

The Adventure Zone: Ethersea – Episode 34

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

Not long after you leave the ghost ship behind, you see a large... It looks like a very fancy like taco.

Receptionist: Identify yourself.

Devo: We are looking for some... [clicks tongue] Uh let's say for some very special uh vintage? Wink?

Receptionist: Okay, uh weapons on the ship, leave `em. If you want, you can go and... uh wait in the parlor.

Amber: Hey, someone! Please! My friend's dried out!

Receptionist: Come with me and— and— and you two stay put, okay?

Travis: And Devo changes his glamour weave to match the red.

Griffin: Ohhhh!

Travis: Of the jumpsuits.

Griffin: Okaaaaay.

Justin: Cool.

Travis: And heads out the door.

Griffin: You recognize the Dreams of Deborah. And from out of that ship walks Aloysius Supreme. There are 32 guards standing out in front of the door and they are wearing like, actual plate mail armor.

Devo: But Zoox, if you can make it up to that higher level, there is some kind of uh window you might be able to peek in and see if you can figure out what is going on.

Clint: I think he's going to sneak onboard the Dreams of Deborah.

Griffin: Uh, but the ship's security protocol is now sort of active in the room that you are in.

Amber: Hey, where are the animals? I was gonna check 'em out, 'cause I'm pretty bored.

Receptionist: No no no no no. So what are you actually doing here?

Amber: Um, well right now... Um, I'm blackmailing you.

Receptionist: Oh.

Griffin: You smell like a really intense chemical smell, and then... you black out. You realize that you are actually in the middle of the jungle, and a polar bear rears back on his hind legs and... jumps towards you, claws extended.

[intro music plays]

Griffin: Amber you got polar bear problems. Um—

Travis: Pfft, we've all been there. Yeah.

Griffin: It's one polar bear problem, it's one big polar bear that has just uh, sort of swum up, swam up, out of a lake.

Travis: Swimmied?

Griffin: Swimmied. In this jungle environ you find yourself in. Uh, you are unequipped. Whatever sort of gear that you had on you, that— or equipment that may have proved useful in this situation, you do not have at hand. Although—

Justin: Why?

Griffin: You have been stripped of that gear.

Justin: Ohh, they took my—

Griffin: While you were unconscious.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: Um—

Travis: Hey Griffin, can I just say, big kudos. So fantastical to imagine a polar bear in like a jungle setting? Like how did it even get there? That's wild. Right? Like can you ima— I've never seen anything like this before.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: A ju— 'Cause a polar bear—

Griffin: Have you ever seen— Oo, hey. Have you ever seen my two butt cheeks?

Justin: [wheezes]

Clint & Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: 'Cause you—

Travis: Can I tell you, Griffin?

Griffin: You can—

Travis: An unfortunate amount of times.

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah. Uh... Thi— Thi— This polar bear has reared up on its hind legs and uh roared at you, Amber. What— What do you do?

Justin: Um... Alright, I'm gonna try to make myself look— Actually, first. [chuckles] I wanna do Nature to see if I know anything about polar bears.

Griffin: [laughs with delight] 'Kay, yeah, sure.

Travis: Oh, that's—

Justin: Why— What's so bad— That seems like that's very—

Griffin: Well that's gonna require me to know if I know anything about polar bears

Justin: Go on Wikipedia.

Travis: I know about polar bears.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Ask me.

Justin: Go on Wikipedia.

Griffin: Yeah. I know it's—

Justin: Uh, no worries, it's 11. I know that they're usually white.

Griffin: Um... yeah. This— This polar bear looks— You would say this polar bear looks kinda tired.

Travis: Mm.

Griffin: That might just be because its fur is all kinda matted down from the water that it came out of. That being said, on its hind legs here, it is still much bigger than you. Uh and uh, seems pretty pissed off. Exceptionally pissed off, I would say. Uh as for—

Travis: Did you know that a polar bear's fur is basically like clear.

Griffin: Yeah, its skin turns—

Travis: And its skin underneath its skin is black.

Griffin: Its skin is dark, yeah. Um—

Travis: So it can collect the sunlight and stay warm. That's just a polar bear fact.

Griffin: And he like-a drink-a dat cola cola cola cola.

Clint & Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: So, what do you do?

Justin: So I don't have any... Do I have any like rations? Did they take all my rations?

Griffin: Your like bag, which I guess is your— your— [chuckles] I don't know if you keep your—

Justin: My finny pack.

Griffin: Yeah, I don't know if you keep your road gear in your— your bag of holding, essentially. But uh yeah, you don't have— uh you don't have anything.

Justin: Mmm... Okay, I'm gonna try this.

Amber: Shhhhh...

Travis: Bold.

Amber: It— It's okay.

Justin: And I like raise my hands in a comforting way.

Griffin: That's sweet. Make an Animal Handling check.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: Amazing. 12 plus three, 15.

Griffin: Yeah, it is just enough for it to drop back down to all fours. Um, and look at you kind of quizzically.

Justin: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Um and it starts to take a step forward, and then... You actually see its ears perk up before you hear what it is hearing.

[twigs snapping and grass rustling]

Griffin: And then a moment later, you hear... some rustling coming from some— some nearby brush.

Travis: Clever girl.

Griffin: Which uh... At the— Yeah, and a second polar bear comes out from behind you. And it eats you.

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh and when it hears that, the— the polar bear just goes rushing off into the jungle.

Justin: Yes.

Griffin: Uh and it runs away from you.

Justin: Nice.

Clint: Well played.

Griffin: What do you do?

Justin: I wanna look around and see if I see any like possible... I don't know— di— I— Is there anything notable, I guess, would be my question.

Griffin: I mean, this— this rustling sound is approaching you.

Justin: Oh, okay.

Griffin: So that is notable.

Justin: So this situation is happening to me, rather than something I necessarily need to deal with.

Griffin: Right. Someone is approaching where you and this bear just had a standoff. Um—

Justin: Uh I'm gonna try to hide in the brush.

Griffin: Okay. Um, make a... hmm.

Justin: Stealth?

Griffin: I will let you do Stealth or Nature, right?

Justin: Stealth! Perfect.

[sound of dice rolling]

Travis: Would Nature be in—

Justin: Fuckin'—

Travis: Oh.

Justin: Fuck. Two plus two.

Clint: Wow.

Griffin: Wow.

Justin: Just unbelievable. Crumbelievale.

Griffin: Okay, you like... You lay down behind like a— like a flower.

Travis: Well.

[more grass rustling]

Griffin: You get down behind— You get inside of—

Travis: Griffin, that's cold.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh—

Travis: Not only are you visible, you're wicked dumb.

Clint: [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah, it's the— You get into a thorny briar, uh and I'm not gonna make you take damage for it, but you are actively making noise when someone enters this— this clearing that you are at.

Travis: You get mud on your pants in a way that makes it look like you pooped yourself.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: Aww, God.

Griffin: Uh—

Travis: Now that would— Sorry, that would be a critical failure. You didn't a one, so the—

Griffin: You got a two.

Travis: Yeah, so the poop isn't— So it doesn't look like you pooped yourself.

Griffin: So you know it's not— You know it's— It's a stretch to say "That looks like poop on that person's pants".

Travis: Right, but if there was like a teenager around.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: And they really wanted to roast you.

Griffin: They would roast you for it.

Travis: They would do it, yeah.

Griffin: Yeah. Um, the— the person that enters this clearing is... a...

[more grass rustling]

Griffin: A slender, tall person wearing a, just a plain shining golden mask, without any kind of like facial features on it. It almost looks like a— a— You know, like the— the front of a diving helmet that is completely opaque, you can't see through it. Uh and they— they seem to have some sort of like fancy segmented uh armor on, and they are carrying a big, like, harpoon gun.

Justin: Cool.

Griffin: And this person walks into the clearing and looks at your just kind of like writhing in this bush, and they say...

Masked Man: Um... Do you— Do you need a hand there?

Amber: Yeah, where— Sorry, where am I?

Griffin: Uh, he reaches down and holds out his hand. To help you up.

Justin: Yeah, I take it. Why not?

Griffin: Okay. Yeah, he pulls— he pulls you up out of the briar and uh sort of like pulls back one of the— the thorny vines that have gotten stuck on your— on your kit, uh... And he says...

Masked Man: You're Amber, right? One of the— the interlopers?

Amber: Yeah, that's me. An interloper.

Griffin: You hear him giggle, and... he says—

Masked Man: Well, you're clearly somewhere you shouldn't be. Uh, you probably don't need me to tell you that. You are... on... a facility of, I would say eccentric... oligarchs. [Griffin chuckles] And uh you— you have sort of caught the ire of some of them, and they are people whose ire you do not want to possess. And I do regret to inform you that you are being hunted. Not by me!

Amber: Oh.

Masked Man: But by other, other folks.

Amber: You got anything against me?

Masked Man: I do not, I am not actually a murderer of people. So uh, you have nothing to fear from me, that is not how I roll.

Amber: What's your— What's your fuckin' deal?

Masked Man: My deal?

Amber: Yeah, what's your fuckin' deal?

Masked Man: The language is...

Amber: Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend your delicate sensibilities. What's your... deal?

Masked Man: Uh... I'm just— I mean I'm... If you must know, I'm just here for the sport. Um... but not the—

Amber: Ohh, right.

Masked Man: Not like the people sport.

Amber: The greatest sport?

Masked Man: W— Well the greatest [chuckles] sport, as we all know, is high-lie.

Travis: I thought it was golf.

Masked Man: Um.

Justin: Oh, God.

Masked Man: No, uh uh... I'm here for the Hunt, of course. Uh I'm here for the— the beautiful extinction. Um—

Amber: Right, right, right. Yes, alright. Have— You got your eye on any— anything in particular?

Masked Man: I think you just met my quarry. Um...

Amber: Oh, shit...

Masked Man: And I am glad to see that you are unharmed. This is a dangerous animal that you seem ill-equipped to handle, so um... Yeah, I wish you no harm though. I do need to get back to my hunt. Um...

Amber: Oh, sure. Well I don't wanna distract you, sure.

Masked Man: Yes.

Amber: Um... You got any... weapons I could have?

Masked Man: Here is my... ethical dilemma.

Amber: Right.

Masked Man: I mean you no ill will, but at the same time I don't want you to kill... my associa— Associates feels too familiar.

Amber: Competi— Competition?

Masked Man: It's not a competition. I don't want to be... uh forcibly removed from the premises because I gave someone a dagger—

Amber: Right, right right right right.

Masked Man: — that they then stabbed another member of the organization with.

Amber: Right, right right right right.

Masked Man: Um. Soooooo...

Amber: [quietly] Any tools? Any tools or any— Anything you can kinda give me? I'm kinda empty-handed here. And it's like, if you think about it, shouldn't a hunt be fair? Right? Like you're huntin' this cool ass polar bear, it's got sick claws and— and everything, and I'm just askin' you to help me like even the odds, you know what I mean? So it's not just like a slaughter.

Griffin: Make a... Persuasion check.

[sound of dice rolling]

Amber: Nevermind, it was stupid.

Travis, Clint & Griffin: [laugh simultaneously]

Amber: I don't know what I was— Just ignore me. [chuckles]

Griffin: Uh that was a six minus one, a five. Uh, he thinks for a second and then he says...

Masked Man: I... I'm sorry. I genuinely would love to help. I think that what uh... has been ordered here for you and your friends is... uh... monstrous. But—

Amber: What'd they order?

Masked Man: That you won't be leaving the—

Amber: Dead?

Masked Man: Yes.

Amber: Kind of like a dead thing, or—?

Masked Man: Like a dead thing. Um...

Amber: [sighs and blows a raspberry]

Masked Man: I can tell you though... that... the ready room for the hunt is all the way over there.

Griffin: And he points uh way off in the distance. And when you look up, you can see that uh the— the ceiling here is just this glass arch that runs the length of the ship, and this is what you saw, essentially, outside. Uh this— this jungle, uh that— that you are standing in occupies most of this facility. Uh you are standing on one end of it and he has pointed at another end that you would estimate is maybe like... I don't know, a half mile away. This is an enormous facility. He points all the way, he says—

Masked Man: Uh at the other end of the ship, uh you could find access to the ready room, and then once you're in there, I mean... The security forces of this ship probably won't let you out, but at least you won't be uh... Ill-equipped, unarmed, and going up against professional hunters. Um so your odds, I would say, would improve, in— in that regard.

Justin: Alright, I'm gonna head for the ready room.

Griffin: Okay. He—

Amber: Hey. Hey. What's your name?

Masked Man: I do— I wickered don't want you to know that.

Amber: So— Yeah, absolutely makes complete sense.

Masked Man: Call me— Call me Clyde. Uh...

Amber: Eh.

Masked Man: And— Okay.

Amber: What else you got? [chuckles]

Masked Man: Jim.

Clint: [laughs quietly]

Masked Man: Wi— Jim... Jimbo... Jimbo.

Amber: Alright.

Masked Man: Jimbo Fret.

Clint: Jimbo Clyde's a pretty cool name.

Masked Man: Jimbo Clyde is my name, and... It's— I— It— No. One big word.

Travis: [intrigued] Hmm!

Griffin: He says uh...

Jimbo Clyde: Yes, I— I— I would wish you luck. Uh, you are going to need it. I will tell you the odds are pretty well against you, but— wha— Can I ask what you're doing here even?

Amber: [uncomfortably] Ah... I would prefer not to answer that query as well, in the same fashion of your... choice.

Jimbo Clyde: Right. Okay, which way did the bear go?

Amber: What?

Jimboclyde: The bear, which way did it go?

Amber: You just missed him.

Jimboclyde: Which way did he go though?

Amber: [quietly] You just missed him.

Jimboclyde: You're not going to tell me where the bear went, are you?

Amber: Are you gonna give me a gun?

Jimboclyde: No, I'm not going to give you a gun.

Amber: Alright. Well. Seems we're at an impasse.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: He looks around and he says—

Jimboclyde: Oop! There's the trail. Okay, bye!

Griffin: And he wal—

Amber: Yeah, no. That's— That's legit.

Griffin: And he walks off toward uh where the bear left.

[quiet jazz piano music plays]

Griffin: Um Zoox... You are standing in Aloysius Supreme's private chambers aboard the Dreams of Deborah. Uh you were trying to search a desk and not... doing particularly well at— at said search, when a... very familiar looking security sprite floated into the room.

[electronic scanning noises play]

Griffin: You can tell it has not noticed you. I'm assuming during your breaking and entering you are generally being kind of discreet. Um but it

has entered the room and seems to be entering in a sort of guard perimeter route around the room. What do you do?

Clint: But it has not seen Zook.

Griffin: It has not seen Zook. You have seen what these things look like when they are activated, this thing is not activated yet. "Yet" being the operative word there.

Clint: Well if he hasn't been spotted yet, I think he continues to search the office.

Griffin: Uh... Okay. You're gonna have to give me sort of a description of the physicality, like what is going on, 'cause this thing is moving around the room. It will definitely clock you. Give me a— Uh give me an Arcana check to— 'Cause I— You should probably know how much you know about these things.

[sound of dice rolling]

Clint: That would be a... Oh, great. It's contagious. A one.

Griffin: You... know... just as much as you know your... name. You— You know, like an old friend, that... uh these things... can only... detect sound. They can't see anything. Uh they— You can move around all that you want, as long as you do it quietly, these things only have—

Travis: It sounds like a lie, but... [chuckles]

Griffin: No, this is— this is absolutely the truth, and this is what Zook knows.

Travis: Ah.

Griffin: In— In the coral that would be his bones.

Clint: Then I think uh, Zook will stand absolutely still.

Griffin: Now, you're metagaming pretty hard right now. [pause] But okay.

Clint: Okay.

Griffin: Zoox stands absolutely still.

[pause]

Griffin: And the drone floats towards him. And then once it gets close [chuckles] to him, it turns in his direction and lights up with bright red flashes.

[electric noises pulse erratically, along with upbeat music]

Clint: Fine, great.

Griffin: Seeing him instantly. And knowing.

Clint: And Zoox says— Zoox says—

Zoox: Oh, thank God you're here! Oh!

Griffin: [imitates a blaring siren in the distance] Wah! Wah! Wah! Wah! Wah!

Zoox: No no, I have been— Um I was on this ship before. Earlier. I was part of the crew of this ship before, you can check the logs and see. And I left a pair of tongs on this ship, and I cannot find it— find these tongs anywhere. Um do you have any idea where the— where they keep the tongs? I've been kinda wandering around and thought— I thought they were in here. That uh, Aloysius used them to serve like ice in drinks. Uh, tongs? Any idea?

Griffin: [sighs]

Zoox: Is there like a tong, uh, you know, storage area?

Travis: So Dad is, just for reference, Dad is trying to... outwit um like basically a motion detector.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Right? Basically— Like if I broke into a house.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: And the alarm started going off, I would turn to the panel—

Griffin: A—

Travis: And say to the panel—

Griffin: [shouts from a distance] “This is my house!”

Travis: “You don’t understand!”

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: “I’m friends with Steve? Who lives here?”

Griffin: Uh, we’ll play it out though, ‘cause I’m pretty sure you’re gonna roll bad on this. Give me a Deception roll.

Clint: Deception. Not Performance. Okay.

Griffin: No, you’re fucking lying.

[sound of dice rolling]

Clint: Deception roll. Okay, wait a minute!

Travis: Uh-huh.

Griffin: [claps vigorously]

Travis: Great. Great.

Clint: Two! Two crit ones in a row?!

Travis: Sometimes the dice match the narrative.

Griffin: That’s so fucking good, Dad. Thank you. That’s so good. Um—

Clint: Glad I could contribute.

Griffin: Yeah. Uh, give me a Constitution saving throw.

[sound of dice rolling]

Travis: Gotta be due like an 18 now.

Justin: Yeah.

Clint: 19.

Griffin: Uh, okay. Uh a small wire launches out of this thing and imbeds itself in your shoulder. Uh and you... feel your body immediately tense up as a very unpleasant amount of voltage—

[buzzing of electrical energy]

Griffin: Courses through you. You take... uh nine points of lightning damage. Uh however, you know, because of the make-up of your body being not the traditional make-up of your— of a person, you are not tased, bro. Uh... but the drone re— the wire recedes back into the drone.

[metallic sliding sound effects play]

Griffin: Uh which floats over you, and then seeing that it, you know, landed a hit and that you went down on the ground, it flies out of the room, the alarm still blaring. And you hear some movement, through the— the— the viewports, outside on the dock. You— You hear some more folks rushing in to the... uh into the docks, approaching the Dreams of Deborah. What do you do?

Clint: Well, let's see. Um... I'm gonna try my tongs gambit again.

Travis: Wow.

Griffin: On people—

Clint: I'm gonna rush—

Griffin: [sighs]

Clint: I'm gonna rush towards the sound of the footsteps. And see if I can convince humans, or humanoids. Uh... that I'm sincerely searching for tongs.

Griffin: In the time that it takes to run to the airlock... you feel— And maybe it's the electricity coursing through your body, you feel like you've taken the Limitless pill, and that you could maybe think up a better object that one could leave at a ship that would bring them to a strange facility, out in the— in the middle of the deep, dark ocean.

Clint: Oh, okay. Got it, got it.

Griffin: Without permission from anybody aboard. After being told to stay in a place and then walking away from that place, breaching security protocols knowingly.

Travis: Now Griffin, you don't know. Maybe one of these pursuers grew up having a set of security tongs.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: That they loved as a child so much that to be parted from Tongy—

Griffin: [quietly] Yeah.

Travis: — would've been like the end of the world. They would've uh gone to the ends of the earth—

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: — to be back with their beloved Tongy.

Griffin: The airlock opens and there are three guards there. Uh each— uh two of which are holding—

Travis: Each holding tongs. [chuckles]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Each [chuckles] holding electrified tongs.

Travis: "We get it, man."

Griffin: "Listen, man. We love our tongs." Uh, no. They are— They are holding crossbows and they are in almost like a phalanx position uh as they— as you stand at the door as it opens the ship.

[metallic roller door opens noisily]

Griffin: Uh you are inside the ship still, they are outside the ship, and one of `em says—

Guard One: Freeze! Get down on the ground. You are being apprehended. Don't make any sudden movements, okay?

Clint: So they're outside the airlock and I'm inside the airlock.

Griffin: Yes.

Clint: So I don't make any sudden moves.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: [quietly] Good start.

Clint: I just veeery slowly raise my hand like I'm gonna wave and then I hit the button to shut the airlock.

Griffin: Uh, make a Dexterity saving throw.

[sound of dice rolling]

Clint: That would be a... 22.

Griffin: Fuck yeah. Uh yeah, you— you hit the button and a bolt looses from one of the crossbows. And the door like just taps it.

[metallic door slams and the crossbow bolts clinks against it]

Griffin: And sends it flying away from your head, where it was going to hit. Uh, and it clatters to the floor of the airlock. Uh and the— the security sprite is outside, you— you— you saw through the door, and you hear it start honking again and the— the security guards protest. And then you hear them trying to pull the— the airlock door open from the outside, but you are inside the ship and they are stuck out.

Clint: I run for the control room.

Griffin: Li— The bridge of the ship?

Clint: Yip!

Griffin: Okay. [laughs]

Clint: The bridge.

Griffin: Alright. Uh you know it, like—

Clint: Yeah.

Griffin: Anything that you wanna do in here, like I will— I will uh, you know—

Clint: I want— I want to leave.

Travis: Yup.

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: I want to leave.

Travis: Makes sense.

Justin: “I’ll be going now.”

Clint: I want to drive away in the Dreams of Deborah.

Justin: No more adventure for me today.

Griffin: Um...

Clint: I’m leaving.

Griffin: Okay. Okay. Uh, you did not pilot the Dreams of Deborah the last time you were here.

Clint: Oh! Au contraire! I did—

Griffin: You did—

Clint: I did pilot the Dreams of Deborah.

Griffin: You did! You took a turn, didn't you?

Clint: Yes, I did take a turn.

Griffin: Okay. Uh... Yeah, I— I— I can't think of any— I think Aloysius Supreme, you know, boarding the— the super fancy undersea station, where he wants to probably impress all the super fancy, I don't think he would take, you know, his keys with him necessarily. I don't think he would think that anybody would do him dirty here. Uh so yeah, the— the— the controls— The helm is yours.

Clint: Um, I'm going to submerge.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: And— and toodle on out of there.

Travis: [scoffs]

Griffin: Okay. [chuckles] You sub— You submerge and you hear the dudes at the airlock, one of `em falls in the water. Uh you— you hear through the— [chuckles] the glass viewport in the bridge, someone go—

Guard Two: Ah, get outta there, Jeremy!

Griffin: Uh and people trying to scurry about as alarms go off all over the station.

[multiple blinking alarm noises play]

Griffin: Uh and you depart, and leave this— this [chuckles] this moon pool deck, leaving the Crescendo Quarters. Uh after you get about, like ten seconds after you get free from the facility, the tone wheel right in front of you starts to ring.

[pleasant, tinkling phone rings]

Griffin: And... We'll jump over to Devo. Devo, you have sort of left the hot zone uh where people had started to sorta become suspicious of you up on that— that higher level, uh where you had kind of seen into this gallery. Uh where— where—

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: Where folks were looking out. Um... You had taken the elevator back down, correct?

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: Okay, uh yeah. I mean—

Travis: Now, here's what I— I would like to posit, and you tell me if I'm way off base. I like the image of— He's like— It's like a glass el— he's looking down, and he sees people like, you know, knocking people out and taking her away. And he looks up and he sees the security gem like honking and glowing red, as he's just like in the middle. Of the elevator going down. Like—

Devo: [in a fancy voice] Well, shit.

Travis: [chuckles] That— Like we—

Griffin: Make a d— I will say this, the alarms are going off.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Like i— everywhere, uh in this— in this station. So like, you know that something... at least for the people here, bad has happened.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Give me a straight d20 luck roll, and I'll tell you whether or not you actually saw Amber being taken away.

[sound of dice rolling]

Griffin: I will say you tried to tail—

Travis: I got— Agh! It slid across on a 19! And then it bounced to a one.

Griffin: Uh...

Clint: [mockingly] Well, well, well!

Griffin: [chuckles] This is— Guys—

Clint: How the tide has turned!

Travis: Dad, we're on the same team!

Clint: Oh naw! It doesn't feel like it!

Griffin & Justin: [laughs]

Travis: But it does— No, when I'm rolling, I want to do good. Okay.

Griffin: Uh, okay. I'm not gonna— I'm not gonna hit you for a— a— I mean bad luck roll, you... I don't know. A bee stings you.

Travis: Aw, bummer.

Griffin: That's right a bee got— a bee got to—

Travis: I'm deathly allergic!

Griffin: [chuckles]

Travis: Was it the last bee? I'd feel terrible if that was how the last bee died.

Griffin: No, weirdly... There's lots of bees.

Travis: They all came back?

Griffin: They all came back. It turns out what they needed was to go underwater.

Travis: [thoughtfully] Ah...

Clint: They're sea bees.

Griffin: They're sea bees. Uh... Yeah no, you don't see— You definitely did not see Amber being taken away. I will say like you tried to hail Amber, uh on the— on your— your—

Travis: Shellphone.

Griffin: Crystal tone wheel, your shellphone, and it did not uh... She did not pick up. But you don't know what happened to her.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Uh the elevator exits out into the lobby. Uh, you see the woman who is working at the front desk sort of come walking back and bust out a magazine and start reading it while like the rest of the station starts to freak out around her. Otherwise, you have not been clocked, so whatever you wanna do here, you are allowed to do.

Travis: As— As people are like freaking out and running around and stuff, do they seem to be going to a certain location? Is there something— is—

Griffin: I'll tell you actually, a lot of them are rushing for the elevator that you are on. Uh so when the doors open up, there's actually a lot of people who are like waiting for you to get off so that they can get on.

Travis: I see. Uh-huh. Well... So I'm gonna go back up with them.

Griffin: Okay. [chuckles]

Travis: I'm gonna hold the door and be like—

Devo: Yeah, come on! We have to go!

Griffin: Uh some guy says—

Guard Three: [in a quavering voice] Yeah, but didn't— don't you wanna get off? Isn't this the floor you wanna get off on? Why would you take the elevator to the first floor if you didn't wanna get off at the first floor?

Devo: I— I hit down when I meant to hit up and—

Guard Three: Aww, that's so embarrassing.

Devo: Yes.

Griffin: Okay, uh...

Travis: 'Cause one of the reasons he left the upstairs is it was basically empty, he stood out too much.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: But if that's where those people are, and Amber's not answering.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: And— yeah.

Griffin: Uh... Then... Okay, I'm not gonna make you roll for that, 'cause you have like a plus 19 to Persuasion and I know you would succeed, so uh you— you board the elevator [chuckles] going back up. Uh and everybody gets off and runs to the Upper Harbor, uh where you see a group of people gathered around a very soggy security guard.

Uh at that point, you see Aloysius Supreme sort of standing at the dock, chewing out the other two security guards, and the drone, the sprite, which is just kind of like floating kind of sadly, now that it's being uh... told off.

[sad electronic noises play]

Griffin: In this manner. You also see... the Auctioneer. Rather you see sort of a hard light... avatar?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: That you saw at the— at the Abyssal Auction. You don't know like... what— whether or not there's a, you know, it's a suit that someone's inside of, it's another one of those projectors, you're— you're not sure, but you see the form of the Auctioneer. Uh who is... just kind of standing idly by, uh watching Aloysius Supreme have a freak out.

Travis: So everyone's pretty distracted this point, right?

Griffin: Oh yeah, for sure.

Travis: Uh, I wanna look over at the door where I saw Aloysius go into earlier. Have the guards like moved away from there, I assume to like come to this thing, whatever's happening over here?

Griffin: Um... There's still one. There's still one guard posted up by the door. Uh, it is— it is the one that kind of gave you some side-eye earlier. The other guard that was posted up here has— has peeled off to come look at this commotion. Uh—

Travis: Okay, great.

Griffin: But— But yeah, it is much— it is much emptier up in that hallway where... where uh, you saw that door first.

Travis: Okay, I'm gonna make my way, uh around there, with everyone distracting.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: And I'm gonna cast *Charm Person* on that one guard.

Griffin: Oh! Interesting. Uh give me— break— break me off a piece of that spell description card.

Travis: Uh you're gonna need to make a Wisdom saving throw.

Griffin: Okaaaay... Uh, that is a 14?

Travis: Mm.

Griffin: Versus your... spell save? Which is—

Travis: Uh, my spell save is 15. It was raised by one, right?

Griffin: Uh, yes. That's right. With the— With the— the gills that you ha— Not the gills, the frills.

Travis: Right.

Griffin: The frills, not the gills that you got.

Travis: When then— then it succeeds!

Griffin: Okay. Uh so with *Charm Person*... Uh, da da da da da... The target sees you as a friendly acquaintance.

Travis: Yeah, we're buds.

Griffin: So this big, armored guard, holding a halberd, uh immediately stands at ease and is like—

Guard Four: What's up?

[chill jazz piano plays]

Travis: Uh—

Guard Four: Holy shit, dude?

Devo: Yes, it's me. It's Devo.

Guard Four: Devo! I can't— I almost forgot your name there for a second, despite the fact that I— you are a friendly acquaintance of mine,

Devo: Of course, yes. We've known each other forever. Um, uh let me ask you a question.

Guard Four: Dude, bro. Hey, hold on.

Devo: Yes?

Guard Four: You remember... high school?

Devo: Of course.

Guard Four: When uh, you remember when Stinky Jeff and me and you...

Devo: Mm-hmm.

Guard Four: We went— We... went to that grocery store.

Devo: Yes.

Guard Four: And we... unpeeled all of the nanners?

Justin: [snorts]

Devo: Yes, I remember this. This was good.

Guard Four: Yeah. And we just—

Devo: And they had to glue them back together. [chuckles] Oh, that was—

Guard Four: And they glued 'em back together, and we had— and we called them "sticky— sticky nanners".

Devo: Yes.

Guard Four: And then we called the grocery store at night, and we were like [in a funny voice] "Hey, I— why are your nanners so sticky?" [giggles quietly]

Devo: I remember this, yes. This was very good.

Guard Four: Yeah, man. I got grounded for like a year for that bitch.

Devo: Oh, noooo. Really?

Guard Four: Yeah.

Devo: I didn't know this, I'm so sorry.

Guard Four: [simultaneously] What are you doin' he—

Devo: [simultaneously] Hey, who's in there? Just pu—

Guard Four: What are you doin' here, man? This is crazy!

Devo: Yeah, but just like friend to friend, I'm looking for another friend. Is— who's in the uh, in that office right now?

Guard Four: Hey, do you like boba tea?

Justin: [laughs]

Devo: I do, and we can talk about that uh in just a minute, but first uh who's in there.

Guard Four: I know this great boba tea place.

Justin: [laughs]

Devo: Okay, now come on. Friend to friend.

Guard Four: It's weird, they have these weird little bubbles in them.

Justin: Why does— Why is it, in the world of TAZ—

Travis: Uh-huh. When someone's charmed.

Justin: That charm— charm turns people into sent— sycophantic like needy, emotional vampires.

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: Well, also tea. Tea-lovers.

Justin: Right. Tea.

Clint: With a penchant for beverages.

Griffin: Yeah, fair point.

Justin: Yeah, who love tea.

Griffin: Um...

Guard Four: Yeah, I mean who—

Justin: Like you can't just be a normal person that likes somebody, you know what I mean?

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah.

Justin: It's like.

Guard Four: I mean, there's a bunch of uh, you know.

Clint: [chuckles]

Guard Four: Rich just— just bonkers like wild, like super rich dudes in there. And—

Travis: Is the guard wearing a helmet?

Griffin: Uh, yes.

Travis: To have like a face covering?

Griffin: Uh... I— It's like a, armor helmet. Like they are wearing— This is a— This is— They are— They look so out of place.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Griffin: This is— They look like full-blown medieval knight level like royal guards. Um... he says—

Guard Four: Yah, yeah I— I mean, do you know anyone in there? Like who are you lookin' for? Tell me and I can tell you if they're in there.

Devo: Uh, you know, I— the thing is, I— I don't know. I was sent with a message, and I was told to deliver it to, let me look here, the richest looking asshole in the room [laughs briefly] So I think it's like a prank, maybe? That one friend— You love pranks, right?

Guard Four: Oh, dude!

Devo: Like the sticky nanners?

Guard Four: Like the sticky bananas we did.

Devo: Mm-hmm.

Guard Four: Yeah, I do love pranks, I guess.

Devo: Yes, right?

Clint: [laughs]

Devo: Okay, so in— Can you hel— Now, listen. I don't know if you still like to be part of the prank?

Guard Four: [clearly tempted] I mean, ohh, I don't wanna be in trouble.

Devo: No, hey.

Guard Four: That's the one— they—

Devo: You won't get in tro— I'm your friend!

Guard Four: Yeah.

Devo: I would not let you get in trouble.

Guard Four: It's just the employment contract for this place is kind of weird.

Devo: Yeah.

Guard Four: `Cause it said that they could legally kill me.

Devo: No.

Justin: That is weird.

Devo: I am your friend, I am not going to let— You— We've known each other forever.

Guard Four: Okay.

Devo: So—

Guard Four: Yeah no, they said they could legally kill me if I do a bad job, but yeah. Absolutely, dude.

Devo: I'll make sure this doesn't happen. Can I— I just need to borrow your halberd.

Guard Four: My halberd?

Devo: Yeah.

Guard Four: [playfully] Duuude! I—

Devo: I'll give it right back. It's the— The prank is going to be so epic, even Stinky Jeff uh... will be impressed that we pulled this prank off.

Guard Four: [sighs]

Devo: Does he still go by Stinky Jeff?

Guard Four: Yeah, I mean he still stinks like shit, doesn't he?

Devo: Hell yeah, dude.

Clint: [wheezes]

Guard Four: He di— He definitely didn't change his name "Jeff". So.

Clint: [laughs from a distance]

Guard Four: You know, if the shoe fits.

Griffin: Um, make a Persuasion check with advantage.

Travis: Okay.

[sound of dice rolling]

Travis: Uh... That's a 13...

[sound of dice rolling]

Travis: And a 23.

Griffin: Yeah, that 23'll cut it.

Travis: Thank you.

Griffin: He says—

Guard Four: Uh, okay. If anyone asks you where you got that halberd though, say you got it from the other dude that has a halberd here.

Devo: Got it.

Guard Four: And I'll say that he took my halberd.

Devo: Yes. What is his name?

[music stops]

Guard Four: His name? Francht.

Devo: Francht?

Guard Four: Francht.

Justin: Sorry, Francht?

Griffin: Can you guys not make a big deal out of it every time?

Justin & Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: I'm trying to im— I don't have a billion names written down this season where I'm like—

Justin: Clearly.

Griffin: "And this guy's got a big backstory that I'm gonna spend a whole episode talkin—" I'm—

Justin: [wheezes]

Griffin: I'm fuckin' shootin' from the hip, and sometimes I shoot a Francht. [chuckles]

Justin: [laughs] But you know lots of names, though. [wheezes]

Griffin: Okay, fine. Let me try again.

Travis: No no no!

Griffin: No, let me try again.

Justin & Clint: [simultaneously] No!

Travis: For all we know—

Clint: I like Francht!

Travis: There's someone listening at home right now named Francht who heard that name and they were like—

Justin: [wheezes]

Travis: "Oh Griffin's doin' listener names again! I didn't know!"

Griffin: Okay, fine.

Travis: "He named one after me!"

Justin: "Francht!"

Travis: "Francht!"

Griffin: Anyway.

Travis: "Francht Grm!"

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: Francht Gervil.

Justin: "Francht Gervilman!" [wheezes]

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: [giggle and claps] "I'm the only pizza-blasted person in this place!"

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: "Francht Burpleman!"

Griffin: Anyway.

[quiet jazz piano music plays again]

Guard Four: What are you gonna do with the halberd though?

Griffin: He asked.

Devo: [coyly] Oh, you'll see. You'll see!

Guard Four: Okay.

Travis: Uh and I— Devo takes the halberd and slips through the door. Goes through the door.

Guard Four: Wait, you didn't— You didn't say anything about going through here.

Devo: Oh, I have to for the prank. I told you, I have a message for—

Guard Four: Is the prank that you're gonna stab and kill one of these—

Devo: Noooo, I'm not going— I'm not going to stab and kill anybody. The prank is I have a message to deliver and I need the halberd so that I look like I belong there.

Guard Four: A stabbing-based message?

Devo: No, I told you this. I'm not going to stab anyone.

Guard Four: Okay, man. Whatever you say!

Griffin: Uh, and he steps aside and lets you walk through the door.

[chill jazz piano fades out]

[ad break]

[deep electro bass notes play]

Griffin: Amber, you have been navigating this jungle for... I don't know, we'll say about 20 minutes or so. Uh...

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: And it is... I mean it's very clearly like a simulacrum of a— of a jungle. I don't know if—

[ambient insect noises play]

Justin: Is it man— Is it uh... synthetic? Or organic?

Griffin: That— That's the thing. Like it's organic, right? But it's very, very— like there's a lot of trees, but it's like palm trees, which is not exactly what's goin' on in a jungle. It's—

Justin: Like Disneyworld.

Griffin: Yes.

Justin: It's very tended.

Griffin: Like a jungle that was made by somebody who had a jungle described to them once. It's very muddy, it's very humid and wet in here. There's a lot of like um, streams that you are going through, but again it's very clearly like someone dug this out and there's, you know, some sort of plastic at the bottom of the stream keeping things kind of... together. Uh it's like a— it— It is a hunting grounds more than it is a... attempt to recreate or preserve the ecology of— of somewhere.

Justin: Mm.

Griffin: About 20 minutes into your walk, you still have not sighted any other animals or hunters, uh but you do start to hear a noise as you get— You're— You know, maybe just looking up at the ceiling above you, you're close to the halfway point. To the other end of the ship. Um, you hear these deep, pained grunts.

[deep grunting noises play, accompanied by moving water]

Griffin: And you hear what sound like splashing. Uh and it is— it is through some thick brush, so thick that you can't, you know, see what's

on the other side of it and whatever's on the other side of it cannot see you. Uh that is the first thing that kind of like breaks up your journey. What do you do?

Justin: Uh, can I roll Perception real quick?

Griffin: Yeah, absolutely.

Justin: Just to see, split second, if I get anything more.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: I mean. [sighs] It's a one. I mean it's a one.

Griffin: Guys.

Travis: Griffin.

Griffin: [counting] One, two—

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Three—

Justin: Just stop the podcast.

Griffin: Four. That's four this episode.

Justin: Stop the podcast and talk about this.

Travis: Yeah, let's.

Griffin: [chuckles]

Justin: This has gone too far. We can't get a story going, 'cause I—

Travis: You need to give us some do-over tokens or something.

Griffin: No.

Travis: Where's our do-over tokens?

Griffin: [mutters] There's no do-over tokens.

Justin: Okay, Griffin. What do I see— Then just tell me what I see.

Griffin: Um—

Travis: What do— What do his elf eyes see?

Justin: What do I perceive?

Griffin: Y— Here— Here's what you perceive. You got— You got too close in your Perception, uh and so I'll tell you what you see, but it's also going to— The abyss will also look back. Um.

Travis: Oh no.

Griffin: You... I don't know, trip on a root and fall through this brush, and now you can see very clearly what was making this— this noise. There's a uh a muddy pit that is in a small clearing, right next to uh sort of a waterfall basin, a very small one. Uh and this pit, you can look into it and see, it's about um... It's about five feet deep, with pretty steep kind of edges. It's a— a— a pretty sheer drop off. Uh so much so that this— this was probably a trap at some point, maybe in a pre— uh a previous hunt. Uh you can see some trampled stakes in— in the ground that aren't necessarily— The business ends are not poking up so much anymore.

Um... But you also see, inside of this pit, is... it's an auroch, as it was described to you. You probably saw them, right? You— You were on the surface. You lived on the surface. You have seen these things before. Uh just a big... kind of muscle-bound, furry bovine, with these loong, long horns that are sticking out straight out from it. Um this one is—

Justin: How big is it?

Griffin: How big is it? Uh... It is... I mean you can't quite tell the height. It's uh... But I mean, in terms of uh musculature, it's like bison-sized. Like it's a big— it's a big fucking cow.

Justin: And does it seem to b— So it appears to be trapped?

Griffin: It is trapped. You can see just looking at the sides of this pit, there's— there's uh... you know, signs of where it has tried to run up, but

you can also tell like it is covered in— in wet mud. Just head to toe. Uh and it looks pretty exhausted. Uh you can also tell from like one of its rear legs it is bleeding from a uh, from a wound. Uh a slash, it appears. Uh and it is making a lot of noise. When it sees you, it like freaks out, and tries to run away from you and climb up the side a pit.

[water splashes violently]

Griffin: It— The side of the pit away from you, but it is just not making— It is— It is making it harder for itself, the more it tries to clamber out of this pit.

Justin: Right. Um... I wanna look around for like vines or sticks or anything useful like that.

Griffin: I— I won't make you roll for that. There are vines and sticks fuckin' everywhere. Um.

Justin: Yeah, that's what I thought. Uh, I wanna find a strong-lookin' piece of vine that seems to be securely attached to a tree. Or one that will come loose easily and that I could tie onto something.

Griffin: Um, okay. Why don't you make a Nature check for me?

Justin: Okay.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: It was almost a one, and then it was a seven.

Griffin: Okay, um... Uh, I'm just gonna say it takes a while. Right? You find— You find what you are looking for, but it takes some time. Uh the whole time, this— this auroch is making a horrible racket.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: That is just getting louder and louder.

Justin: Okay. I'll go over and try to— okay.

Amber: This didn't work before, but shhhhh. It's okay.

Griffin: Um... Make an Animal Handling roll.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: [disappointed] It's a nine. I mean, it's a nine plus three.

Griffin: Okay. No, it responds.

Justin: Okay. Good.

Griffin: You see it— Uh, it stops trying to run for a while. It is not like— It is not making an escape attempt when it sees you approaching it sort of gently. Uh you get the impression that it has not had a person approach it gently, maybe ever. Um and so it stops its breathing very, very fast still, and is sort of standing in the middle of the pit.

Amber: [comfortingly] Alright, listen. You're gonna be okay. We're gonna get you out.

Justin: And then I kind like throw the vine to it, and then realize that that's not actually gonna do anything.

Griffin: [laughs] Yeah, it looks down at the vine and then it leans down to try and eat it.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Griffin: And then it looks up at you like "Eat it?".

Amber: Um...

Griffin: It likes that! It's eating it happily, like [makes satisfied eating noises]. Like a big-a spaghetti.

Justin: [chuckles] Okay.

Amber: No, no no no, don't— don't eat it. Um. Ah, fuck.

Justin: Alright, so I'm gonna try to tie it around the auroch's—

Griffin: You're gonna have to get down there.

Travis: It's only five feet. It's not the worst.

Justin: [reluctantly] Maaaaan.

Griffin: Yeah, I'll t— That's a good p— I will give you this. You're a monk, like. You would— You would be able to hop your way out of this, [chuckles] you assume.

Justin: Okay. Alright, let's go with that. I'll take that.

Griffin: I— I— It would not take me long to look at your features and traits to find some bullshit excuse for why you can jump five feet vertically, straight up in the air.

Justin: Yeah.

Travis: You could put your hands on the side of it and lift yourself up! You got four of `em!

Justin: Alright, I'm gonna clam— clamber down there.

Griffin: Alright, uh it—

Travis: Amber down there.

Griffin: It is actually so distracted by this delicious uh plant spaghetti that you threw down here that it— it is not freaked out when you approach it.

Justin: Okay. Uh I'll start to wrap the— try to tie the cord around... the thing.

Griffin: Okay, um... With advantage I think, use Sleight of Hand. You are a fisherperson sort of by— by trade originally, so you know your way around a knot or two.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: I can't believe I just used two good— Fuck. Two eig—

Clint: [laughs] Two to tie a knot!

Justin: Two 18s! Plus two to tie a knot.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh okay, dudes. Please recognize there is a difference between tying a knot and creating a fuckin' buffalo harness, that you can use to— [chuckles]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Drag, uh with—

Justin: Fair enough. Fair enough.

Griffin: Yeah, with an 18 plus two like you— you get this thing well, well sort of suited up in several knots at key, load-bearing bovine parts of this— of this creature, uh and there is— there is still plenty of slack on the vine. Uh that— that you can use to try and free it.

Justin: Alright, I'm gonna hop out.

Griffin: 'Kay.

Justin: Of the pit.

Griffin: Yup.

Justin: And... start pullin' on the thing. Now I know I'm not gonna be able to deadlift this thing out, but I'm hoping that I can give it a little bit'a—

Griffin: Traction?

Justin: Just a little bit'a extra traction, a little bit of extra juice.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: Juice.

Griffin: Yeah, this— this thing picks up what's your— what you're putting down, and as it feels this tug it looks up annoyed at you first, that it can't eat this anymore. But then you see him take a run at the side of the, of the pit as you pull. Make a uh... Make a Strength check for me.

Justin: Can I use one of those 18s that I used—?

Griffin: [laughs] Sadly no.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: 19. Oh, God. It was almost a one. 19 plus two.

Griffin: Yeah! Uh it— it takes a minute and there's a moment where you feel like it's just not gonna happen, and then it leaps upward and you just manage to tug it clear of the pit, and both of you go sliding in the mud. Uh and it lands... next to you for a moment, and then it hops up to its feet and immediately tries to run away. Just like immediately you see it hop on all fours and try to— to run away.

Amber: Shhhhh, shh shh shh shh shh shh.

Justin: I still got the— I still got the— the cable tied around it.

Griffin: Yeah, you definitely still have this vine wrapped around it.

Justin: Okay, I'm not let— I'm not lettin' it go, I'm tryin' to calm it down.

Amber: Shhhh, it's okay. You're alright. Calm down.

Griffin: Uh... It comes back at you and looks at you in the eyes and... it looks like it is scared, but not necessarily of you. Like it has gotten so close to you now, and it— it presses its forehead up against you as if it's trying to push you in the direction that it was attempting to run off just— just moments ago.

Amber: I'm gonna ride you now. And I need a win, alright? So just, we're gonna make this happen together.

Justin: And I try to get on its back.

Griffin: Uh... Yeah, make an Animal Handling roll, man. I'll—

Clint: [chuckles quietly]

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: Eight plus three, 11!

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: Nail— Nailed it. That's more than ten, I got it.

Griffin: Uh...

Travis: It's a 50/50 shot. Anytime you try to jump on a random animal's back, it's a 50/50 shot.

Justin: 50— [wheezes] 50 shot. Well, it's binary. You either keep yourself on its back—

Travis: Yup, there you go.

Justin: — or you didn't. So if below ten you didn't, above ten you did!

Travis: Okay. So, Griffin. It's a coin-flip, basically.

Griffin: It is a wild... muddy fuckin' bronco ride as you attempt to get on this thing's back. But it isn't like it's tryin' to buck you off, it just is kind of running around frantically. And it takes you a while to get this thing to chill. And it's making a lot of noise and throwing up a lot of mud as it does, and...

[discordant synth music plays]

When you finally manage to get it to slow down, and you finally manage to get yourself sort of comfortable astride it, you look up from this animal that you have now mounted, and you see directly in front of you a seven-foot tall... muscle-bound shirtless man, wearing a... a bull mask. And he is holding the biggest battle-axe you've ever seen. Uh and he is breathing deeply and looking at the two of you, and the auroch starts to very slowly trot backwards. What do you do?

Travis: [whispers] Jump on his back.

Clint: [wheezes]

Justin: [scoffs] Um...

Amber: Dibs.

Clint & Griffin: [cackles]

Griffin: Okay. [laughs] Uh, Zoox. The uh the tone wheel for the Dreams of Deborah, upon the bridge, uh rings.

[pleasant, tinkling phone rings]

Griffin: As you pilot the ship away from the Crescendo Headquarters.

Clint: Zoox picks it up and says...

Zoox: [in a high-pitched voice] Hellooooo-oooo!

Travis: Nice.

Griffin: Uh you hear... a guard say,

Guard One: Please identify yourself. You are in vi—

[sound of the microphone being grabbed play]

Griffin: And then someone grabs the tone wheel away from whoever was speaking and you hear Aloysius's voice say—

Aloysius Supreme: Yeah, who is this? Is this— I'm gonna guess, is this Devo?

Zoox: Uh no.

Aloysius Supreme: Or is it Amber?

Zoox: [cheerfully] Try again!

Aloysius Supreme: Is this Amber?

Zoox: Try again. The other one! No, the other other one.

Aloysius Supreme: You're kidding. Zoox?!

Zoox: Yeah! [chuckles] Yes! Wow. Really?

Aloysius Supreme: Wow.

Zoox: I was the last choice?

Aloysius Supreme: I just— I would not expect this kind of behavior from you, of all people, Zoox.

Zoox: Well. Yeah, I'm a work in progress.

Aloysius Supreme: Okay, well whatever reason you had for... the second time, stealing my— my vehicle, I need you to please return it now. I have other stuff I need to do today and I will need to be able to, uh you know, transport myself around. Also it's a terrible crime.

Zoox: Um, yeah see, now we're in this— this kind of uh... a situation where if I come back, I'm in trouble. But you know, if I stay out here and just, you know, nothin' bad's gonna happen to me. Um so [chuckles] um... I think I'm gonna— You know, it's— I miss this ship, I miss kinda... You know, havin' fun in it, cruisin' around in it. Um, you don't need it immediately, do yah? I mean aren't yah doin' a bunch of business in there?

Griffin: Hmm... Make a uh, a d20 roll plus Speed, which is gonna be uh a— a plus four.

Clint: Okay, hang on just one second. Alright! So, d20 plus four, here we go. D20... Roll it!

[sounds of dice rolling]

Clint: 17... Plus four is 21!

Griffin: Uh, okay. A— You see a flashing red light.

[electronic beep sounds]

Griffin: Suddenly appear in front of you and you instinctively like spin the— the control mechanism out of the way, and uh, an enormous explosion takes place just—

[explosion sound effect plays]

Griffin: — just outside the starboard side of the Dreams of Deborah. Uh and you hear Aloysius Supreme say—

Aloysius Supreme: Um... I've got lots of ships. So...

Travis: Oh.

Aloysius Supreme: Please understand that uh, I will be... It will cost me quite a bit to uh destroy the Dreams of Deborah with you inside of it.

[upbeat music plays]

Aloysius Supreme: But I assume that the cost will be far greater to you, because you will be dead. So I'm going to have to insist now that you bring this ship back to me, now.

Clint: Okay... Zoox is gonna play a pretty typical Captain Kirk kind of gambit.

Griffin: Cool.

Travis: Oh, boy.

Justin: Yes. Love this already.

Clint: He's gonna bluff.

Travis: Oooo!

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Ohhh.

Travis: Oh, bold!

Clint: He's gonna bluff and he's gonna say—

Justin: A classic bluff.

Zoox: I'm sorry, Mr. Supreme. I don't believe you are willing to blow up this ship. Because you and I both know there's something on this ship

that is much more precious than the ship itself. And I don't believe you're going to blow it up for that very reason. Now we can talk terms! And I can bring this ship back to you, and everything will be okay. But I sincerely doubt [chuckles] you're gonna blow it to smithereens.

Griffin: Mmmmm... Make a... Hmm... I don't even know what kind of check this would be. Guys?

Travis: Deception?

Griffin: There's not a Bluff roll... I guess it—

Travis: Performance?

Justin: De— Yeah, Performance or Deception.

Griffin: Deception would—

Travis: I like how the— like if I'm understanding it correctly, Dad's bluff is that Aloysius is bluffing, and the bluff is that Dad is calling his bluff.

Clint: Exact—

Travis: I love that.

Clint: It's the Corbomite Maneuver.

Travis: Of course.

Clint: It's the Corbomite Maneuver, call.

Justin: Corbanite. Corbobites. It's—

Griffin: Yeah, for sure. A— Yeah, it's the same modifier I guess for both things, so make a— make a Performance Deception check.

Clint: Performance...

Travis: Yeah, Perception— No, what?

Griffin: Straight d— Straight d20.

Clint: Straight d20. And...

Griffin: No faking.

Clint: It begins.

Travis: What does?

[sound of dice rolling]

Clint: And it is a two. [wheezes]

Griffin: [chuckles]

Travis: Welp!

Justin: Another fine roll.

Clint: At least it's not a one!

Travis: I mean yeah, it's— Yeah.

Griffin: You see uh some... apertures open on the side of this installation, and a trio of pretty big cannons...

[sounds of three weapons emerging]

Griffin: Uh appear and train themselves right on the Dreams of Deborah. And you hear Aloysius Supreme say...

Aloysius Supreme: I swear to you, Zoox, there is nothing aboard that ship that cannot be replaced. So... I— My attachment to it is purely sentimental. Um, I don't want to blow it up, but I will if it means that you are stopped in your tracks. So, return my ship to me, we can talk terms. You will be in some trouble, but you'll live to see tomorrow. And do whatever you do. I don't know. Just sort of— Soak in a brine?

Justin: That's not a bad deal. I mean think about it, it's not a bad deal.

Travis: Yeah, soakin' in a brine is nice.

Justin: Just 'cause it doesn't sound like the most compelling.

Travis: And because I think he's a bad guy, doesn't mean you shouldn't trust him.

Clint: [sighs] Well, okay.

Travis: I mean I wouldn't do it, 'cause I'm a cool badass—

Justin: Yeah.

Travis: — who challenges authority, but.

Justin: I'm— Lives by his own rules.

Travis: Yeah, I know, but—

Clint: Zoox—

Travis: I know you're a real pushover.

Clint: Well, I— I'm rollin' ones and twos here, guys. So I mean—

Travis: Yeah listen, yeah you're runnin' on fumes, yeah.

Clint: Okay. So is there like an— is there an autopilot? Auto-dock sequence I can punch in?

Griffin: Um yeah, sure. Yeah, you can get this thing back— back uh to— back to the dock you were just at.

Travis: Gonna roll over and show him your rock-hard underbelly.

Clint: So I'm rollin' over. Um okay, so I hit the autodocking and it starts to move back towards the dock.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: How long will that take?

Griffin: Uh, couple minutes. Uh, the cannons recede and Aloysius says—

Aloysius Supreme: I am so glad that you have listened to reason. Um... just sort of make yourself ready to be apprehended?

Zoox: Mm. Yup.

Aloysius Supreme: Whatever that looks like for you, uh and uh... yup. See yah— see yah soon!

Zoox: Okay...

Clint: And just before it gets to the dock, he activates the self-destruct and dives out of the moon pool.

Travis: Hell yes he does.

Griffin: Mm...

Justin: To what end?

Griffin: To the blowing up end.

Clint: Chaos.

Travis: To blow him—

Griffin: Umm...

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: Just chaos.

Travis: I love this.

Clint: Yeah.

Griffin: Alright, uh...

[huge, abrupt explosion sound effect plays]

Griffin: Cool.

Justin: [mutters] Blow up the Dreams of Deborah.

Griffin: Devo. Uh...

Justin: For no reason. [wheezes]

Griffin: [chuckles] Devo.

Justin: Hollow. [laughs] A hollow gesture of my hatred.

Griffin: [chuckles]

Travis: Hey, Daddy? I fully support it. For the first time in *TAZ*, you've done something I would do.

Griffin: Devo.

Travis: Uh-huh?

Griffin: Uh you walk into... a... uh a large semi-circular room and the far wall of it, the curved wall of it, is just one huge pane of glass over-looking a jungle.

Travis: Mmm.

Griffin: Um and... it— This ac— This room actually sort of descends a little bit, almost like an amphitheater, as there's rows of— of uh, like red velvet theatre seating of uh— A— A— And seated in these chairs are... Maybe nine or ten uh... people who are all wearing these— these golden masks covering their faces. You can't make out the identity of anybody here.

Uh, there are also a couple of custodians, or servers, walking around with uh, you know, flutes of champagne, or you know whatever kind of fancy-looking amber fluid, uh walking around and— and serving people. And... you hear them laughing. And... make a— make a Perception check.

Travis: Okay.

[sound of dice rolling]

Travis: That is... uh, a nine total.

Griffin: Hmm... Okay.

Travis: Pretty good.

Griffin: With the nine, I will tell you what they are laughing at, because you look through the glass. And it seems to be like, in— in parts of it, like magnifying.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Uh down into this— this jungle, into different places. Almost like where people are looking through the glass, it sort of senses that and can magnify these— these different places. You see Amber. And she is... trying to haul... the auroch out of a muddy pit and she is having a fuckin' hard time of it. And she is filthy, just— just covered in mud, and with each sort of attempt, the— the people in this room just like bust up laughing. And one of them says um...

Golden Mask Person: So, uh... What are the odds, do you think, that Bull gets to her before she can get that— that stupid beast free?

Griffin: And another person says—

Golden Masked Person Two: Oh, I'll take that wager! [laughs in an excessively snooty way]

Travis: [snorts]

Griffin: Uh, and they are just having themselves a grand old time. You also notice, as you sort of like get closer to the glass, that the wall that you sort of passed through the door from is... lined with the— the stuffed heads of a lot of animals.

Travis: Mm.

Griffin: Uh, most of them two by two. You see... some sort of... I mean, Devo didn't live on land, right? So like there's a big cat and there's a weird horse. Uh that's about as— as— as good as... as you can get.

Travis: Is it a unicorn?

Griffin: Yes. Uh you see two rhinos.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: That appear to have these like almost feathered collars around their necks, which you assume to be the tufted rhinos that have gone missing from the Menagerie. Um with that low Perception roll, you did not perceive that you got a little too close to the glass to look down, and a couple of the wealthy folks here have caught notice of you. And they say uh— One of them says—

Golden Masked Person Three: Uh, Guard. Why have you doffed your armor? I uh, I quite liked the look of it. I felt like a fancy sort of emperor, with his own—

Devo: Is it— Is it—

Golden Masked Person Three: His own armored coterie. [chuckles smugly]

Devo: [in an American accent] Listen, I understand, but you have to get out of here. I— I— I just heard word that the Curator has gotten word of our location and he is sending the Chaperones here as we speak to arrest all of us! The guards, every hunter, everyone! You— We have to get out of here! Aloysius has sold us out!

Griffin: [gleefully excited] Ooo, baby!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Make... Make a Deception check for me.

Travis: Well it's not a Deception, because I'm going to use *Suggestion* to contact the Curator.

Griffin: [gasps]

Travis: And send a message back that says "Found animals. They are in danger. Aloysius Supreme involved. Send back up to these co-ordinates." And then the co-ordinates where we are.

Griffin: [inhales deeply] Uh, okay... Ar— Is it *Suggestion*, or uh... *Sending*?

Travis: Uh it is— Sorry, *Sending*, yes. I'm going to send the message.

Griffin: You have the spell slots for that?

Travis: Yes, I do.

Griffin: Yes, you do. Okay. So you last used *Sending* in the last arc, so this is uh...

Travis: Correct.

Griffin: You've— You've had a rest. Okay. Uh... And they can respond? Right?

Travis: Correct.

Griffin: Uh... right. [reading the spell description] "And can answer in a like manner immediately." Okay! You hear a voice say, uh...

The Curator: [in an echoing, magical voice] I will alert Ballaster Kodira. We're on our way.

Griffin: Uh, this is no longer a Deception.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: So roll a... Intimidation check.

Travis: You sure it's not Persuasion? Okay.

Griffin: I mean you're trying to fuckin' scare these dudes. There's no way you're not—

Travis: That's a 19 plus four, a 23.

Griffin: That's— This was a good roll to get good.

[piano music start playing]

Griffin: Uh.

Clint & Justin: [chuckles]

Griffin: I would say... all but a few of them immediately bolt for the door. And seconds later, you hear like this exponentially increasing commotion coming from the Upper Harbor.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Uh... As you also hear a ship coming in to dock.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: And... The one that like sort of like addressed you stands up and then you realize this dude is a little bit tipsy, and he says—

Golden Masked Person Three: [slurring slightly] I think you might be telling me a fibaroonie.

Griffin: And he gets like way too close to you! And he's like—

Golden Masked Person Three: [slurring slightly] Are you telling me a fibaroonie?

Travis: Is everyone else out of the room? How many people are left?

Griffin: Uh, there's like one more sort of wealthy person that hasn't moved from their seat, and then there are a couple of very nervous-looking servers.

Travis: Okay, when the— when they're out the door, I close the door and I put the halberd through the handles.

Griffin: Okay... Okay. Uh, there is immediate pressure on the other side of the door, trying to reopen it.

[thumping sound effects play]

Travis: Uh so is this the ready room that was mentioned?

Griffin: No, this is— Uh, well. You would have no way of knowing that.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: But I will say that this room is— I mean, you also did not get that briefing from—

Travis: That's fair.

Griffin: Uh but I will say that this— this room is on a upper level, right?

Travis: Mm.

Griffin: Like over-looking the jungle. This is not some place that somebody could just trapse into. There's no access from the jungle into here.

Travis: Got it. Are there any weapons in here?

Griffin: There's a halberd—

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: — that has been shoved through the handles of the door.

Travis: Right right right. But I mean like any decorative crossed axes or something on the wall, or you know, guns.

Griffin: No. No, that would probably be down in the ready room.

Travis: Okay. And I go back to the tipsy one.

Griffin: Yeah.

Devo: Uh, so it seems like right now, in this second, uh you are in, uh... How do I put this? A great amount of danger.

Travis: And uh Devo pulls out his knife and puts the point to the chest of the man. Or the person, excuse me, who—

Griffin: Did you smuggle this knife in?

Travis: Everybody has a knife, Griffin!

Griffin: I think we addressed that in this instance...

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Okay, fine. Whatever. It's just a knife. No!

Travis: You know what? Here's what it is, Griffin.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Uh, Devo's got a necklace with a sharp point of steel on it. How about that? Does that work for yah?

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: A brooch! That's shaped like— Uh, no. Devo is go— Oh! There it is. Devo uh gives himself a spritz and his eyes start glowing blue.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: And he says—

Devo: You are in a great amount of danger right now, and so I am going to need you to tell me how to get to where my friend is. Uh where... is— How do I get down there to Amber?

Griffin: Uh... You hear a chuckle coming from this— this dude's helmet. There is— From behind his mask. And he says—

Golden Masked Person Three: Have you considered checking... betweext... betw— betwixt your butt cheeks? And then way up in— way up in it?

Devo: Mm.

Griffin: And then he just collapses to the ground, uh fully— fully blotto. The other masked individual sitting at the end of the gallery speaks up. And says...

Masked Individual: If you'd like, I could show you in there.

Griffin: Uh and... he stands up.

Devo: If— What is the rest of this sentence?

Masked Individual: Hmm... I mean, you would have to participate in the game. I uh... I'm not wild about having uninvited guests. And... So as... childish as it might seem, this is the most sort of theatrical way to deal with things, and my— my patrons enjoy theatrics.

Griffin: He says.

Devo: Ah, so I would be entering there... to become part of what's happening. Is this it?

Masked Individual: But you have— [sighs] You have [derisively] "magic powers" don't you, Devo? That's not uh... A particularly level playing field, is it.

Devo: You're aware of my name, yeah?

Masked Individual: I'm aware of your name and what you can do, and how very good you are at destroying undersea facilities. I um...

Devo: Ahh, Auctioneer!

Masked Individual: That's I suppose one name you could call me, sure.

Devo: Asshole? Perhaps would be another.

Griffin: [giggles]

Devo: Or Fuckhead?

Clint: [laughs]

Devo: Or Poacher? Piece of shit? Um, Monster? Uh let's see, Soulless Bastard? Um... What's like— Is there a shorter version of like somebody who takes innocent animals who aren't hurting anybody and makes them like, uh, a toy to be hunted for sport, to have fun? Uh they weren't doing

anything, and this is because humans are the real monster. Is there like a shorter version of this that you can think of? 'Cause right now it's escaping me.

Griffin: He... lifts up his mask. And you see... You see a young man, not much older than you, probably. Early 30s, you would guess. And he... has scars running down the length of— of his face. Three long sort of scars. Not like claw marks, uh but just these— these three long scratches, uh one of which has gone over one of his eyes, uh which is— is missing.

Devo: [mutters] Damn, that's a cool look. Fuck.

Griffin: And he says...

Tolliver: You could call me Tolliver, if you wanna be on a first name basis. I reject a lot of the labels you just threw down at my feet. Good gracious! But um... for the sake of expediency, um, Tolliver will do.

Devo: Tolliver, I have one question for you.

Tolliver: Yes.

Devo: Have you ever shopped at Nermal's Pile? It is uh, the hottest boutique.

Justin: [snorts]

Clint: [cackles]

Devo: In all of Founder's Wake. It is where I found this uh fine suit of clothing here. Uh you need to check it out. Now uh, if you would be so kind as to show me to where my friend uh is kept and then let her out and then let us go, and then I won't kill you.

Tolliver: Well before all that happens, I have one question for you, if you don't mind.

Devo: Is it about Nermal's Pile?

Tolliver: I'll admit I am curious, but no.

Devo: Gotta check it out.

Tolliver: Have you spoken to—

Griffin: And then the side of the ship explodes.

[explosion sound effect plays]

[outro music plays]

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