-through. Right?

**Travis:** Okay.

**Griffin:** But this is— this is not, like, huge roll. `Cause he, I think he feels— the one here, the critical failure, is: he feels very superior to you. And he says—

**Travis:** Oh, yeah. Just asking a question, and realizing it was dumb, probably hurts Devo pretty bad. Fuck.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Yeah. He says,

**Orlene:** Devo, I'm... [sighs] I'm guessing your time away from the cloister has... dulled... some of the things that we attempted to teach you there. But exposure to Ethereal water has strange effects on everyone. It just so happens that the people who have been trapped in this clam for... I mean, who knows how long, have been exposed to this particular pool of water, that has made them into these... entities. I don't know what they are. If we attempted to study every weird effect that the Ethersea had on the things, the living things that live within it, it would... there is not enough time, in any of our lives, to make that study possible. But they seem to be—

**Devo:** Yes. Benevolence forbid that we try to, oh, learn things, oh. Can you imagine studying things? Ugh.

**Orlene:** Yeah, it seems like maybe you had some trouble with that.

**Devo:** Maybe you had some trouble.

**Orlene:** Okay.

**Devo:** With your face. With your face!

**Orlene:** With my face. Fantastic.

**Zoox:** Excuse me—

**Orlene:** Yeah. Great.

**Zoox:** Excuse me?

**Orlene:** Yes, my Brinarr friend.

**Zoox:** Uh—

**Devo:** You are not friends.



**Zoox:** Um, yes, Super Captain. Did I miss the part where you told me to shoot Devo? 'Cause my arm is getting so tired.

**Orlene:** No no no, put that down.

**Zoox:** Oh, good! Because I— I would have had some regrets. About that. For future reference, Devo, is there a place where I could shoot you, where it wouldn't, like, kill you? And it would just like, you know, upset you a little?

**Devo:** You are saying that if—

**Zoox:** Just in case, just in case this ever happens again.

**Devo:** Yes, if we find ourselves in a circumstance where someone is controlling your mind—

**Zoox:** Yes.

**Devo:** And tells you to shoot me, is there a loophole. You could shoot me in the toe of my shoe—

**Zoox:** [laughs triumphantly]

**Devo:** And I will kind of curl my toes back, so it will go through the shoe but not through my foot. Eh?

**Zoox:** That— that's exactly what I was looking for, thank you! Thank you. Woo!

**Devo:** Ah, but now we have said this out loud. Fuck!

**Griffin:** Okay, are you all— so you all are taking a long— you all want to take a long rest here, yes? In this settlement of Flotsam? Dad suggested that name via text, and it's—

**Travis:** Pretty good.

**Griffin:** It's extremely good. I think what happens then, is Benefactor Orlene arranges for... some rations to be brought your way. Everything here is like, you know, been scavenged, you don't know what the diet of these Ethereal beings are, but they bring you some, you know, fairly basic rations, and he suggests that you all sleep in your ship, with the hatch pretty well locked down. Because the process of psychically manipulating every single person in this, in this little village, is... not the most safe thing. So. Yeah, you all spend the night— I guess Amber spends a very comfortable night.

**Justin:** Ohhh, yeahhh.

**Griffin:** Uh, in Amber's Place. And Zoox and Devo, where do you all sleep aboard the Coriolis?

**Travis:** Devo sleeps on the bridge.

**Griffin:** Okay. Is there like— just in the chair, sitting up?

**Travis:** Um. Maybe it reclines! You don't know, maybe it's got a little lever on the side that he can push, and recline.

**Griffin:** Okay, sure, sure.

**Travis:** Either that or he... sleeps, like, under a console on a little ma— like, I... he... as I've said before, he doesn't sleep very well to begin with. Um. And so, like... it's also just like... he wants to see if anything's coming, especially knowing Orlene is there. He does not trust Orlene at all.

**Griffin:** [amused] I bet your sleeplessness is... not great right now, after the kind of day you're having! Okay.

**Travis:** Yes. So, he kind of like... zones out? 'Cause he has the qualities of a half-elf.

**Griffin:** Right right right right.

**Travis:** So it lets him do that meditation thing. But he is, like, not hittin' REM cycle or nothing.

**Griffin:** No. And Zoot, you— you have a special way of sleeping also, right?

**Travis:** I should clarify. He is not half-elf. He just has the qualities...

**Griffin:** No, yeah, we talked— we've talked about this at length. Zoot. You have a special way of sleeping. As well.

**Clint:** I do? Okay! Yes. Um. I think Zoot would sleep in a tub. A bathtub.

**Travis:** Full of beans.

**Clint:** Of— full of Ethersea.

**Griffin:** Oh, interesting! Okay.

**Clint:** Because I think that would, uh. Recharge him. Rest him. And probably level him up, don't you think?

**Travis:** Whoa!

**Griffin:** [laughing] Whoa, okay, so just every time you fuckin' take a nap, you're like, "Guys, guys, check it out—"

**Clint:** Well, a nap in a tub full of Ethersea, gosh, yeah!

**Griffin:** Yeah. "Check out my huge muscles!"

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Um. No It's... so then it wouldn't be like sleep, right? 'Cause you also have sort of the traits of a Warforged. And one of their things is that you don't sleep, you just have to like, spend six hours in a motionless state...

**Clint:** Right.

**Griffin:** Um. And so do you that—

**Clint:** I think he just floats in this big nice tub. You know? It wouldn't be get— it wouldn't be too—

**Griffin:** Is it horizontal like a bathtub, or vertical like a Bacta tank?

**Clint:** Yeah, like a bathtub.

**Griffin:** Okay. Um. How's that... I mean, what's that like? Right? You're not dreaming, necessarily. This is obviously something you have to do in order to keep yourself alive.

**Clint:** Well, I think he's cogitating. I think he thinks—

**Travis:** Gross, Dad! This is a family podcast!

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughing] It didn't used to be! Uh. I think he's just trying to process... Zoox doesn't process things that quickly—

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Clint:** I think he's very... strictly, you know, top level when it comes to action and when it comes to things happening, and so I think this is his time to reflect and kind of, you know, like dreams are supposed to be able to sort out your subconscious, I think when he's in this rest state...

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** He, um, he sorts through all the things he's found out during the day.

**Griffin:** Yeah! And I think he's had a lot to find out today. Like, Zoox, for all of his concern about being a failure after the first mission, I think had a pretty damn good day of... you know, Solid Snakin' it out here. Okay! So. You all can heal all the way up to full. Get your spell slots back. Also during the night, you heard some clanking and clanging, and realize that the Ethereal pirates here were doing some repairs to the Coriolis. So go ahead

and bump that also back up to full. I think it had only taken a little bit of damage, but hey—

**Travis:** It was down to 69, yeah.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Oh man!

**Travis:** I know.

**Griffin:** Oh well. Every little bit helps.

**Clint:** How do we— how do we restore that?

**Travis:** I took care of it on the ship page.

**Clint:** Oh, you just did? Okay. Alright. And I assume that Urchin is helping them? Maybe?

**Griffin:** Urchin is— no. I mean, Urchin's never where you need him to be.

**Travis:** Urchin's like the wind. You know?

**Griffin:** That's just— that's rule number three of the Ethersea: Urchin's not where you need him to be, guaranteed.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Okay! And the next morning, you all have gathered in the bridge, you have this seed crystal and this map, which is essentially like an anatomical diagram of a clam. And... so you—

**Travis:** You keep saying that, and I'm really wondering, how complicated is that? Is it more complicated than I think?

**Griffin:** No. I mean, it's, uh. I mean, maybe. I don't know what you assume a clam's sort of...

**Travis:** I think it's like a compact! You know? And like, the idea of somebody being like, "well let me draw you a detailed version of how a compact mirror works. It's like, well it has this top part that opens up, and this bottom part that opens up, and in the middle there's something."

**Griffin:** Uh. Okay. Yeah, I'm looking at a diagram of a clam now, this is pretty comp— this is pretty complex. This looks like chutes and—

**Travis:** Really!?

**Griffin:** Yeah, it looks like some Chutes and Ladders shit. Alright. Whatever. You all know that... you all have a heading. You all have a heading, that you are supposed to go toward. That's basically the takeaway from this map. Uh. And... you have this seed crystal, that you're hoping to sort of contain this... this anomaly with. So. Let's just say you guys have been— you guys have been— you've— did you have anything else that you wanted to take care of here in Flotsam? Or? Are you down to take off?

**Travis:** Um.

**Clint:** Do they have any kind of shopping area, or... ?

**Griffin:** No.

**Clint:** Trading post, or anything like that?

**Griffin:** Um. Not one that... I— I think Benefactor Orlene is very nervous about you guys interacting with these folks...

**Clint:** Right.

**Griffin:** Too much? Since they are under a kind of hypnosis. Um. He is very worried about what would happen if that would break.

**Devo:** Can I just say... to Zoox and Amber... um. That this is— I don't know if this is like a common, uh, thing, to say to oneself? But like... I told myself so. Right? Like, this feeling where it's like, "I told you so," but... to myself?

About working with the Parish? Is this... have you ever felt this? This, like, "Oh, I told me so." [pause] You know? No? I— am I alone in this?

**Zoox:** I'll have to wait til my next bath, to be able to think deep thoughts like that. So.

**Amber:** Yeah, I try to keep it pretty surface level.

**Devo:** Okay. I see this. It's...

**Zoox:** You're the deep one! You are the deep one.

**Devo:** I did not want to be...

**Amber:** It's possible I'm sleeping too deeply to have such thoughts.

**Zoox:** Yeah, how was your rest and recharging—?

**Amber:** Aaaaawww!! ...Best bed I ever had, probably.

**Zoox:** [softly] Wow.

**Devo:** Can I— I also just wanted to apologize. Um. Yesterday, uh, twice, I... I... got frustrated, and I um, got angry, first with the person on the dock, and then again with Orlene. And I let them get to me, especially Orlene, and... uh. I do not like being this person. That I was. And... I... I am sorry.

**Amber:** Yeh. I like that person just fine.

**Zoox:** Yeah! I appreciated it!

**Amber:** You know, it's nice to see a little bit of zip from you! Sometimes you keep a little buttoned down; it's nice to know you got a little fire in there.

**Justin:** And— and she tickles his belly.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Devo:** Okay.

**Zoox:** I too appreciated it, because I, you know, I'm learning, y'know, what different kind of personality types there are! Like... being a jackass! And that really... that helped me! I appreciate you so much more.

**Devo:** [mumbling] You know, it's just...

**Amber:** Don't apologize for feeling, I guess is what I'm saying. It's the best thing we got goin'!

**Zoox:** Mmhmm! Mmhmm!

**Devo:** Yes, but I do not like when I act like one of them. You know? This control— I tried to control him, and... it was what... they would do. And I... I want to not resort to this as much. Um.

**Amber:** Alright. If I could make a suggestion. And— I don't know you that well, we're not like, best buds or anything—

**Devo:** We're not??

**Amber:** But— I mean. We're okay buds.

**Devo:** Okay.

**Amber:** We're like a five on Buds— my Buds scale, but I got a lot of buds, keppa? Um. The thing I wanna say is, if you don't like being controlling, maybe the number one person you shouldn't try to control is yourseeeeeeeelf.

[someone whistles]

**Zoox:** Oooooohhh!

**Devo:** Shit, this is very good!



**Amber:** Damn, it's good shit, right?

**Devo:** Did you just come up with this?

**Amber:** Just now.

**Devo:** This is very good!

**Amber:** Anybody else need— Zoox, what about you?

**Devo:** Yes, let Amber have a chance at you!

**Amber:** I'm on fire!

**Devo:** Just— yes, this is good!

**Zoox:** The—

**Amber:** I'm on fire.

**Zoox:** The Brinarr have a saying: The roe never falls far from the fish—

**Devo:** No, you ask Amber for—

**Amber:** No, I'm— you're— I'm helping you, don't try to—

**Zoox:** Oh!

**Amber:** No, don't—

[Amber and Devo speak over each other unintelligibly]

**Zoox:** Right. Gotcha.

**Amber:** Yeah, you need any— you got anything you're processing?

**Zoox:** Um. Yeah. I don't know... how I eat?

**Amber:** Mmm.

**Zoox:** I haven't established that yet. And... and... every time we approach the subject... I get confused, 'cause I'm... I have yet to eat a single ration, and yet I'm not hungry. I don't...

**Amber:** Wow, that's actually a thinker, kinda! Do you not...

**Zoox:** Oh, right! We're not doing the deep stuff—

**Amber:** Do you not— no, it's not that deep! Do you not eat?

**Zoox:** [mumbles unintelligibly]

**Devo:** I thought you like, filter feed?

**Amber:** All organisms have to consume something, right? No matter how...

**Zoox:** I know! I know!

**Amber:** Are you maybe... Hey listen. I'm gonna... Okay. Listen. Hey. Huddle in. Do you guys think there's stuff so small we can't see it?

**Devo:** Yes, of course! This is—

**Zoox:** Oh!

**Devo:** Yes.

**Zoox:** Oh, yeah.

**Devo:** Like germs? And atoms?

**Justin:** Wait. Do they got germs and atoms here?

**Travis:** That's a great question.

**Griffin:** Um.

**Clint:** Plankton!

**Griffin:** Yes?? Yeah??

**Justin:** No I know they got germs and atoms, but do they have, like—

**Travis:** Do we know about them.

**Justin:** Is there, like, an analogous... Robert Cork figure...

**Travis:** Mmm!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** That... created the ability to see microscopic... like...

**Griffin:** Uh... yeah, let's say that Brother Seldom is a leader in the field of...  
[laughs] Uh...

**Travis:** [bursts into laughter]

**Clint:** Subatomic particle physics!?

**Griffin:** Yeah...

**Justin:** Not subatomic, they're not at that level I can't imagine.

**Griffin:** Yeah. But he calls 'em, like, "Little Guys." [laughs]

**Devo:** Yes, we have the Little Guys, that make us sick.

**Amber:** Right. But maybe your food is in the water.

**Devo:** Ooh.

**Amber:** Right. Like, maybe there's like... tiny micro-things that you're eating, which is why you like... I've seen you pick up rations.

**Devo:** Yes.

**Zoox:** Yeah!

**Amber:** And you stare at 'em. And I've even seen you— and I didn't wanna get all weird about it. But I've seen you moosh them—

**Devo:** Yes.

**Amber:** I would say, on yourself—

**Devo:** I've seen this as well—

**Amber:** In different places where we moosh our food?

**Zoox:** I didn't know that you were watching that!

**Amber:** Yeah...

**Devo:** It is hard not to watch, honestly, when this happens.

**Amber:** It's hard not to watch, even—

**Zoox:** It's probably hard TO watch.

**Amber:** Yeah. Yeah, both.

**Devo:** And I have— I have noticed that you also then say, like, "Mmm! Yummy!"

**Amber:** [laughs]

**Zoox:** Well, those are... that's... I'm... [sadly] okay, I'm just trying to be one of the gang...

**Devo:** No, I understand this—

**Amber:** I know! I know!

**Devo:** But you say it very loudly.

**Amber:** Hey, can I tell you something, honestly?

**Zoox:** Certainly.

**Amber:** With these rations, you're not missing much.

**Devo:** Yes.

**Amber:** 'Kay? I think they're adequate.

**Devo:** I think I might have eaten—

**Justin:** Quick check! DM, are they adequate?

**Griffin:** Um, you actually hear a voice:

**Urchin:** I think they're pretty delicious!

**Clint:** [bursts into laughter]

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** [laughing] God...

**Amber:** Hey, we need to get back to work. This has been fun, I'm glad I could help everybody so much, y'all owe me one—

**Zoox:** Given me a lot to think about!

**Amber:** Agreed, owe me one, yes, Zoox, yes you're nodding I bet, alright.

**Zoox:** Mmhmm.

**Devo:** Also—

**Amber:** [mumbling] Y'all both owe me one.

**Devo:** When we have some down time, we should kill Urchin.

**Griffin:** [laughs quietly]

**Amber:** Yeah. I— that seems like a weird thing for you to say, but I'm into it, I think.

**Devo:** Okay.

**Griffin:** [laughing] As you all leave the room, and the door shuts, and we stay in this empty room for a while, and then you hear a voice say,

**Urchin:** Urchin has a complicated relationship with his father!

[Clint, Justin, and Travis burst into laughter]

**Justin:** Aw, there's a lot of depth there we're missing out on, huh?

**Travis:** Oh man, we got to get to know Urchin! But okay, but none of us heard that, we don't know!

[Clint and Justin continue cracking up]

**Griffin:** [laughing] He's— he's—

**Urchin:** Oh are we not— you guys left? We're not doing that anymore??

[Clint and Travis continue laughing]

**Justin:** [imitating Urchin's voice] "If they killed me, it would upset the Daedalium Prophecy!" [normal voice] It's like, wait a minute—

**Griffin:** [laughing] Yeah...

**Travis:** [through laughter] Wait, hold on, hold on, what?

**Justin:** [through laughter] Wait, what?

**Travis:** [imitating Urchin's voice] "Urchin's the chosen one!"

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughing] Take me back to the Daedaelium Prophecy!

**Travis:** Wait, yeah, no, run it back, run it back.

**Justin:** [laughs]

[ambient music plays]

[ad break]

[somber music begins]

**Griffin:** Alright, let's jump forward! You all have been cruising through this clam now, for... for a couple hours. Trying to... trying to navigate your way, using this, using this map. But basically, like. Uh. You have found some ridges on the ceiling that you can see, Devo, that have been sort of your guiding light, here. There's a very soft illumination against the ceiling. And when I say ceiling, I mean, y'know, the top of... a cavern, essentially. Uh. Y'know. Several hundred feet overhead.

Um. And so I think you are... a bit sort of dismayed, when you realize that this light... is fading a little bit. And it's becoming a little bit harder to see this ridge on the ceiling that you were following. And then it gets— it gets, like, completely pitch black in here. Uh. And... through the viewport of the bridge, of the Coriolis, you see... a like, white point of light in the distance. That... very quickly, blossoms, and grows into this like, wall of transparent white light, that just shoots through your ship, and past your ship, enveloping everything behind you and around you. But this effect only lasts

for, like, a few seconds? And then it... is back to normal, you can see this ridge in the ceiling again, above you. Everyone, make a perception check.

**Travis:** [whispering] Perception check... Uh... that is a 15 total for me.

**Justin:** Yeah. Uh. Tw— that's a, six plus three for me, a nine.

**Travis:** 12 plus three for me.

**Justin:** Hits just keep coming.

**Clint:** It's a dirty 20 for Zoox!

**Griffin:** A 20 for Zoox! Okay. Um.

**Travis:** Thank. God.

**Griffin:** So... Amber, I don't... y'know. That was weird! Devo... you know for a fact that that was a... it was a spell, essentially? Like, it was an— you assume it was, you know, coming from the direction of— you got no impression from Benefactor Orlene that there was anyone else sort of where you are going.

**Travis:** Mmm.

**Griffin:** And so you intuit that that was the... the anomaly, giving off some sort of like, compression field. Uh. Zoox, with a 20, what I will give you... the engine. Is making a strange noise.

**Zoox:** I... um... Listen, can you... it... can you hear... ? That? It's kind of a... it's kind of a, clackety-clackety-clackety-clackety-kkkkkkkrr. Clackety-clackety-clackety-clackety-kkkkkkkrr. Can you guys... hear that? In the engine area of the ship?

**Devo:** I mean, now that you mention it, yes. Uh.

**Zoox:** Should... should we... go? Check it out?



**Devo:** Do you know shit about the engines?

**Zoox:** No. That's why I used the "clickety-clickety-krrrrr" thing.

**Devo:** Ah, yes.

**Amber:** Fair.

**Devo:** We could call the Tap It Brothers.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Amber:** Uh. I'll go poke around.

**Griffin:** M'kay. Amber, you head down to the engine room. What do you know— [laughs] I mean, you are— [laughing harder] I think you are, de facto, the ship's engineer at this point, because you taped, like a bubblegum wrapper over a hole on the inside of the ship, and that seemed to fix that. So. Just—

**Justin:** I think she's got a wrench, and she's like... kinda just clanking around on things...

**Travis:** Yep!

**Justin:** Like, seeing what looks loose.

**Travis:** It's like that moment where you're like, "I'll take a look!" And then instantly, like, you just lift the hood of the car.

**Justin:** You ever open your fuse box, and you're like, "What the fuck goes on in here?"

**Clint:** [laughs heartily]

**Travis:** "Well nothing's on fire, and nothing's labelled 'this part's broken,' soooo... I'm at a loss, I don't know, man."

**Griffin:** Uh. I— what I will give you for free is that, you have at least seen the engine before. And while it seems like all of the mechanical components of it are... functioning? Like they are still moving in the way that they are supposed to. The engine is pulsing, with this light, and that's not normal! But it will take either an arcana or an investigation check, I think, to get anything more than that.

**Justin:** Uhhhm. I'll do investigation check. Ugh. Plus zero.

**Travis:** One of these rolls...

**Justin:** A nine! I just, like, can't catch a break today, guys!

**Griffin:** Um. [sighs] Okay. With a... with a nine... I, uh... the best you are able to get... is... I think you work it out in your head a little bit that this engine, like all engines of ships in the Ethersea, are powered by... the Ethersea? Right? Like they absorb the, you know, similar to the prestige salt stuff, that's just naturally in the water, and then uses that to power the ships. Uh. This thing got hit with a, a... some sort of effect, some sort of magic spell, that it, you know, absorbed, trying to power the ship, that it was a little bit too, too juicy for it.

And so, it is... whatever this magic was, which, y'know, you know to be compression magic, that is making things smaller, uh. Is just bangin' around inside of the engine of your ship right now. With that nine, I will also give you: that pulsing, it's getting a little bit faster. There is no damage. To the engine. There is nothing to repair. Um. But... that is, that is what you have discovered.

**Justin:** Hmm.

**Amber:** Well.

**Justin:** I'll go back and report back.

**Amber:** The magic in here is fuckin' shit up.

**Devo:** Okay?

**Amber:** We probably shouldn't stick around too long, 'cause that... I... I am... I wouldn't have the first idea how to fix it.

**Devo:** Uhhhh. I mean, I can take a look at the magic part?

**Amber:** Yeah! I mean, what the hell, right?

**Devo:** Okay, I will look at the magic, I don't know about the engines, but I know... a little bit about magic, I have studied it all my life, so let's... uh... let's try it.

**Griffin:** Okay. You wanna make an arcana check?

**Travis:** That's a nat 20!!

**Griffin:** Oh, shit!

**Travis:** That's a 20 plus four! 24!

**Griffin:** That's real good! There's that good roll! Uh, okay. Good. With a 24... I'll give you a lot with a 24. With a 24, you realize that by absorbing this compression magic, it's very subtle, because it's happening to you too, but your— the Coriolis is getting smaller. And... it's tough to get a sense of scale for that, but maybe you notice it by looking up at that ridge, and like... feels like the ceiling's getting maybe just a little bit further away. Um. And... as the... as the pilot of this ship, I think sitting in front of the console, you realize the only way to kind of like, stop this right now, would be to... would be to kick off the engines. Uh. To dispel this. Which your ship would still be able to run, it's just you wouldn't be able to use anything that requires engine power, which I think for the Coriolis is just the... just the bathysphere bay, at this point.

**Travis:** So if we turn off the engines we'll stop shrinking?

**Griffin:** Uh, yes. That is what you have— yes.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Devo:** Uh. So. What is happening is, it has... it has... the engine being on is shrinking us? And the ship, because it has... the spell inside of it. So... I'm just going to turn this off? And let it have a little rest. Little cool down? And we'll turn it back on later. Um. Okay!

**Travis:** And then he clicks it off.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Zoox:** Are we shrinking as well?

**Devo:** Yes. Yes, we are shrinking. But we are shrinking in comparison to the ship, so it is... hard to see.

**Zoox:** Oh, okay. I thought you said the things were closing in on us. So I gotcha. Okay.

**Griffin:** Okay! As you do that, I think the ship switches over to this, like, y'know... emergency track lighting. But the ship is still running, the engines are sort of powered by their own... sort of self-propulsion.

**Travis:** You know, you've got the battery and you've got your engine, right?

**Griffin:** Yes, exactly. Right.

**Travis:** This is a hybrid.

**Griffin:** So the ship is still running. And maybe it's when it switches over to that emergency lighting that you do see a light in the distance, underwater. Um. You see... just these, these... faint, faint, pulses of... like... greenish whitish light. And it's— they're in weird shapes? These flashes? Like, squares? And rectangles?

[somber organ music fades in]

But after a while of going through this water, which is, y'know, different now that the Coriolis is smaller, you realize that what you are approaching is a... well, it's either an enormous building, or a normal sized building and you have shrunk much more than you... assumed. Uh. It's not like, it— it's not enormous as— it's not a skyscraper, right? It's just— its scale is huge, as you all are sort of coming toward it. It is a wooden sort of— honestly kind of ramshackle... little longhouse, here. And Amber, you know this building very well, because you used to sleep in it. Because a couple dozen yards ahead of the Coriolis, these green pulses of light are flashing through the doors and windows of the Shithouse.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** What do I know... okay, I know the Shithouse, what do I now know about the scale of us versus the Shithouse?

**Griffin:** You are...

**Justin:** By looking at it.

**Griffin:** The Cori— yeah, I mean, you... quick back-of-the-napkin math, like, you guys are a mouse.

**Travis:** Mmm!

**Griffin:** Compared to... like, a mouse in a normal sized Shithouse. Um. It is... it is enormous.

**Amber:** Well. The good news is, I left some jerky under my bunk.

**Griffin:** [laughs quietly]

**Amber:** But the bad news is, I don't think we're in any position to eat it.

**Devo:** Hmm. Oh, we can eat— uh, take tiny bites, you know, and then... over time... there's a lot more jerky when you are little!

**Amber:** Yeah, but back then, what— the kind of jerky we were dealing with, like it's probably aged to perfection, but there was some, um... let's call 'em impurities. Those, at our scale... oh, oofa doofa, that's a bad afternoon, man.

**Clint:** Um. This might be a little bit of a tangent. But could Zoox make a, uh... a perception check to see if the engines on the bathysphere are also affected by this spell?

**Griffin:** So... I mean, you don't have to make a check for that. By shutting down the engines, the bathysphere bay is not functioning anymore. So it is...

**Clint:** Gotcha. Okay.

**Griffin:** It is... Uh. Yeah. I mean, you can tell, the bathysphere's the same size as the ship, it's scaled down with it. But with the engine being off, you lose access to all engine powered tools. Which is just the bathysphere bay, here on the Coriolis.

**Clint:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Um. Devo, did you have something?

**Travis:** So, how... you said that there's, like, the pulses... ? So it's like, a pulse of light. Right?

**Griffin:** Yeah. And it's not in any kind of set rhythm. It's almost like fireflies.

**Travis:** Well then, let's... you know what? Let's get the fuck in that building.

**Griffin:** M'kay. Just right through the front door?

**Travis:** I mean. We're pretty tiny now, so we're probably pretty sneaky.

**Griffin:** Sure! Okay.

**Travis:** And we're doing, like, silent running! You know, the engine's off, we're on... our emergency power and track lighting and stuff. I'm gonna—we're gonna sneak in there.

**Griffin:** Okay. I mean, as you poke your head in through the door, I'll tell you what it looks like, and then you can tell me sort of what your approach is.

**Travis:** I like the image, by the way, of like, a tiny mouse-sized ship, just like peeking around. Just like, peeeeeeeek!

**Griffin:** [laughing] Yeah, sure. Yeah. It is... a... a super-super long room, that you are entering in on one of the far sides of. And Amber, it is... it is... it's weird, because it's— like you know this room, but also it is submerged in water, right? So. There are rows of bunkbeds, that... are fastened to the ground. For some reason. I don't know why they— maybe it was an earthquake— maybe when the Trash Hole became a Trash Geyser, they were like, "Okay we need to— we need to secure all of these bunk beds to the ground."

**Travis:** Well, yeah, some of the rowdier residents kept rearranging them into forts.

**Griffin:** [laughing] Yeah— [laughs] Exactly.

**Travis:** And everyone's like, "Guys! We're trying to save, like, society! We can't— stop— keep building these bunk bed forts!"

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** But there are, like, a couple of obviously extremely waterlogged mattresses just sort of like, floating, almost in stasis, in these waters. And... like a couple of, you know, bedsheets or whatever, just kind of like, slowly, slowly, drifting around the room. And... all of you can see... yeah, I don't think you would need to check anything for this. You can see one thing that is weird, is that all around the room, the source of this green light, is coming from these round sort of... black... thick... screw-shaped objects. That are... they're about the size of your ship, actually, in this miniature form. That are

burrowed into the wood of the walls and the ceilings, and floor, and some of the support beams of this enormous cavernous room. And nearly all of these black, you know, screw-like football things, are broken. With these jagged holes interrupting their otherwise smooth black spirals. But maybe like a half-dozen of them are intact, and every few seconds they flash a green light from within, like lightning bugs. That is what you see, as you come into the, you know, the near side of the Shithouse.

**Clint:** Can Zoox make a nature check to see if they're organic? To see if they're animal, or...

**Griffin:** Absolutely Zoox can do that.

**Clint:** That is a... 12 plus two, 14.

**Griffin:** Um. They are organic, yes. They are... mmmm... phb phb phb phb phb. They are... Hmm. I'm trying to think of...

**Justin:** What's a 14's worth?

**Travis and Griffin:** Yeahhh.

[Everyone murmurs in unison]

**Griffin:** Exactly, it's just shy... I think you know that—

**Justin:** It's an awkward number.

**Griffin:** That they are organic, and... also that you have never seen anything like them before. And I realize that's something that I've told Zoox about a lot of the failed nature checks that he has made in the past. But there is... there is something otherworldly about these, right? Like, this is a... this black screw shaped things, burrowed into the wall, like... that's weird shit, it's not like coral growing, or barnacles growing on the side of a ship or whatever.

**Travis:** How big are they compared to us?



**Griffin:** They're about the size of your... a little bit bigger than your ship, actually. How it is now in its miniature form. You would think like, to scale with the room, like they are...

**Travis:** Like a light bulb?

**Griffin:** Uh... maybe light bulb sized, or like... two fists, sort of stacked? I—I'm looking around the room for things that... [laughs]

**Justin:** What are things? What are some things?

**Griffin:** What are some things? A little bit bigger than your ship. Which is a mouse size. So we'll say they are the size of big rats.

**Travis:** Okay. Um. Can I—I would like to kind of study them a little bit, and just make sure that this is definitely where this, like, compression magic is coming from. Like... what do I feel when they pulse, you know?

**Griffin:** Okay. Yeah, make an arcana check.

**Travis:** [sound of dice rolling] Another nat 20 baby!

**Griffin:** Oh my god.

**Justin:** Ohh!

**Clint:** Holy smokes.

**Travis:** Back to back nat 20s!

**Griffin:** Jesus, back to back...

**Travis:** 24's.

**Griffin:** Here's what I'll give you, man. Um. Completely unrelated to the compression magic. That is not what these are. This is something else. These things are not giving off any kind of... they're giving off light,

obviously, but they are not, like, projecting magic power out into the waters around them.

**Travis:** But the compression magic is coming from the Shithouse?

**Griffin:** No. No, it's just... this is in the way, to where you're going, and you just happened to investigate it, to see if this is what that was. But it is not. Like, these are something else, that is just giving off light. What I will also give you with a nat 20... is... hmrbmrbrmrbmrbrm.

**Travis:** Excuse me, what?

**Griffin:** Hubbmrbrmbm. [laughs]

**Travis:** [laughing] I missed that last bit— Okay, I don't see how that helps us, but thank you?

**Griffin:** Um. Way way deeper down in this room, like on the other far side of it, with a nat 20, you... detect... a... a thing. A living organic thing. That the compression magic maybe has not shrunk down to scale, at the size of your ship. And has in fact maybe even gotten a little bit bigger. But it is, you know, the other side of this room is very far away? So this is just sort of, the magical inclination that you get. Is that... the compression magic has affected something, some other living entity, different from these, these screws, on the far side of this room.

**Devo:** Now listen, we are... very small. But over there, there is something. And... we could go investigate it, to see what it is. But it might be big and angry.

**Amber:** Yeah how does that serve our goal?

**Devo:** Yes, this is a good question. I do not know. I mean, my curiosity is... overwhelming. But, I also know that we are currently very small—

**Amber:** Yeah.

**Devo:** And I believe our guns would be about as effective as, like a spitball. Um. Sooo... I am torn.

**Zoox:** Can we... we would like to be big again, correct?

**Devo:** Yes. We need to find some kind of wish fulfillment machine.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Devo:** That will make us Big.

**Griffin:** So what are y'all doing?

**Zoox:** We gotta investigate!

**Amber:** Yeah. I guess it... yeah.

**Devo:** Yes, if it has made this thing big, maybe we can figure out how to make us big. Hm?

**Clint:** So I assume we can swim faster than the ship can move, right?

**Griffin:** No, my friend! What?

**Devo:** We are little too!

**Justin:** Okay, Griffin, here's what I need you to do.

**Griffin:** 'Kay.

**Justin:** Take ten seconds—

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** To get— to just... compression wise, lay it all out for us, give us big small ratings on everything.

**Griffin:** Okay. This room is... big compared to you. You are the size of a mouse, in this room, your ship is the size of a mouse in this room, which means I guess you guys are...

**Justin and Travis:** Ants.

**Griffin:** Ants.

**Justin:** Like unto ants!

**Griffin:** Like ants living inside of a mouse... suit.

**Travis:** That classic!

**Justin:** Heinous symmetry!

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** Okay, I got that, but the thing is, we shut off our engines.

**Justin:** Griffin is continuing through this list. What other things [laughs] are big and small?

**Griffin:** I mean... everything else in the room is... is sort of at the same scale.

**Travis:** And if you want to cover any other opposites too, like, what's new, and what's old, what's... [unintelligible]

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Justin:** Okay, so the Shithouse is big.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Compared... the Shithouse is reglier.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** We're small.

**Griffin:** And then there's something at the far side of this room that is bigger than it's supposed to be.

**Justin:** And there's green glowing screws?

**Griffin:** Yeah, there's... I mean, there's a bunch of these screws, most of them are broken, and there's like a half dozen of them that are still flashing green light.

**Justin:** And they're what size?

**Griffin:** They're the size of your ship. They seem to be at room scale.

**Justin:** Okay. Got it.

**Travis:** And we're able to move, we're just not generating the power needed to like, power up other things.

**Griffin:** Right. Yes.

**Travis:** Okay. We're gonna... let's sail over there! See what's in the room.

**Griffin:** Okay. So, now that you are in the room and you know what it looks like, what is your... what's your, like, approach, Devo? As the pilot?

**Travis:** I'm coming in... uh... like, as close to the bunk beds as possible. I want some cover.

**Griffin:** Okay. Yeah. I mean, you could probably sort of weave... a path, like under them and around them...

**Travis:** Like a mouse would scurry! I'm—

**Griffin:** Right, exactly!

**Travis:** Yeah, I'm following the mouse trajectory.

**Griffin:** Make a... just make a speed roll with the Coriolis. d20 plus five.

**Travis:** 11 plus five, 16.

**Griffin:** Okay. Um... With a 16, you are able to... Ratatouille your way around these... around these bunks.

**Travis:** Hell yeah.

**Griffin:** Oooh, you know what it is? You are able to... time it out, so that you're able to push the ship under a bunk bed and then when the flashes, the green flashes of light coming from these screws, like, fade, in the darkness you kick the gas on—

**Travis:** Hell yeah.

**Griffin:** And shoot underneath another bed. And then pull the brakes and wait for the next flash. And in doing that, you... reach... a point in the room where you can see what's on the far side of the room. And it has not noticed you yet. But. You see this huge pink fleshy object.

**Travis:** Gross.

**Griffin:** That... is... It's a worm. It's a— it kinda looks almost like an earthworm. But it is... to use room scale, it is coiled all around the far wall of this room. I mean, it's the size of... it's probably 30 feet long. Like, in regular scale. It is... this thing has gotten much, much bigger than any worm has any right to be. And also, sort of surrounding it, and stretching all across the back side of this room and covering up some of the windows and doors, are... is this white, sticky, almost webbing-like stuff. That it is... slowly expelling. With one end of its worm body. And with another end of its worm body, this thing is actively eating one of these screw-shaped objects. Zoox, quick nature check for me?

**Clint:** Yes! Absolutely. Nature check... coming up on the nature check... and that is... a... [sound of dice rolling] 14.

**Griffin:** Um. Yeah. With a 14—

**Clint:** No no no, I'm sorry, it's a 12. I don't know why it...

**Griffin:** A 12? Okay. It's way bigger than it has any right to be, with a 12 I'll give this to you, because... this is a... an actual sea creature. This is a ribbon worm. Which... not a joke, content warning, if you google ribbon worm, these motherfuckers are nasty. They shoot out this sort of white, weird, almost ghostly, tree-like substance.

**Clint:** God I wish I could do that!

**Griffin:** Yeah, I know. So...

**Travis:** Well, if you try hard enough...

**Griffin:** That is what you all see. You see this thing, it has not seen you. And it has—

**Travis:** And it's eating one of those screws, right?

**Griffin:** It is eating one of those screws, yeah.

**Travis:** Um. Okay. I'm gonna ask you a question...

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** And remind you...

**Griffin:** Yeah?

**Travis:** That I have passive insight of 16.

**Griffin:** Ohhooohhooohhhmmmm.

**Travis:** Okay. Can I make— is there a connection, then, to be assumed, between its size, and the green pulsing light screw things?

**Griffin:** Um, no. No no no no. 'Cause you put together earlier that the green pulsing light has nothing to do with the compression, right? It's just, this thing is... [laughing] I think enjoying its new large size, by devouring these things that it otherwise would not be able to, as a normal ribbon worm.

**Travis:** So why it IT larger when everything else gets smaller?

**Griffin:** I— I will let that earlier nat 20 ride. And say that... just... it is affecting different things in different ways. Right? Like it got caught in your engine, and kind of bounced around for a while, and so it kept hitting you and hitting you and hitting you. Maybe just by its biology, this thing was affected differently. Maybe the Shithouse got smaller too. And the ribbon worm did not get smaller. And you guys are microscopic. Right? Like... that is how chaotic this magic is—

**Travis:** Okay.

**Griffin:** You have no fucking idea how big anything actually is. This— it's just... this is the scale that you are working with right now.

**Travis:** Okay. But long story short, there's no information that's gonna help us get to big size again?

**Griffin:** No.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Devo:** I say we get, while the getting is good.

**Zoox:** Um. I... I think I wanna try to talk to it.

**Devo:** No! You always want to try to talk to the thing—

**Amber:** No, no. We're not gonna— it's not going good.

**Devo:** This is a 30 foot long worm, and we are a mouse.



**Zoox:** Oh, I know, but look at it! It's absolutely gorgeous!!

**Devo:** But to what end!?

**Zoox:** I mean... well—

**Amber:** Ah, it's viral marketing for the Dune movie.

[Griffin and Travis say "hmmmm" in unison]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Amber:** I bet. I bet they did viral marketing here. Our one weakness.

**Zoox:** Um. I think... I know, but it's— don't you think it's probably the reason we're so tiny?

**Amber:** God—

**Devo:** No!

**Amber:** God, it's so irritating, no, he's probably right!

**Devo:** No, I know magic! I— this has nothing to do with us!

**Amber:** Okay. Tell me why. Then you explain it.

**Devo:** Okay, so the magic is coming from the singularity, the thing that we are going to collect.

**Amber:** Oh...

**Devo:** With this, this crystal. Yes? This worm. Uh. Is not, by its nature, the singularity. Yes?

**Amber:** Right, but it's probably got magic...

**Devo:** No!

**Amber:** All over it. Made it big, right?

**Devo:** No. The water. This water, that we are in, right, it is, it is... okay, think of it—

**Amber:** Zoox food.

**Devo:** Think of it like this. Right?

**Amber:** Right.

**Devo:** Um.

**Amber:** Yeah?

**Devo:** Imagine a glass of water.

**Amber:** Ah.

**Devo:** Mmhmm? And you drop some coloring in it, some dye in it, yes?

**Amber:** Right, right.

**Devo:** So then you are going to put objects into this water. Yes? They will become covered in the dye. Because it is in the water. Yes?

**Amber:** Um.

**Devo:** Now, if they are things that absorb things, if they are different colors when they go in, the differences between the objects will make the dye in the water affect them differently. Yes? ...This is how the Ether in the Ethersea works.

**Amber:** ...Right.

**Devo:** So—

**Amber:** So he should just try talking to it once.

**Devo:** No!! The worm is just soaked in the magic! And so—

**Amber:** Why is the worm here, then?

**Devo:** [voice rising with frustration] Why— why are we here?

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Amber:** Whoa!

**Zoox:** Whoa.

**Amber:** Whoa. That may be even be beyond my... beyond my abilities...

**Devo:** No, it's `cause we fell into the clam! This— that was not a metaphysical question! We are here `cause we fell into the clam. Listen. Listen! I know. This is weird, right? Giant worm! And, uh, we're very small, and we're looking for... the giant... you know, things that make things small and giant, right? But this is not it! This building is not it, those screw things are not it, the worm is not it. They have all just been affected by the same magic we're trying to find. But that magic is not here! I have studied magic literally all my life. And this is not it. Uh. You know, this is like, Amber, I would not tell you how to punch a shark with your ethereal fists. Zoox—

**Amber:** Yeah.

**Devo:** I would not tell you how to swim with the farts that come out of your feet. So I need you to trust me. That I know that this, the only thing that can happen here, is that this worm sees us as food. Like it sees these... things in the wall. And eats us. And poops us out as this white, tree gross stuff. That comes out of its butt. Right? So.

**Amber:** Right, yeah. That's fair.

**Zoox:** [fondly] I love it when he's compelling. Aren't you? You're very compelling!

**Devo:** Thank you—

**Zoox:** Very very!

**Devo:** It is— I am good at this. And we are on a mission. And I would like to get big again. And I would like to get money. And I would like to leave this place. And get people out of it. And—

**Amber:** Alright. Alright. Let's do it, let's do it.

**Devo:** Thank you.

**Griffin:** Alright. So y'all are bugging out?

**Travis:** Yes. Get me away from this big worm!

**Griffin:** So, I think to continue your heading toward, you know, where you're going in this anatomical map, it's gonna be one more speed check, to see if you can, you know, time these pulses, and shoot the ship out a window or something like that, to get out of here. So that's a d20 plus five.

**Travis:** [sound of dice rolling] Ohh! I got an 11 total... six plus five?

**Griffin:** You... wait. And. Maybe it's that when this thing ate one of these screw shaped objects, it like messed with the timing?

**Travis:** Oh, yeah.

**Griffin:** Of the remaining ones in the room. But... you wait for a darkness between the pulses, and then, you know, set bladder to max, and shoot toward this window...

**Clint:** [laughing] [yelling] Bladder to max! [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs] As you shoot toward this window, um... like, several of these screws flash. And... the ribbon worm convulses.

[theme music fades in]

**Travis:** Oh, bummer.

**Griffin:** And the window that you were sailing toward... in an instant, gets covered with this thick white webbing. That is now creeping all along the wall. That this window was on. And... the worm uncoils from the back wall. And in a serpentine pattern, starts to dash in the direction of the Coriolis.

[theme music plays out]

MaximumFun.org.  
Comedy and Culture.  
Artist Owned.  
Audience Supported.