

The Adventure Zone: Ethersea – Episode 28

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

Cambria: I have been waiting for you, Finneas Cawl.

Finneas: I'm not gonna stay. I've got, uh— I got things to do.

Cambria: So, I'm afraid I must insist.

Griffin: And you are unconscious.

You are in a room that is solely lit by faint lights inside of dozens of similar cylinders like the one that you just broke out of.

Ona: Okay. I am forming a hypothesis, but I believe that the bodies that we found out there... those are failed experiments! They're working towards... something! We should go!

Bertand: How do I know you're not a clone, huh?

Ona: Well, I didn't come out of a tube.

Bertrand: Says you.

Justin: Once Finneas is out of sight, I cut off Ona's head with the mining laser.

Griffin: Then the door to the Bathysphere opens, Finneas. Bertrand climbs in.

Finneas: What the hell! You're not my Bertrand, are you?

Griffin: Finneas and Bertrand just continue to take swings at each other, and Finneas loses his footing, and the memory stops. And then you wake up, Zoos. All of them are congregated around where Ampersand Five is seated, and they are all looking in Ampersand Five's lap, where the lantern that once held the spirit of Finneas Cawl has gone dark.

[theme music plays]

Griffin: So, the three of you are seated at a four-top in Shret's bar, up on top of the marshlands. Probably a bit exhausted. Probably coming down from the sort of voyage that you just went through.

Travis: And listen, Griffin. I don't wanna put words in your mouth, but I have to assume Devo's probably getting some nasty glares.

Griffin: Oh yeah, for sure, for sure. Um, in fact the chef comes up to your table and sets bowls of gumbo down in front of Amber and you, Devo, and he's just like, staring daggers at you. Uh, and Zoon, in front of you he places a, uh— a bowl of, like, pale green soup? And he looks at you and points at the bowl and he says...

Chef: Not spicy.

Griffin: And then he turns and walks back behind the bar. And is probably just, like, sweeping up debris from the colossal fight that happened in here. And a few moments later, Shret comes in with Ampersand, and Ampersand's moving kind of slow. He's just, like, carrying the lantern. Uh, it's unattached from his body, the lantern that once sort of contained the spirit of Finneas Cawl. He sits at the bar by himself, uh, and Shret comes up to your table and she says...

Shret: Alright. Did y'all get everything you needed, then?

Zoon: I— I believe we— we— could you excuse me? [clears throat] Would you... would you guys fill Shret in real quick? I need just a real quick... talk to Ampersand. I'll be right back.

[chair squeaks on the floor]

Devo: Yes, I believe we got everything we need. Um, the location of the phytoplankton, and everything like this. Thank you so much for your help. We would not have been able to do this without you.

Griffin: She kind of squints her eyes at you, and she says...

Shret: You should— you should take a bite of that gumbo.

Devo: O—okay? If you insist.

Griffin: You eat it, and the spicy flavor makes your voice better.

Travis: You just don't want me to do it anymore.

Clint: [laughs loudly]

Griffin: No, man! The spicy gumbo makes your voice better! Take it! Take the bu— take the heal, bro.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Take the cure.

Justin: Just take the heal.

Travis: Just take the heal, bro.

Griffin: Just take the heal, bro. Uh, she says, uh...

Shret: Alright. Well, it's been real, and it's been... fun. I mean, okay, I'll be straight with y'all. I'm pretty interested in what it is y'all got goin' on now, so, uh... what's— what's your plan?

Devo: Uh... Amber?

Amber: [sighs] I guess... we're gonna go talk to Cambria. I don't know... [sighs] I think it's the only thing that might be able to fix it. I mean... it's the best I got.

Shret: Did you say that, um, your ship was sort of in the impound right now?

Amber: I mean, it's gonna be a long swim.

Devo: Yeah. I would say this— this is negotiable. I mean, I suppose.

Shret: Uh, why do you just let ol' Shret take care of that, okay? I'll make sure your fine vessel's ready for you, once you're ready to push off.

Amber: I don't— I don't need any help from you, Shret. We'll figure it out.

Devo: Um, just counterpoint? Yes, thank you very much, this would be nice that we wouldn't have to worry about this?

Amber: [sighs]

Griffin: She's looking at you now, Amber, kind of, like, waiting for your response.

Amber: [sighs heavily] Fine. Fine.

Griffin: She nods and she walks over to another table that a group of folks are sitting at, some workers here in the marshlands, and they nod and stand up and walk out.

And... let's hop over to you. What are you— uh, what are you doing, Zoox?

Clint: Um... [clears throat] He just, uh, walks over to Ampersand, kind of plops down on the stool next to Ampersand, and says, uh...

Zoox: Are you— are you doing alright, Mr. Five?

Ampersand: Oh boy. Uhh... I guess so. It's, um... things are— things are quieter? Than they've, um... ever—

Zoox: [laughs] I can imagine.

Ampersand: —ever been. [laughs weakly] Uh... we had a... complicated relationship. Um... but he was sort of like a family member that was attached to me, and he's— but that's qu— that's gone— I don't know, man. I really don't know.

Zoox: I have a message for you, from him.

Ampersand: Oh yeah?

Zoox: Yes. Um... the last time we kind of shared a memory, he said to thank you. And the— Her— Hermine— the Hermine— Hermione, and to thank— but to thank you—

Ampersand: Hermine?

Zoox: Hermine.

Ampersand: You did your best.

Zoox: I know. Um, said to thank you and the Hermine for everything. And, um... I wanted you to know that. I don't know if that'll help you, or if that makes it worse, but he did say to— to tell you thanks.

Griffin: Ampersand kind of, like, nods his head. And then he looks over at you and he slides the lantern over toward you. And he says, um...

Ampersand: I'll be honest. I don't really want to hang on to this? So, um...

[music plays]

Ampersand: Do you want it?

Zoox: Y— oh!

Ampersand: It doesn't work, it doesn't—

Zoox: I'd be honored!

Ampersand: —like, provide illumination or anything like, that, but... I don't know. You said you were a— a fan of it.

Zoox: No, I could keep— I could keep— yeah, I could keep stuff in it, maybe! Yeah, I'll take it.

Ampersand: Yeah, like jelly be— jelly beans?

Zoox: Jelly beans? Yeah! I could— I could do that. Um... thank you.

Ampersand: Okay, yeah.

Zoox: That means a lot to me, to give me this completely useless piece of... lighting technology. Thank you so much.

Ampersand: Yeah, sure.

Zoox: I gotta— I gotta get back to my buds.

Travis: Uh, just to, uh—

Clint: No, go ahead, Travis.

Travis: Here in Founders' Wake, they're actually called shelly beans.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Oh, I'm so sorry. Thank you. I forgot that that's, like, an important thing we set up in the setup episode.

Travis: Yeah, shelly beans.

Griffin: That they were called shelly beans. Okay. Yeah, got it, shelly beans, got it.

Zoox: Thank— thank you for the shelly b— oh, you know what? I'm gonna fill it with shelly bellies, 'cause they are...

Travis: They're actually shelly shellies. [laughs quietly]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Zoox: Um, I gotta get back to my friends, 'cause it looks like they're making big plans, and if I'm not there, um, I won't know what they are, 'cause they never tell me anything.

Ampersand: Yeah.

Zoox: But listen, you hang in there. Anytime you want to talk, um, you— um... good luck finding me. Thanks!

Ampersand: Yeah.

Griffin: Uh... alright, you head back to the table. Um, and Shret—

Zoox: Guys, look! Look at this lantern! He gave it to me! He gave me the lantern!
[giggles]

Devo: Oh. You could probably, um, sell this to, uh, the curator for... quite a bit of Lux.

Zoox: No! I— no! I'm gonna put shelly shellies in it.

Devo: Oh, I love the shelly shellies.

Zoox: [goofy laugh] The ones that taste like weird things like snot and, you know— oh, I love those.

Griffin: Amber, how are you doin'?

Justin: Bad. I just wanna be out of here. I feel like... I'm done with— I don't like being indebted to Shret, and I would like to go.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Um, and I'm kind of being... you know what's hard to communicate in an audio podcast?

Griffin: What's that?

Justin: Sullen.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: It's, like, a hard—[laughs] it's a—

Clint: It translates as silent.

Griffin: Right.

Justin: [through laughter] It translates as checking your email.

Travis: Yeah.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: I mean, I'm just... [laughs] you don't really— like, it's never— one thing I don't think I've heard on TAZ is, like, "Been kinda quiet. What's goin' on?" [wheezes] You know?

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: [laughs]

Devo: Amber, you seem... sullen? Am I reading this correctly? Is something wrong?

Clint: [laughs]

[pause]

Amber: Yeah... [pause] Shret's the worst. And— and... you know, it's not like a sort of roguish, you know... [sighs] antihero whatever. Like... Shret's a bad person. Shret's done... bad things. And we... if this weren't sort of a... a sea-wide calamity, I wouldn't... take on debt to Shret. But I don't feel like I got a lot of options.

Zoox: No, let's... I'm— don't you think we've— we're even? Don't you think the books are even? Why do you feel like we still owe Shret?

Amber: Well... [sighs] if Shret's gettin' our ship out of impound, and helped us with the— the grotto, I don't know... I mean, what did we do for Shret?

Zoox: Well, we're doing something for everybody! We're trying to save everybody!

Amber: You don't understand how this works. Not with her. I mean... she doesn't have an altruistic bone in her body. She's working an angle. Always. And even if it doesn't come due now, it will!

Devo: I... am very... I think it would not surprise you to know that I like making deals, and I like negotiating with people. I just want you to know that... I respect a lot that you did this thing, and put your pride aside for a moment, so that you could do what needed to be done, and this is a very good example. Um, and it means a lot.

Amber: I appreciate that, but you should know it's not my pride I'm putting away. What I'm burying is the overwhelming urge to bury a knife in her throat.

Devo: Oh.

Amber: So the sooner we could go—

Devo: Yes.

Amber: —that would be grand.

Devo: Yes, then let us, uh, do, as they say, walk and talk? Huh?

Amber: Could it just be a walk?

Devo: Okay, but I do want to say something, and it's very hard for me to be—

Amber: No, I just want silence.

Devo: Okay, well, uh, five—

Amber: Shhh, please. I need a moment.

Devo: Okay.

[echoing thumping noises]

Griffin: Are those footsteps?

Justin: Yeah, footsteps.

Clint: [laughs]

Devo: Okay. Can I talk yet? Has it been a moment?

[noises start to sound like horse galloping]

Amber: Hold on, keep up!

Griffin: What's wrong with your fucking feet?!

[all laugh]

Amber: Alright. What is it?

Clint: [laughs]

Devo: It seems to me like we could go. You know, the three of us, in the Coriolis. But, uh, I think, you know, we also have this memory. It was pretty fucked up down there. Um, maybe— and I'm just saying maybe— we should talk to the Boyar and to the other Ballasters. And, you know, maybe get some backup from the Biggest Baby. Um, and from whatever other ships are available, and maybe not go down there, just the three of us versus a godworm and god—

Amber: That's a fucking choice point. And I'm kind of mad at myself for being so murderly that I didn't think about it. We are not doing this— what were we thinking?!

Devo: Yeah.

Griffin: [laughs]

Amber: What were we thinking?! I was about to go get in our ship and go fight the fuckin' seawor— like, what are we thinking?!

Devo: Yes. God knows how many clones there are now, and—

Amber: We are one step above, like, returning people's overdue VHS tapes! Like, we can't— we're not gonna go fucking talk a god out of their— their plan!

Devo: We are, at best, junior repo men.

Clint: [laughs]

Devo: We are not, uh, superheroes, or a powerful military unit.

Amber: Yeah, let's go talk to the— let's go talk to the Boyar. The. [wheezes]

[all laugh]

Griffin: Uh, okay, cool. As you all head out of Shret's bar, you walk, you know, a ways down the dock, and she pops out of her bar and shouts...

Shret: Hey, Devo! Devo!

Devo: Uh, yes?

Shret: When y'all are done out there, savin' the city, you're gonna get your ass back here and you're gonna help me clean up my bar, okay?

Devo: Oh, okay, definitely, yes.

Amber: [quietly] I told you.

Devo: I mean, yeah, but—

Amber: She always has a price.

Devo: Yeah, but I did—

Amber: In this case, it's basic custodial services.

Travis: [laughs]

Amber: Demonic and mundane.

Clint: How— how long were we under in this drug dream?

Griffin: So, it was actually not that long. The time that sort of passed in the dream was much longer than the time that passed in real life. So you would—

Clint: Yeah, I mean, we had a boat chase and all this stuff, and Shret still hasn't cleaned up the bar?

Travis: It's been, like, two hours!

Griffin: No, it's been a— it's been a couple hours. It has not been long at all.

Travis: And she was in the boat chase!

Griffin: Right.

Clint: Oh, that's right. [laughs loudly]

Griffin: Uh, okay. You all head down the Crystal Ascension one level to the, uh— to the Ballast. And I think things are still so, like, buck wild and hectic, like, there is no envoy of guards sort of patrolling the halls to, like, catch you guys and ask what it is that you are doing there. And so you are able to sort of cruise right in to the Ballasters' chambers. When you get in there, you see the High Ballaster Hermine, and she is standing over a table looking at, like, a bunch of different charts and stuff. And Ballaster Kodira is also here. Um, the Ballaster of Defense, essentially, for the city. And Hermine looks up at the three of you and shakes her head and says...

Hermine: And what are you all... doin' here? Can I help you?

Devo: [quietly] Zoox.

Zoox: Um... yes. Uh, oh mighty Ballaster. Um, oh— oh wonderful Ballaster?

Hermine: No, just say— just say the thing.

Zoox: Okay.

Clint: And he holds the lantern up and says, um...

Zoox: By the power invested in me by this wonderful lantern, I pass along to you a message from Finneas Cawl from the great beyond. "Thanks."

Griffin: [wheezes] This is—

Zoox: Well, he didn't really elaborate. He just said to thank you, and Ampersand Five, for everything. Um, from whence our souls did commune—

Hermine: What the f— what— what the fuck happened?

Devo: [quietly] Zoox, tell her about the... the... what— the phytoplankton and Cambria and all that shit.

Zoox: We... shared memories with Finneas Cawl! And I don't know why I'm talking in such a presentational manner!

Devo: Yes, maybe take a deep breath and start again?

Hermine: It's a small room, yeah.

Amber: Take another pass.

Zoox: [clears throat] There is an underground city under bubbles. And the solution to all of our problems, to how to cure the— the shallow, and how to make things right, for a disastrous roll that I can't remember which one of us had—

Devo: The role—

Justin: [wheezes loudly]

Devo: The role we played in this, he means.

Zoox: The role we played in this. And by doing so, we shared memories with Finneas Cawl. Um, who was in this lantern.

Hermine: Where is he— where is he now?

Zoox: Um... not in the lantern?

Devo: Heaven.

Zoox: His— he's in Heaven. He went up... you can talk to Devo about it later 'cause he's, like, the spiritual one.

Devo: Eh.

Zoox: Um, but we shared the memories of Finneas Cawl, and it was revealed to us what happened to the Bathysphere, this whole kingdom. There's this race of—

of clones living on the bottom of the ocean. And you know any time you boil a plot down it sounds really dumb. You know?

Griffin: Wow, thanks for that, Dad.

Zoox: Um...

Griffin: Wow.

Travis: [laughs loudly]

Justin: Fuckin' drag him.

Travis: Yeah, get him, Dad.

Griffin: Got it.

Clint: No! I just mean that— it isn't!

Griffin: No, understood. Loud— loud— 10-4, good buddy. Loud and clear.

Travis: [laughs] Bunch of clones, huh?

Clint: But I'm just saying, you know, the city underwater under bubbles—

Griffin: Yeah, it's fucking stupid.

Clint: —and it's full of clones—

Griffin: Yeah, it's a dumb—

Clint: —and a great big worm!

Griffin: Just forget it.

Clint: No! I didn't say it was stupid! I just said—

Griffin: Just forget it! Just forget the whole thing!

Justin: It's just stupid; it's just a stupid idea.

Griffin: There's a dra—[tearfully] okay, then a dragon comes out and he has a crystal—

Justin: [high-pitched laughter]

Griffin: —that saves it.

Clint: No! It was a big worm. It wasn't a dragon. Which sometimes, W-Y-R-M, people use to refer to dragons.

Travis: Yeah, that's true.

Griffin: Sure.

Clint: So it still holds up. And...

Justin: I wish the first time somebody was like, "Behold this wyrm," somebody was like, "That's not a worm. What's wrong with you? That's a dragon."

Travis: "That's a dragon, man."

Justin: "It's— idiot. There's already a thing called a worm. Stop it!"

Travis: No, I, uh— I meant a We-yurm. [laughs quietly] It's a we-yurm.

Clint: We-yurm!

Griffin: Her disposition toward you all was already pretty frosty, uh, considering that you hauled the sallow back into the city in the first place. When she sees you walk in here with this lantern, you get the impression that she kind of stopped listening as soon as she realized that Finneas Cawl was not in there. I want you to make a, uh, a persuasion check, Zoox, as you are trying to sort of convince her of the... like, eminence of this solution that you have stumbled upon.

Clint: Okay.

[dice roll]

Clint: That would be a 10.

Griffin: She, like, while you are still talking just walks up to you and snatches the lantern out of your hand and, like—

Zoox: Hey! Hey, hey, hey, hey!

Griffin: She just starts looking at it. And when you, like, say that, she looks back at you with fuck you... like, a fuck you face.

Devo: Zoox, may I take a pass at this?

Zoox: Oh, I would— yeah! I didn't want a pass in the first place!

Devo: No, I— I think you did great. Uh, Ballaster?

[pause]

Griffin: She—

Devo: I'm going to, uh, attempt something that I do not usually do, which is I am going to attempt restraint. Because I do respect your authority and your position, but I want you to know that today, a lot has been sacrificed so that we can save just about everyone living here in Founders' Wake. Basically, um, Finneas Cawl gave his life, and Zoox risked losing himself within a memory, and Amber, uh, had to make a deal that she is wildly uncomfortable with so that we can save the life of everyone that you are sworn to protect, both of you here. And we come here with the information of where to get more phytoplankton, and the origin of the sallow, and you can either help us on this mission, or you can live knowing that you did not do everything you could to protect this city.

Griffin: Uh, roll a persuasion check. I love that your modifier for persuasion is a full 10 points higher than Zoox's.

[dice roll]

Travis: Yeah. Uh, that would be a 22 total.

Griffin: She... looks up at you. She finally, like, breaks eye contact with the lantern and looks at you, and she sighs, and sets the lantern down on the table

that her and Kodira were kind of going over these charts on. And... she looks up at you all and she says...

Hermine: Y'all, we're— we're— we're spread pretty thin. Um... Kodira, is this— it's up to you. You're the one sort of with the direct line to the Biggest Baby. So, um... is this— is this within your jurisdiction, do you think?

Griffin: And Kodira takes a breath to start speaking, and then a red light kind of appears...

[beeping]

Griffin: ... right above her forehead. Uh, and you all— you saw this before, Amber, at the auction, when the Chaperones there sort of got in a tussle with you. That red light kind of kicked on and seemed to be, like, their way of reporting back to the big man, by which I mean the ship that they cruise around in.

Travis: Yeah, Biggest Baby.

Griffin: And... the light is on there for a while, and Kodira is not speaking while it is on. And when it shuts off, she looks at the three of you and she says...

Kodira: I'm— I'm sorry, y'all. I c... we can't. We... we can't— we can't spare the— the resources.

[ominous music fades in]

Kodira: Koda— Koda said no. And we can't really go against Koda's wishes.

Devo: Excuse me? You can't... [laughs quietly] you can't spare the resources to save the city.

Kodira: It's not up to me, Devo. Okay?

Devo: Okay, where is Koda? Let me talk to this Koda. I can be very persuasive.

Kodira: Yeah, that's not gonna happen.

Devo: Okay. What if there was a trade?

Kodira: I don't know if you have anything that—

Devo: I pull out the Kodite.

Griffin: Wait, why do you have— oh, you've had that the whole time!

Travis: Yes, I have.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Huh, okay. She... looks at you very concerned. She says...

Kodira: Where did you get that?!

Devo: Hmm, it seems like you need something from me.

Griffin: When you start playing hardball like this, you see Hermine get very, very nervous all of a sudden. Um, and that red light shines in front of Kodira's face again. And when it goes away she starts walking towards you. And she says...

Kodira: You are not supposed to have that!

Devo: Hmm, seems like we have this, and the information of where to save the city. Two things you very much need.

Griffin: She starts walking towards you in a fairly aggressive way. And that red light comes on right in front of her face. And she is almost on top of you, and she looks ready to just attack you.

Justin: I put myself between the two of them. And bust out a couple spare arms.

Griffin: [holding back laughter] Okay. Make an intimidation check for me, Amber.

Justin: Okay.

[dice roll]

Justin: [wheezes] Four. So basically it's minus 1, so technically that's a 3. So, like, I pull out my arms and one of 'em makes, like, a bunny shadow puppet and is like, "Well... "

Clint: [laughs]

Amber: What do you think about this?

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, she is going to— what's your AC?

Justin: [whimpers] [through laughter] That's none of your business!

Griffin: It's 15. She is, uh— she is going to just try to sort of backhand you out of the way. And it's an unarmed strike. Uh, she hits you for, uh, 4 points of bludgeoning damage.

Amber: Feck!

Griffin: And with that, Hermine shouts...

Hermine: That's enough!

[ominous music stops abruptly]

Griffin: And Kodira stops, and the red light is gone, and she looks at what she just did, and she looks kind of horrified. And she reaches an arm down to help you up, and she says...

Kodira: Amber, oh my god, I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry. Are you okay?

Amber: Yeah, I'm fine.

Griffin: Uh... Hermine says...

Hermine: Kodira, you're gonna take your ship and you're gonna follow them. I'll make sure that your ship is taken out of impound, okay? And I'm really proud of you for the restraint that you've shown for not trying to do something stupid and get it out of impound yourself. And because of the trust you all have shown—

Devo: yes, that would be stupid, yes. Yes.

Clint: Was that an option?!

Travis: Um, I'm gonna use sending real quick?

Griffin: [laughs] Okay?

Travis: My new spell. Um—

Griffin: What's it do?

Travis: It lets me send a message to someone I know, of 25 words or less to a creature with which you are familiar. They hear the message in their mind, recognize you as the sender if they know you, and can answer in a like manner immediately. Um—

Griffin: How far— how far is this?

Travis: You can send the message across any distance, and even to other planes of existence.

Griffin: Okay, cool.

Justin: Damn, that's a good— that's a good lil—

Clint: That's real good.

Justin: —instant message, there.

Griffin: Yeah. Okay, then—

Travis: It is a third level spell. [laughs] Let me be clear. This is a very big deal.

Griffin: We cut down, then, to the Gills, where just three kind of wise guys are standing next to your ship that has this, like, big glowing dome on it.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: And two of the guys have crowbars and hammers sort of pried under it looking at the third guy who's standing on the dock, and he keeps going, "[loudly] Achoo!"

And with each sneeze they're trying to hammer the crowbars deeper and deeper into it.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: And then the guy who's sneezing, like, looks up and feels— feels something in the ether, and the voice says...

Devo: Uh, this is Devo? Abort. Abort plan. Um, they will be down there soon to let it out. Skedaddle.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Okay, I think that was 18 words. I was trying to count very quickly.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: And the sneezing guy says...

Sneezing Guy: [quietly] Abort, abort! Skedaddle, skedaddle!

Griffin: And the two guys, like, panic and jump down into the water. He's like...

Sneezing Guy: No, no! God, no! We can walk—

Travis: [laughs loudly]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, and Kodira says, uh...

Kodira: It doesn't work like that, Hermine. We can't just tell him what to do. He's not really a baby!

Devo: It sounds like he is.

Griffin: And Hermine just waves her off and says...

Hermine: Get ready. Do whatever you need to get ready. The Biggest Baby's at your disposal.

Griffin: And Kodira storms out of the room.

Travis: Before Kodira leaves—

Griffin: Mm-hmm?

Travis: Devo says...

Devo: A deal is a deal.

Travis: And hands over the Kodite.

Griffin: Okay. She— she grabs it out of your hand without even, like, stopping her stride, and marches out of the room. And Hermine says...

Hermine: They are not gonna let you aboard that ship.

Devo: Oh, that's fine. Yes, I don't want to— it sounds like it's a ship that has a personality, and that's weird. I don't want to be inside this.

Hermine: You're— so you all... are the... pilot fish. You show 'em where to go, and then once you get down there, what? You gonna have 'em just nuke the city from orbit? What's—

Devo: No. First we will get the phytoplankton, and then they will nuke it from orbit.

Hermine: Yeah, alright. Yeah. I mean, it's the best plan we got so far, so you have my blessing.

Griffin: Uh, she makes, like, a genuflect, like, hand gesture, like, not sure what she's even doing. And she walks back to her charts and...

Devo: Uh, one more question? Not to push—

Hermine: Yeah, what? Holy shit!

Devo: —and this is completely negotiable. But we do need to stock up on some supplies to make this work. Is there any way you could extend us a line of credit, or...

Hermine: No. No, come on.

Devo: Oh, okay. I— I thought you might be a little bit invested in the mission, but...

Hermine: All the money that we have right now is going towards, um, you know, providing food and shelter and medical treatment for the many, many people—

Devo: Ah, yeah, okay. Yes, yes, yes. F— yep.

Hermine: Yeah. Cool.

Devo: Complete sense, yes.

Clint: Zoox grabs his lantern back and gives the Hermine such a look.

Travis: Oh yeah.

Justin: Ugh.

Clint: Ugh.

Travis: Oh, scathing.

Clint: Phew.

Griffin: Wha—

Clint: Sh-yeah.

Travis: Maybe one— one crayfish crawls out and shakes a little, like— little claw at her. [cartoonish disgruntled muttering]

Griffin: She says...

Hermine: What the fuck are you— what the fuck are you doing?

Zoox: This was a gift. This belongs to me.

Hermine: [sighs]

Griffin: She sighs, and she says...

Hermine: He's really gone?

Zoox: Yeah. Yeah, he's really— he's really gone. But he went thanking you. Saying thanks for all the stuff you did for him. Now... we're trying to continue his mission. Um, and I... *really* want this lantern!

Griffin: She shakes her head, uh, and you can see tears welling in her eyes, and she says...

Hermine: It's just a fucking lantern. Go ahead.

Griffin: And she turns and walks through a rear door out of the room.

Devo: I think all things considered this went very well. I mean...

Zoox: Yeah!

Devo: Yeah. I t— I—

Amber: Yeah, honestly.

Devo: Yeah. I—

Amber: Well played, everybody. I'm sorry about when I, um... kinda did a bit of a goof.

Devo: No, but I really appreciated you stepping in, there.

Amber: And got smacked around a bit.

Devo: I thought I was about to get, uh...

Amber: I guess it's the thought that counts, right?

Devo: Yeah. I thought I was about to get knocked the fuck out.

Zoox: I almost shot her for slapping you.

Devo: What?!

Amber: That would've been a hell of a— hell of a—

Devo: This was very sneaky. None of us saw you do anything.

Clint: Zoox puts the— puts the crossbow back in the—

Devo: Oh, wow.

Amber: Zoox, for— for future reference, man, I can take a hit, alright?

Zoox: I know, I know.

Amber: That's not the first time I've been smacked this week. Like, I'm fine.

Zoox: I know! I just— I hate it. I hate it.

Devo: We do nee—

Amber: Well, thanks— thanks for holding back, I guess.

Devo: We do need to work on your public speaking, Zoox.

Zoox: I guess, yeah. Well, we got you. You don't need—

Devo: Yes, but I'm kind of, and I'm realizing now, a bit of a piece of shit. And, uh—

Griffin: [wheeze-laughs]

Devo: —people seem to like you a lot? So, um... I would rather save me being a piece of— we can do, like, a good, uh— a good— what is it?

Clint: [laughs quietly]

Travis: What are they called, Griffin? The, uh... oh, the cops here. They're called—

Griffin: Oh, the Chaperones?

Clint: Good cod and bad cod?

Devo: We can do, like, a good Chaperone, bad Chaperone thing. Uh—

Zoox: Oh, I have a better idea. You could be—

Devo: Oh, okay. [laughs] Cool, cool! No, sorry, go on!

Zoox: You could be... Sea-rano de Bergerac.

Devo: I do not get this reference. Let's go save the city, huh?

Clint: [laughs]

[music plays]

[ad break]

[music plays]

Biz: Hi! I'm Biz.

Theresa: And I'm Theresa.

Biz: And we're the hosts of *One Bad Mother*, a podcast about parenting. Parenting is hard, and we have no advice. But we do see you doing it.

Honk if you like to do it! [laughs] What was—didn't we have a bumper sticker a while back that was like, "Honk if you did it." That's what it was.

Theresa: I think it was "Honk if you're doing it." [laughs]

Biz: [laughs] Why did we not ever make those? Those were a delight.

Theresa: We did make them!

Biz: Did we?!

Theresa: I think they're still in the Max Fun store.

Biz: [laughs] Honk honk. You're doing it. [laughs]

Theresa: [laughs] Thanks, Biz. So are you.

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Biz: You can find us on Maximumfun.org. Honk honk.

Theresa: Toot toot!

[music and ad end]

[music plays]

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[music and ad end]

[music plays]

Griffin: Alright, you all have time to prepare now. You are sitting on a, like, pretty considerable chunk of change. Uh, you had 30, I believe, Lux.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: At the end of the, uh— the auction job that Devo, I believe, you spent 7 of on your own sort of kit.

Travis: Correct.

Griffin: At Nermal's Hall. Um...

Travis: Nermal's Pile. Excuse me, Nermal's Pile.

Griffin: Nermal's Pile. I'm thinking of Des— Desdemona's Hall.

Travis: As a brand ambassador, it's very important to me that you get that right.

Griffin: It's super, super important. I got you.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, so yeah. I mean, anything you all want to do to prepare for this mission you, you know, let's take a little bit of time and do that, if you want.

Travis: Um, well, I think— can we talk out of character for a moment?

Griffin: Sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Travis: Just to speed it up.

Justin: Yeah.

Travis: Now that we know where we're going, I think this is probably the most informed we have ever been going into it. I think if we have the Biggest Baby backing us up, we focus on infiltration and extraction.

Justin: Yeah. I was thinking that we'd wanna go and arm up, but I don't think that that's advisable. Like, I don't know. Whatever threat we could muster, even if we spent all of our cash on it, I don't think it would be very impressive.

Travis: Yeah. But if— do we already have a salvage claw?

Griffin: You do not. Yeah, no.

Justin: Ooh.

Griffin: I mean, there's lots of things that are not weapons and armor that—

Travis: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Justin: Right, no, I know. Yeah.

Travis: So it seems to me like that and maybe a blink bay? So, like... that way we can do, like, a teleport in, teleport out without ever having to land the ship.

Justin: Hmm!

Travis: And, like, the salvage claw. Anything that lets us, I think, operate at a distance is going to be incredibly beneficial.

Griffin: Cool. You all find your ship waiting for you down at the Gills, and it's just a sort of short skip, uh, underneath the city, up into sort of the little— lowercase g grotto, where— uh, where Felix does his stuff, at the Phantom Sea Coast Co. And as you all sort of arrive and pop out, he looks at you all and he says...

[jaunty music plays]

Felix: It's been a while! I was starting to think you found a different wholesale... ship... sales... guy to go to.

Devo: This got away from you, huh?

Felix: It really did!

Clint: [laughs loudly]

Felix: Like, instantly! Anyway... how can I help you today?

Devo: Well, first can you pass on, uh, my respect to your better half? [laughs]

[pause]

Felix: You're talking about... my—

Devo: Nermal.

Felix: —buttface.

Devo: Well—

Felix: Nermal.

Justin: [laughs]

Felix: The face on my butt.

Justin: Your butter half.

Travis: Oh!

Griffin: And you hear a— you hear a voice come out of a pipe that says...

Nermal: [distantly] You're my buttface!

Felix: Oh...

Devo: Nermal, I have been— I have been representing the brand to everyone.

Nermal: [distantly] Yes, the sales have been going wild!

Griffin: I forget what Nermal sounds like. I'll get it— I'll do it better next time.

Travis: I think it's a transient voice honestly.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Oh, that's right, yeah. Uh—

Justin: It's like Robin Williams? They're just always doing a fun different voice.

Griffin: Just having fun, right.

Justin: Just having fun. Getting silly. No one's ever heard his true voice. If you heard, um, the true voice of Robin Williams, it would make you insane.

Travis: This is true. [laughs] That's why he—

Justin: [gruff voice] Skrawww.

Travis: —uses the Megatron.

Griffin: Right. Okay. Uh, oh, actually, hey. Uh, Devo.

Travis: Yes?

Griffin: From the moment you all entered, Felix has just been looking at you expectantly, because if you will look at the worksheet, you will see that you are 7 Lux in debt, yes.

Devo: Yes, yes. Yes, yes, yes. Yes, yes, yes. Yes, yes, yes.

Griffin: Alright. So, what are y'all, uh— what are y'all doing?

Devo: Uh... I do— can I pay the interest on my loan? And, uh, I promise you I will take care of this. This is very... I promise you I will.

Griffin: Uh...

Travis: That's to Amber and Zoox.

[pause]

Amber: Um... yeah.

Zoox: How much will we have left outside of that?

Devo: Uh, 21.

Griffin: 21.

Amber: Yeah.

Zoox: Yeah.

Amber: Yeah. That's fine by me.

Devo: Oh, also I got you guys these shell phones? Uh, and I got some personalized cases for them?

Amber: [sing-song] Shell phones.

Devo: They each have a— uh, see, yours, Amber, says "Vibe check!" on the case.

Amber: Oh, that's cool. I love that.

Devo: Yours, uh— yours, Zoox, says "There's a hole for that." I thought you would appreciate this, yes?

Zoox: Oh! [laughs] Wow.

Amber: So funny.

Devo: Yes. And mine says "Whip it!"

[muffled laughter]

Devo: No, no it does not say this.

Clint: Zoox looks at his and says, "Oh! I have four sand bars on this!"

Griffin: That's so good.

Travis: Oh, that's good. Dad, that's *really* good.

Justin: Really good.

Travis: Fuck, dude!

Griffin: Alright, I will deduct— I will deduct that from the interest and the Lux and, um, as you offer up those 2 Lux for the interest, uh, Felix just kind of nods and says...

Felix: I mean... it's— it's— you're just bleedin' money the longer you let this debt go unpaid, but I appreciate the show of good faith.

Devo: Yes, but also I want you to know, like, we are stocking up so we can go, uh, you know, try to save the city, which I think is probably important to you, because that is—

Felix: That has no... bearing on my bottom line!

Devo: You don't need customers?!

Felix: I'll find another place to sell my wares.

Devo: You are cold-blooded, my catfish friend.

Felix: No kidding, my man!

Devo: Okay. So, Amber, what are you thinking? You are a bit of a tactical expert.

Amber: Yeah. I think a blink bay.

Devo: Oh fuck yes.

Amber: It can get us— yeah, we can teleport in 100 feet. That might help us to get in without, uh... a lot of calamity.

Devo: And I don't have to swim, which I like.

Amber: Love that. Yeah. I think a blink bay. 7 Lux. I think it's a good deal.

Devo: Yeah, and listen, this will be useful, assuming that we are able to save the city and then get back to work, useful in the future as well.

Amber: Of course.

Felix: Sure, just give me one second.

Griffin: And a ship worm pops out—

[pop]

Griffin: —uh, of the water, holding a, like, a long scroll-looking thing. And another one pops out—

[pop]

Griffin: —and puts a tiny little pair of glasses on Felix's eyes, and Felix says...

Felix: By purchasing this piece of equipment and signing this release, you are agreeing that Phantom Sea Coast Co Ltd. are not responsible for any teleportation-based whoopsies, including teleporting into a wall and turning into gush, teleporting halfway through a wall and half of your body turning into gush—

Devo: Mm-hmm?

Felix: —teleporting into another person and both your bodies—

Devo: I never read those things, you know? I just—

Felix: In a really gooshy, terrible way. Teleporting into an animal, and then all of a sudden you've gooshed with the animal.

Zoox: Is there a box we can check?

Devo: Yeah, we just scroll to the bottom?

Amber: You gotta let him finish it out.

Devo: Okay.

Felix: Part of your body teleporting one way, and the other part of your body teleporting another way.

Devo: Ugh, okay, but what is the odds?

[pause]

Felix: Teleporting into—

Amber: Agree.

Felix: —another person who's teleporting at the same time and opening up a wormhole that—

Devo and Amber: Agree. Agree. Agree.

Devo: Yes?

Clint: [wheezes]

Amber: Got it, yes, agree.

Devo: Agree?

Felix: Accidentally teleporting—

Devo: Agree.

Amber: Agree!

Felix: —into a hell dimension.

Devo: Okay, next.

Felix: Okay. Uh, that's it. Sign here, here, here, and here, and initial here.

Devo: Okay. You didn't point to anything. [laughs quietly]

Felix: I used my— I used my whiskers.

Devo: Ohh, very subtle, yes, okay.

Felix: Follow the whiskers.

Griffin: Okay. Alright. Uh, that is 7 Lux, and I will add the blink bay to the sheet.

Travis: If we are—

Griffin: This is a— this is a facility, by the way, so this is taking up one of the spots for rooms, right? This isn't just, like, some tool. You need to dedicate quite a bit of space to get, like, teleportation... stuff working.

Travis: More room for decoration, baby.

Griffin: Yeah, I guess so. Uh, cool. Okay, well then some—

[multiple pops in the background]

Griffin: —some, uh, ship worms start, like, hauling down, like, um...

[metal squeaking]

Griffin: ... metallic, like, sheets, almost like, you know, drywall, to start framing out this room, and you see some also start dragging, like, big pieces of technology down into the water, and you see some sparks underneath the water as they start to install this in the Coriolis.

Travis: And Griffin, I'm right in thinking the grayed-out stuff is stuff that we do not have access to yet, right?

Griffin: That is correct. That is correct. As you continue to do work for various factions, it will unlock various things for you. He says...

[coins clinking]

Felix: Anything else? I hear the jingle jangle of those sweet cubes in your pocket!

Devo: What should we do if we are talking about the, you know, getting in, getting out? Uh, a salvage claw, perhaps?

Amber: Oooh. Yeah, that'd be a lot of fun. Get that.

Devo: Yes. This is good. We'll do the salvage claw.

Felix: Hmmm!

Amber: What bout... rims?

Devo: Rims? Yes.

Zoox: Ooh!

Amber: [loudly] Hey, you got rims?

Devo: That is a good question. Do you have rims?

Felix: Rims?

Devo: That spin? Something that spins?

Amber: Spinners?

Devo: Yes.

Felix: What would it—

Amber: Do you have a whistle? Give us that whoo-who?

Devo: Oh, yes. This will be good. I would also like an aquarium inside the ship, so I can look outside and see fish, but also inside and see fish.

Amber: Fuck, that's funny. Can you imagine how annoying—[wheezes loudly] can you imagine how annoying it'd be for a fish to be livin' in an aquarium and could, like, see ocean? Like, fuck!

Zoox: [laughs]

Devo: Oh yeah, we put it— we put it close to the—[laughs quietly] to the, uh, windshield? I can't remember what this is called. And since I can look out and see the fi— aww, but then we run into a fish and they're look, "Hmm, glad I'm in here!"

Amber: Hmm, twisted.

Devo: [laughs quietly]

Felix: I stopped listening—

Devo: I bet we run it— I've never thought about it, but I bet we run into a lot of fish.

Amber: Let's— listen, let's focus.

Devo: Okay, yes.

Amber: We got a world to save.

Zoox: Can I have a knife?

Devo: Oh.

Amber: *Everybody's* got a knife!

Zoox: I've been asking for a knife! And you were supposed to get me one, remember?

Devo: Yes, but now, to be fair, I looked.

Amber: One of the rules— yeah.

Griffin: You were asking for a sword, I thought.

Clint: Well, yeah. But I thought— you can go up to 24 inches with a knife before it becomes a sword.

Travis: Based on— hey, dad. Don't you quote those stats back to me. If I saw someone carrying a two-foot knife, that's a sword, baby.

Justin: Yeah, but then you get into, like, okay, what about Sting?

Travis: Oh fuck, yeah.

Justin: Right? Like, it's all in perspective, right? That's a sword to a hobbit and a dagger to a man.

Travis: And a singer to beloved millions, yeah.

Justin: Oh my God, can we please go save the world.

Travis: Well, we do still have money to spend.

Justin: That's fine! Save it! You don't— this is your problem, Travis. This is what I've been telling you.

Travis: It's my problem in life as well yeah.

Justin: Don't blow it— I know! Stop blowing it all on fuckin' doge and let's go save the world!

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: Alright. I am add—

Clint: I need a knife.

Griffin: I am adding the— you have a knife. You don't have a sword.

[pause]

Clint: Okay. I wanna sword.

Felix: I mean... you'd need to talk to my— my butter half for that.

Devo: Can you shoot down a sword?

Felix: Uh... I mean, can you help—

Nermal: What kind of sword?

Griffin: You hear from the pipes above.

Zoox: Um... something that— do you have a sword, like, from a swordfish? You know, like, a long, pointy— or like a swordfish skull with it's— it's— the nose? Or anything along... I feel really weird talking down a giant toilet. You have anything like that?

Nermal: [distantly] Weirdly, yes!

Devo: Really?

Nermal: Yeah, definitely. I have a swordfish— petrified swordfish sword.

Devo: Okay.

Zoox: Yeah!

Nermal: Yeah. I, uh— that's gonna be— let's see. How about... 4 Lux for that? Does that sound fair?

Devo: Wait, hold on.

Zoox: Oh.

Devo: You are telling me—

Zoox: No.

Devo: —that a swordfish sword costs the same as a launch bay.

[pause]

Nermal: Listen, man, I don't set his prices. He doesn't set mine, okay?

Devo: Ah, this is fair.

Zoox: How— how— how much will you give me for this lantern?

Travis: No.

Devo: [whispers] Hey, uh, Zoox, offer to wear a hat that says Nermal's Pile. Nermal loves this shit.

Zoox: Can I— can— I tell you what, I'll wear a Pile hat.

Nermal: Oh, you wanna be a—

Zoox: If you give it to me—

Nermal: Well, wait a second! Do you look dope?

Devo: Oh yes.

Zoox: Oh-ho, you oughta see the fanart.

Nermal: What do you look like? Tell me what you look like! And if your body looks cool, and like somebody I would want wearing my hat.

Zoox: It's really cool, and I'm made out of coral—

Nermal: Whoa!

Zoox: —and the fans love me. Yeah! Very unique!

Devo: Oh, maybe brand the sword? Make a branded sword.

[pause]

Nermal: Yeah, no, that's gonna be 4 Lux, I think.

Devo: Oh, okay.

Zoox: Ahh, forget it! I'll just find a skull laying on the bottom of the ocean!

Griffin: [laughs]

Zoox: Let's buy something else! 4 Lux. This place sucks!

[all laugh loudly]

Felix: Wait a minute. This place—

Zoox: No, no, no, no, no.

Felix: No, listen to me.

Zoox: I'm gonna—

Justin: [high-pitched laughter]

Zoox: I'm gonna wear things—

Felix: This place kicks ass. My place kicks ass. Nermal's Place sucks.

Justin: [wheezes]

Zoox: I'm gonna wear a hat that points over at— at Devo's shirt and says, "Don't go there."

Justin: [wheezes and laughs loudly] I wanna— I think we need a spinoff campaign about Dad looking for one other store, because as far as we know there is not one.

Griffin: Okay. If I've been following the math correctly, yeah, you guys have spent 11 Lux. You have 10 Lux left. If I might suggest, there— there are also consumables. Like, if you don't take rations you're gonna take a minus on your— on your—

Clint: So we don't need anything to navigate to where we're going, right? So, like, the sextant we don't need.

Griffin: If you look at your— so, the sextant is just a permanent readiness add.

Clint: Right.

Griffin: Um, if you do not take rations then you will take a negative, um— you will take a negative to readiness.

Clint: Anything stealth-related?

Justin: I was looking for that.

Travis: I think all the stealth things that are there we don't have access to yet. Because, like, illusory hull and stuff like that—

Griffin: Yeah, you do not have—

Travis: —we just don't have yet.

Griffin: —the license for that. Right.

Clint: So, would the sensors give us any kind of advantage in battle?

Griffin: Oh yeah. Yeah, I mean, any of the things in parts—

Clint: 'Cause we can plan.

Griffin: —sensors are like your modifier for, like, to hit when you attack with a weapon, or if you're, like, standing—

Travis: And right now we just have basic sensors, right?

Griffin: Uh, right now you have, uh, affordable sensors, I believe.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Justin: Oh, even worse.

Travis: Yeah.

Devo: Yes, so let us—

Clint: Generic!

Griffin: Affordable sensors are like, the... the worst. The worst one.

Travis: And we have how much left?

Griffin: Ten?

Travis: Okay.

Clint: I thought we had 14.

Travis: He didn't get the sword.

Clint: I didn't get the sword.

Griffin: No, no, no. No. You all had 21.

Travis: Oh, right.

Griffin: You spent 7— you spent 7 on the blink bay and you spent 4 on the salvage claw.

Travis: Yes.

Clint: Right, okay.

Devo: Uh, I say we get the, um... experimental sensors? Or the salt glass shaker.

Zoox: So—

Devo: One of these two.

Zoox: We are not planning on going into battle, right? We're gonna—

Devo: Well, I mean...

Zoox: —sneak-sneak.

Devo: Well—

Amber: I mean, you never— one, you know.

Zoox: Well, I'm just saying, if we're gonna sneak don't you think—

Amber: Make a plan and Todd laughs, you know?

Devo: Yeah. Todd is such an asshole.

Amber: Do you know my friend Todd?

Devo: I do!

Amber: Any time you try to do a plan around him he's like, "[mockingly] Let's just fuckin' go for it," and it drives me crazy.

Devo: And he tends to show up everywhere, man. Like, he would come into the church sometimes and do this.

Amber: [crosstalk]

Devo: And it was a planned— you'd be like, "What do you want for lunch?" And he'd be like, "[laughs]".

Amber: Yeah, no plans allowed. Alright, listen. I think... yeah, like, just get these sensors and get moving!

Zoox: Get the experimental sensors, yeah.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, one thing to point out about the experimental sensors, they are experimental in that they are powerful.

Justin: Hmm, could've warned me.

Griffin: They get, uh— they have a higher attack modifier, but their repair DC is considerably higher.

Travis: Oh.

Griffin: Which means that they are going to be stronger, but if something goes wrong with them, they will be more difficult to fix. They have a DC of 8, um, which is just a flat d20.

Travis: On a what roll, like— oh, a d20?

Justin: Urchin— urchin can fix it.

Griffin: No. Urchin does not fix things for you guys. You fix things, but Urchin provides a modifier.

Travis: Sure.

Justin: Yeah, I'm just saying, he can help.

Griffin: Alright. Uh, experimental sensors, then, are 6, leaving you all with 4.

Amber: Let's save the rest.

Devo: Yeah, we save that. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Amber: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay. I will say once—

Zoox: We may see something along the way that we want.

Amber: Wait, hold, wait, wait, wait.

Griffin: I'll say once again, for the third time, if you go out without any sort of rations you will take a negative... modifier.

Amber: Alright, let's get rations!

Zoox: I thought we found a whole bunch of rations.

Amber: Yeah.

Griffin: That was last— that was last adventure.

Travis: Okay, let's take some—

Amber: Alright, get— er, get rations.

Devo: Maybe... generous rations?

Amber: Oh my. Oh, huh.

Devo: This is—

Amber: Valentine's Day'd us. Uh—

Devo: Yes, this is like—

Amber: Generous rations!

Devo: Yes, is the bars, but they have little chocolate chips in them!

Griffin: Alright, generous rations. How much is that?

Travis: Two.

Griffin: 2 Lux. Okay, so you guys have 2 Lux left.

Justin: Perfect.

Devo: This will be good for the tolls.

Clint: [snorts and laughs]

Devo: The ocean tolls.

Griffin: Uh, okay, yeah. Go ahead and heal up and do whatever. Uh, get your spell slots back. And we'll start your—

Travis: Well, not the one that I used to [laughs] abort the crime. But other than that...

Griffin: Yeah, sure. Alright, you all get all your stuff set up.

[music plays]

Griffin: As you are about to head out of the Phantom Sea Coast Co, you see a shape moving in the water. And it's like a glowing yellow shape, and it looks like it's moving with, like, a considerable amount of effort. And finally you see, uh, a long sort of glowing yellow tendril reach up and pull this shape up on to the dock here, inside of the store. And a few seconds later there's more tendrils pulling it up, and you see the glowing yellow smiley face character from the auction. And it pulls up the AI core that this character bought at the auction, and then the yellow, uh, glowing hard light disappears, and you see it's just, like, a bunch of shipworms that all just kind of, like, disperse—

[multiple pops]

Griffin: —and slide back into the water, leaving the AI core on the land. And, uh, Felix says...

Felix: Oh, cool! I'm gonna sell this for a lot of money, I think.

Griffin: And he picks it up and puts it up on a shelf.

Devo: Ah, one mystery solved.

Griffin: Says, uh...

Felix: We're closed, now. Now we're closed.

Devo: We were done anyway.

Felix: Fine, I'm done too!

Devo: Okay, fine. We are leaving.

Felix: But I'm cl— I closed before you said that.

Devo: No, we were already walking out—

Felix: [simultaneously] So I'm the one who made the decision.

Devo: Bap-bap-bap-bap-bap. So, see you later?

Felix: Hmm, yeah. See you later.

Devo: Okay. Bye, buddy.

Griffin: You all hop back into the Coriolis—

[multiple pops]

Griffin: —just as the last few ship worms are sort of pulling out from their installations. And... you hear Ampersand Five say...

Ampersand: Hey, I'm here. Don't get scared.

Devo: What— oh!

Ampersand: I came in through a— a hole when they were installing some— some stuff, and, um... hey, I'm here, so don't be scared of me.

Devo: Okay?

Zoox: What are you doing here? [laughs quietly]

Ampersand: I just wondered if I might... be able to come with you all? 'Cause I—

Devo: Sure.

Ampersand: Frankly, I would like to just kind of... see how this turns out. I feel like I owe that to Finneas? I won't get in the way, I promise.

Devo: Oh, no. We expect you to help.

Ampersand: Yeah, yeah, yeah, definitely. Yeah, for sure.

Devo: Okay, yeah. I mean, sure, you are... welcome.

Zoox: And don't kill our Urchin.

Devo: Yes.

Zoox: You will want to...

Devo: But he—

Zoox: ... but we ask you to resist.

Devo: Ironically, Urchin grows on you. So, um...

Griffin: You hear a voice from the walls saying...

Urchin: I could snap that little dude like a twig! Don't even say stuff like that!

Justin: [laughs]

Urchin: It's a baby!

Devo: Urchin... Urchin.

Zoox: I love how rule 3: he's never where you want him to be, and yet he's everywhere when you don't want him.

Devo: Yeah.

Urchin: I hear everything. There's no secrets from Urchin.

Griffin: Uh... alright. You all are... shoving off, then, with Ampersand Five in tow. Um, you know from the memories that you saw where to go, and you know that sort of first waypoint is the abyss where this auction took place, where you sort of scraped the ground and picked up the sallow in the first place. And as you get down into unfamiliar territory, you are going to roll your readiness rating on the random roll table.

Uh, as you can see, we got the usual modifiers here. I have given you a plus 5 for the intel that you picked up during your memory dive.

Travis: Oh, wait—

Griffin: So, how about somebody who's not Dad?

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Who has not rolled it yet?

Clint: Oh, that's chilly! That's real chilly.

Griffin: I think everybody's— I think everybody's rolled one at this point.

Justin: I do. And here's what I would say.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: And you guys hear me out. What are the odds...

Travis: Uh-huh.

Justin: Well, I know the odds.

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: They're 1 in 100. [wheezes] What are the odds that Dad would get two bad rolls in a row? I think he needs a chance to redeem himself.

Travis: I think you're right.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Hey, Dad? This one's on you, bud.

Clint: Huh?

Justin: You got this, bud.

Travis: I believe in you.

Clint: Ok— alright? Okay.

Griffin: That's a d100.

Justin: It's a d100.

Clint: d100.

Justin: It looks like two die next to each other.

Travis: Fourth one.

Clint: [whistles] Guys, you're sure?

Travis: Yeah, bud.

Justin: Yeah, Dad.

Travis: Yeah, man. This is it. Redemption arc! Do it, Boromir!

Clint: Alright.

Griffin: I— aw, man.

Clint: Here I go! Hoo-day!

Griffin: Nope.

Travis: Bad way to start.

Justin: Nope.

[dice roll]

Clint: 74!

Travis: That's pretty good.

Griffin: 74 + 9!

Justin: Yes.

Clint: 70-fucking-4!

Justin: Like, let's calm down. There's at least 26 numbers higher than that.

Griffin: [laughs] It's a 74 + 9, so an 83 total.

Travis: Oh, a solid B.

Griffin: A—

Clint: 80-fucking-3!

Griffin: Alright. Alright.

Travis: Year I was born. It's a solid B.

Griffin: Uh... oh, shit. Okay. Alright!

[music plays]

Griffin: As you sink down into this abyss, a shadow appears overhead. And looking up you can see that you all are underneath the monolithic black battleship called the Biggest Baby. And it flashes some signal lights at you as you begin to descend, as if to alert you that they are providing overwatch as you submerge deeper toward the city.

Something catches your eye after, you know, an hour or so of traveling through this ravine that was definitely not there in the memory. It's— it is— it is dark down here. There is not much life. Uh, it's well below sort of the, uh— the halocline, uh, and there's just nothing— nothing growing down here. But the lights on the Coriolis flash off of something gold. You see it clear as day through the view port on the bridge.

And as you approach, you can see that it is a ship, a golden ship. And you have never seen a ship of this design before. Um, it is... it is long. It's a very long, very sort of slender design. Uh, if this thing tried to park in the docks in the Gills, like, it would not fit, because it is just sort of an abnormal shape.

Um, but its hull is, like, gilded, and it is just sitting on the bottom of the ocean. You can tell that its tail has, like, cracked off and flooded the ship. There is no, like— there are no lights or any sort of, like, power that you can see inside the ship, but that is what you all can see from where you are at.

Devo: Um... I will be the one to say it. I know we are on a mission to save an entire city, but... gold ship? I mean... [whistles] Harden— hard— hard to pass up, am I right?

Zoox: I'm— oh, that looks so cool.

Devo: So cool, right?

Zoox: Whaddaya say, Amber? Come on!

Amber: Yeah, fine.

Zoox: Really?!

Amber: Yeah!

Zoox: [giggles]

Griffin: Alright. Uh, you all stop the Coriolis over this golden ship, and what you sort of do to investigate it is up to y'all.

Zoox: Um, how about if I swim down, take a lookie-look?

Amber: No need.

Devo: What?

Amber: No need to swim! Your swimmin' days are over! Blink it!

Devo: Blink him down.

Zoox: Blink it, baby!

Griffin: [laughs] Alright.

Amber: Blink it, don't drink it! Get in there!

Travis: Don't think, just blink!

Amber: Don't think, just blink!

Zoox: Okay!

Griffin: [nervously] Alright.

Amber: Don't sink, just blink!

Griffin: I love that you're breaking this room in by teleporting him— you're probably, like, 20 feet over the ship.

Devo: This is a good time to try it out.

Griffin: Alright, yeah, that's a fair point. Okay! Uh—

Travis: Do we really wanna practice in the moment when we really need it to work?

Justin: Thank you, yes, thank you!

Griffin: Alright. Uh, then... [laughs] Zoox you go stand on this pad in the blink bay.

Zoox: [laughs] I really, really wish I had listened to all those warnings!

Devo: Zoox, you'll be fine.

Amber: It'll be fine!

Devo: We have clear line of sight. Uh, we—

Zoox: Okay.

Devo: This'll be fine.

Griffin: Are you trying to teleport into the ship? Because, uh, the rules of the blink bay are you have to be able to see where you're going. You can try it, but it could be—

Travis: Oh my God, Griffin! It's gonna be fine!

Griffin: Okay, just where are you teleporting?

Travis: We'll put him down right next to the broken off section so we can see the ground.

Justin: The rules of the blink bay say that...

Travis: You don't talk about the blink bay.

Justin: ... you can teleport into an enemy ship if they can see their landing—

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Like, what would that mean in the context of underwater vessels? Like, if somebody opened up a screen— opened up a screen door? [wheezes] Or, like, a—

Griffin: Well... or if you look through, like, a— a— a window?

Justin: They got windows in there?

Griffin: Yeah, baby.

Travis: View ports.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: Well, does this one have any view ports?

Griffin: Sure, yeah.

Justin: Okay, fine! Like, okay, then!

Travis: Come on, Griffin!

Justin: Why are you slowing us down?!

Clint: Technically— technically they're portholes.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Nice.

Travis: No, this is a view port in front.

Griffin: You stand on the pad, then, and it's, uh— it's not like a Star Trek, like, beautiful glowing diffusing light. It's like, um...

[rapid beeping]

Griffin: There's actually a loud pop—

[pop]

Griffin: —that happens when Zoon disappears in the blink of an eye, as if, like—

Travis: I assume with name and technology, it's based off of blink sharks, right?

Griffin: Um... roll an arcana check. If you wanna know how this thing works.

Clint: Who?

Griffin: Uh, Devo.

[dice roll]

Travis: Oh, no. 5 + 5 is a 10, baby. I don't know.

Griffin: I mean, they are named the same thing.

Travis: Yeah. That's a good point.

Griffin: Uh, alright. You—

[pop]

Griffin: —reappear in the water, Zoon, and you are inside this ship. And it is— it is pitch black. It is, like— it is very dark in here. There's no light being provided by the ship itself or the water outside. I don't know if you have dark vision or anything like that.

Clint: I have fairy fire.

Travis: [snorts]

Griffin: I don't know what that means.

Travis: Go see a doctor.

Clint: Fairy fire: each object in a 20 foot cube within range is outlined in blue, green, or violet light, your choice.

Griffin: Okay, that's cool, yeah. That's a first level spell slot, so go ahead.

Travis: [simultaneously] Is that a cantrip, or a— yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, go ahead and mark that off. Uh, a spell slot. And what is— what swarm? How does this look in your swarm?

Clint: The swarm that is used is the— all those creatures that, you know, live in the deep, deep, deep dark like the Marianas Trench who generate their own light.

Travis: Bioluminescence.

Clint: Bioluminescence. So a whole bunch of these little bioluminescent—

[twinkling noises]

Clint: —I like the little ones that have, like, a lure hanging off the front of their head.

Travis: Angler fish.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Angler fish. So a whole bunch of teeny little angler fish.

Griffin: Okay. Um, cool, then they come out and all of a sudden everything in this chamber— you have more or less hopped into the bridge— is illuminated. Uh, why don't you just make an investigation check for me?

[dice roll]

Clint: [emphatically] That would be a nat 20!

Travis: Boom.

Griffin: You are kidding me?

Travis: Dad's due, Griffin. Don't be like that.

Griffin: No, that's a huge—

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: —that's— okay, sorry. That's just— that's— that's huge. Uh, with a nat 20, you— it's like Sherlock Holmes. Like, all of the things in this room you start to file away in your mind palace, and then you instantly, like, calculate what is of value in this chamber that you can see.

Travis: I like this new focused Zoox.

Griffin: Yeah. The first thing that you see is a body, and it is the only body that you can see in here. The rest have been maybe hauled away by various hungry sea creatures, but there's one just kind of, like, floating up in a corner that is, like, fully skeletal.

[unsettling noises play in the background]

Griffin: But they are wearing a— what looks like a kind of padded jacket with golden epaulets on it, and the rest of their clothes are sort of, like, rags and tatters, but this one jacket has held up to, you know, undersea scrutiny, like, very, very, very well.

The other stuff that you see in this room, uh, you see a few things. One, there is a large table at the center of the room, and it is sort of flat and circular, and you can tell just by looking at it that it was some sort of display. Like, some sort of screen. Maybe it's sort of, like, flickering a little bit, like the only sort of source of light or, you know, power that is in this room.

And at the very center of it, you see a small black sphere that is just kind of, like, underneath a layer of cracked glass that is sort of holding it into the table. So, you get the sense that that— that sphere is something of value, but it is sort of fastened to the table somehow.

Two more things, with your fucking wild nat 20, is a seat on this bridge. Uh, there's a joystick on it and, like, a bunch of different switches, and you can tell that this is where the sort of gunner of the ship sat. And everything here has, like, more or less rusted away, but there is a lever attached to a tube, and you see that and just— you know that that is a flare launcher that is in fairly good shape.

It is not as sort of rusted away as some other parts of the ship are. And then... [laughs] you can also tell that there is another station here that is in control of a blink bay, and that— that station is, uh, definitely much more sort of, like— it's

not like you could rip that one out of this ship and just, like, slot it down into your ship. Like, it would take some time to uninstall that. [laughs] But if you wanted to get a second blink bay on your ship, uh, that is also something that you can salvage.

Uh, the last thing is not, like, something so much that you can take back and, you know, have for yourself as much as it is...

[music sting]

Griffin: This— this ship is... is wild. It's not just that, uh, it is of sort of a different make and model as the ships that you see in Founders' Wake. It is... really, really ornate in here. Like, there's a lot of wood in here. A lot of carved wood that, you know, hasn't fared so well from being underwater for however long this ship has been down here. Um, and you also see a lot of... make a history roll for me? I don't know how dope your history would be. It would have to be, like, secondhand entirely, since you're, like, you know, two years old or whatever.

[dice roll]

Clint: It ain't good. That's a 5.

[unsettling noises get louder]

Griffin: You see sigils on the wall that you do not recognize. One of them has held up a little bit better than the others. It's just, like, a wooden plaque with some sort of sigil on it that you don't recognize.

Clint: Do the shell phones have video capability?

Griffin: Uh, no, but if you want to describe those things to your friends back at the ship, you can do that over the shell phones. I'll say— they're tone wheels. They would work underwater.

Clint: Okay. So he gets on the shell phone, and rather than go through all that endless— nobody was...

Travis: I was listening, Dad.

Zoox: Oh, I gotta tell you, folks. There's some really cool stuff. There's a jacket you would die for!

Devo: Ooh!

Zoox: Down here. Yeah, it's gold.

Devo: Ooh!

Zoox: Epaulets.

Devo: [gasps]

Zoox: It's got epaulets. I know how you dig the epaulets.

Devo: I do, I do like the epaulets.

Zoox: Um, there's a big table with a gigantic gla— a black orb in the middle of it. I think the only way we could get this back on the ship would be with your claw, Amber. Because I think it's— I mean, we're gonna have to extract this. We'd have to get the whole table. You know, I don't know if that's something you want to do. But there's a bunch of stuff. There's a flare thing down here!

Devo: Ooh!

Zoox: That we could take.

Devo: So let's spend some time, and strip it for parts.

Griffin: Um...

Zoox: I'm— I'm in favor.

Griffin: Okay. So, each of these things would take a different amount of sort of time to secure. I will say, the jacket is—

Travis: That's six hours.

Griffin: That's nothing. Like, you could just grab— you're grabbing it off his skeleton. So the jacket, if you want it, is— is a freebie.

Travis: Oh, I'll take a dead guy's jacket.

Griffin: I mean, Zook's— Zook's call, since Zook is the one who is actually down there.

Clint: Yeah. I'll gr— I'll— I'll grab the jacket for you. Can I get the—

Griffin: Yeah, the skeleton just comes—come—

Clint: —can I get the flare thing without any trouble?

Griffin: Uh, no, because it is sort of, you know, attached to the wall. That one you figure would maybe take you... maybe, like, 20 minutes of just kind of, like, you know, usin' some tools to uninstall that.

Travis: That's fair.

Griffin: Um, the table would take a while to get out. Maybe a couple of hours of sort of making—

Travis: But it's so cool.

Griffin: —a hole big enough for this thing to be ripped out of. All of these things, by the way, are, like, best case scenario. You will have to roll to try and, like, uninstall these things. The blink bay similarly would take a while if you wanted to, um, try and salvage that.

Justin: Eh, we got one.

Travis: We got one. Uh, did he also describe the sigils and stuff?

Zook: And there are these sigils. Let me describe them do you in great detail.

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: Okay. Uh, Devo and Amber, if you wanna roll a history roll.

Justin: That is exactly what I was about to do.

Travis: Oh, I got a 19 + 5, a 24.

Justin: Dang. I got a 11.

Griffin: Uh, it is appropriate, Devo, that you are the one who rolled a 24 on this. This is, like... old, like, orthodox Benevolence stuff.

[unsettling sound effects play in the background]

Travis: Ooh.

Griffin: Like, the schism that happened where the Benevolent Parish kind of left and joined the shoreside community, which would then, you know, become the de facto religious organization in Founders' Wake, obviously uses different sort of symbology. But this is even, like... this is almost like ancient times Benevolence symbology. Like, nobody uses this shit anymore. Not before the Followers of Benevolence left and joined the— the, you know, the Founders' Wake team.

Travis: Okay. So, knowing that, does that inform anything for Devo of what the black sphere might be?

Griffin: No. The black sphere is some sort of, like, you can roll an arcana check. A very high arcana check. Because, like, you know...

Travis: Oh, it's a 3 + 5, an 8. How high?

Griffin: Yeah, no f— yeah, no fucking idea.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Um, but you have deduced that, like, wherever this ship came from is a place that, like, for whatever reason has a vested interest in the old ways—

Travis: So it's almost certainly Hominine. Or...

Griffin: That— that would be one assumption... of the way that you could go with it. You can't think of any reason anybody from Founders' Wake or any of the sort of, like, small, like, you know, settlements of people who have branched off of Founders' Wake would use this ship.

Clint: And these are written— these are written on, like, a plaque or something?

Griffin: Yeah, right, yeah.

Clint: How much— how much time would it take to take the plaque?

Griffin: Not much. You would just have to pry it off the wall. I would give you that one for free also.

Clint: Okay. Okay. I'll pull the plaque off the wall.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: And, uh— and grab the jacket.

Zoox: Can— you guys wanna take the time to get anything else?

Devo: Uh, listen.

Zoox: Can we leave a marker or something that shows us how to get back here?

Devo: I say we take the flare, and oh boy am I tempted by that black sphere thing.

Clint: Are all these things made of gold? Say yes.

Griffin: No.

Devo: What do you think, Amber?

Amber: I think we should get movin'. [wheezes] Honestly, guys, we've lost the plot a little bit here. I love free stuff as much as the next person but, um, we got some work we gotta get done.

Devo: Okay. Uh, how about Zoox, you get the flare thing, and when that's done, what if we just shoot the salvage claw through the view port and just try to grab the table?

[pause]

Devo: Eh? Quick and dirty?

Zoox: I'm— I'm waiting to hear from the DM. [wheezes]

Griffin: I mean, you can do whatever the fuck you wanna do, man! Yeah, sure!

Devo: It's free stuff, guys! Like, we—I—

Zoox: Yeah, but time is money! Time is money. I think we—

Amber: That's my concern. I feel like we just need to get moving.

Travis: Well, okay, but it's 20 min— Griffin said 20 minutes for the flares. Like, I think we can spend 20 minutes.

Justin: Alright, let's get the fla— let's get the flares and get goin'.

Griffin: I will say, because I don't want you to think that I'm poo-pooing the idea, if you wanna try to do, like, a quick and dirty... salvage job with the claw, like—

Travis: Yeah, worst thing that happens is it doesn't work and we don't get it.

Griffin: Well, that's not the *worst* thing that could happen.

Travis: Okay, well...

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: Alright.

Clint: Is there GPS on the shell phones? [laughs]

Griffin: Um...

Devo: So, which of us has the best aim, would you say?

Travis: Is it going to be, like, a dexterity to fire the salvage claw? What are we looking at, here?

Griffin: I mean, it's probably gonna be another flat d20 on repair roll if you are, um... well, wait. You do sort of— yeah, I think it's gonna be [laughs quietly] a ranged attack roll.

Clint: And what are we using the claw for?

Travis: We're basically gonna shoot through the front of the ship and grab the table and just, like, yank it out.

Clint: How big is the black orb?

Griffin: Uh, the black orb is, like, bowling ball sized.

Travis: But it's atta— it's in a covered thing, right?

Griffin: Right, it's covered by, like, a thick layer of glass.

Clint: Which could be broken?

Griffin: Presumably.

Clint: Okay.

Travis: My... ranged attack— hit DC is plus 4— let's not overthink it. Devo fires the salvage claw.

Griffin: Okay. In through the, like, front... windshield of the ship, trying to grab—

Travis: Correct.

Griffin: Okay. Um, make a... uh, let's use the ship stats actually, 'cause now you guys have this plus sensor, right? Whenever you make a ranged attack with the ship you use the sensor roll, so roll a d20 + 6.

Travis: Okay.

[dice roll]

Travis: And 11 + 6, 17.

Griffin: Okay. You fire the claw through. I think with a 17 you definitely hit the table—

[mechanical whirring, cables stretching]

Griffin: —and you grab onto it. And you can see, uh— I mean, first of all, there's an explosion of sort of, like, gold and—

Travis: Awesome.

Griffin: You actually you see it's, like, gold leaf that is, like, flaking off of the hull. Like, this is not a solid gold... ship. Uh, they just really wanted it to look like it. And you get the cl—

Travis: Knowing what Devo does of, like, the— especially the old Benevolence church? Not surprising.

Griffin: Yeah. Um, you get it around the table with that black orb on it, and it pries up from the floor, but it doesn't come, like, completely loose. There are some... you see some, like, very thick cables—

[cables stretching]

Griffin: —that are stronger than this salvage claw. As you start to try to, like, retract the salvage claw, it actually pulls the Coriolis closer to this gold ship. So... if you are going to get this thing, somebody is going to have to go and sort of loosen— like, free up those cables.

Clint: Zoox takes out the knife everybody says he has and cuts those cables.

Griffin: Uh, okay, make a... flat d20 roll.

[dice roll]

Clint: Shit! 3.

Griffin: Okay. They are a lot thicker than you anticipated, uh, and there are a lot more of them than you anticipated, but you start sort of carving away on them. Um... Amber. Make a perception check.

[dice roll]

Justin: Well, that's a natural 20.

Griffin: There— there's a lot happening on the Coriolis right now. Um, enough to be, like, pretty distracting.

[unsettling sound effects play in the background]

Griffin: You hear the winch for the salvage claw—

[metal squeaking]

Griffin: —kind of whining in protest as Devo keeps trying to, you know, pull it up from the ship, and Ampersand is there kind of watching curiously. Um, you hear—

[sawing]

Griffin: —the sounds of effort over the shell phone from, uh— from Zoox, who is sawing away at the wires back down in the golden ship. But that's not enough to... cloak what happens next. You— you feel the hairs on your neck stand up—

[music sting]

Griffin: —and feel this, like, very slight wave of nausea, only your brain puts it together instantly, because after the last time you happened, you swore that you would not be caught unaware again. Somewhere *very* nearby outside... something is watching this attempted salvage job. And it is waiting for the moment to strike. You are in the presence of another blink shark.

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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