

## The Adventure Zone: Ethersea – Episode 20

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

[“The Adventure Zone: Ethersea Theme” music plays]

**Griffin:** Devo, you know that Amber just fell in the water.

**Travis:** Devo hesitates. And then jumps into the water, after Amber. As soon as he touches her, like, finger brushes her, and his lungs are burning, he screams underwater and casts Cure Wounds.

**Griffin:** The bleached ship is following you.

**Devo:** We are not going to fight them. We are going to get away. This is—

**Amber:** Oh, okay!

**Zoox:** Oh, yeah, yeah!

**Amber:** That’s fine! Yeah! We’re all fine with that!

**Griffin:** And the propulsion system is damaged. Your ship’s speed has been reduced to zero.

**Clint:** He opens the bag and pulls out the skull.

**Zoox:** Hello?

**Griffin:** It doesn’t answer, with words? But you can see the faint outline of a circle. You look down at the skull, which is bleached, but... spreading out from your hands where you are holding it, it is regaining its color. And when it has finally reached its, y’know, point of being completely chromatic, the coral ship outside pulls in real close to your ship, and then it peels off. And sails away.

[Ethersea theme music plays out]

**Griffin:** So the bleached coral ship has just faded from sight, um, bringing a sort of sudden end to the dog fight between your two vessels. And now things are quiet for the remainder of your trip back home. Of which there is not much. How are you all doing, aboard the Coriolis? I almost said the Cloaca, and it's a shame that those two words are so sort of close, in my brain?

**Travis:** Yep.

**Griffin:** Because I'm gonna be saying each of them quite a bit, I think.

**Clint:** Well, just hang in there, I'm sure I can wreck the Cloaca too.

**Griffin:** Oh, man—

**Travis:** No.

**Griffin:** Hey, that was a really rough phrase? [laughing]

**Justin:** It's really rough.

**Travis:** Yeah. Oooh. I—

**Griffin:** Really rough stuff. And I don't even think it was intentional. Being like... sorta... older gentleman, naughty.

**Travis:** Um, I—

**Clint:** I didn't even realize it was naughty.

**Griffin:** I know, I know.

**Travis:** Well. Yeah. I mean. I don't even think you need context—

**Griffin:** Right.

**Travis:** To know that "I will wreck the Cloaca" is...

**Griffin:** [laughing] Could be interpreted...

**Travis:** Okay.

**Griffin:** It... yeah.

**Travis:** Um, I think that... uh... there has been... Devo has been unusually quiet.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** And thoughtful. Sitting at the helm.

[Gentle ambient music begins]

**Griffin:** That is— that is unusual.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Devo:** Uh, Zoox, Amber, before we... um. Before we dock, could you all meet me on the bridge, to talk?

**Amber:** Yeah, sure.

**Zoox:** Ten four.

**Amber:** Oh, that's cool, what's that, like trucker talk?

**Zoox:** Mmhmm. Yeah. Sea trucker.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Amber:** I didn't know you knew sea trucker.

**Zoox:** Oh, yeah—

**Travis:** It's one of his— it's one of his learned languages.

**Clint:** I'm... yeah. Let me see—

**Justin:** Sorry, Travis McElroy, are you here? We're having this beautiful character moment—

**Griffin:** Oh, you gotta let us just jazz— we gotta jazz it, baby! The audience loves it when we jump in with our jibes and our jazz.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** That's true.

**Justin:** I just would like it to be character-based jazz and jibes!

**Clint:** Okay.

**Travis:** That's fair.

**Clint:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I think that's a... that's a, yes. Travis, take it again?

**Travis:** You're right. TAZ: Characters Welcome. Uh,

**Devo:** Yes, oh, is this one of your languages?

**Zoox:** I spell— I speak Troll, and Trucker.

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Devo:** Ah! One of those. Um. I wanted to talk to you. [sighs] I can't think of a better way to phrase this other than to say... Is this... is this how it's supposed to go? Is this it? That we go, we go on the mission, and it goes sideways, and somebody almost dies? Twice now, out of three missions, with Guthrie shooting Zoox, and then this, Amber almost drowning... it's just... is this... [sighs] Is this what it is?

**Amber:** What do you mean?

**Zoos:** You mean that we're not very good at this?

**Devo:** Not— [sighs]

**Zoos:** And yet we're lucky enough that we have survived? And successfully completed our missions?

**Devo:** I... you say lucky. Both times, I... saved you. And... [sighs] Multiple times now, in these adventures, I... I have been... alone. You two have charged at a thing, and dived in the water, or dive— and I've been left alone, and I... this can't be... right. The right way to handle these things. Right?

**Zoos:** Um... I would like to think that I have saved you. I... communicated with the giant clam. And that solved that. I—

**Devo:** Did it?

**Zoos:** Made contact with the dried coral ship, and it left. So... how 'bout you thank me? Instead of questioning me? I think we've been saving each other pretty much on a mutually balanced basis.

**Devo:** I asked you to fix the engine. And to stop just connecting with every single thing that you found.

**Zoos:** Mmhmm.

**Devo:** And what did you do? You... stopped on your mission to fix the engine, to psychically connect with something!

**Zoos:** Which saved us. And... was very successful. [stutters] I need to ask something. Your title is pilot, isn't it? You don't actually command us, do you?

**Devo:** I am not trying to command you.

**Zoox:** Sounds like it!! Sounds like it to me!!

**Devo:** We talked, back at the beginning, about the possibility of bringing in other help. I want to bring this up again. That if we are finding it so difficult to barely survive these missions, maybe this is an indication that, at the very least, we see if Skittles the Octopus is free to come help us? Eh?

**Amber:** Who was Skittles?

**Devo:** He was the octopus that was on the brigand ship in the first... when we went to the art gallery thing, and he... you know, he's kind of squiggly, and wiggly, and an octo— Holy shit.

**Amber:** What?

**Devo:** Squiggles was the smiley face.

**Amber:** What?

**Devo:** Squiggles— Squiggles— Skittles.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Devo:** Was the Smiley Face man!

**Griffin:** [laughing] Travis is broken! Travis!

**Zoox:** Squiggly Diddly. [laughs]

**Devo:** Skittles!

**Amber:** Bo Diddly was...?

**Devo:** Skittles! Was the Smiley Face avatar at the auction.

**Amber:** Wha—

**Devo:** He was all wibbly wobbly, right? And... like... didn't talk? And wanted the journal?

**Amber:** Is this your— is this like, your headcanon, or?

**Devo:** Nope!

[Someone snorts]

**Devo:** Okay. Besides the point. We need— I think we need... help. Because I do not want to be left alone on the ship. I do not want to be the only one—

**Urchin:** Hey man! Hey, you're not alone anymore, buddy!

**Amber:** Oh god.

**Zoox:** [laughs]

**Devo:** This—

**Urchin:** I'm telling you man, I— I— I'm a big strong warrior, buddy!

**Amber:** Yeah, we gotta start training him. For battle.

**Urchin:** I don't want octopuses on this ship, neither. 'Cause octopuses— octopuses go ahead and eat—

**Griffin:** I don't have this guy's voice at all today, do I?

**Travis:** You had it for a second there.

**Clint:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** I had it for a second.

**Justin:** You had it there. You were in the pocket.

**Griffin:** I was—

**Clint:** You gotta get a little— [imitating Urchin's voice] A little more saliva in the back of the throat.

**Griffin:** Yeah, that's right.

**Urchin:** I don't wanna do any more of these—

**Clint:** There he is!

**Urchin:** I'm the only sea creature you guys need! I'm like the mascot, and also octopuses eat my kind.

**Devo:** We... I mean, we would make sure, we would ask Skittles not to eat you.

**Amber:** Now wait, if the octopus would eat him, that is tempting, actually. I—

**Zoox:** Mmhmm. Mmhmm.

**Amber:** I— now, now that's a possibility.

**Devo:** And this—

**Urchin:** Is this a good time to say to say I would love to get a raise?

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Amber:** I would love to get... I love to get some Alf shit going on on this ship.

**Devo:** Yeah. I just think that we need to think— rethink. The way that we handle these missions. There has to be a better way. And I'm sorry that I snapped at you. I'm not used to working with people? And having people that I... [sighs] rely on, to do things. And... I... [sighs] This is a new experience for me? I have not been on a ship like you, Amber, and... this can't be it, right?



**Amber:** Well. I mean. [sighs] The way I grew up... You know, you don't expect much better than this. You get from one to the next one, and... eventually your luck breaks bad, and that's it. I mean... what do you want to do? You want a 401K? You know? Like... this is it.

**Devo:** I... [sighs] I just thought it would be fun.

**Amber:** Yeah, well, nothing's fun when you start at it. You know? You gotta kinda go through the boring parts. You know, like you always see the scene where they're like, teaching you to mop, and then it turns out that like... mopping is sort of like sword fighting or somethin'? You know? Like in the movies—

**Devo:** This would be fine, yeah! No, if it was just boring, this would be fine. But it is scary, and dangerous. And... [sighs] And you two keep getting hurt. And I— [sighs] I don't like this. I am... invested in you, in a way that I have not been before, with anybody. And I don't like when you get hurt, and I want to be able to keep you safe, and to protect you. But you don't always listen to me.

**Zoox:** You... you know, another side of that might be— I'm not against the idea of... Squibbler. Um.

**Devo:** Skittles.

**Zoox:** 'Cause you know, if... Skid... Scibbard? It might be nice to have somebody that we can leave in charge of the ship, so that you aren't left on the ship.

**Urchin:** [clears throat]

**Zoox:** And can participate in...

**Urchin:** [clears throat pointedly]

**Zoox:** I mean along with... Dumbass over there.

**Urchin:** [grumbles]

**Zoox:** Um. You know, it might be nice—

**Urchin:** I don't even have an ass. So now who's the dumb one.

**Devo:** Wait, you don't?

**Urchin:** Don't give me that—

**Devo:** We had a whole conversation about you pooping.

**Urchin:** Okay. Well, I fixed the engines by the way. Thanks, Urchin! Yeah, no problem guys! Let's talk about that 401K though, damn!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Zoox:** Well, how about if we conclude this mission, and we have another discussion about it. Can you give us some time to think on it?

**Devo:** Yes. I just... yes.

**Zoox:** Because I want it to be fun for you.

**Devo:** [sighs] Thank you.

**Zoox:** Is that okay with you? Am-bear?

**Amber:** Uh... yeah. I guess. Yeah, sure. I don't— I mean, I don't need another split, honestly. So. I'm fine. But— I mean, we've made it this far, right? If one of us had beefed it, I'd be more open to this. But I guess at that point we're just talking about head count replacement. Y'know.

**Devo:** Just... be more careful, then, in the meantime, until... [sighs] Be more careful?

**Zoox:** Oui.

**Devo:** Yes, you.

**Amber:** Yeah, oui.

**Devo:** Yes, you.

**Amber:** Oui.

**Devo:** Yeah.

**Zoos:** Will be more careful.

**Devo:** Thank you.

**Zoos:** Oui. And you be careful too!

**Devo:** I've been careful— I have not almost died yet!

**Zoos:** Yes you did! You almost drowned, Amber saved your ass!

**Devo:** Yes, but I did not have to make any death saves, eh?

**Zoos:** Oh... [chortles]

**Amber:** Ah, he's got you there.

**Zoos:** [laughing] You did not!

**Amber:** Oui oui. [chuckles]

**Devo:** Oh, you need to go to the bathroom?

**Amber:** Oh, come on—

**Griffin:** An invisible tow truck appears and starts dragging your ship back home.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I will not— I will not stand for weewee humor. In this show. I will stand for—

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** No, in this show?

**Griffin:** I will stand only for American weewee humor, on this show!

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

[“Neptune’s Diner” by Griffin McElroy plays softly]

**Griffin:** Um. Okay. You all finish your trek, it’s a short jaunt, back to Founders’ Wake. You rise up through the Gills, into the moon bay here at your assigned parking spot, on the docks. And a fleet of small little cleaner sprites appear from the base of the... the Bluespan Brokerage headquarters, and start, y’know, scrubbing up the ship, as you all hop out. Where are we headed? World’s your oyster, nobody’s there to sort of... intercept you at the docks.

**Justin:** Do we have to go see Ravi? To get like our money?

**Griffin:** Well you would have to turn in the mission first.

**Travis:** Yeah, to—

**Griffin:** Yeah, Ravi doesn’t do the payouts for the missions typically—

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** It’s the, it is the clientele who do so.

[Music fades out]

**Clint:** Alright, let's turn it in, then.

**Justin:** Yeah, let's turn in our fucking crush bone belts.

**Griffin:** Alright! You all take a short Crystal Ascension ride, up to Joshy's Knuckle. And walk through the savory alleys until you arrive at the Cloaca.

[Chill groovy music plays]

**Devo:** Wait, Amber?

**Amber:** Yeah.

**Devo:** There is a very good chance that this man is going to jump out at you, yes?

**Amber:** There's always a good chance that the man is going to jump out at me, yes.

**Devo:** Okay. Just... just wanted— do you want us to do anything? Should we be ready? Eh?

**Amber:** Um. Well, no. If you all help, that's... he calls it a cheatski?

**Devo:** Oh.

**Amber:** Yeah. It's no good. I have to be ready for it on my own. If somebody else is like, "Look out!" Or like, "Watch out!" Or like, "He's behind you!"

**Devo:** Okay!

**Amber:** Or like, or like, "That pile of laundry's moving!" You— like any of that. He— that's a cheatski. And I'll actually get docked points for that. Many points.

**Devo:** Okay. Okay.

**Amber:** Yeah.

**Devo:** So if I see something, I do not say something.

**Amber:** Uh. Yeah. See something, be quiet. [laughs]

**Devo:** Got it.

**Griffin:** As you all walk into the Cloaca, you see—

**Justin:** Perception check.

**Griffin:** Okay. Yeah, go ahead.

**Justin:** Don't even fucking...

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure!

**Justin:** No!

**Griffin:** No, yeah, it's fun.

[Sound of dice rolling]

**Griffin:** That's D&D. Whoa, Trav, did you get a new beautiful dice— or Dad did.

**Travis:** I got a new beautiful dice too.

**Clint:** [gasps]

**Griffin:** Oh, okay. 17 plus three, that's a 20. You walk in, Amber, your eyes... squinted like a hawk's eyes, at lunchtime. And you see Uncle Joshy, standing behind the—

**Travis:** You sync with the tower, and you can see a new section of the map unfold before you!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yes. Uh. You see Uncle Joshy standing behind the bar. And his hands are kind of lowered behind the bar, like he's washing a glass or something. With a 20 perception check, as you take one step closer... there's like, light reflecting off of him? And you can tell, right away, this is a very poor standee of Uncle Joshy.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It is just a cardboard cutout of a gentleman, sort of washing a glass behind a bar. And then a few moments pass, and then—

**Justin:** I pick— I take out a knife and throw it at his throat.

[Music fades out]

**Griffin:** At the standee's throat?

**Justin:** Yeah, the standee's throat.

**Griffin:** Okay. As... [laughs] As it is sailing through the air, there is a flush, coming from the restroom, and Uncle Joshy walks out of the restroom, just as the knife pierces the cardboard cutout's throat. And he ducks back into the bathroom real quick, and pulls out like... a toilet paper roll. And yells,

**Joshy:** Uh, vibe check!

**Griffin:** And it just doesn't even— it lands on the floor and just kinda rolls at your feet.

**Amber:** No. Sorry. I sa— I thought— I was trying to assassinate you!

**Joshy:** Well I—

**Amber:** Oh my gosh!

**Joshy:** I didn't think you'd be back so quickly!

**Amber:** I'm embarrassed, I was trying to assassinate you! Oh my gosh!

**Joshy:** I had— I had to make water, and then that one narrow window, that's when you came back! That's— but that's gotta be part of the instincts, right?

**Amber:** Yeah.

**Joshy:** Like you knew if you come in here a moment earlier you woulda seen that standee, you would have been like, "Oh, shit, Uncle Joshy got frozen by magic."

**Amber:** Just give me five— just give me five points! I got you! Stone cold!

**Joshy:** Alright, five points.

**Amber:** You were on the shitter! Jesus.

**Joshy:** It was— what am I supposed to do? What am I supposed to do, Amber?!

**Amber:** That's not up to me. Just admit— you're slipping! It's sad, honestly. Can I say something to you? It's sad, in your old age.

**Joshy:** I know.

**Amber:** Decrepit.

**Joshy:** Okay.

**Amber:** Mmm.

**Joshy:** Alright.

**Amber:** Decrepit.



**Joshy:** Did you guys get the book or did you... what happened?

**Devo:** Uh, yes we did get the book, yes. Um. I do want to know, may I ask?

**Joshy:** Yeah, what.

**Devo:** Why... why do you want it? What is in the book?

**Griffin:** R... roll an insight check.

**Travis:** [sound of dice rolling] That is a 10 plus eight, 18.

**Griffin:** He is visibly upset. When you ask him that. And he looks over at Amber, and is like,

**Joshy:** Is this guy for real?

**Amber:** I'm sorry. Um. He... uh. You shouldn't pry, Devo.

**Devo:** Oh—

**Amber:** This is his business.

**Devo:** Well—

**Joshy:** Yeah, this is—

**Devo:** It is—

**Joshy:** This is not how contracts work, bud.

**Devo:** Ah. Well, see, this is our business, because we went through a lot of work, to get this book—

**Amber:** No, but we're getting— we're— I don't want to interrupt you, but we're getting paid. We... don't overstep here, okay? This is my home. You can't do that here.

**Devo:** Okay.

**Amber:** So anyway, here's your book.

**Joshy:** Yeah, thanks.

**Griffin:** He takes it, still kinda mad-dogging you, Devo. Uh, he says,

**Joshy:** I appreciate the work that you put into this, but you executed a contract for me. Right? I owe you nothing more than the payment that I owe you. How much, by the way, did you end up spending on this thing?

**Travis:** I honestly can't remember, Griffin.

**Justin:** It was like 23, right?

**Griffin:** Uh—

**Clint:** No! We—

**Griffin:** No, you whittled it down to... uh... 18? I think? Or 15. Shit.

**Travis:** 15, yeah it was 15.

**Griffin:** Uh, so you had nine...

**Travis:** We paid 15.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you paid 15 for it and then you got six more from... I think looting?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** That sounds right. Yeah, you all have 15 Lux right now—

**Travis:** And I think we already had... what, four with us?

**Griffin:** No, you spent all 24 Lux on the thing, and whittled it down to 15.

**Travis:** Correct. 15...

**Griffin:** So that's nine there, and... you have 15. Okay, you give him the correct number answer. [laughing]

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And he says,

**Joshy:** Alright, what a steal. Well, uh, here's—

**Devo:** I do— I wanted to apologize. Um. I am young, and my— it was just curiosity, and it got the best of me, and I, I apologize, I did not mean to pry. It was... just... slipped out, top of my mind. Please... forgive me, I did not mean to do you any kind of insult here, in your place of business.

**Joshy:** You talk for a long time—

**Amber:** Forever, right?

**Joshy:** For just like, "I'm sorry."

[badly imitates a European accent] "I'm sorry!"

[Normal voice] That's... man, I'm so sorry, that was actually a wicked bad accent, let me try again.

[Even worse, almost Cockney] "I'm sorry."

[Normal] Nope, that was not it either.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Joshy:** Anyway, don't worry about it, you're young, you just, you're new at this. I'm not insulted, but in the future, I wouldn't try to pull that with anybody. Or else you're not gonna be in the contract business for too long. [sighs] Uh. I get your curiosity though. It's just a book. I'm gonna sell it. Sell it for a higher price than what I paid for it. That's... business. Which, what I still owe you...

**Griffin:** And he pulls out nine Lux from his pocket. And hands it to Amber. And says,

**Joshy:** Y'all are sitting on a nice little pot right now, ain't ya? That is a... that's a pretty penny.

**Devo:** You know, you should, if you are looking to sell the book, you should contact Brother Seldom. He collects—

**Joshy:** Oh yeah, I heard his octopus was out at the, trying to buy it—

**Devo:** Okay, don't be a smartass.

**Joshy:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** He says,

**Joshy:** I... I also heard y'all... maybe made quite a mess out there.

**Griffin:** And he... he leans down and he picks up this black, like, flat ring? That he pops into his... tonewheel—

**Travis:** Mouth, and it's an Oreo. Oh. Sorry.

**Griffin:** Yeah, he eats an Oreo, and then he puts this little ring into his tonewheel and presses a button, and there's like a... very nonchalant report, about how the Abyssal Auction was destroyed.

**Amber:** Yeah, it got a little rowdy. Uh...

**Joshy:** [laughing] Yeah! It sounds like it got a little rowdy.

**Amber:** Yeah. But, hey. Remember when we had the kid mind his business?

**Joshy:** Yeah.

**Amber:** I think it's a good rule for everyone.

**Joshy:** [laughing] Yeah, I would say so.

**Griffin:** He pops it out, he says,

**Joshy:** Don't worry, this... this is some... some dark-wave stuff, you know? It's not hit the public eye yet. So your secret's safe with me, I do imagine—

**Amber:** Can I check that— can I check that out?

**Joshy:** Yeah, sure.

**Griffin:** He throws you the disk. He's like,

**Joshy:** I already heard it.

**Justin:** Now I swallow it.

**Travis:** Whoa!

**Joshy:** Wait, it doesn't— it's not something you sw— it's not something you swallow!

**Amber:** [strained] Give me a second.

**Joshy:** Yeah. You got confused, 'cause I ate an Oreo—

**Amber:** [retches violently]

**Joshy:** Oh no!

**Amber:** [more strained] Hold on. [Grunts with effort] Just give me one... I almost got it... [High-pitched straining retching]

**Devo:** Oh boy.

**Amber:** I give up. Fuck. Here, take it back.

**Clint:** Zoox tries to go find a glass of milk. Maybe that will soften it up.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Sea cow milk!

**Griffin:** Yeah, I was gonna say, what milk?

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** What milk is down here?!

**Justin:** If Star Wars gets milk, we can get milk down here in the ocean!

**Clint:** Yeah!

**Travis:** Yeahhh!

**Justin:** Some sort of ocean milk!

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Justin:** Somebody— you know what, normally what I do in these situations is I search— I have a Boolean, for “Spongebob, blank.”

**Griffin:** Right.

**Justin:** In this case it would be—

**Griffin:** “Spongebob milk.”

**Justin:** Spongebob milk. And just see how it’s like...

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Yeah, it's just like, regular milk it looks like, down there.

**Travis:** Yep.

**Griffin:** Well, that's not the best— we try to aim for a little bit more sort of hard sci-fi. [voice cracks]

**Travis:** Do we?

**Clint:** Manatee milk!

**Justin:** Can I say what he does there? It's snail— it is snail milk.

**Griffin:** Okay. Yeah, alright.

**Justin:** So.

**Griffin:** You just pick it up and wring it, or are there... we dealing with teats?

**Clint:** Eww.

**Justin:** Yeah, they've unfortunately never showed...

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Justin:** Gary giving milk before.

**Griffin:** That's weird.

**Travis:** No matter how many times I write them and ask!

**Griffin:** You're right.

**Justin:** [wheezes]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughing] "Excuse me, I have an idea for your next feature film!"

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughing] Uh huh.

**Travis:** An hour and a half long scene—

**Justin:** Ninety minutes of Gary getting milked.

[Everyone laughs]

**Travis:** [laughing] Very intimate but tastefully shot.

[Everyone laughs]

**Justin:** Lars von Trier is back! In "Gary Milk!"

[Everyone laughs]

**Justin:** A Spongebob joint.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh. Okay.

**Travis:** "I drink your snail milk." Alright.

[Mysterious angelic music begins to play]

**Griffin:** He takes the book, and he actually opens it, and flips through it a little bit, not even trying to cloak it—

**Travis:** And releases the demon.

**Griffin:** Yeah, a big demon comes out. Um. And it... he's actually pretty nice, the demon is.



**Travis:** Oh, cool!

**Griffin:** Um. No, he looks through it, and he just kinda goes,

**Joshy:** Huh. It's... it's a bunch of... uh... it's got the big secrets in it. Oh boy. Oh, the power— I can feel the—

**Travis:** Can I see? Can Devo see?

**Griffin:** Uh, if you want to try to cop a look, you can roll a stealth check for me.

**Travis:** [pained] Mmm. Mmmm. Mmmm...

**Griffin:** Yeah, what's wrong? It's not like you've already offended this dude today.

**Travis:** Okay. I don't want to cop a look. Is he—

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Travis:** For— is he— so he's holding it in such a way that I could not see it unless I copped a look?

**Griffin:** No, you could— you could— uh, yeah, right. He is, I mean he's reading it like a book that you are on the opposite end of.

**Travis:** Mm. Okay.

**Griffin:** He is looking at it, and he says,

**Joshy:** Yeah, I can feel the power... the wisdom flowing through me. Everyone step back, I'm about to— I'm about to become a big... I'm about to become a big monster. Oh, boy.

**Zoox:** [whispering] Is... is he... being a smart Alec again?

**Devo:** If it is in a strange writing, I can take a look, I know many strange writings, if you— it might help you sell the book. If you knew... you wouldn't want to be taken and be underpaid for a very valuable book because you did not know what language it was written in.

**Griffin:** He says,

**Joshy:** Yeah. Knock yourself out.

**Griffin:** And he turns it, to face you, so you can look at it, and it is like... I will tell you without any kind of rolls, there is no way you would have learned about this language in school. You've seen many languages, because of your training—

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** This is not a language as much as it is, like... some... customized shorthand...

**Travis:** Okay.

**Griffin:** That a person—

**Travis:** So this is not like the language that the books of Benevolence are written in.

**Griffin:** No, no, no, no, no, this is— remember these are the journals of this engineer, like this, legendary engineer. They are like—

**Travis:** Oh, right.

**Griffin:** His wild scrawlings.

**Clint:** That'd be a great name for a character.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** Wild Scrawlings!

**Travis:** Wild—

**Griffin:** That is funny.

**Travis:** [country accent] Wild Scrawlins!

**Griffin:** Um... yeah. So he just takes it back, and closes it. And says,

**Joshy:** Well. Uh. Hopefully my contact will still buy it. Oh well. I'll worry about that later. Y'all, job well done... Have a great rest of your day. I— I need to get better at saying goodbye to people. Good business... you look great...

**Devo:** Good friends and good brews, eh?

**Joshy:** Good friends, great oldies.

**Devo:** Yes.

**Joshy:** Great... times. Come...

**Clint:** I've used all those slogans. [laughs]

**Joshy:** [stifling laughs] Come on down—

**Clint:** Stacks and stacks of wax and wax. Playing the hits.

**Joshy:** Come on down to... come on down to Chili's.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Amber:** Let's go.

**Joshy:** Alright. Bye.

**Amber:** Come on.

**Griffin:** Okay! You all have... gotten your loot. By my calculations, you all have... 30 Lux now? That's so much! That's so much Lux.

**Travis:** Is that true?

**Griffin:** Yeah, I think so. You didn't really get paid...

**Travis:** We'll have to double check that math, but...

**Griffin:** You didn't really get paid in the last mission. But. Yeah. I think it makes sense.

**Clint:** When we go shopping...

**Griffin:** Yeah?

**Clint:** At Felix's... is it only ship stuff we're buying?

**Travis:** This is a good question, 'cause I would like some better armor other than my beautiful blousey shirt.

**Griffin:** Um. I mean, as far as you know, Felix has only shown you ship... ship inventory. Yeah—

**Clint:** But are there other places to do business? Is what I'm wondering.

**Travis:** Yes, a dry goods store, perhaps?

**Griffin:** Um. I'll... yeah.

**Clint:** Or a weapons— an armory.

**Griffin:** Yeah, almost certainly. There is stuff like that, down—

**Travis:** A haberdashery.

**Justin:** Let's find the directory.

**Griffin:** [laughing] Okay. Y'all want to go shopping right now?

**Clint:** No, no no no, no no, I just—

**Travis:** Wait, I do.

**Clint:** I was wondering... Okay.

**Travis:** Is there a Wetzel's Pretzel's, or a Footlocker here, Griffin?

**Griffin:** No... there is not a— not either of those things, 'cause it's not the real world?

**Travis:** Oh.

**Griffin:** It's a fantasy setting that we've worked very hard to... um...

**Clint:** Ohhh.

**Travis:** [silly high fantasy voice] Is there Lady Esmerelda's Magical Coats and Cloaks?

**Clint:** [laughing] Sea Pretzels.

**Travis:** Is there a sea pretzels?

**Griffin:** Um... yeah. Yeah. No, there's no sea pretzels.

**Travis:** Oh, it's WETzels, but the W. E. T. is like, caps.

**Clint:** Ohh!

[Soft angelic music plays]

[Advertisement break]

[Music plays for a few seconds]

**Griffin:** Okay, you all have gotten— gotten paid. You have a few things that you could go off and do, if you would like to. Uh, it's up to you. World's your oyster.

**Travis:** Literally!

**Clint:** Um. Uh... Oh. Oyster. I'm sorry, Zoox had a flashback there—

**Griffin:** Sure, sure sure.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Clint:** It's very close.

**Griffin:** Yeah, not exactly—

**Clint:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But definitely close.

**Travis:** There are some people out there who don't even know the difference between oysters and clams?

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure!

**Travis:** And they're 38?

**Griffin:** Sure! Can you imagine?

**Travis:** They're 38-year-old adults. And use it interchangeably.

**Griffin:** Right. Uh. Zoox, what do you want to do? We— yeah, we haven't done a Zoox adventure in Founders' Wake yet.

**Clint:** Well, I... Zoot hasn't been able to stop thinking about the skull in his bag. And... and... I think he would like to go talk to the Deep Thinkers. And...

**Griffin:** Yes, over at the...

**Clint:** See if they can—

**Griffin:** The Coral Spire.

**Clint:** Give him any kind of... Yeah, yeah, at the base of it, right?

**Griffin:** Right.

**Clint:** Yeah. So, yeah. I think he'd really like to kind of check it out and find out what he can about the skull. And he's got a lot of questions, about his... about himself. But I think the driving force right now is to find out what the deal is with the skull.

**Griffin:** M'okay. Uhm... Amber, and Devo, are you guys down to go as well?

**Justin:** Yeah, I want to follow along, I've never— I don't think I've spent much time down in this area.

**Travis:** Plus, I heard they have a great gift shop.

**Justin:** I feel like it makes me uncomfortable.

**Griffin:** What does?

**Justin:** The— the Deep Thinkers. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** [laughing] Yeah?

**Travis:** Ohh, yeah yeah yeah.

**Griffin:** Why is that?

**Justin:** It just kinda wigs me out a little bit, [laughs] I dunno.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** [chuckling] Something about them just kinda like, skeeves me out.

**Travis:** It definitely doesn't seem like Amber's... whole thing? I think this is the kind of thing that Devo has heard a lot about, because it's like, you know, another, like... not quite philosophical, but like... learned group?

**Griffin:** They're a brain trust, yeah, sure! I understand the similarities. But—

**Travis:** Yeah, it like—

**Griffin:** As opposed as their ideologies might be.

**Clint:** I kinda picture them as the judges on Krypton.

**Travis:** Yeah!

**Clint:** Y'know, [imitating judge] "Guilty."

**Justin:** Oh, yeah.

**Travis:** But also—

**Clint:** "Guilty!"

**Travis:** I think that there was always like— when they were spoken about by the Parish, it was like, they're the science, and the Parish is like the, y'know, the belief, the faith? And so it's always like, "them... but, you know, the... you know, those, the science people."

**Griffin:** Right.

**Travis:** So I think... Devo's very fascinated.



**Griffin:** Okay. Um. Not many people get into the Coral Spire. The only way to... access it— they don't have like a dock, for ships to come and go to. There is like a... shuttle station within the Gills that you have to have certain clearances to access. But being a Brinarr, you have sort of... automatic clearance to come and go to the Coral Spire as you wish. I guess with up to: plus two guests.

**Clint:** Yeah, that's my plus two.

**Travis:** Wow, how lucky!

[Music begins to play very softly]

**Griffin:** Right. Right. So you all board the Coral Spire Shuttle, which is... like, pretty spartan, actually? It is almost like a... like a military transport vehicle. Like the chairs aren't particularly comfortable. Maybe that's just not how they've prioritized their budget. They probably spent more of it on holograms, and shit.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But it only takes like... like, two minutes. Because the Coral Spire grows—

**Clint:** Oh, tell me it goes around and around like a big coil, all the way down. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** No, man. No.

**Clint:** No... straight down.

**Griffin:** As cool as that would be, it would be... not particularly practical, which is not their style.

**Clint:** Right. Okay.

**Griffin:** So yeah, you basically like, drop out of the bottom of the Gills, and travel like... [chuckles] several hundred feet. And then you enter into the

Coral Spire shuttle bay. And the doors open, and... as spartan as the vehicle was, the inside of this place is like... Imagine that an Apple store... was on Atlantis. And then sank to the bottom of the ocean.

**Travis:** Ah.

**Griffin:** That's more or less what we're— what we're looking at here. Like, they have tried to go for this hyperclean, hypermodern aesthetic—

**Travis:** But also fish!

**Griffin:** But— yeah! Out of every window, there is coral, pretty much covering the views outside. And there's some, y'know, the windows are a little bit gunky, because of just sort of natural coral residues.

[Soft Brinarr piano melody plays]

But this whole place is pretty, like, open, open-concept—

**Travis:** Oh, that's nice.

**Griffin:** Much like a sort of modern office building here, where like, all of the labs, and the people operating in those labs, are pretty much visible as soon as you walk into the building. Like there are very few— at least in this section of the Spire, there are no secrets being kept from anyone.

**Travis:** And what's the— what are the benefits like, Griffin?

**Griffin:** Of working in the Coral Spire?

**Travis:** Yeah! Nice?

**Griffin:** Yeah, for— I guess furthering humanity's struggle to survive.

**Clint:** Yeah—

**Travis:** Yeah, but like, what about like, time off? Paid time off? You get maternity and paternity leave?

**Griffin:** Oh, for sure! Yeah!

**Travis:** Oh, cool cool cool.

**Griffin:** Yeah, as much as you want. Yeah. They—

**Travis:** Really?

**Griffin:** Their motto is— their motto is, “Have as many babies as you want. It’s on us.”

**Travis:** [laughs heartily]

**Griffin:** And as you walk in, there’s no, like, receptionist or anything, just some lab tech walking down the hall sees you, and walks up, and says,

**Lab Tech:** Um, oh, hello. Uh. Are you here for... um... not “maintenance,” what’s the word? I’m sorry, I don’t work really in the Brinarr division? Um. Up— up— upkeep? Heal— health? Healing?

**Zoox:** Information. Um. I barely remember this place. Um... And I don’t even know if I’ve ever really been on this side. I mean... it’s like... I have very few memories of what’s going on. Who do I need to speak to? About, uh, analyzing an artifact?

**Lab Tech:** Oooh. Let me think. We have the Analysis of Artifacts Department. What’s the nature of the artifact? Food? Mineral?

**Zoox:** Uhh—

**Lab Tech:** Vegetable? Those are the three things, right? Food, ani— [laughs] animal, vegetable?

**Travis:** Mmhmm.

**Clint:** And he pulls the skull out of his bag, and shows it to him.

**Lab Tech:** Oh, so not a vegetable. ...Is it—?

**Zoox:** I'm pretty sure it's coral?

**Lab Tech:** Oh, coral! Oh, right! Sure. I can check...

**Griffin:** And she walks over to a little pad, that is hanging on a nearby, like, pillar. And she flips through it, and says,

**Lab Tech:** It actually looks like Tessellation has an opening in their schedule right now. Is that okay? I don't know who you were—

**Zoox:** Awesome!

**Lab Tech:** Hoping to— okay!

**Zoox:** No, I'll— that's fine! That's great!

**Griffin:** She leans down to this, like, big messy folder, and roots around through it, and pulls out... almost like a, uh, a kid's placemat level map, of the facilities, leading down toward something called the Shepherding Pools.

**Zoox:** And how do I get there?

**Lab Tech:** The map. You follow it. Like a map.

**Zoox:** Oh.

**Lab Tech:** Yeah.

**Zoox:** Oh. So the map is like a map?

**Lab Tech:** A— it's a lot like a map, yeah. You take it and look at it, and it shows you where you start. And imagine that the line is also in the, like, the world, that you can see. And then you—

**Zoox:** [under his breath] Awesome.

**Lab Tech:** —Follow that imaginary line, using the map, for reference. Until you arrive at your destination.

**Amber:** Now wait a minute—

**Lab Tech:** Yeah, sure, go ahead.

**Amber:** I don't mean to quibble, but—

**Lab Tech:** No, please.

**Amber:** [laughs] The pictures on this... piece of paper, are much smaller than what, uh, we see...

**Lab Tech:** Right, so—

**Devo:** This is an excellent— yes.

**Lab Tech:** Right. Yeah. And we hear that a lot. Um. Imagine that you are a small ant, or even—

**Amber:** I'm not.

**Lab Tech:** You're not, no, no, no, but this is like an imagination, like, play-pretend. Um. So you imagine—

**Amber:** Imagine you're small! How 'bout imagine you're small!

**Devo:** Oh!

**Lab Tech:** Um, okay, hold on one second. [pause] Yeah, that's fun.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Lab Tech:** I like that. I imagined myself with a big cookie, and it was the regular size, and I had a lot of fun eating it. So thank you for that.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Lab Tech:** Um... No, you— yeah, you just follow the— you know, follow the map, and if it— if you come to a door—

**Devo:** Ahhh.

**Lab Tech:** You look at the map, and the map will be like, “Nope, not this door, gang! Keep on trying.”

**Devo:** The map talks?

**Lab Tech:** Right. And you should probably—

**Zoox:** Wonderful.

**Lab Tech:** No. I’m so sorry. Well, it talks in that there’s words on it? And that’s like, um, talking inside of— in your mind. Now, there is no map showing you how to get back to the—

**Devo:** Is it?

**Lab Tech:** Yes. There’s no map showing you how to get back to the lobby, so you’re gonna want to get an adult to walk you back here.

**Devo:** Does the map also show where the bathrooms are?

**Lab Tech:** There are no bathrooms in this facility.

**Devo:** Ohhhh, this is—

**Lab Tech:** I’m just kidding—

[Someone whistles]

**Lab Tech:** There’s of course bathrooms in this facility.

**Devo:** [relieved] Ahh!

**Lab Tech:** ...One.

**Devo:** Where are they? Like, right now?

[Clint laughs]

**Lab Tech:** One.

**Devo:** It's a— this is— it was a— long drive, and—

**Lab Tech:** There's— there's— there is one bathroom. And it is... the wild westing.

**Justin:** [giggles]

**Clint:** [wheezes, laughs]

**Lab Tech:** Okay. So—

**Zoox:** [laughing] It's kill or be killed. And your name is?

**Lab Tech:** Um. My name is... uh. Eco. And...

**Zoox:** Eco.

**Devo:** You just made this up.

**Eco:** No, it's Eco. So, don't steal anything.

**Griffin:** And she walks off.

**Amber:** 'Scuse me, wait, real quick before you go—

**Eco:** Sorry, I'm already walking— what? Is it? Yes?

**Amber:** Are any of these the sort of doors that, like, lock behind you? If this isn't the sort of place that you love? Like, you could just walk right out any of 'em, right? They don't lock behind you?

**Eco:** Um... Some of `em do, yeah.

**Amber:** [softly] Okay. Darn.

**Eco:** So choose—

**Amber:** Alright.

**Eco:** Choose wisely.

**Devo:** Uh—

**Amber:** Ughh.

**Devo:** I just— I have one question. Is it true—

**Eco:** I really— I am— I did not think that this would take this much time, gang.

**Devo:** Is it true that you all worship the, uh, the, oh, what is it— the microscope?

**Eco:** [takes a deep breath] Yes. We love those things around here.

**Devo:** I knew this. Yes. Okay.

**Eco:** Yeah.

**Devo:** Yeah, this.

**Eco:** I named my firstborn child Microscope.

**Devo:** [gasps] I knew this—

**Eco:** The next one, I called Microscope Two.

**Justin:** [snorts, laughs]



**Zoox:** You mean like, “also?”

**Justin:** [laughing] Can we please go?

**Zoox:** Come on, fellas!

**Eco:** Um, I would—

**Zoox:** Let’s go follow the map!

**Eco:** I would love that. I would love that.

**Griffin:** And she walks off, to a nearby lab station. Um—

**Travis:** [laughing] Where she stands, and stares off into the distance, doing nothing—

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Waiting until the next time when we encounter her in a different scene.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Zoox— Zoox, I want you to make an intelligence check for me?

**Clint:** Ewww.

**Griffin:** Not a saving throw, just a check. Although the scores are the same so it doesn’t matter.

**Clint:** Intelligence check... really?

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Clint:** Okay. [sound of dice rolling] Uh...

**Justin:** It's not like he's asking you, Clint McElroy, to do one. It's your character, Zoox—

**Clint:** Look, look at my new dice. Oh ha ha ha haaaa!

**Griffin:** A nat fucking 20!

**Clint:** I love these new dice!

**Justin:** Unbelievable.

**Griffin:** That is—!

**Travis:** I can't see them, Dad, what do they look like?

**Griffin:** They're like—

**Clint:** They're—

**Griffin:** Purple and pink with gold trim—

**Clint:** Gold, and purple.

**Griffin:** Yeah, they're lovely—

**Travis:** [gasps] We picked the same ones!

**Justin:** How come— how come Griffin's— can see Dad's dice, but I can't?

**Griffin:** Uh...

**Justin:** That's weird.

**Griffin:** Yeah. I'm, umm... I hacked it, I hacked the website. [breath] You get there... so fast. You get there so fast, in fact, that you got there a little bit earlier, than... you were supposed to—

**Clint:** That's what I wasted my nat 20 on, was getting somewhere fast!?

**Griffin:** Yeah, but—

**Travis:** Wait, did he need to reference the map?

**Griffin:** Yeah. He— he referenced the map, and he did a good job with it! Or else you guys would've gotten desperately lost. But you—

**Travis:** Oh.

**Clint:** Alright.

**Griffin:** You got to the Shepherding Pools pretty quickly. So quickly, in fact, that, like, nobody is there, to greet you. All you can see is... uh... a big bay window, as you enter into this area. And—

**Travis:** Ah, that window is bae.

**Griffin:** ...Window is bae.

**Justin:** [laughs]

[Reverent music plays]

**Griffin:** Uh. And it is overlooking a... a room, a circular room, with a... sort of lattice-work ring walking around the outside, as like a walkway. And the water underneath that ring, is just like another moonpool, like the entry into the docks, um, into the Gills, rather. Only the water that this walkway is built around is... almost sort of golden, in color. And... all three of you see... I don't know if anyone but Zoox would recognize Tessellation. And they are... standing, almost, like, inches from falling into this water. And they are... they are motionless. In this state, they almost look like a coral statue. And... from the water, a coral body rises up. And it is— it is just as motionless as Tessellation is right now. And water sort of drips off them, slowly, almost like, um... almost syrupy. Like it is sort of drizzling off of them. And they sorta hang like that in the air, totally still, and then the golden glow of this water gets brighter and brighter, and then... a dark blue light with an aurora around it lifts up, and encircles the Brinarr body.

And the ring just kinda gets shorter and shorter, and narrower and narrower, until it enters the body. And then it spasms a couple of times, and then is alive. And it— it— this— this new Brinarr falls down into the water, for several seconds, you know, flailing almost, like a child. And then about ten seconds later, it shoots up out of the water, with the foot bubbles. Which I'm going to say, to sort of maintain the... the glorious-ness of this, [laughs] of this beautiful moment of coral birth, you all just witnessed. And they climb up onto the walkway, with Tessellation's help, who is like, fully cognizant now. And... both of them walk through a big metal door, out of this room.

**Devo:** Uh... Zoox? What the fuck was that?

**Zoox:** Umm...

**Clint:** Z— Zoox makes a history check.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure. We can gamify this, for Zoox in particular.

**Clint:** Okay.

**Griffin:** I'll give you advantage too, like a personal history check would be I think a little bit easier.

**Clint:** Well that's an 18—

**Griffin:** That's an 18, yeah, don't worry about it! This is— this is how... Brinarr, are... are, more or less, like, made. Once a coral body has grown to a point where, like, it can be... inhabited, and kinda stabilized? And there's a bunch of different sort of like measurements that you still don't really understand. You certainly didn't understand when you first... sprung to life. Is... there, you know, the body has a certain level of resonance, almost like it is ready to accept its inhabitant. And then this, the spirit of conjoined Einarr, are... in— you know. Pushed into it. And that is how— that is how they are made, and this is where that happens, and Tessellation is the one who does it.

[Music fades out]

**Clint:** Okay. I'm gonna tell— I'm gonna tell them that, but I'm gonna put a little spin on it.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** I think that's knowledge that he has... but he has a lot of trouble remembering if this is what... was his... case.

**Griffin:** Sure! I'll allow that.

**Clint:** Does that make any sense?

**Griffin:** Yeah, no, I mean, it is a—

**Travis:** Yeah, so he knows how it works, yeah.

**Griffin:** Yeah—

**Travis:** Not a memory.

**Griffin:** It's like a newborn baby, right? Like, you're not, like—

**Clint:** Yeah, would— you wouldn't remember the maternity ward.

**Griffin:** Right, exactly, it is very much the same thing—

**Travis:** Wait, you're not supposed to? Aw, man.

**Griffin:** Uh oh. Um. And a few minutes later... Tessellation very casually walks into the room. A little bit wet, from, y'know, the service that was just sort of provided here. And they stride forward. They are tall. They are— they are... one of the tallest sort of living creatures in Founders' Wake. Like... How tall are you, Zoox?

**Travis:** Well, Devo is nine foot eight. So.

**Griffin:** Devo is nine foot eight, you did cover that. Um.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** How tall are you, Zoox? I don't know that we've mentioned sort of your... your... build.

**Clint:** Uh. Zoox is six foot nine.

**Griffin:** Okay, big, then. This—

**Travis:** Nice. Hey!

**Griffin:** That's really good.

**Travis:** Nice.

**Griffin:** We get it, and we love it. Uh, Tessellation's even bigger than you. Like... maybe seven and a half feet tall.

**Travis:** Devo's six foot ten. [laughs]

[Everyone laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughing] Amber? You wanna— you wanna get a hand on the ball?

**Justin:** [wheezes with laughter] Three foot—

[Everyone laughs]

**Griffin:** Alright!

**Clint:** [laughing] Tides of blue...

**Griffin:** Uh, none of that— very little of that was canonical, I feel like we have to say—

**Travis:** No, Devo's just— just six foot. Boom.

**Griffin:** No, you're five— you're five five. I can do that—

**Travis:** No, but he says he's six foot.

**Griffin:** Alright.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** There's no— there's no rulers down here! Nobody— they— everybody forgot to bring a tape measure, so nobody knows.

[Bright music plays softly]

**Griffin:** As they approach, their, y'know, sort of coral coloring brightens up a little bit when they see you, Zoox. And Tessellation says,

**Tessellation:** Zoox Anthellae. It's been a long time. How are you?

**Zoox:** Um. I am fine. Um. It is... it is... good to see you, Tessellation. Um...

**Tessellation:** Why are you talking like that? Something—

**Zoox:** I've been having some memory issues? And... I'm trying... I'm, I mean, I'm sure I have met you before, but I'm... I'm only— I mean, I know from pictures and stuff, but I don't remember seeing you... before...

**Griffin:** Uh, they laugh. And they say,

**Tessellation:** That is... [chuckles] That is perfectly normal. We can... we can have a check-up, if you would like. I don't know that I have time for it right now, but you can make an appointment.

**Zoox:** Wh— that— oh— I will do that, but I do have something kinda pressing I would like your help with.

**Clint:** And he opens the bag and holds out the skull.

[Music ends]

**Griffin:** They take a big step back! And they say,

**Tessellation:** Uhhhh... oh, oh... oh. Oh my. Um. Why do you... have a... Brinarr h... head? In—

**Devo:** I pulled it off of, uh, off of the body.

**Tessellation:** Off of a what?

**Devo:** The body? A body. It was— it was not just a head, I want to—

**Tessellation:** Okay, so you...

**Griffin:** They start backing up toward like, a tonewheel on a nearby desk, like,

**Tessellation:** Oh, okay, so you did— you— killed, okay, so you killed a—

**Devo:** No no no no, wait—

**Zoox:** Wait, wait, wait—

**Devo:** It was already dead! It was already dead. Don't worry.

**Tessellation:** And then you— okay. Yeah, you found a dead body and you ripped its head off. One second please—

**Devo:** Well, we killed it.

**Tessellation.** Oh. Even— even better. Just wait, one second for me, please—

**Griffin:** And they like, are trying to reach for this tonewheel behind their back.



**Zoox:** Well, well, wait, wait wait wait wait. The... Do you have time— I have to tell you the story. We did not know it was a Brinarr. We were attacked by these figures, and we defended ourselves, and apparently we're really good at defending ourselves? And it— you know, one of them... uh, it was behind like this holographic disguise? And they kinda died.

[Dramatic music fades in]

**Devo:** Oh, and it was bleached? If this makes any difference.

**Zoox:** The skull was bleached! It was bleached! And then... we got chased by a coral ship? And when I touched the skull near the coral ship, it turned into... bright vivid colors! It was bleached, it was a bleached skull!

[Music intensifies]

**Griffin:** Um...

**Zoox:** And if I understood what any of that meant, [laughs incredulously] I wouldn't have come to see you!

**Griffin:** At the end, you all sort of... lower their guard a bit. And Tessellation stands up, and says,

**Tessellation:** So you were attacked? By... bleached? Coral? People? In a— in a bleached coral ship?

**Zoox:** I... yeah. Back me up a little bit here, folks, help me out?

**Devo:** Uh, yes, this is— this is exactly what happened. They were— they did not talk. They... bit several people, I don't know if this is a Brinarr thing. Um...

**Zoox:** Bit me right here! Right here! On the shoulder!

**Devo:** And then, uh... yes, they attacked us with a big coral ship that, like, rammed a thing, um... its...

**Griffin:** Tessellation starts examining your shoulder while you're talking.

**Devo:** It was, uh... pretty messed up, if I'm being honest.

**Tessellation:** Oh... okay. And this is its head? And this is its head, which was bleached, but now is... colorful again.

**Zoox:** We were on our ship. We were being chased by large, bleached coral ship.

**Tessellation:** Right, I've— I think I— yes.

**Zoox:** And I got a mental summons, from the thing in my bag! And it was the skull! And when I pulled it out, it went from being bleached, to being, as someone once said, fully chromatic!

**Tessellation:** [sighs] Okay.

**Zoox:** And then the— then the big ship ran away! But I made contact with somebody. They showed me this mental image of a big circle, with a bunch of Brinarr standing... at least, I assume they were Brinarr. Standing in front of it.

**Griffin:** Um... they sit down, on this desk that has the tonewheel on it. And... put their, y'know, long hand to their head area. And... Tessellation looks up, and says,

**Tessellation:** Oh... okay. I obviously have a lot more questions, for you. Um. But first, are you Amber Gris?

**Amber:** Yeah!

**Tessellation:** You— you were on the beach. Do you remember me?

**Amber:** Oh, absolutely, yeah. How you doing?

**Tessellation:** I mean, pretty much the same as I was 25 years ago. Um.

**Amber:** Wow. That's nice, that kind of stability.

**Tessellation:** Yes. This is weird to say to a human, but you have aged wonderfully.

**Amber:** Yeah, I mean, I'm still here, right? That's about all you can ask for. Lotta people theorize— have you heard this? A lot of people think that like, we've aged... like the age is less noticeable, because we aren't being bombarded by the sun anymore.

**Tessellation:** Oh.

**Amber:** Like... I think that that's part of it, you know? Our basis for comparison that we had growing up, was people that had been, y'know, rugged.

**Tessellation:** Right.

**Amber:** You know, like, the generation before us?

**Tessellation:** Sure.

**Amber:** And I feel like, I think that sometimes we look a lot younger, even though, ironically, we've seen a lot worse shit, ya know?

**Tessellation:** Yes! The sun would—

**Devo:** Uh, can you do me now? Can you talk about how good I have aged?

**Tessellation:** I don't know you.

**Clint:** [giggles]

**Tessellation:** But you... seem great, for a... fifty-years-old?

**Devo:** No, I'm 23. Oh, this is...

**Tessellation:** I don't know stuff about that.

**Devo:** [quietly] Okay.

**Tessellation:** I will say that the sun would kill me pretty quickly. So, I suppose we're both lucky. Anyway, back to these... bleached monsters, that... attacked you.

[Dramatic music fades back in]

A bleached coral body is not something that can be... inhabited, or... revived by any means that I am aware of. And I don't want to brag, but I'm aware of pretty much everything in this particular department. Ummmm... can I keep the— can I keep this?

**Griffin:** And they gesture toward the skull.

**Zoox:** Um. Y— uh, yes. Yes!

**Tessellation:** Did you want it as some sort of grisly trophy, for the kill?

**Zoox:** No! No, no, no! I— I just—

**Amber:** [laughs]

**Tessellation:** Okay.

**Zoox:** Listen, a lot of weird poop has been happening to me—

**Amber:** Hey, language.

**Zoox:** Oh, I'm sorry. A lot of weird shit has been happening to me—

**Devo:** Thank you.

**Tessellation:** Right.

**Amber:** Thank you.

**Zoox:** And I just... I... I have so many questions about myself, and, and, and this kind of has taken the forefront... and I just... I just wanna know... what the deal is... and it has to have some— what it has to do with me, to be honest with you. I don't know what— I keep making— I keep making mental contact? I made mental contact with something on the big ship, and there was this clam, and, and, and... it... I got Devo mad at me. Admit it, you—

**Devo:** Yes, I—

**Zoox:** It perturbed you...

**Devo:** Yes, I... I've made no secret of this.

**Zoox:** You know... you know... I kind of saved the day, but still...

**Devo:** Well...

**Zoox:** Um. Uh. Can you help me?

**Griffin:** They turn around to that tonewheel, and... y'know, maneuver a couple of the rings, and they say,

**Tessellation:** Kosca? Um... cancel my 10 o'clock for me. Thanks.

**Griffin:** And... they... look back at you. And then they look at Amber and Devo, and say,

**Tessellation:** It was lovely to meet the two of you. Um. But I need... uh... a little bit of time to talk to Zoox alone. Um. Is that... is that okay, Zoox?

**Zoox:** [nervously] Oh. Uh, well... yeah? I don't want to force anybody to—

**Amber:** [taunting] You're in trouble...

**Zoox:** [moans] Am I in trouble?

**Tessellation:** No, you're not in... I mean, I was about to... [laughs] I was about to call the Chaperones on you earlier, but. Now that I don't think you're a murderer anymore, you're not in trouble.

**Zoox:** Uh—

**Amber:** [same taunting tone] I misinterpreted the situation.

**Tessellation:** Yeah. That's okay.

**Zoox:** Amber, Devo, will you be alright without me?

**Devo:** Uh, we have the talking map.

**Amber:** I mean, we're adults. Like, you're fine.

**Zoox:** Oh, okay.

**Amber:** I'm gonna— you know what? I'm gonna go to the Cloaca. I'll check you guys later.

**Devo:** Ah—

**Zoox:** Oh, okay.

**Devo:** I am going to go shopping, for new clothes.

**Zoox:** Would you buy me a big-ass, uh—

**Devo:** A big ass?

**Zoox:** —Sword, of some kind?

**Devo:** You've got it! [laughs] I'll buy you a big ass—

**Tessellation:** We can actually—

**Zoox:** [laughing] Will you buy me a big ass?

**Tessellation:** I can modify your ass.

**Devo:** Ah, yes, do this—

**Tessellation:** That's a joke, I can't—

**Zoox:** Oh!

**Tessellation:** That would be a— hugely unethical, and a waste of resources.

**Devo:** No, I will, uh, look for a sword—

**Tessellation:** I was talking— I was talking to Zoox.

**Devo:** No, I—

**Zoox:** Oh—

**Tessellation:** I was talking to Zoox.

**Devo:** But Zoox asked me for a sword—

**Zoox:** If you buy me a... Buy me a sword. And I'll stay here, and talk to Tessellation.

**Griffin:** Okay. You all... head off in your separate directions. Amber back up to the Cloaca, um, where you are not attacked. I think it's a once-a-day thing, or else it would get sort of... tired, quickly.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And Devo, you... you head to Joshy's Knuckle, maybe? To get some good discount clothing items? Or are you going all out? Putting on the ritz?

**Travis:** Um. No, I think he'd... I think...

**Griffin:** He's still in consignment territory? Sure.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Clint:** You want armor, don't ya?

**Travis:** Well... no.

**Griffin:** We can... we can cross that bridge...

**Travis:** He's gonna wear a cool leather jacket—

**Griffin:** Yes—

**Clint:** Oh.

**Travis:** That will serve as leather armor.

**Clint:** Alright.

**Travis:** 'Cause he wouldn't wear armor.

**Griffin:** And Zoox, you follow Tessellation back into their private chambers, to discuss recent events. So y'all go about the rest of your day, y'know, doing the various chores and check-ups that you have... that you have set up for yourselves.

[“Neptune’s Diner” by Griffin McElroy plays softly]

Back down in the Gills, at the parking spot for the Coriolis these cleaning sprites continue to scour the ship, with these small brushes. They're almost like those scrubbing bubbles, if you will.

**Travis:** I love those.

**Griffin:** Just sort of following the path of the ship, sort of getting into the nooks and crannies of the jets all around the propulsion bladder. They go



around and give a few passes to the, the windows, surrounding the bridge. And they, y'know... pick off the little pieces of detritus that a ship picks up during a journey like the one that you just went on. I imagine there's also a bit of ink, that is taking some deep— some deep grouting. And so these sprites are passing over the hull of the ship in a row, and... as they reach the underside of the ship, they move in a row, straight down the length of the Coriolis, cleaning off its belly.

[Music changes to low, tense, and dramatic]

And one of them, toward the sort of center of the ship, passes over... a... a small, shallow gash. Almost like something impacted the ship and just left a little... little rough spot on it. And... as it gets deep down, into this crack in the hull of the ship, um... something comes loose.

Something... very small. A mote of light. A speck. A... a spore. That... passes away sort of quickly and violently, away from the scrubbers, as they pass over the damage to the ship. And then just kinda lazily drifts downward in the water, being sort of pushed here and there by currents of other ships passing. Um, not being noticed by any sprites or pilots or anyone. And it drifts closer and closer to the heart of Founders' Wake.

[Music changes to Ethersea Theme]

And... then it gets caught in a current, of a... a pipe. Coming out of the sort of core pillar that the rest of the city is built around. And this small green spore spins around the pipe a few times, before suddenly being sucked upward into the pipe. Into the heart of the city. And out of sight.

**Clint:** Shit!

[Ethersea theme music plays out]

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