

The Adventure Zone: Ethersea – Episode 32

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Griffin: Previously on The Adventure Zone Ethersea:

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

Griffin: As you all approach the Brokerage, you see three familiar, albeit unpleasant faces. It is the crew of the Gutpunch.

Brinarr: We’re on some next level hero shit.

Devo: Saving a bigger city, that you know about, that we don’t know about? Was this it?

Brinarr: Uh, yeah, something like that.

Griffin: The Curator, who is seeking a team to investigate a recent theft from the Menagerie, a facility in the Conservatory tasked with preserving wildlife from the surface world... A handful of animals have been stolen away from Founders’ Wake lately.

Travis: And Devo’s gonna head towards the Parish.

Amber: Um, can you just tell us what you saw?

Docent: I saw one of the containment orbs... there was like a white specter, that was holding it. And I shouted. And it vanished.

Griffin: You know exactly what this is, then. At the auction house, the auctioneer himself, was essentially like a free-floating hard light thing, that a sprite was projecting out.

Justin: I’m just gonna snatch it out of the air. With my net.

Griffin: This exact cube is the exact same thing that the auctioneer left behind when it vanished. But now, with this item in tow, the perpetrator of this crime is completely evident.

[Theme music plays out]

Griffin: So you all manage to recover the sprite, that was being remote controlled by the auctioneer. That is the working theory. And... you have that in your possession. This object is completely inert, at this point. So any hopes of just kind of following it to its home... That is not going to be possible. Although, y'know, sort of knowing what you know about the auctioneer, that seems like he would not have necessarily fallen for that, anyways.

Travis: But it's fair to say, now that we've got that one, right? And we know what was going on. The animals that are in the Menagerie are a lot safer now, right? Like...

Griffin: Sure, sure.

Travis: That's my, Travis McElroy's, concern. I don't know if Devo cares. But me, Travis, I don't want animals stolen.

Griffin: Um. And that's... that's...

Justin: Noble, and important.

Travis: Thank you.

Griffin: A noble thing to say. And I think people are gonna be really proud of you...

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: For taking a stand...

Travis: I'm willing to take a stand! This is my line in the sand: don't steal animals!

Griffin: I think that's— and that's huge, 'cause I, like, I'm part of the crowd, you know what I mean? I'm too afraid to say "I don't think you should steal animals." 'Cause I know how popular it is to steal animals.

Travis: Now I say that, but right off the bat, man, now I'm starting to question it, 'cause Al the horse wanted to be stolen.

Clint: Yeah. He did.

Griffin: Wow...

Clint: He wanted out, he wanted to be rustled.

Griffin: Wow...

Travis: Well, you know what? Now I've changed my mind. Steal animals.

Griffin: Steal all animals. That's great.

Travis: Steal all— listen—

Justin: Steal all the ani— steal all the animals.

Clint: Isn't there a whole thing about—

Travis: It's either one or the other.

Clint: ...Freeing animals from zoos, and... y'know...

Travis: Well, we can't get into that. But you should get the lobsters out of the tanks at the supermarket, for sure.

Griffin: That's legal, they legally can't do anything, if you start to pull those out.

Travis: Yeah. Yeah. That's fair. Because, as— until they're out the door, you can just say, like, "I was gonna pay for it."

Clint: Mmhmm.

Travis: Right?

Griffin: Yeah—

Travis: I worked loss prevention at Best Buy...

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: And like, until the lobster— until you walk out the door with the lobster, they're like, "oh, maybe he's just..."

Griffin: You're free to go.

Travis: "Eh, maybe he's gonna pay for 'em."

Griffin: Right.

Clint: Unfortunately, we got a gig. So. You know.

Griffin: You do, you do. Okay, fine. No more theft hacks! Uh, what's the game plan now?

Travis: So, let's do it in character, huh?

Devo: Um. So I'm fairly new to this, but Zoox, Amber... do you know anything about these sprites? Like how far away can you control them?

Zoox: Well, let me tell you.

Devo: Do you know?

Zoox: That I don't know. Anything.

Devo: Okay.

Zoox: About that. Um. I bet Amber does! Amber!

Amber: Ahh, yes, it's a question I know well. Hmmm. I... I've often been asked this.

[long pause]

Zoox: Mmhmm?

Amber: Gotta be fifty.

[Someone snickers]

Devo: Okay, so maybe this is something we find out.

Amber: [through laughter] We should ask somebody else...

Devo: Yes. And maybe we ask around about the auctioneer? I'm willing to bet the Curator... just from, like, the way... y'know... the Curator's interests, the auctioneer's interests. Maybe the Curator knows something about this auctioneer. And Uncle Joshy got an invite to the auction, so maybe this is...? We have some leads, is what I'm saying. We have connections to the auctioneer. Right?

Zoox: The Curator would want to help us, too, right?

Devo: Oh yes! This is his mission, and his animals!

Zoox: Yeah. Let's go talk to the Curator! [pronounced cure-AY-ter]

Griffin: Okay!

Devo: I don't know who that is, but we can talk to the CURE-ah-tor.

Clint: [chuckles]

Griffin: The Curator is like, outside. Of the building.

Travis: Like, we turn around and he's right there?

Griffin: He's— yeah, he went out there to vape. Real quick.

Travis: [bursts into laughter]

Griffin: And... he looks back at you, and says—

Travis: [exhales as if vaping] "Oh, hello!"

Curator: Oh, how goes the— how goes the investigation? [comically loud exhale] Ohhh, yes...

Zoox: Is that raspberry? Woo!

Curator: Um. No, this is just plain flavor.

Travis: Oh, so the Curator's natural breath is raspberry.

Curator: Yes.

Clint: [laughs]

Devo: The investigation... mmm... is going well! Big, big start. We figured out who the ghost was, that was stealing the animals. We stopped that from being able to happen anymore.

Amber: You might say... we busted your ghost.

Devo: We did do this, yes.

Curator: Um...

Devo: And it made me feel good! If I'm being honest.

Amber: Oh, I felt a little sad.

Zoox: So we are who you wanted to call in the first place!

Devo: Yes.

Amber: Yeah.

Devo: Well, you did call us. And we came, and we busted all over—

Curator: You are talking like space aliens.

Devo: Okay—

Curator: The way the— the structure of these sentences is very confusing.

Devo: I'm willing to bet—

Curator: You're saying that busting makes you feel good?

Amber: [snickers]

Devo: Yes indeed—

Curator: That it doesn't... [sighs] they never...

Devo: We weren't afraid of no ghosts! 'Cause there were no ghosts there.

Curator: But you were— that means—

Devo: Yeah, yeah...

Curator: That you were afraid of all ghosts.

Amber: We're afraid that there were no ghosts.

Devo: Yes.

Curator: Okay.

Devo: And we were correct.

Amber: Hey, what's... These sprites you got running around, what's the story on these guys?

Curator: Um, they are... you know. Automated sort of living spells. You enchant something, you say "hey go do this," and it goes and it does the thing.

Amber: Who sets those up for you? You got a... I.T. guy, or...? I.S. guy?
[chuckles]

Curator: I mean, we get some help from the Parish. Uh, y'know, they do a lot of the magic sort of stuff for us. Um. We get some help from... let's see... I mean, there's no shortage of enchanters in the city who know how to whip these things up. Wait— why are you asking about our sprites?

Devo: Oh, so this is what was happening. There was a sprite, that was projecting a hard light... you know, hologram.

Curator: Ooh.

Devo: And that was the spirit that was stealing the animals. We've stopped this sprite, but we are trying to figure out if somebody wanted to, not just automate, but control, remotely control the sprite? Where, like what's the range for that spell, would be.

Curator: Oh, definitely fifty.

Devo: Fifty.

Clint: [bursts into laughter]

Amber: Yeah, I thought! I thought. It seemed like fifty.

Griffin: He says—

Devo: Just a standard fifty?

Amber: Just a clean fifty.

Zoox: Amber just said— yeah! Amber just said that.

Amber: Yeah, just a clean fifty. I'm hurt you didn't trust me.

Devo: No, I just wanted confirmation. Uh...

Travis: Oh, I was slipping into Russian.

Devo: No, I just wanted confirmation on this.

Justin: Can any of you all... any of you all... Okay, I'll just ask this in character, why not.

Amber: Can either of you all Detect Magic? Like... sense it? From somewhere? Like if somebody were using it, in here, like you could get a hint of it? Get a whiff?

Zoox: Hmm.

Devo: Well... no. But there are people that can. I mean, if we went to them, we could probably get them to see if they can... y'know, trace any magical—

Amber: Looking for somebody ain't such a momentum killer, you know?
[sighs]

Devo: I don't have— no.

Amber: What about you, Zoox, can you Detect Magic?

Zoox: Uh, no. No. No, no. No. I... no. I can't. I'm—

Amber: Alright.

Zoox: I can't even think of a reality in which I would be able to do that.

Curator: If it helps, these sprites, they cost an arm and a leg.

Amber: [sighs]

Curator: And so, one that can be sort of... controlled, you said, remotely?
It's—

Zoox: [gasps, then chuckles]

Curator: That's is not going to be an item that is... that any old Joe off the street is going to be able to afford.

Zoox: Oh! Lightbulb. Lightbulb.

Amber: Oh, god.

Zoox: We just look for somebody with one arm and one leg.

Devo: Oh, boy.

Amber: Okay. [sighs] Um—

Devo: Now, we do have a bit of a lead on who we think was controlling it. Does... do you have any familiarity with someone who is, maybe goes by, or just is, an auctioneer?

Curator: Mmm... only in rumors, and hearsay. Um. Of course, I've heard of the Abyssal Auction. I have my fingers to the pulse at least that deep, or else I would not be a particularly good Curator of historical artifacts.

Devo: Hmm.

Curator: I have never attended one of these auctions myself. Um...

Devo: Well, the auctioneer was stealing your animals.

Curator: Oh! Well that's infuriating.

Amber: Yeah.

Devo: Yeah.

Amber: You hate to hear... You gotta... like, we're gonna keep working on this, but you gotta get like, better security.

Devo: Yeah, lock this down.

Curator: I mean okay, but in my defense, it's like, he created some sort of... holo-ghost! That's— like, you know, that's pretty clever, don't you think? It's not like we just, welcome people in here, and "say touch the orbs," and someone puts one in a backpack.

Amber: Well yeah but every crime is gonna be new.

Devo: Yes.

Curator: Yes, that's fine.

Amber: If you do the exact same thing twice, it wouldn't work good.

Curator: Okay. That's fair.

Devo: And you have to be careful, 'cause here in the ocean, there's probably... let's see... Ocean's... 11? 12, maybe 13 people, could think of—

Curator: I'm gonna barf. Okay. Um, listen. I've not met the auctioneer, but I know there are people in this city who have done some dealings in these auctions before. So, if... if you find one of them, maybe you'll find a lead? But I don't know what to tell you otherwise.

Devo: Hmm. We need to find somebody who is connected to the auction, right?

Zoox: Yeah!

Devo: Well, we know that Aloysius Supreme...

Zoox: Right.

Devo: Still a great name. Was there. Maybe he knows how to find the auctioneer?

Zoox: Well, they must have been invited by somebody, right?

Devo: Yes, this is what I'm saying, right?

Zoox: Yeah!

Devo: So he must have some kind of connection. I don't want to ask a mass of shipworms...

Zoox: Hmm.

Devo: That seems, uh, like a...

Zoox: Well I could ask them for ya. I could ask the worms.

Devo: Oh, you know, we could probably— I guess we could ask Felix. Felix sent— I don't think the shipworms were acting on their own. [chuckles] I don't know, who do— oh, I guess maybe Kodeira? What do you think, Amber?

Griffin: You remember— Kodeira did not know...

Travis: Oh, right.

Griffin: Those two operatives for the Chaperones were working kind of on their own.

Devo: What do you think, Amber? Who should we talk to?

Amber: Erhhh... [sighs]

Justin: You know, it's hard when you're trying to figure out who to interview, and you're certain that everybody, literally everybody, knows more... [laughs] than you do about a given subject.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Uh huh.

Justin: Uhhh... I wanna find som—

Travis: Also, they all share Griffin's brain.

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Mmhmm.

Travis: So it's like, maybe any of them could probably tell us!

Justin: [chuckling] Right.

Griffin: Wow.

Justin: Wow...

Amber: I think we should talk to Aloysius Supreme, just so we have an opportunity to say that, a few times.

Devo: I think this is true. Also, I think we... probably when we stole the Dreams of Deborah, another bad taste was left there? We might be able to repair that bridge a little bit, to mix metaphors, yes?

Amber: Sure. Yeah.

Griffin: Uh. Okay! Is— if that— if you all have an accord... or a consensus. [laughs] If you all have sworn a vow to talk to Aloysius Supreme.

Devo: Oh! On my life, we will— [laughs] talk to Aloysius Supreme! [takes a breath] Uh, Curator? It seems—

Curator: Yes.

Devo: —that we might have need to speak with Aloysius Supreme?

Curator: That dude sucks.

Justin: [snickers]

Devo: He does suck, yes. But if you have any old... like, real good wine? That you could part with? That you would not, maybe, have an extra bottle, that we could give to Aloysius Supreme, to grease the wheels?

Griffin: Oooh! He thinks for a moment, and he says,

Curator: I mean... the items we have in our possession are important historical artifacts. I'm not sure I can just part with one of them, so that you can impress a douchebag.

Devo: Well I guess my question would be: what is more important? An artifact, or a living creature that could potentially, y'know, procreate and create more of them to repopulate the surface world?

Curator: Ooh, gross, you're thinking about them... doing it? That's gross, boy—

Devo: You're the one that keeps them together so they can fuck!

Curator: I'm just kidding, yes, they— I know, I know, I'm nasty too.

Griffin: Why don't you make a persuasion check?

Travis: See how nasty he is.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Be nasty with me. Uh, it's only a 14, five plus nine.

Griffin: He says,

Curator: I... [sighs] Come with me.

Griffin: And he takes you to his... to his office, where he produces a big, a big big big big bottle. Like almost novelty-sized bottle, filled with wine. And it's already a third empty. And so he pours... he sort of decants it into a small flask, and puts a stopper in it, and hands it to you. And he says,

Curator: This is... um... this is... hold on, I have to come up with a cool name for it.

Clint: [snickers]

Curator: This is Crimsonia Cabernet. It is the last of its vintage, before the storm made the fields fallow. Um. And, y'know, you can talk it up, obviously. There's more of it than just this. But it's... you know, it's wine, and you seem like a good liar. So you can say, like, "This is a special bottle that was created by... the... King of... blehbebebebe." You know?

Devo: Yes.

Clint: [laughs]

Curator: Okay.

Devo: I know exactly what you mean, yes.

Curator: Okay.

Griffin: He hands that to you. And he says,

Curator: He is... I will tell you this, and you probably have known this, because anybody who has met Aloysius Supreme for more than like 45 seconds knows this. But he is very flatterable. Loves that. And that is the way to his... well, his brain. Where the information resides that you need, to, y'know, finish solving this crime.

Devo: Indeed. Thank you very much for your help. We will—

Curator: [imitating Devo's accent] Sank you.

Devo: We will finish this for you, and get your animals back, very soon.

Curator: Cool, and then I'll pay you money for it.

Devo: This sounds like a good deal. Uh... commerce!

Curator: Man, capitalism beats ass, yes!

Clint: [laughs]

Devo: [laughing] Yes, gig economy!

Amber: No downside!

Curator: It's like, I need a thing and I have money...

Devo: Yes!

Curator: And so I give you money to do the thing! It kicks ass— and then I don't have to do it!

Devo: No, and there is a service that I can provide that you cannot do, but I do not have the money—

Curator: And I'm more powerful than you, because my money number is higher than yours!

Devo: Yes, but eventually if I work hard, maybe my money number will grow as well—

Curator: But it never will be—

Devo: No...

Curator: Because the ones with the bigger money number make sure that your money number will never even come close, it's—

Devo: And you figured out how to not give away parts of your money number! Where I believe it is my duty—

Curator: So the rest of you do have to give away money number, yes!

Devo: Yes! Because—

Curator: Fucking great!

Devo: I've been taught that this is the way it works, but you seem to know a system, eh?

Curator: Yes! Oh, I made it—

Devo: That does not work the same—

Curator: And here's the secret, you ready, boys? Come on in, shh, shh.

Devo: Yes.

Curator: [quieter] I made the system, too, so like—

Devo: Ohh!

Curator: It's like, I am in charge of the both— obeying the rules that I created! It's a nonstop party for me! Anyway.

Devo: This is very good.

Curator: Anyway... I feel dirt—

Travis: I'm glad this is a fantasy podcast, and not real life, 'cause that would fuckin' suck.

Griffin: [singing] Ba wah ba, ba bah [raspberry]. Go ahead and do something else.

Travis: [bursts into laughter] Let's go see— speaking of capitalism. The Ballaster of Commerce!

Griffin: Cool.

[Low classy music begins]

Griffin: You all make your way up to the Ballast, where you are... I think that the security guards there maybe more than anybody else in this city, revere the three of you? 'Cause they saw how fuckin' bad it got, firsthand, during the last arc. And so as you approach, one of them—

Travis: There's a lot of celebratory butt pats.

Griffin: Yeah... no. But they— there's a lot of autograph requests.

Justin: All of which are granted.

Travis: Oh, yeah! Devo's eating that up, are you kidding me?

Clint: Always! Always.

Griffin: Uh—

Travis: I bet Zoox makes his own ink! Now that I think about it.

Justin: Eghhhh...

Clint: Aw, yeah!

Griffin: Oh, don't say that for him! Okay—

Travis: That dirty nasty boy.

Clint: Yeah!! Oh ho ho ho ho...

Griffin: And you all are permitted into the office Aloysius Supreme. And you are forced to wait there for a while.

Travis: Uh huh.

Griffin: Before he returns.

Amber: Devo.

Devo: Yes?

Amber: Zoox. Listen, I'm not gonna... [sighs] You know when I just start to talking, it... things come out all screwy, right? Right, a little scrambled eggs. So. Um. I just thought it would be good, maybe, if you acted like... we needed to be able to control... a sprite? For a venture, that we were doing.

Zoox: Ohhh.

Amber: And like... you know what I mean? Like...

Zoox: Ploy. A ploy. A clever ploy.

Amber: Yeah.

Devo: Now... uh... let me offer a counterapproach.

Amber: I'm sorry, it was stupid.

Devo: No no!

Zoox: No! No!

Devo: This is not stupid! This is not stupid. But perhaps with the flattery angle, we say, "oh, we are just absolutely stumped on this one, and we need to approach one of the most clever people we've met, to help us... because we just— we can't figure out, with our tiny brains, how we would get ahold of an auctioneer? Um. How any of this works? What— how—"

[Music fades out]

Amber: That's great.

Devo: And we treat it like we are real dummies.

Amber: That's great. Yeah. That's why— see, that's why you do the talking! Alright. I just wanted to say, I had that one thought, and I wanted to...

Devo: This is not a— listen! This is not a bad thought, because, you know... sometimes I can really beef it, on this. So if I go bad, right? Then you come in, and you go, "oh, one last question, this has nothing to do with the investigation. But I have this sprite that I've been trying to power up, and you seem like— oh, you have a lot of cool toys? And you seem like you are into the latest and greatest?"

Amber: You're about to say this again. You know?

Devo: Okay.

Zoox: Yeah.

Amber: In about thirty seconds— [wheezes]

Zoox: Go ahead—

Amber: And if anybody— I don't know why someone would be listening to this conversation and then that conversation—

Devo: Mm, yes.

Amber: But I feel like if they had to hear it twice...

Devo: Yes.

Amber: They may be kinda bored, you know what I mean?

Devo: Sure, yes, yes, yes.

Zoox: Just in case, go ahead and give... go ahead and give Amber the sprite that's in your bag.

Devo: Okay?

Zoox: You know, so we're ready for that.

Amber: Oh! Yeah. And is there a... some sort of secret password? If you want me to punch him in the face four times real fast?

Devo: Uh. I will say... let's say... um...

Zoox: If I shoot him with a crossbow. Then you can—

Devo: No!

Zoox: Punch...? No?

Amber: No... that's...

Devo: No, this is not going to be the sign.

Amber: No.

Zoox: Oh. Okay.

Devo: Maybe I will change my jacket. Right? Into...

Amber: Ohh, yeah...

Devo: Uh... a big middle finger. Uh.

Zoox: [cackles]

Amber: Nice. Alright.

Devo: And then you will know to start the punching, and the shooting. But, Zoox, shoot him in the butt or the foot. Don't—

Zoox: No, I wasn't gonna kill him! I just said I would shoot him.

Devo: But you can see why I would feel the need to say this, right?

Zoox: Yeah, sure. Sure!

Devo: Okay.

Zoox: Yeah. Yeah. In the context. Yeah. Mmhmm.

Griffin: Um. The door opens, to Aloysius's office, and in floats...

[Squeak of door hinges]

Justin: I— can I just say real quick.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: There was... that wasn't edited, folks. There was one eighth of a second of Griffin...

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: This is how tight in we are. Where Griffin knows exactly when we're done with garbage. Like...

Clint: [laughs harder]

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: "Well, they've done enough garbage now!"

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: "I know that their garbage meters are all full."

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: “I’ve let them fucking do all the garbage they need. [laughing] Now I’m moving on.”

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Um. In—

Justin: Not a second too early!

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: But not a second too late! [giggles]

Griffin: In floats a large sprite. And it is...

[Electric whirring sounds of a sprite]

Justin: Hell yeah, I could go for that right now. [laughs]

Travis: Yeah man, fuck—

Clint: Ahhh...

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: Oh boy, I haven’t craved a Sprite in a decade!

Griffin: All— hey— no kidding, I have not drunk a Sprite in a hundred years! And thinking of a nice cool Sprite, would be— aw, shit, that would be nice right now.

Justin: All this talk about Sprite’s been driving me wild for Sprite!

Griffin: I know!

Travis: Ahh, I gotta call my friend Lebron James, see if he's got any handy. Bring `em on over!

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: I would even— I would even at this point, and I hate, I shudder to say it, I would drink Sierra Mist. At this point.

Travis: Ohhh, what?

Griffin: I don't know about that.

Clint: Oh...

Travis: Oh, no... so you're thirsty for water but you'll accept piss?

Justin: [bursts into laughter]

Griffin: [laughs] The... this glowing cube is a bright...

[Rhythmic music plays]

Brassy, flashing multi-colored, thing. That is just pulsating, like, house music.

Travis: Ah, hell yeah.

Griffin: And it flashes in rhythm, and a voice comes out of it that says,

Cube: Awwwww damn! Here he comes! The Ballaster of Commerce himself! Aloysius Supreme! Bahhhhh-bah-bahhhh—

Clint: He's got a—!

Griffin: And Aloysius runs in—

Clint: He's got a hype cube! [cackles]

Griffin: Holding his hands up for a high fives, that—

Travis: Oh! Devo delivers.

Griffin: He dodges your hand.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Aloysius Supreme: Too slow, nerd.

Griffin: And then he sits down in his chair. And he's panting.

[Music grows quieter]

Aloysius Supreme: [pants] Alright.

Travis: Is the cube still playing music and flashing lights?

Griffin: No, he claps his hands twice, and the cube retreats from the room.

[Rhythmic music ends and classy Ballast music plays for a moment]

Griffin: And he says,

Aloysius Supreme: So... [pants] You guys just want the keys... to my ship? Should I just make it easier for you this time? And you can just...

Devo: [laughs loudly] Good joke!

[pause]

Aloysius Supreme: Okay.

Zoox: But yes.

Devo: No! No! No, we're not going to steal your ship!

Aloysius Supreme: Why don't— Okay, well—

Zoox: Well, if he gives them, we're not stealing it!

Devo: Zoox!

Zoox: Hmm?

Aloysius Supreme: I should tell you three, I am taking this meeting... as a sort of professional courtesy.

Devo: Mmmm.

Aloysius Supreme: Because the other Ballasters are wild about you guys. And I think you are a bunch of good-for-nothing...

Devo: Yes.

Aloysius Supreme: Thieves.

Devo: Mmhmm.

Aloysius Supreme: And... um... and I want nothing— like, less than nothing, to do with the three of you. So, I'm gonna sit here, and just kinda nod my head, and occasionally I'll make sort of a monosyllabic, like, "mmm!" Um. Until it's been sort of long enough that I can remove the three of you, by force, from my office. And then go on with the rest of my day.

Zoox: Sounds good for old Devo.

Devo: Before we begin, may I ask you one question?

Aloysius Supreme: Ugh. If it's absolutely necessary.

Devo: Does "Crimsonia Cabernet" mean anything to you?

Griffin: Make an insight check.

Travis: [rolls dice] Uh, 16 total.

Griffin: He... immediately puts on false pretenses, of, like, "of course." He says,

Aloysius Supreme: Of course I know about Crimsonia Cabernet. Crimsonia—

Devo: Ahh. Then you know how highly prized this wine is. A fine vintage, from a now-extinct grape, that you have not been able to produce this, since the storm began. But we... oh... lean close, my friend. We were able to procure you some, as a bit of a peace offering.

Aloysius Supreme: Hmm...

Devo: This was... [chuckles] spared no expense. This is one of the last flasks of the Crimsonia Cabernet, that is available. Only the elite— it's just this, and the Curator's private collection. And we were able to get you some, to say that we feel terrible about everything that has passed before. And in fact, some say— and this is, [laughs] you know, maybe this is just rumor, but some say that when you drink the Crimsonia Cabernet, you can actually taste the sorrow and regret of your enemies. And it tastes so sweet.

Aloysius Supreme: It's Skunknuts again, isn't it?

Devo: Oh, no, my friend. This is Crimsonia Cabernet.

Aloysius Supreme: Not you. Not you. You.

Griffin: And he points at you, Amber.

Justin: Eeehhhhh...

Griffin: And he says,

Aloysius Supreme: This is Skunknuts, yes?

Amber: Which one?

Aloysius Supreme: This one!

Griffin: He points at the bottle. He says,

Aloysius Supreme: I want you to tell me that that is not Skunknuts.

Amber: [breathing heavily] Yeah. Yeah, it's no problem. Um. It's not Skunknuts.

[pause]

Aloysius Supreme: Okay.

Griffin: [laughing] He says...

Aloysius Supreme: I know a liar when I see one, and that's clearly not Skunknuts! So.

Justin: Dang, I didn't even have to roll. Choice.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Oh, it's not a lie.

Justin: What?

Devo: It's not!

Griffin: It's not Skunknuts.

Devo: It's Crim— here, take—

Justin: Yeah, that's true! Okay, yeah.

Clint: 'Cause Skunknuts wine goes through you like an ape.

Justin: I can't have another character that can't lie!

Griffin: [amused] Yeah, that's a good point.

Clint: [guffaws]

Justin: I can't do it twice.

Griffin: He takes it, and he looks at it. He holds it up to the light, and shakes it, and pops open the cork, and goes,

Aloysius Supreme: [wet snuffling sound] [gasps] [wet snuffling sound]

Justin: [giggles wheezily]

Aloysius Supreme: Ahhh. Okay. Well, this—

Clint: He needs to spit it out, right?

Justin: Wait wait wait wait wait wait wait.

Amber: Oh... you gotta try, you gotta try a little bit more. I know that on the second... uh, big gulp? It really hits.

Aloysius Supreme: The... typically I smell it. That was a smelling sound.

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [bursts into laughter]

Amber: You got— you've gotta—

Justin: Oh, really? God dang, Griffin!

Aloysius Supreme: It was a wet—

Justin: Alright, bud.

Aloysius Supreme: Listen. You don't understand how to really do it, if you think that that was a weird sound to make, to huff it.

Justin: [laughing] Next time... Let's make a promise next season of the Adventure Zone...

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: No wet sniffs.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Okay, sure.

Justin: No wet sniffs. That's a guarantee.

Travis: [chanting] No! Wet! Sniffs!

Griffin: He—

Travis: No! Wet! Sniffs!

Justin: You gotta— okay then let me do that bit again.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Oooh.

Amber: You gotta— hey, listen. You already popped it open, right?

Justin: He did pop it open, didn't he?

Griffin: He did.

Clint: Mmhmm.

Amber: Okay. You gotta... drink it! I mean, straight up, it... you're... the air's getting in! Quick, you got maybe 30 minutes before it's all gone. All the good flavors, and tanbims.

Aloysius Supreme: Oh yes, the tanbims! Um.

Devo: Yes, they will sublimate.

Aloysius Supreme: Oh, for sure, I hate that.

Devo: [murmurs sympathetically]

Amber: Yes.

Zoox: They'll sommelier all over the place. You don't want any of that.

Devo: Oh, this is a fun game.

Griffin: He grabs out four little tiny brandy glasses.

Amber: Hell yes.

Griffin: And pours a splash in each one.

Justin: Done.

Griffin: And he hands it— he hands one to each of you, and he says,

Aloysius Supreme: To—

Amber: [slurps]

Aloysius Supreme: New stuff—

Amber: Yes.

Aloysius Supreme: Oh.

Amber: Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Aloysius Supreme: Wait. We were supposed to do it at the same time.

Amber: I'm sorry. Hit me again.

Aloysius Supreme: Don't do that again though, okay? This isn't gonna be—

Amber: Not again!

Aloysius Supreme: Okay.

Griffin: Splash.

Amber: I'm a lady of distinction, I was just confused about...

Aloysius Supreme: Alright.

Amber: Okay.

Aloysius Supreme: To fresh starts...

Amber: [high pitched] Ooooh.

Aloysius Supreme: What?

Amber: I was just putting out my pinky. That's the sound I make when I put out my pinky. If we're all doing this kind of fancy ball—

Aloysius Supreme: You're right, what was I thinking. [high pitched] Oooh!

Amber: It's like a fancy ballroom thing.

Devo: [high pitched] Oooh.

Clint: [laughs]

Devo: Zoox? Put out—

Zoox: Yoinks!

Devo: Okay.

Aloysius Supreme: Alright. And to—

Amber: No, that's— [through laughter] that's your ring finger.

Devo: Yeah. Pinky.

Zoox: Oh, right! Umm.

Devo: No, that's middle finger.

Amber: Nope— middle— [laughs]

Zoox: Well, okay—

Justin: [cackles]

Zoox: Maaaannnnnnnnnnng!

Amber: There it is... yeah...

Devo: Oh no, you can't do that in public, Zoox! [chuckles]

Griffin: Alright.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: This— alright.

Aloysius Supreme: So, to new beginnings, and... to old... t— to old tambins.

Travis: [low country accent] To old tambins.

Griffin: And he sips it. He says,

Aloysius Supreme: Okay. Now, um...

[Someone audibly gulps]

Aloysius Supreme: I have extended the time limits that I am willing to entertain the three of you in my office, by an extra... two minutes, so. Because of this generous offer. So, what the— what do you fucking want?

Devo: Well... the question we have is a bit of a delicate nature, yes?

Aloysius Supreme: Mmmm.

Devo: Um. We find ourselves needing to procure some things that may be, might be hard to find, and we have heard mention that perhaps the Abyssal Auction might be the way in which we can find these items. But we have no idea how to get in contact with the auctioneer.

Aloysius Supreme: [quickly] And why would you think that I would know anything about the Abyssal Auction, or where to find it?

Devo: Well—

Zoox: You were at the last one.

Aloysius Supreme: [laughing nervously] What are you talk— what— no I wasn't! That's a stupid—

Devo: Well, let's say— No—

Aloysius Supreme: That's stupid!

[Classy music fades]

Devo: No, we are not saying you were there. But you are the Ballaster of Commerce, and frankly, the most intelligent person we have had the chance to meet, in our dealings in the city—

Aloysius Supreme: He just said I was there.

Devo: He is saying in the hypothetical sense. Right? That if anyone knows how to find it, and how to get there... how to be there, how to perhaps know people who were there? It would be you!

Amber: You could have been there, and us dunces wouldn't have been any the wiser.

Devo: How would we—

Zoox: But if it helps, I was speaking to Devo. 'Cause he was there.

[Someone coughs]

Devo: [sadly] Okay.

Aloysius Supreme: You all were at... you all were at the last...?

[Tense ominous music begins]

Devo: No! Hypothetically, once again, Zoox, uh, is speaking hypothetically.

Justin: [chuckles]

Aloysius Supreme: You all were... the... the turquoise team, weren't you?

Devo: Nooo.

Aloysius Supreme: I thought I recognized your voices, because YOU have a very distinctive accent! That was the three of you!

Devo: I was using a different accent. Um. Now that our cover is blown, I wanna say—

Aloysius Supreme: You assaulted me!

Devo: No! What?

Zoox: Mm mm! Mm mm. Me?

Amber: I might have.

Zoox: Yeah.

Griffin: He stands up from the table.

Devo: [groans]

Griffin: And says,

Aloysius Supreme: I think we're done here. I think you all need to leave, right now.

Devo: How would it affect your reputation in town, if everyone found out you were at the Abyssal Auction, buying black market goods?

Aloysius Supreme: Mmm! That's an excellent question that I had not considered.

Justin: [wheezes]

Clint: [cracks up]

Griffin: He goes and slumps back down at his table, and folds his fingers, and he says,

Aloysius Supreme: Okay. I'm intrigued. What is it that you need from the Auction?

Devo: [sighs] There are some items that have been stolen from the Curator. If we can—

Aloysius Supreme: What items?

Devo: Animals.

Aloysius Supreme: Interesting.

Devo: And we need to return these animals, so that we can complete this job. And, you know, continue to support the gig economy here in Founders' Wake, which I assume you as the Ballaster of Commerce, fully support? The idea of trade, goods, and services, et cetera?

Aloysius Supreme: Hmmm. You all know... well, maybe you don't. The kind of circles that you are attempting to kind of poke your nose into, are filled with powerful people, who would not necessarily appreciate the intrusion. I understand you all are contractors; you all have a job to do. But you may want to consider the fact that you are biting off a bit more than you can chew.

Devo: Um. Well. If I may, not to be disrespectful, but that is an "us" problem, that we can deal with. And I appreciate your concern, but what we need from you is information. How does one get in contact with the Abyssal Auction, to obtain an invitation, or to contact the auctioneer directly?

[Music fades, then resumes]

Aloysius Supreme: Oh, the Auctions are done. They won't do another one after what happened last time. That was a bit too loud. Uh... But if you— This is interesting. This can't come back to me, do you understand?

Devo: Oh, of course, yes!

Aloysius Supreme: I need your vow that this will not come back to me, okay? You keep my name out of your mouth, when it comes to this, do you understand?

Devo: I would never sully the name Aloysius Supreme, with this... taint.

Aloysius Supreme: You two? Gross. You two?

[Someone snickers]

Zoox: I believe it's Aloysius Love Supreme. I'm not—

Amber: It's not— fine. Yes.

Zoos: Yeah!

Griffin: He opens up his desk drawer, and pulls out what looks like a... fairly thick black business card, that he slides across the table to you all. And in gold font across it is a single word, in the fanciest font that there is, which we all know...

Travis: Mmmm.

Griffin: Is Helvetica.

Travis: [simultaneously] Times New Roman.

Griffin: [amused] Yeah, it's Times New Roman. And it says "Crescendo" on it. And he says,

Aloysius Supreme: The auctioneer is... hmm. The auctioneer is into some stuff that is not necessarily above board. There's an organization he hits, that... I occasionally supply delicious wines to. Just like this, mm, Crim-skun...

Devo: Mmhmm.

Aloysius Supreme: [stuttering] Ca-caba-bray. And I have gotten the impression that maybe they're dealing in some more nefarious deeds, and so I've just like, after that last auction, I was like, "no way dude. I don't want any more of this stuff." And so I've cut ties. But, um... his invitation still stands, and maybe you all can make more use of it than I can.

Griffin: And he slides the card across the table to you two. To you three.

Travis: Devo takes the card.

Aloysius Supreme: This group is... well, they're cult-adjacent, I would say.

Devo: Oh!

Aloysius Supreme: Whenever they have purchased wines from me in the past, they're really only interested in the really rare shit. Um... the final, the final vintages, of things. That's their— that's their sole fascination, this organization. The "last" of things.

Devo: Ah, this tracks with the name, doesn't it? Crescendo.

Aloysius Supreme: [snarky] Yeah. Great, great stuff, Devo.

Justin: [bursts into laughter]

Devo: I mean... no, I'm just agreeing with you that this makes sense, and you're so wise.

Aloysius Supreme: Mmmm. Yeah. Hey listen. Sidebar?

Devo: Yes?

Aloysius Supreme: I appreciate even empty flattery, but when it gets sort of, like, compliments for a toddler who's learned how to tie his shoes good?

Justin: [stifles snickers]

Aloysius Supreme: It gets a little... Like I know what you're doing here, obviously. And I—

Devo: Polite flattery is very new for me?

Aloysius Supreme: Mmmm.

Devo: This is honestly the best I can do.

Aloysius Supreme: Okay. Um. This card—

Griffin: And he swipes his finger across the word on it, and the edges of the card light up in one corner, and he says,

Aloysius Supreme: This'll get you to their installation, where Crescendo operates out of. And I assume the auctioneer will be found there as well. I cannot promise you will be welcomed, with open lovin' arms!

Devo: Mmhmm.

Aloysius Supreme: But... and again, let's practice this. You show up, the auctioneer's like, [gravelly and low] "Hey!" 'Cause that's what he— I dunno, maybe that's what he sounds like. "Hey you guys! Where did you even get this card?" And you all say...?

Devo: We killed a man!

Zoox: Oh... oh. I shot him—

Devo: And we'll do the same to you! Yes! He shot him just to watch him die!

Zoox: In Reno.

Devo: And then we found this card— in Reno.

Aloysius Supreme: Okay...

Zoox: Mmhmm!

Aloysius Supreme: Let's do it—

Devo: And then we found this card.

Aloysius Supreme: Just so I know you know what I'm saying: the thing you don't say, is:

Devo: Oh! We'd say, "not Aloysius Supreme, that's for sure!"

Zoox: [agreeing] Mm mm! Noo!

Amber: [chortles]

Aloysius Supreme: Okay. Um. This is a huge mistake I'm making. That I feel like is—

Devo: No, we will keep your name safe, no, we will keep you safe.

Aloysius Supreme: Okay.

Devo: Don't you worry about it.

Aloysius Supreme: Um. Good.

Devo: We— I see this relationship as being very useful. You seem like a man who like the finer things, and we are us three adventurers who like to get paid, yes? So perhaps we can come to an arrangement, should we find any fancy wine? Or things like this, that perhaps you would like.

[Music fades out]

Aloysius Supreme: I think this— we can all agree that this is the start of a long and prosperous friendship.

Devo: Okay, well, we'll see— I mean, acquaintance for sure.

Amber: Kinda weird, how you said that. [chuckles]

Devo: Yes. We'll start—

Zoox: See, Amber, that's how you lie, Amber.

Griffin: He says,

Aloysius Supreme: Okay. For real. We've squashed a lot of beef here today, and that's important. And I feel good about it. But you do need to... I have so much stuff to do today. And I need you all to leave.

Devo: Right now?

Aloysius Supreme: Yeah. Basically.

Justin: [chuckles] Okay, we leave.

Clint: We leave.

Aloysius Supreme: Oh. Good luck! [quieter] You'll need it. [snickers]

Devo: What did you say?

Zoox: We didn't hear that, we left.

Aloysius Supreme: Good luck!

Devo: Yeah, what was this?

Aloysius Supreme: I said, good luck! Slow deeb it.

Devo: Ah, of course. The ancient language.

Griffin: [laughs]

Devo: Slow deeb it to you as well!

Aloysius Supreme: Yeah, I didn't threaten it. It was not a threat. Anyway! I gotta go. I gotta— I have a dentist appointment.

Devo: Okay.

Amber: `Kay, we had already left.

Devo: Yeah we were out—

Aloysius Supreme: Oh, my teeth are hurtin'!

Devo: We were out the door— oh, is it tooth-hurty, already?

Zoox: [guffaws happily] Taking a joke out of Highlights magazine! I like it!

Aloysius Supreme: [quietly] You— you'll be tooth-hurty before the day is done.

Devo: Sorry, what was this?

Zoox: We're not hearing— we're not hearing any of that.

Aloysius Supreme: Nothing! I didn't say— I said, "you'll flbe bloof flirty before meh nyurne-nun."

Devo: Mmmmm.

Zoox: A hype—

Devo: Are you flirting with us, my friends? Ahh...

Griffin: He stands, and says,

Aloysius Supreme: Well! I better be hitting the road. You all, good luck, don't get me killed, don't get yourselves killed.

Devo: Wait, sorry, should we go too? 'Cause this is your office.

Aloysius Supreme: Why don't you wait, like two minutes, so we don't have that uncomfortable weird— I don't want to be in an elevator with the three of you, that sounds like my fucking nightmare.

Devo: Ah.

[Tense music begins to fade back in]

Aloysius Supreme: So you all just kick it a few minutes, don't steal nothing. And... let me know when it's— I mean— "Let me know when it's finished" sounds pretty ominous, huh?

Devo: Yes, but—

Aloysius Supreme: Oh well, I'm gonna leave that energy just kinda sitting there.

Griffin: He says. And walks out.

Travis: Devo counts to a hundred and twenty Mississippi. And then they leave.

[Tense music plays for a moment]

[Advertisement break]

[Ambient music plays for a few seconds]

Griffin: Okay, you all have... have a lot right now. Is there anything else that you wanna do before you push off on this mission? Should we circle back on— Devo, you wanted to do a special... something, during the investigation scene. That you—

Travis: Oh, yes! Devo...

Griffin: More or less left and came back from. What was it?

Travis: Went— Devo went to go see the Hand the Guidance.

Griffin: Regarding what?

Travis: Let's play it out. [makes a whooshing time-jump noise.]

Devo: Hand of Guidance?

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: [deep growling voice] Yes?

Travis: [laughs] Now— What?

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: [Growling voice] It's me! The Hand of Guidance!

Devo: [laughing] Sorry! Sorry, wrong room. Let me try a different room.
[Makes time-jumping whoosh noise again] Hand of Guidance?

[Casual music begins to play]

Griffin: How about this? You— when you went to the Parish, earlier... the receptionist there was... is the one who greeted you. And she said,

Receptionist: The Hand of Guidance isn't really free right now. She's busy... I mean...

Griffin: She leans in close.

Receptionist: She's looking... she's decrypting some stuff, that you brought in?

Devo: Ah yes, no, yes, I know. I know, this is why I'm here.

Receptionist: Yeah, well, she's busy right now. She's the Ballaster—

Devo: In— ohh, she's busy, is she busy— she's busy in her office?

Receptionist: Yeah?

Devo: Oh, okay.

Travis: Devo just walks to the office.

Griffin: Uhh... okay. You... as you open the door, you indeed, you see the Hand of Guidance is working... She is looming over the table with that black sphere, that you all recovered from the ship. And she has her hands sort of outstretched over it. And there is like... y'know, there are sigils and shit appearing all over, that are kinda spinning around the table. And standing

on the other end of the table, doing the exact same thing, you see Brother Seldom. And Brother Seldom looks up at you, and says,

Brother Seldom: Devo? What... It's... what are you doing here? Do you need something? We're— the— we—

Griffin: And as they interrupt the flow, all those sigils disappear. And he goes,

Brother Seldom: Damn it! [sighs] Yes. Yes, Devo.

Devo: I needed to talk to Guidance, for a moment. Uh... no one told me that you were busy, I had no idea.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: The receptionist runs in, and says,

Receptionist: I told— I told him that you guys were busy! I told him you guys were busy!

Devo: This is a lie, she is lying.

Griffin: Uh—

Devo: I had no idea.

Griffin: The Hand of Guidance looks at you, and says,

Hand of Guidance: She's not lying. You're lying.

Devo: No, I know. No, I was being, uh... cheeky.

Hand of Guidance: Okay. We are doing our best to try and make sense of what this is that you brought to us, Devo.

Devo: Mmhmm.

Hand of Guidance: And we are working very hard. And some people very much don't want to be here right now.

Griffin: And she looks over at Brother Seldom. And she says,

Hand of Guidance: So... what is it that we can help you with?

Devo: I need a moment alone with you, Guidance.

Griffin: Brother Seldom... looks at you, and kinda tilts his head, and says,

Brother Seldom: Devo, I know you have your differences with the Hand of Guidance, but we are on the verge of... something pretty major here. And... [sighs] I— you know what? This isn't my place.

Griffin: He goes and brushes past you as he walks out of the room. And he says,

Brother Seldom: But we need to get back to work soon. Okay?

Devo: Yes, of course. Of course. Yes. Very much so.

Griffin: Okay. Uh. He leaves.

Travis: Devo closes the door behind him.

Griffin: 'Kay.

Travis: So it's just the two of them.

Griffin: 'Kay.

Devo: Guidance, what aren't you telling everyone else? What do you know about this, that you are not telling them?

Hand of Guidance: Are you kidding me.

Griffin: She says.

Hand of Guidance: Are you kidding me?

Devo: Mmm, let me check. No. But there is... if there is one word that I would use to describe you, it is "withholding." And so let's see. We find a Benevolence ship, from Hominine...

Hand of Guidance: Mmmm.

Devo: And lets—

Hand of Guidance: Hominine— just so I make sure, Hominine, the city that I walked away from. And walked away from my life—

Devo: Ah, to come here? And set up a new branch, of the church, that worships the god that founded Hominine? Yes, yes, that's the one. So I would say you are probably the preeminent expert on all things Benevolence and Hominine. And yet, when we find this ship, you say "I know nothing about this! This is a mystery to me as much as it is to anyone else!"

Griffin: She walks over to the door. She walks past you and opens it. And she says,

Hand of Guidance: You are not free to come and go from my office, and come in here and insult me, and— I know that you got a raw deal because of what I did. I am— I am well aware of that, Devo. Okay? I do not appreciate you coming and insinuating that I am conspiring against the city that I left my life behind to help establish.

Devo: Hmmm.

Hand of Guidance: I don't— okay.

Griffin: She looks outside, at the receptionist, and says,

Hand of Guidance: Devo's leaving now.

Griffin: And she walks back to the table. She gestures to Brother Seldom to come back in, who looks at you, and walks up, and says,

Brother Seldom: Devo? You're... you need to give this some space, okay? You gotta understand—

Devo: Seldom? You have to understand. I know her better than you. And what she does, what the Hand of Guidance is meant to be, what it represents... is a beacon. Right? Right? And a beacon can guide but it can also blind. Her whole purpose is to draw people into trusting the parish. Into trusting Benevolence. Into trusting. You cannot trust her.

Griffin: Make an insight check.

Travis: [rolls dice] Uh... it's a 17 plus eight, a 25.

Griffin: Oh, okay. He's pissed off. He looks at you, and he says,

Brother Seldom: Well, thank you, Devo, for telling me how I should deal with a member of the Church that I have known for my entire life. I am taking every precaution that I need to take. And you need to understand that maybe... you don't know everything that you think you do.

[Music plays softly]

And that I... [laughs gently] that I am... I am doing everything that I need to do to keep this city safe right now. So. I appreciate your confidence. But maybe consider that *you* don't know her as well as you think you do.

Griffin: And he walks into her office and shuts the door. And you hear a click as it locks behind him.

[Music fades out slowly]

Griffin: [makes time-skip whoosh sound] Now we're back in real present time. [laughing]

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: And... you all— does anybody have any other business here in the city, before you... push off?

Justin: Hmm. We don't have any money to spend.

Griffin: You have two Lux.

Justin: Ehh.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: We got two Lux to rub together.

Griffin: If you want to spend the last of your two Lux to rub together on rations, that... you know...

Travis: Then I guess we need rations, Griffin! We gotta eat.

Justin: Gotta eat.

Travis: Unless we're gonna stop by like an undersea fantasy McDonalds on the way there. Come on!

Griffin: Okay. Do you want basic rations, which basically cancels out the negative—

Travis: The best rations two Lux can buy.

Griffin: That's generous rations, that gives you a plus two to your readiness rating.

Travis: Then...

Justin: Really nice.

Travis: Really good rations.

Griffin: I am also going to give you a plus five to intel, because you all did a really good job cracking the case, so to speak.

Travis: Hell yeah! What's that mean?

Griffin: Uhh... what do you mean?

Clint: Kraken, it's a big animal, like tentacles...

Travis: No, I got that. What's our intel, how's that help?

Griffin: It adds to your readiness rating whenever you make a random roll.

Travis: Hell yeah.

Griffin: Which, as you push off from Founders' Wake following the sort of tracker on this business card... I do want you all to make your random roll, please!

Clint: Oh god, who's turn is it?

Travis: I haven't done it in a while, can I go?

Griffin: Yeah, Trav, do it. It's a one... a d... a 1d100.

Travis: [rolls dice] 68! Aw, so close!

Griffin: [groaning] Awwww...

Justin: [groaning] Dang!

Travis: Fuck!

Griffin: [groaning] Shit!

Justin: Aw, it was almost funny.

Travis: Ah, damn it.

Justin: Damn it!

Griffin: Uh... okay, 68 plus nine is 77. Yes.

Justin: ...Yes.

Travis: That's two lucky numbers.

Griffin: That's really lucky. You find a billion—

Clint: It's also the heart of the disco era.

Travis: Wha—

Griffin: You find a billion dollars.

Travis: Hell y— but money doesn't mean anyth— if only it were Lux! This is just paper!

Griffin: Alright! Um. You all... are basically headed out into open ocean.

[Ambient music fades in]

Like, the other sort of jobs have taken you toward geographical undersea landmarks, like Abyss, or the Phytal Flats, or y'know all these different places. This is basically just like... empty— big empty ocean, that this card is leading you out to. And you've been going that way for... a couple hours. When all of a sudden, your tonewheel chimes, very faintly.

[Ringing sound effect]

And you hear a voice come through it. And the voice says,

Voice: Hello?

Devo: Hm?

Voice: Hello? Oh my— oh my god, hello? Is someone there? Can you hear me? Hello?

Devo: Yes, hello.

Voice: Is this— are— is this real? Are you a ship? Are you... are you... who is this?

Devo: This is a ship. Who is this?

Voice: This is Matt. I'm a delivery driver, for Faracore? I— my engine's dead, I been out here for like five days! Can you please help me? Please!

Travis: I'm gonna make an insight check, Griffin. To see how I feel about this situation.

Griffin: Okay... Oh, I don't have to say that into my hands.

Travis: [rolls dice] Yeah. Oh, nope! That's a two plus eight, that's a 10.

Griffin: Yeah, so what you have picked up is that a dude named Matt—

Travis: Uh huh.

Griffin: Who's a delivery driver for, um, a company called Faracore? Um. Is in a ship, that is— engine's been dead for a long time. And he needs help.

Zoox: Devo?

Devo: Yes?

Zoox: May I offer a suggestion?

Devo: Always, yes.

[Music fades out]

Zoox: Tell him, "Ten four good buddy. What's your twenty?"

Devo: Okay. Uh. "Fourteen, good buddy, what's your twenty?"

Zoox: No!

Devo: No?

Zoox: No, ten—

Devo: Okay, I was joshing. Okay.

Zoox: Ten, hyphen— oh! [giggles]

Matt: [laughs]

Devo: Where are you?

Matt: Great one!

Griffin: He says.

Matt: Good jokes! So, I'm dying.

Devo: Uh huh? Uh, Amber, do you know anything about this Faracore?

Justin: Um. Let me do um...

Griffin: History, maybe.

Justin: History? Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: [rolls dice] Nope. [laughs]

Travis: Fuck.

Griffin: You've s— with an eight, you've seen the name before. And it's like... let me think of what an Earth equivalent— it's like, you see the name of companies on trucks, and they're like, "Oh well we do industrial... uh... sort of, management, of..."

Justin: So... okay, yeah...

Griffin: "We do fulfillments—"

Justin: Is it like when you get something from DHL, and you're like, what is this? [laughs]

Griffin: What the fuck is DHL? Right?

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: No, it's not a d—

Justin: Who uses DHL??

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah. Exactly.

Travis: I assume it's for deliveries for the hockey league? Would have to be my guess.

Justin: Hey, shoutout to DHL, I am sorry that you guys are...

Griffin: We don't know anything about you, yeah.

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Probably putting in work.

Devo: I say we help him. I mean, maybe it is... uh... I don't know. If it is a trap, it is a very weird trap to set up here in the middle of the open ocean.

Amber: Yeah, yeah, yeah, let's help him out.

Zoox: Yeah!

Griffin: Okay!

Devo: Okay.

Griffin: You follow the signal from the tonewheel, and find a ship. It's... it's bigger than your own, mostly you can see it's just sort of like—

Amber: Dibs.

Griffin: Oh, okay. Uh. Mostly it just like a large cargo space, with a tiny bridge attached to the front of it. Um. And it is like, completely dark. It is fully without power.

Travis: Does it appear damaged?

Griffin: Um... make a... Make an investigation check. Any of you can make an investigation check.

Travis: [rolls dice] Nope. Two plus three. Or no, wait. What? Ni— sorry, nine plus three, 12.

Justin: [rolls dice] I got a 16.

Clint: Umm...

Travis: Zoox?

Clint: [rolls dice] Yep.

Travis: Investigation check?

Clint: It is a nine.

Griffin: Amber.... Roll again.

Travis: [snorts, and snickers] Do better.

Justin: Allllright. [rolls dice] Now it's a 15.

Griffin: You get the impression, Amber... that you are seeing this ship in a way that Zoox and Devo, like... are not. And it's not just that you are, y'know, smarter than them and able to survey this ship better than them. You actually notice that, like... it's like you're looking through air, when you are investigating this ship in the water. The lights of the Coriolis are just shining off of it, it's the only illumination, but it's like you are looking at something in a large room right in front of you, not like you are looking at something through cloudy saltwater. And this has happened a couple times now, where you've been sort of on the Coriolis and when you look outside it's like, y'know, you're wearing a new prescription of glasses.

Justin: Oh my gosh!

Griffin: So when you're underwater, it's like you are seeing things more clearly than you are, on land, or rather, I guess, in the city or on a ship or something. With a 16, you can see that it is not damaged. You can't see any sort of external damage, aside from the fact that the engines aren't on, the power's not on, there is no sign of life here.

Amber: Guys. Um. Two things. One, it seems... um... not dangerous. Two, I think I have sea-seeing.

Zoox: [gasps reverently]

Devo: What?

Amber: Sea-seeing!

Zoox: That's when you send an email to somebody else, right?

Amber: It is, thank you Zoox, yes. But also, like, I can see through the ocean with my incredible fish sight. My sea-seeing!

Devo: Okay!

Zoox: Whoa!

Devo: And you're—

Amber: Do you see? Sea-seeing!

Devo: Your sea-seeing—

Zoox: Yeah, I see!

Devo: Is through the sea... and it's not dangerous? This is not— this is fine?

Amber: Sí. I'm practicing my Spanish a little bit.

Griffin: [laughs]

Devo: Okay. Then let's help this guy out, I guess!

Griffin: Okay! How are you doing that?

Travis: The bathysphere?

Griffin: Uh... okay...

Clint: Are we still in communication with him?

Griffin: Uh. Yeah? I mean, if you want to be.

Clint: Well, I mean, does he want rescued, or does he want us to try to haul his ship? Hauling his ship isn't gonna do any good, is it... I mean, he'll die...

Travis: No, and his ship is bigger than our ship.

Griffin: He says,

Matt: Uh, yeah, I mean I just don't have anything to repair my engines with? So I don't know if you all have some tools, or... uh... can give me a jump?

Devo: Okay, wait. So to clarify, Matt, are you asking for a ride, or are you asking us to help you fix your ship?

Matt: I mean, I can't just leave this... my merchandise out here. I would be in... you know, as good as dead, so...

Devo: Well, not as good as dead, huh? Because...

Matt: That's fair, I mean... I suppose, if... if you would take me aboard, and I could go home, that's one thing. But if you guys could just like, you know, jump my ship? You know what I mean? That would be better?

Devo: Okay... uh... Sure?

Travis: Okay, Griffin, we're gonna help repair his ship?

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Man, everything about every episode of Star Trek, of— basically any sci-fi show I've ever watched, where like you come upon a ship that needs help? We're about to get fucked, I just can't see what direction it's coming from?

Justin: It's like... yeah, but it is coming, ya know?

Travis: But it is coming! But we're gonna help him, let's do it!

Griffin: Well, let me press against that, and say, if that is your true sort of gut... Oh, whatever, I'm not gonna metagame this—

Travis: No, that's what— that's what Travis feels! Because he's watched a lot of TV.

Griffin: Okay!

Travis: Devo has never seen television.

Zoox: Could I make a suggestion? Do you think we have the time for me to swim down there, and scope it out a little bit, before we just go down and start helping this guy?

Devo: Uh... yeah! Why don't you go down there and start poking around the front of the ship, to see if you can sneak a peek through the front window. The viewport, I believe it's called, I don't think it's called a window.

Zoox: I would like to do that, if that would be alright with you guys.

Amber: Yeah.

Zoox: Okay!

Devo: Matt, we are sending our Brinarr friend Zoox down, to have a look. To see if he can determine how he can help from the exterior first.

Matt: It's not... the exterior is fine. My engine is dead. I just need—

Devo: Ah, of course. But you know, Zoox believes that you can tell a lot from the exterior of a ship. It's not weird.

Zoox: Mm mm!

Matt: It feels kinda weird— okay, yeah. Fine. I— yeah. Okay. Beggars can't be choosers. That's fine. Whatever.

Clint: Okay. Zoox dives into the moon pool, and heads out.

Griffin: Okay! How exactly are you scouting? Are you just trying to look in windows and shit?

Clint: Um, I think... yeah. Is there... Yeah, I think he's trying to look through viewports, look through portholes, or whatever? And...

Griffin: Yeah, the cargo space itself doesn't have any viewports that you can see, it's just like a big eighteen-wheeler cargo container, essentially. The bridge, you can definitely look into, and it is... I mean, it's so dark in there, dude. It is derelict. You can see that there is a helm, that is unhelmed, [chuckles] that is unmanned at the moment. But that's like— that's like the only thing that you can see in there.

Give me... why don't you give me— if you want to make out more, you're gonna need to do an investigation check, or something, something else. But just on first sight, that's about all you can see.

Clint: Zoox is casting Faerie Fire.

Griffin: 'Kay.

Clint: Inside the cabin. Inside the control room, whatever it is.

Griffin: Uh... okay...

Clint: Because it's just where he can see! It's a 20 foot cube, in blue, green, or violet.

Griffin: Okay...

Clint: And casts it on the inside... of that control room. Of that interior.

Griffin: [amused] Okay! Uh... so, Faerie Fire: "each object in a 20 foot cube within range is outlined in blue, green, or violet light, your choice." Please choose.

Clint: Uh, green.

[Bright swarm music plays softly]

Griffin: Okay. "Any creature in the area when the spell is cast is also outlined in light if it fails a dexterity saving throw... for the duration, objects and affected creatures shed dim light in a 10 foot radius." You cast this spell, and you can see now inside of the bridge. And it is difficult to kind of make sense of it, right? Because this is a room with a lot of complicated machinery, and stuff, that is now all glowing in bright green light.

[Swarm music fades out]

There is one figure, that is outlined in this green light, that simply was not there before. But now that you have cast this spell, you have illuminated it in green light. And it is... it doesn't make any sense. Because you see... arms, and legs, kind of sticking out of a vaguely human-shaped mass, that is just kind of twisting around itself? It is... [chuckles] I haven't used this word in a while, for this show, but it is... it is phantasmal. For lack of a better word. And you see it, kind of look down at itself, and acknowledge that now it is visible. And then it looks up at you, Zoox, and you see several faces.

[Ethersea theme music fades in]

Several humanoid faces, that look at you curiously... and then its arms extend, and the window that you were just looking through shatters suddenly. And Devo and Amber, from aboard the Coriolis, you see this green light appear, and illuminate Zoox, before this windshield that he was looking through shatters. And then he is pulled into this ship in the resulting implosion, and then is gone.

[Theme music plays out]

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