

The Adventure Zone: Ethersea – Episode 37

Published on April 28, 2022

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

Blink Shark: You will kill four-armed woman person until her death. Agreement?

Zoox: Oh, no. If I killed the white... stick people.

Blink Shark: Yes, excellent. Acknowledgment!

Zoox: If I do that, if I do that, we're good? We're cool, right?

Blink Shark: Mmm, we still die as noble sacrifices, but world safe, so... very good.

Zoox: I will keep the white stick people from hanging four-armed woman person in sky to boil off sea.

Devo: Let's go! Time to boogie.

Amber: We gotta get these animals on the ship.

Devo: Yes, I agree! Come on!

Curator: The rhinos did not... oh, dear. What happened?

Devo: Aloysius Supreme, uh, was part of a group called Crescendo, uh, and he helped them set up something where they stole the animals and then people were hunting them so that they could feel the thrill of snuffing out the last of, uh, an animal. There was a dude there named Tolliver.

Griffin: The only Tolliver you've ever known, the only person that ever had that name, was Declan Cern's little boy.

Kodira: We— we need to go home right now. I'm s— Devo, I'm so sorry. Um, the Hand of Guidance is dead.

[theme music plays]

[melancholy piano music plays in the background]

Griffin: The office of the Hand of Guidance is clean and bright, just as you've seen it every other time you've visited. Nothing is out of place at first blush. Uh, there's just Guidance, slumped over her desk, eyes closed, her face one of peaceful slumber. Sitting on the desk beside her, positioned with ritualistic precision, are two objects: a small silver cup, about shot glass sized, inscribed with the scales that serve as the insignia for the Church of Benevolence.

The other is a small glass vial, the sealed stopper for which has been cracked off to release the fluid that seemingly brought Guidance to her end. And... you are in here with Kodira and a couple of other Chaperones, and she stands from where she's been kneeling beside the body of her fellow Ballaster. And she is holding a sheet of parchment that she very solemnly hands to you, Devo. And it is a note in Guidance's handwriting. And it reads:

"Hominine is gone. It was all for nothing. I'm so sorry, Benevolence. I'm so sorry, Devo."

Now, when you all were brought in here, fresh off of your last mission, you received a briefing from the Chaperone who was sort of the first to report here. Uh, according to the receptionist for this parish, whose name is Adelaide, Brother Seldom and Guidance were working in her office most of the day yesterday, which is when you last saw them together, Devo, working on deciphering the Whisp that you recovered from the wrecked Hominine ship.

Is it that the orb is called— you're the one who came up with this. Is the orb called Whisps, and the spies who use them called Whispers? Or the other way around?

Travis: Correct.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: And that is— that's, like, the code sending, message sending machine, right?

Griffin: Uh, yes. That is the thing you guys recovered from the sort of golden wrecked ship that you all found during the Cambria sort of hunt. So, Seldom left before supper. Adelaide checked in on Guidance and found her in good spirits. She intended to work more on deciphering the Whisp, and so Adelaide left, and locked the parish up. And this morning, she found the door into Guidance's office locked from the inside, and after being somewhat alarmed, because she is not answering her calls, she busted in the door and found Guidance dead in her office. And that is the briefing you all have received.

Justin: So we see a silver shot glass...

Griffin: Yes.

Justin: Right?

Griffin: Yes.

Justin: Then there's a... you said like a vial? Phail? What have we got?

Clint: A vial.

Griffin: Uh, I don't know what the difference between a vial and a phail is. But it was—

Justin: Me neither. One sounds, like, a lot more fancy?

Griffin: Sure.

Travis: I think it's the way it's pronounced is the main difference.

Griffin: Maybe.

Clint: And spelled!

Griffin: This was like a, uh— a container that you couldn't just open. You would have to break it in order to get the fluid out. It's not like it had a—

Travis: So like a carafe or a samovar or a decanter? what are we talking about?

Griffin: Or a phylactery or a— yeah.

Travis: Yeah, okay. But it was like— it was sealed not just, like, with a cork. This wasn't, like, a bottle of, like, wine or something, right?

Griffin: No. This is a, you crack this open and it's like, you know, it's the nuclear option.

Travis: One-time use, in case of emergency.

Griffin: Exactly, right.

Travis: Got it, okay.

Griffin: Um, yeah. That is what you all see, and I think after handing you the note, Devo, Kodira says...

Kodira: Um... listen. We've taken a look here. I can give you some time. Uh, I can't imagine how hard this must be for you, and we need to start making arrangements ourselves. [shakily] We've lost— we've lost two Ballasters in the last 24 hours, so... [sighs]

Travis: It's important to know, I want everyone to know, since being told that the Hand of Guidance was dead, Devo has not said anything.

Griffin: Mmkay. Um, that is—

Travis: And now he says...

Griffin: A first. [laughs quietly]

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: [snorts]

Travis: And now he says...

Devo: This is fucking bullshit.

Justin: Whoa.

Travis: Yeah, it's powerful, man.

Justin: He took all that time [wheezes] to put that together.

Griffin: To really— yeah. [laughs] Those were his— the thoughts he's been sort of processing.

Devo: Who did this?

Kodira: I—I... it would seem that she did it, Devo.

Devo: Oh, no. This is the bullshit part. No, no, no, no, no. No, no, no. She would not do this.

Kodira: I— I didn't know her— listen. You knew her better than I did, and so that's why I want to give you a chance to... [out of the corner of her mouth] *take a look around?*

Griffin: She kind of Whispers under her breath. Uh, trying to sort of say that surreptitiously to your group without the other Chaperones hearing. She says...

Kodira: It would— it would— it breaks protocol a little bit for something like this, but if there is foul play afoot, I feel like you would be better at finding it. Because to me... this just seems like she took her life.

Devo: Hmm.

Amber: Alright. Alright, can we talk real quick?

Kodira: Yeah, I'll give you all the room.

Amber: Thanks.

Griffin: And, uh, her and the Chaperones leave and close the door behind them, and now it's just you and Guidance.

Amber: Alright guys, listen. I wanna be helpful, and this is terrible. But this is starting to feel... [exhales] this is starting to feel like a murder mystery.

Clint: [quietly] Ah-hmm? Hmm? Hmm?

Amber: And those things scare the ever-loving piss outta me. I'm really freaking out a little bit—

Devo: Wait—

Amber: — 'cause I can't do a murder mystery, guys!

Devo: Is it the murder part or the mystery part?

Amber: [groans loudly] That's half of it! The other half—

Devo: I mean, yes— uh, okay.

Amber: — it's the mystery!

Devo: But people have died around us a lot in, like, the—

Amber: [distressed] But we know why!

Zoox: 'Cause of us, usually!

Devo: So it's the uncertainty more than the murder?

Amber: [strained] It's both!

Devo: Okay.

Zoox: Okay. Okay.

Amber: [shuddering breaths]

Devo: How about— how about—

Amber: I need to put my head between my legs, hold on. Okay.

Devo: Okay, why don't you step out of the room and talk to Kodira, and get as much information about it as you can?

Amber: No, no, no, I'm not going by myself! What if she tries to tell me about a spooky clue?!

Devo: Oh boy. Okay, how about—

Griffin: I would also rec— sug— just request that you all don't immediately split up the party, please.

Devo: Okay. How about you freeze, and I will look around, okay?

Amber: Alright. Alright. This might just be a regular— just a regular death.

Devo: Yeah, sure. Yes.

Amber: Yeah, yeah, okay. Alright.

Zoox: Just [buzzer sound] —

Devo: Just a run of the mill murder.

Amber: Or maybe you'll know who did it right away!

Zoox: Yeah!

Amber: There may not even— I'm just gonna sit— I—

Devo: I mean, I would— if I may, and I don't want to be this guy, but this is also, as much as I hate this person, someone that I have known quite literally all my life. So maybe a little bit more taking it *seriously*? A little bit?

Zoox: Okay.

Devo: Okay?

Zoox: I will take it seriously.

Devo: Ohh, but the way you said this! I don't know if you mean it. Do you mean it?

Zoox: Okay, wait, wait, wait. [deep, gruff voice] I will take it seriously.

Devo: There it is.

Amber: Whoa.

Devo: Okay, I believe that. That was the most serious you have ever sounded, Zoox.

Amber: Oh, intense. Okay.

Devo: Okay.

Travis: Now, Griffin, I have been in this office countless times.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: I want to see what is— what is different, right? What is the thing that either isn't there that should be, or is there that shouldn't be, right?

Justin: Hmm!

Travis: I'm trying to find... anything that's, like— that's different.

Justin: Alright, Travis. I'd like you to roll investigation with advantage.

Griffin: No, what? Huh?

Travis: Uh-huh.

Justin: Because you know the room so well.

Griffin: What?!

Travis: Thank you, Griffin. I will.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: No, I didn't say that! That was Justin!

Travis: I will see—

Justin: Our voices sound so fricken similar. That didn't sound like me.

Travis: [simultaneously] I rolled a 13 plus 3.

Justin: Okay, a 16.

[dice roll]

Griffin: What just happened?

Travis: Oh, and a nat 20, baby!

Justin: Oh, nice! Thank goodness!

Griffin: Wait, no! You don't get to roll with advantage! What are you talking about?!

Justin: [wheeze-laughs]

Travis: I rolled a nat 20, Griffin!

Griffin: I don't give a shit!—

Justin: [simultaneously] I tried, Travis. I tried. [wheezes]

Griffin: You shouldn't have wasted it on Justin's DM-ing.

Travis: But it was a nat 20, 'cause you said I knew the room so well!

Griffin: Hey, Juice, if you wanna— Juice, if you wanna fuckin' DM—

Justin: I don't. I don't.

Griffin: Oh man, it would be so good though!

Justin: [wheezes loudly]

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: I don't. I just like— you're right, I shouldn't have. I was just— how—

Travis: But you said I knew the room so well, and I got advantage, and so I got a—

Justin: I have to—if I'm ever gonna learn how to do it, I have to learn on the job. And that means stepping in sometimes when other people are DM-ing and doing it myself, some.

Clint: [wheeze-laughs]

Travis: Yeah. He's—

Justin: What other way can I learn? That's how all the great DMs were!

Travis: It's called a ride along, Griffin!

Justin: That's why— that's why Gary Gygax used to say, "This is my nephew, lil Matt Mercer." [wheezes loudly]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: "I teached him— teached him the ropes. We'll let him duck his head in from time to time and just tell you how big a dragon's teeth are or something, you know."

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Come sit on Uncy Gygax's knee.

Justin: [giggles]

Griffin: Uh, okay. I'm— I'm—

Travis: So nat 20.

Griffin: No. You're not gonna keep the nat 20. Uh, you can roll again. Here's the question, though. Is— are you trying to look around the room to get a feel for what is out of place, or are you, like... you said that you are kind of trying to cross reference that with what you remember from the office, right? So it's not— here's something that we need to get straight before we get into this, because it is, you know, going to be a mystery, is the distinction between investigation and perception. It's always been kind of blurry with us. And this is the distinction I'm going to use from now on, uh, because I saw it online and it was very instructive.

Perception is the use of your senses to see something. Investigation uses your mind. So... knowing that and moving forward, what are you rolling here?

Travis: Yeah. So... I want to... use my mind.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Um, to think about... okay, yeah. I want to compare and contrast how I remember the room, what I remember being, like, on her desk, how about that?

Griffin: Uh, okay. I know you've been in here a lot. I think that's going to be a pretty high check, 'cause that's, like, some, like, Sherlock level—

Justin: [simultaneously] I don't know what's on my desk.

Griffin: [laughs] Yeah, right?

Justin: Right now.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: It's in front of me.

Griffin: Uh, so go ahead and roll, uh, investigation, then.

Travis: Okay, but if it's lower than that 16 I'm gonna be real mad.

[dice roll]

Travis: Oh, no, it's an 18. Nice! 15 plus 3, 18.

Griffin: Okay. Um... let me think.

[melancholy string music plays in the background]

Griffin: Uhh... ch-ch-ch-ch... you're just looking at—

Travis: I can tell you specifically what I'm looking for.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Right?

Griffin: What are you looking for?

Travis: Any, uh, indication that something was put back in place where it shouldn't be, or that there's something on her desk that shouldn't be there.

Griffin: Okay. With an 18 you— you do see it. Right away. Um, because you have never known the Hand of Guidance to be particularly, um, like, technologically savvy, but you see on her desk is, you know, her and the silver cup and the vial. And then there's a quill, an inkwell, and there's a lamp. And then there's a tone wheel. That just looks like, you know, it looks like a pretty bog

standard, like, you know, [laughs quietly] office tone wheel. Nothing too exciting. But you have never seen a tone wheel on her desk before. And just as a reminder, tone wheel is sort of the... magic fantasy name we have for...

Travis: Shell phones.

Griffin: ... phones or walkie-talkies or whatever— however— communication devices.

Travis: Is there a way with these tone wheels to basically *69 and call back?

Justin: Ooh!

Griffin: Um...

Travis: A previous number?

Justin: Nice.

Griffin: No— no.

Travis: Or is there any kind of number storage in them?

Griffin: Uh, no, I don't think so. I don't think that they are that techie, right?

Travis: Okay, but it does indicate that somebody left it there, so at least as far as I know, it is not hers.

Griffin: Uh, as far as you know, it is not hers. You have never seen it in here before.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: If she did own it, she has not kept it in her office. I'm also going to say, like, you notice— this was a little bit harder to notice but, like, it's not— you know, somebody noticed it at some point. The door has been, like, damaged around the door—

Travis: Because Adelaide said she knocked it down, right.

Griffin: Because Adelaide had to smash it down, right.

Travis: Are there any other windows, or—

Clint: 'Cause it was locked from—

Travis: — entrances or exits?

Griffin: Uh, nope, just that. No windows. Uh, because yes, because it was locked from— from, uh, as Adelaide said it from the inside.

Travis: One more thing.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: I'm gonna look in the drawers of her desk.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: And I am, uh, specifically looking for the Hand of Guidance's, uh, like, specific— each Hand has a book, right? That is, like, their magical...

Griffin: Oh, right.

Travis: Like, the thing where they learn magic from, right?

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: And how they, like, understand their role within the church?

Griffin: Sure.

Travis: I wanna find hers.

Justin: Hmm.

Griffin: Uh, yeah. Yeah, you find it. It's— I will just give you that. If that is a thing that all Hands have, it has not been— you know, it has not been stolen or destroyed. It is in the drawer that you would think it would be in. Like, you are that familiar with the room.

Travis: I take it.

Griffin: Okay. Um, Zoox. What are you... what are you looking for?

Clint: Zoox is gonna make a... nature check.

Griffin: Okay?

Clint: To, uh, check out the vial and the glass.

Griffin: Sure.

Clint: To see if there's any kind of— 'cause most poisons are probably gonna be plant or animal based.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Travis: Or mineral. One of those three.

Clint: So nature.

Travis: Yeah!

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: He's gonna make a nature check of the glass and the vial.

Griffin: Okay. Go ahead and— this is very specific, right? You're trying to, like, identify the brand of poison here. So why don't you roll— roll nature.

[dice roll]

Clint: That's an 11.

Griffin: With an 11 you cannot— it smells, like, familiar. Um, and it smells very potent. Like, when you get your— your, you know, face holes close to it, uh, it has a pretty potent smell that kind of knocks you back a little bit. Um, but you cannot identify the exact sort of poison that it is. Just that it is like a— it's familiar, right? And so you know it's kind of like a common— a common poison. It's not the venom of this specific asp. Like, it's just, like...

Clint: Right.

Griffin: ... some poison.

Travis: Is the vial—

Clint: Okay, and we're just assuming that— that that was the cause of death?

Griffin: Uhh...

Travis: That is the indication, yeah.

Griffin: Right.

Travis: Is the vial fancy or plain?

Griffin: The vial is very— is very plain. The cup is what is fancy.

Travis: Mmm.

Devo: Once again, this is another thing right here, right? If— look around, right? We found a golden ship, right? If there was something that was like this— "use this, bite down," you know, cyanide tooth or whatever, it would be fucking fancy! That's what... that's, like, the whole MO of this place!

Zoox: Hmm.

Griffin: Amber, what are you doing?

Justin: Hmm... [sighs] she's kind of out of her element. Um... maybe— maybe she's just sort of— I feel like she's kind of, like, generally kind of poking around to see if anything looks weird. She knows—

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: — fights. Like, she knows that kind of thing. Maybe some sort of signs of struggle or anything like that.

Griffin: Um, okay. Make a perception check for me.

[dice roll]

Travis: Is it safe to think that we had a rest in that time—

Justin: Oh, good. A natural 1. That, narratively, is perfect. That's just fantastic.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: Narratively, I love it.

Griffin: [laughs] Um...

Justin: Alright, let me just do the scene.

Amber: Alright. My hands are in my ears, and my eyes are closed. Please don't be very loud about any clues you find, okay? I'm barely hangin' on here, alright? But I'm looking for clues. I *am* participating, alright?

Zoox: But she can't hear us answer 'cause she's got her hands in her ears.

Amber: It's not that effective.

Zoox: Yeah. Do you not have any kind of, like, monk... chants or anything that you can do that would, you know—

Amber: [incredulously] Monk chants?!

Zoox: Yeah, you're a monk!

Devo: This is very reductive, Zoox.

Zoox: Oh. Well, I mean—

Devo: Also— oh, I— I think at this point, Zoox, we know, not that kind of monk.

Amber: Right, right. Yeah, alright. No, I— yeah, I'm not seein' anything, so I'm thinkin' maybe it's not murder. What a relief.

Zoox: Do you want something to drink? There's probably beverages and stuff in this office.

Travis: When—

Zoox: I mean, I wouldn't drink out of that cup, but...

Justin: [snorts]

Travis: When Amber says "Not murder... "

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Uh, Devo walks over, and he is going to cast on the Hand of Benevolence Detect Thoughts.

Justin: Whoa.

Griffin: Oh, interesting!

Clint: Creepy.

Travis: Yeah. It's... there's a lot of doubt, if you can't— denial being one of those, you know, things... that one experiences. Uh, and he's gonna cast Detect Thoughts at— at— as hard as he can at the quote, unquote, "body."

Griffin: Um...

Travis: And see if anything happens.

Griffin: Okay. What's your spellcasting modifier? Plus 6? That's what you're gonna roll.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: 'Cause she can't save.

Travis: So I'm going to roll what?

Griffin: Uh, plus 6. It's your spell attack modifier. Just to see how effective this is. I'm willing to entertain.

[unsettling electronic music plays in the background]

Travis: So I'm rolling a d20 plus 6?

Griffin: Yes. I'm gonna say you need to clear a 15.

[dice roll]

Travis: Oh, I didn't get it. An 11 total.

Griffin: Uh... okay. With an 11 total... you get the faintest inkling of something. She, uh— and this is, again, sort of what Adelaide attested to— she was thinking a lot about the Whisp. That is, like, the lingering thing that she was thinking of. And that is where it was last time you saw it. It's just, like, uh, you know, this pretty big table with this big black orb sort of underneath a protective layer of glass. It is, you know, where it was. She was thinking about that when she died.

Travis: Um, you know what? I don't usually push this, but I'm gonna burn another spell slot and do it again. Uh, if that would be okay. Because— and I can justify why he wouldn't let it go.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Their relationship was basically based on a lot of her withholding information from him.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: And only telling him what she thought he needed to know.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: And this being, like, the last opportunity to not put up with that shit.

Griffin: Yeah, sure. Um, I'm gonna say, you have not had a chance to have a long rest.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Um, so you got the spell slots that you got.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Uh, I have those. I burned through my first level ones and my third level ones.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: For Detect—

Griffin: Yeah, but you got second. Sure, alright. Uh, alright, yeah. Roll that d20 again. You're gonna have to get higher to get more shit.

[dice roll]

Travis: Okay. That's a 10 plus 6, 16.

Griffin: There is another thought that joins the thinking about the Whisp. Uh, which now, like, because of the stronger nature of the second time that you cast it, is not just, like, thinking about the Whisp. It is like obsession with it. Um, and that thought is just futile screaming.

[pause]

Travis: Hm.

Griffin: And... that's what you get.

Devo: I think we need to talk to Brother Seldom. Even if she took her own life, which I am telling you right now, she would not do... it is because there is something more. So far we have done jobs that we are being paid to do, that someone has hired us to do. And so I am going to figure this out. I will not stop until I do. You two don't have to.

Justin: Um, I wanna do... Amber is gonna do a history check. She's been around a long time, and I wanna do a history check on who might possibly have benefit from her being killed.

Griffin: That's interesting. Uh...

Justin: If this is happening in my day-to-day life, I would have some sort of natural suspicion.

Griffin: Okay, sure, yeah. You've been around for a while. You probably know the people who have beef with, like— when the Parish showed up on the shoreside community, there were lots of people who were pissed about that and, you know, maybe still were. So if you wanna roll a history check just to see who, like, would have a...

Justin: Exactly.

Griffin: ... a bias... okay. Yeah, sure, go ahead.

[dice roll]

Justin: 19 plus 3!

Griffin: 22. Okay. Um... hmm.

Clint: So basically providing a list of suspects, right?

Griffin: Right.

Travis: Or at least mot— yeah, motive-based, yeah.

Justin: Motive.

Griffin: Um...

Travis: Besides Devo.

Griffin: Right, I wasn't— I wasn't entirely prepared for this. Um...

Justin: I'm sorry.

Griffin: It's okay.

Travis: You've really fucked up now, Justin!

Clint: Oh, that shows off—

Travis: How could you?

Clint: — outside the box thinking!

Justin: I'm going back to shoots and ladders.

Clint: [laughs]

[classical string music plays in the background]

Griffin: Uh... okay, I'll say this. A lot of people in, like, Joshy's Knuckle are not psyched about the Parish. For— for one thing because it's, like, extremely against

the vibe, with the folks that roll down there. Um, but also, like, it's in the Conservatory. So, like, the Church got to live in the very best place in the whole city; this, like, lush rolling garden, while the people of Joshy's Knuckle live in, like, a weird... big bulkhead, for some reason?

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: Um, you would definitely— you would definitely know that. Um... she was also a Ballaster. And so, uh, you know, there are people who don't love what the— the— how the city is run, right? Like Uncle Joshy has been a frequent sort of protester of the— of the Ballast, and has always sort of been resentful of the fact that, um, you know, Joshy's Knuckle doesn't have any kind of representation on the Ballast. So that is what you, uh, know.

With a 22... I don't know. I don't think that it is an instant light bulb, like, "Ohh! These people hate her. That's probably who killed it."

That is just, like, the— you know, something that comes to mind.

Travis: Now— so just so we remember, at this point the remaining Ballasters— 'cause Aloysius Supreme was the Ballaster of Finance...

Griffin: Right.

Travis: And—

Griffin: Uh, the remaining ones are Hermine, and Declan Cern is the Ballaster of Transit, and Kodira is the Ballaster of Defense. So there's just three left, and there's supposed to be six.

Travis: Who is the missing one?

Griffin: Uh, there was a Ballaster of the Voice, which is like a, you know, representative of the people.

Justin: Adam Levine.

Griffin: Uh, that was Adam Levine.

Travis: Yes. Oh, I get it!

Griffin: It just— it was just vacated. It was not filled. Um, yeah.

Travis: Who was the last person to do that? 'Cause that might be somebody to interview.

Griffin: They... died. They're dead.

Justin: [wheezes] They're not important, Travis. I just realized. [laughs] I have a hunch.

Travis: Uh, their name was Hannery MacGuffin.

Griffin: Yeah, right?

Travis: Okay.

Clint: Before we go...

Griffin: Yeah, please.

Justin: Sure.

Clint: Can we do— I just wanna make sure we've— we've gone through the crime scene. I'm gonna— Zoox wants to— okay, Zoox is gonna talk to Devo.

Zoox: So, you know this office inside and out, right?

Devo: Yes.

Zoox: And this door is the only way in, right? There's no... you know, secret passages or anything like it? There's no other access to this room, right?

Devo: I will put it this way to you, Zoox. If there is, right? I don't know about it. So the chance that somebody in passing would know it and I don't is very small. Now, that said, Guidance was, uh, very, uh... I can't think of a better word than

"shady," right, when it came to keeping secrets. So she might have had something like this, because she... is by nature that way. But she wouldn't have told anybody about it if she did.

Zoox: Okay. So checking for it would be a waste of our time. What about—

Devo: Like I said, I don't know. I'm telling you what I know is that I don't know that there is another... exit.

Griffin: Yeah. I'm gonna say just as the GM, like, y'all be as thorough as you wanna be, right? There's lots of— there's— I have lotsa clues. It's just a question of—

Clint: Is there...

Griffin: — asking the right questions.

Clint: — a chance... is there a chance that the Hand of Guidance has a pet in this office. Like a— like a parrot.

Griffin: Ohh.

Clint: Or even a lizard in a terrarium, or a fish in a tank.

Travis: Are there any bugs nearby?

Clint: Any insects in the room?

Griffin: Um, there's a poisonous scorpion— no. Uh, you don't— you don't see anything like that.

Clint: Okay.

Travis: Um—

Griffin: [holding back laughter] Were you hoping to interview an animal witness to the—

Clint: Yeah! [laughs]

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah. [laughs]

Justin: Great.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Get— get some confession out of a newt.

Griffin: Yeah, right?

Travis: Oh, you know what? Zoox, you— do you have the best perception? Is that my guess? 'Cause you're a ranger. What's your perception?

Clint: Plus 1.

Travis: Oh, really?

Clint: Yeah...

Travis: Ooh.

Justin: Mine's plus 3.

Travis: Okay.

Clint: Yeah.

Travis: Um, I think we should take a look at the note. Um, and see if we can discern anything about, like, the handwriting. I mean, does it seem herky jerky in any way? Is it—

Justin: I'm probably the most educated, though. I mean—

Griffin: This would be an investigation.

Justin: Okay.

Travis: Okay.

Clint: And... is it signed?

Griffin: Uh, it—

Justin: That would...

Griffin: It, uh— it's not signed, no.

Travis: Okay, yeah. I'm gonna investigate that.

Clint: Would Devo know the handwriting?

[dice roll]

Griffin: Uh, sure.

Travis: Nat 20! That's a 23 investigation check on the note.

Clint: Wow!

Griffin: Jesus Christ. Okay. It is, uh, unequivocally her handwriting.

Justin: Mmm.

Griffin: She wrote this note. If this is a forgery, it is truly masterful work. And I don't know that Devo knows anybody who is capable of that level of sort of, you know, subterfuge. With a 23...

Travis: Uh-huh.

Griffin: ... in investigation... something hits you like a sack of bricks, reading the note. It reads again:

"Hominine is gone. It was all for nothing. I'm so sorry, Benevolence. I'm so sorry, Devo."

And it occurs to you that...

Justin: She never called him Devo.

Griffin: Exactly.

Clint: [laughs] Whoa.

Travis: I fold up the note and I take it with me.

Griffin: Okay. Any other work y'all wanna do here?

Devo: So... here's the thing... that I... what we must remember, right now in this moment... is that the Church, the Parish, often operates with control. Think about what, uh... hm, Benefactor Orlene did to you when you turned on me. Now, that said, there is no one I know more powerful than the Hand of Guidance, so somebody dominating her will and making her do this to herself... I— I— [sighs] that person... is terrifying to me. But it's possible there was no other person in this room. My guess? Somebody called her, spoke to her over the phone, and made her do this to herself.

Amber: Alright. Now I'm spooked.

[melancholy string music plays]

Griffin: Hey, everybody! This is Griffin McElroy, your dungeon master, your best friend, your personal shopper. And I— check out this jacket I found! It's gonna look great on you. As are these sponsors for this week's episode of *The Adventure Zone*.

[ad break]

[unsettling electronic music plays over distressed breathing]

Griffin: Is there anything else you want to check up on in the office?

Justin: Is there?!

Travis: Is there, Griffin? I'm gonna roll an investigation check on my little brother. To see—

Griffin: Hah.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: It's a tickle check! And you tickle him till he tells us the truth.

Travis: [high-pitched noises]

Griffin: The only way I feel like a murder mystery works, through the lens of Dungeons and Dragons, is you all ask questions, and roll to find out the answers. I can't, uh— I can't do any more than that, or else it sort of goes against sort of the spirit of the thing, right?

Clint: Okay. Okay, yeah. Then let me ask this. Just in recap form, the deal with the Whisps and the Whispers, right?

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: That's basically covert surveillance.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Right?

Griffin: Mm-hmm.

Clint: Why don't we look to see if there's any sign of this technology in this room.

Griffin: There is. There's the Whisp, is in this room. Because that was what Guidance and Brother Seldom were sort of trying to decode when last they were seen.

Clint: I think we need to investigate that, or at least take it with us.

Griffin: It is, like, f—

Clint: Is it a big—

Travis: It's a table.

Griffin: — it's fastened to, like, a huge table that you guys ripped out of a ship.

Clint: Don't— don't you think somewhere in there, that factors in? Because... you know... I don't know. It just seems like that's such an obvious connection.

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: Am— Amber's gonna fuck with it.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Yeah, that's good!

Justin: She's never seen one before.

Griffin: Yeah!

Justin: And nobody's in the room. And she's just kind of fucking with it. Roll to fuck with it.

Griffin: Roll to fuck with it. Uh, describe to me exactly what she's doing.

Justin: Rubbin' on it... like, pokin' it, lookin' underneath it. Trying to figure out how it works.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: [holding back laughter] You know, fuckin'— fuckin' with it.

Griffin: Fuckin' with it, yeah, sure. Make an investigation check.

[dice roll]

Justin: Oh. 19.

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: How serendipitous! [laughs]

Travis: You— you fuck with it real good.

Clint: [laughs] That's some good fuckin' with!

Travis: You fuck with it like Jonas Salk fucked with vaccinations.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: Nice reference.

Griffin: You fuck with it really good. Here's— here's what I will give you. When you all sort of brought this aboard the Coriolis on— you know, two missions ago, you had some time in the cargo deck, and you got kind of curious and touched it a little bit there, and it did some stuff. Now when you touch it, it does nothing. It is, um... it is completely inert.

Justin: Hmm.

Griffin: And, you know, I—

Justin: What powers these things? Is it magic? Is it— I mean, I guess it's not a wall outlet. [laughs quietly]

Griffin: Um—

Travis: No, it's got a European plug is the problem.

Justin: Oh, okay.

Travis: And we didn't bring any adapters under the ocean with us.

Griffin: Uh, if you wanna roll an arcana check, I can try and tell you more.

Justin: Oh yeah, why not? I know very little about magic.

[dice roll]

Justin: That's a 9.

Griffin: Uh, yeah, you don't— you don't know. It's not, like, uh... it is not like the same stuff that powers a ship, right? There's no engine or anything like that, or generator running for it. It's just, like, enchanted shit is weird and does stuff on its own, and that's sort of what you piece together. But this, for whatever reason, this is— this is dead. This is an inert thing.

Devo: I will say once again. If you want to solve this, Amber, you seem wildly uncomfortable by murder mysteries.

Amber: No, you know what?

Devo: You're in it now, right?

Amber: I'm start— I'm startin' to get it.

Devo: You're in it now.

Amber: I think I have got a knack!

Devo: Now, listen. I—

[music begins to swell in the background]

Amber: I cracked the mystery of her calling you Devo before you did.

Devo: This was very good.

Amber: I'm feeling like I'm on fire right now! This is— this is— maybe this is my calling!

Devo: I have two thoughts on leads, and I'm open to suggestions, or if there's someone else we want to talk to first. But first is to talk to Brother Seldom about their work with the Whisp and see where they had gotten with this, to see if this is tied into it. Or will we run into Benefactor Orlene at Shret's place. My guess is Benefactor Orlene is somewhere in Founder's Wake, and if we can find him, ohh, I'd love to do whatever I can to get answers from him as well. But what do you think?

Zoox: Yeah. Let's go do that. And...

Devo: Which one, though? 'Cause that was two options?

Amber: Yeah, you gotta pick.

Zoox: I think Seldom.

Amber: Yeah, let's talk to that creepo.

Zoox: Talk to Seldom.

Devo: He's not a creep! What?

Zoox: But I would like to— can we talk to Adelaide on the way out?

Devo: Yes.

Griffin: That is— in fact, as you step out of the room, what you see Kodira doing. And she sees you as you all walk out, and nods to those Chaperones that accompanied her, and they step outside, and she walks over. And she says...

Kodira: Okay. Um... did anything kind of ring a bell in— in there? Have any thoughts?

Amber: Well, madame, we have I believe quite the... cunning mystery on our hands.

Devo: Oh.

Kodira: What are you...

Amber: I— me and my associates have been... clueing out a little bit, and I think we're starting to... figure it out.

Devo: Um—

Kodira: Fig—

Zoox: [Whispers] It's called sleuthing. It's sleuthing.

Devo: Captain, may I point out some of your brilliant deductions?

Amber: Ah... if you must, monseigneur.

Devo: Okay. I'm not a— okay. Um, first of all, there's a tone wheel on her desk. This is not hers. Uh, so not sure how it got there, but it has not been there before in my— uh, in my experience. Uh, secondly, while she did write the note, it is in her handwriting, as Amber was so brilliant to point out before the voice in my brain could point it out, um... she called me by "Devo." She would not have done this. She would have called me Devotion. Uh, and so... my suspicion is somebody controlled her through the tone wheel to have her write the note, and then take her own life. Possibly? Because she was getting to close to something with the Whisp? Who can say.

Kodira: That seems... a little speculative. But, um—

Devo: Well, yeah!

Amber: Correction.

Devo: Oh!

Amber: It's extremely speculative.

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: She says...

Kodira: Look. Um... this is, again, not how things work around here, but y'all seem like you're onto something, so I'm gonna give y'all the bandwidth that you need to talk to whoever you need to talk, and, you know, hit the— hit the streets. And, um, typically, this kind of vigilantism? Not, uh, acceptable in this fair city. But, um... if you know— if you have an inkling that you know that there's foul play, I— I— I'd wanna know about it, so... y'all talk to whoever you need to talk to, okay?

Devo: Um, and... [sighs] Ballaster, I know you don't need us to tell you how to do your job, but just because I would be upset at myself if I didn't say something, it might benefit to you to put a couple Chaperones on Cern and Hermine. Uh, both for protection and just—

Kodira: Oh, I'm way— way ahead of you. [beat] Yeah. Of course, yeah. We've— we have already posted up guards.

Devo: Great.

Kodira: Yeah. We still do need to talk about the Ballaster that... that you, um... I mean—

Devo: Oh, Aloysius Supreme?

Kodira: Yeah.

Devo: That dude sucked.

Kodira: No, he sucked major, sort of, um... just big ones. But, you know, you did end a— you did end a life.

Amber: Shark balls?

Kodira: Yeah, [quietly] shark balls.

Devo: Well, no, no. To be fair, his own ship somehow malfunctioned. Nobody's quite sure how.

Zoox: [imitates explosion] Boom!

Devo: Yes. Nobody could have done anything to stop this.

Kodira: Yeah, we're still shifting through the wreckage, so let's, uh— let— you know, we'll— we'll make goofs about it some day. This'll all be real fun.

Devo: This is no goof! I'm telling you, it was complete accident.

Zoox: Priorities! Priorities! Let's get this dealt with.

Kodira: Yes, you're right, you're right, okay.

Devo: Uh, did Adelaide have anything else to add?

Clint: [imitating Columbo] Uh, just one more question. Uh, Adelaide—

Justin: No, absolutely not.

Clint: Okay. Um...

Zoox: Adelaide, did you have a key to the office? To the office door?

Griffin: She looks up and she's like...

Adelaide: [dazed] Uh— who are you— who are you? Oh, God. It's you— it's you guys. What are you doing here?

Devo: Yes, this is Zoox.

Adelaide: Zoox. What— what did you— what did you say?

Zoox: We're, uh, like Miss Marple. We get called in by the authorities to investigate crimes. And so I— I just wanted to know if— if you have a key to— to Hand of Guidance's office.

Adelaide: No. I— I d— I... I have keys for every door in this building. I kind of help, you know, with management stuff around here. But, um... she was insistent that, um, her office be sort of a sacred space. And I, of course, did not protest that. So, um... no, I didn't have a key to her office. But I've also— I ha— [breathes shakily] uh, I can't remember the last time she locked it. So, um... there's that.

Zoox: Okay. And it was locked when you tried to get in, right?

Adelaide: Yeah. I, you know... uh, I'm not the toughest sort.

Griffin: And you can see that she's kind of, like, leaning on one elbow and trying to, like, raise and kind of roll the other one, uh, as she probably hurt herself pretty bad smashing down this door. Um, she says...

Adelaide: But I— I— I would do anything for— [tearfully] I would do anything for Guidance.

Travis: Devo touches her shoulder and casts Cure Wounds.

Griffin: Oh, okay.

[dice roll]

Travis: Nice.

Griffin: [holding back laughter] That is probably your last spell slot, I think, right?

Travis: It is my—

Justin: [simultaneously] Just burning.

Travis: Yeah, of first level. Yeah. That's 8 plus 3, 11 points.

Griffin: Okay. She comes back and she kind of — .

Travis: Devo likes Adelaide. Adelaide is nice.

Griffin: Yeah, sure. Um, she says...

Adelaide: Wow, that was... I've never actually felt that... before. That was— that was Benevolence, wasn't it? Workin' through you?

Devo: No, this was— it was Devo. It was me.

Adelaide: Right.

Devo: I— Benevolence did not make me do this.

Adelaide: I— I— yeah, of c—o kay. I'm sorry.

Devo: No, don't—don't make me regret doing it, okay?

Adelaide: I— you're right. It's— sorry, it's just— phew! Anyway. Okay. So, um... yeah. Anyway, I already asked— I got asked a bunch of questions, and I already told the answers that I knew. Do you need a statement or something?

Devo: I have a question, Adelaide.

Adelaide: Yeah.

Devo: You knew the Hand of Guidance really well, right?

Adelaide: Yeah.

Devo: The last time you spoke with her, you said she seemed in good spirits?

Adelaide: She was— she was excited. She was, um... she was still working on the Whisp. She had been at it all day. Um, she seemed tired? Whatever they were doing in there it seemed like taxing work. Um, Seldom seemed pretty— pretty beat when he left, too, but he's an old dude, so I didn't make too much of that. Um...

Devo: But she seemed— when you said she seemed excited, right?

Adelaide: Yeah.

Devo: Excited... when— like a normal amount of excited? Or, like...

Adelaide: What's a normal amount of excited?

Devo: Did she seem like she was excited because she had figured it out?

Adelaide: I don't— I don't— I don't know anything about magic stuff. I'm really sorry.

Devo: Adelaide, you know her— you know *her*, though. You know the Hand of Guidance. We all learn to be wary of her good moods and her bad moods, and how— how excited was she?

Adelaide: She was very excited. I— I don't know what else to say.

Devo: Has Benefactor Orlene been here, Adelaide?

Adelaide: Not for a while now. He, um... he's been pretty much in dereliction of his duties? Um, so we— he's not— he's sort of persona non grata around these parts. He's been sort of off doing what he calls field work, um, and so... yeah. Um... but I haven't seen him in, I don't know, weeks?

[music plays in the background]

Devo: If you do, um, this is my number. Please call my shell phone and let me know right away.

Adelaide: Okay.

Griffin: She excuses herself and walks back into sort of a parlor, back in the, you know, further reaches of the Parish. Uh... what do you guys wanna do now?

Justin: Who do I know... who do I know in my past that would know the most about, like, skunk works Whisper shit?

Griffin: Skunk works Whisper shit.

Justin: Whisper shit! Like, who do I know—

Travis: [simultaneously] Yeah, that sneaky bullshit.

Justin: Yeah. Like, who do I know who's like... uh, disreputable? [laughs quietly]

Griffin: [disdainfully] Uh, do you need me to answer that for you?

Travis: You would—

Justin: Does he know about Whisper shit, though?

Griffin: I mean, he's disreputable. And he—

Justin: Yeah. Let me get— let me go ta— let me go holler at Joshua real quick.

Griffin: Okay. We can do that. We can hop down there all— all together, uh, if you'd like.

Justin: Yeah, I'd like.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, alright. Y'all make your way down to the Cloaca.

[music plays in the background]

Griffin: And they're actually having a— they're having a birthday party for, uh... Chauncey. Uh, Chauncey's— they're having a little— he's got a little cupcake, and they just finished singing, and they see you all walk in looking, I would say at this point, kind of bedraggled. You were— you were—

Justin: Rough.

Griffin: Yeah. I mean, you are actively pretty muddy, Amber. And they all look up and are kind of stunned in silence. And, uh, Joshy says...

Joshy: You mind not, like, uh, tracking that in onto the floor?

Amber: Oh, I'm sorry, Joshy. Hold on. Let me get my shoes off.

Joshy: I'm sorry I didn't have, like, a trap set for you. This is Chauncey's big special day.

Amber: There's the left one...

Joshy: And he works really hard 'round these parts, so we wanted to make him feel special on his special day.

Devo: How many is he?

Joshy: How many are ya, big Chauncey?

Griffin: He looks up and he's like...

Chauncey: 11!

Griffin: No. Uh... [laughs]

Justin: [muffled laughter]

Travis: Was he born on a leap year?

Griffin: Uh... Chauncey is— Chauncey is [hesitantly] 21 years old today. He is— he is— he is havin' himself a crisp bev.

Justin: [snorts]

Griffin: Like a bad boy.

Amber: Sorry, the lace is stuck. Alright, there's the right.

Joshy: Are y'all here—

Amber: Hey, Joshy?

Joshy: Yeah.

Amber: Let me holler at you for a second.

Joshy: Sure thing.

Amber: Out of prying ears.

Joshy: Yeah.

Amber: Chaunce, first, pound it. Happy birthday.

Chauncey: Thanks, thank you ma'am.

Amber: Put—put—put Chaunce a drink on my tab, alright?

Joshy: Um... alright. He tried it once and he did a spit and a almost-throw-up, and so I don't know that he's gonna want to do it again but, uh, yeah. Appreci—I'm sure he'll appreciate that. What— y'all look, uh, like you have seen a ghost. What's going on?

Amber: It's been— yeah, it's been rough. [holding back laughter] Is there anywhere we could take a short rest?

Joshy: Uh... yeah, sure. If— if you want. Um... we got a back room here with some comfy furniture on it. Are you—

Amber: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Come back and talk to me for a sec.

Joshy: Okay.

Amber: While we enjoy a short rest together.

Joshy: Okay.

Griffin: Uh, he takes you all back into the back room. Uh, and—

Travis: There's some bean bag chairs, a futon.

Griffin: It's just kinda, uh... it is kinda cramped and cozy. Like, you're also in the kitchen. This is, like, the room that the window behind the bar looks back into. Uh, there is a shower there for— and ether shower rather, for you, Zoon. I think you used it many episodes ago.

Clint: A lot of 8x10 pictures of all the musicians that have played there.

Griffin: Sure.

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: Signed. There's Doherty, you know? Yeah.

Griffin: Right, okay. If y'all wanna roll to, you know, use some hit dice and heal up, uh, you can do that. You don't get your spell slots back on a short rest, though.

Travis: I do!

Griffin: You do?

Travis: Yes!

Griffin: Oh, that's a feature of the bard, isn't it?

Travis: Yes! Now! Hahaha.

Griffin: Okay, cool.

Justin: And I get ki points back.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Um, or no, what do I call 'em? Vibe?

Griffin: Vibe, yeah, sure.

Justin: Yeah, I get vibe back.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, after you all have kind of, like, taken a chance to clean yourself up a little bit, he's like...

Joshy: Okay. So what's— what's— what's going on?

Amber: Right. Who do you know... that's, like, if you want something done that relates to, like, Whispers... like, some real Black Ops shit, who do you go to?

Joshy: Uhh... Whis— Whispers? You're asking me about Whispers?

Justin: Don't be a clasper about it, just tell me!

Joshy: Well, I mean, you know I'm not, like, a, you know, archbishop or nothing like that, right? Like, that's pretty— that's pretty top tier, like, uh, you know...

Amber: [cajoling] Joshy...

Joshy: I'm telling you that—

Amber: It's Amber. Joshy?

Joshy: Yeah?

Amber: Who do you— who do you— Joshy, who do you know?

Griffin: Roll a, uh, persuasion check.

[dice roll]

Justin: 13?

Griffin: Minus 1?

Justin: Minus 1, 12.

Griffin: He says...

Joshy: Okay, listen. Here's what I know about Whispers, 'cause, you know, uh, I'm into the occasional sort of clandestine endeavor. And it seemed like a, you know, a promising future for me in terms of infosec. Uh, but, I mean, it is— it's pretty hardcore stuff. It's pretty hardcore magic. And it's— there's a reason why, you know, Whispers are sorta, uh... relegated to the upper echelons of the Church. So, uh, I mean, you wanna know about Church stuff you ask— uh, did you talk to Guidance about this?

Amber: Well, funny you should say.

Devo: Devo shoots Amber a look and shakes his head.

Amber: I did not... talk to her about it. And that's the truth.

Griffin: Make a deception check.

[dice roll]

Travis: But that's true!

Justin: [quietly] It's not— it's not a lie, but it is a lie of omission, perhaps. Uh, 16.

Griffin: Okay. Minus 1. [snorts]

Justin: Minus 1. 15.

Griffin: [laughs] He nods and he's like...

Joshy: Okay, well, I mean, go talk to her. It's— don't get me wrong. If I could sort of control them things, uh, I could see myself bein' a sort of... [dramatically] dark broker of the secrets of the deep. Oh, that sounded so good! You figure out

how those things work, you come down here and you tell me about it. We could— we could have our own little side thing going on.

Amber: Alright. One other question before we go. Um... what— [sighs] if somebody wanted to controls somebody's mind, make 'em do things they didn't want to...

Joshy: Yeah.

Amber: You know of any way to do that? You ever hear tell of nothing?

Joshy: I mean, you— you— you hang with a dude who does that.

Amber: Yeah. Yeah, but he's not— he's not the sort of creepozoa that would make somebody...

Devo: I've done—

Amber: ... do something they wouldn't want—

Devo: I have, yeah. No, I've done this.

Amber: Oh, that's true. Well, alright, yeah. That's a real good point, Joshy. Thank you for that. Sometimes you just need a little insight of an outsider, you know?

Joshy: Yeah. I mean, I— I guess? I— all I know is it's sort of powerful stuff. I tried to train my mind against it, you see? That was one of the main tenets of Joshua's—

Travis: God, I wish right now I could just snap my fingers and make Joshy slap himself or something. [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: If, you've uh— burned all your spell slots.

Amber: So, uh, yeah. I mean, and if somebody gets your mind under control, forget about it.

Joshy: Yeah.

Justin: 'Cause that should be, like, a weap— a legally... recognized weapon.

Joshy: Yeah, for sure.

Devo: Do you know anybody named, uh, Orlene, Joshy?

Joshy: I know everybody in this city.

Devo: So is that a— is this a yes.

Joshy: It's a— it's a— it's a qu— it's a yes trying to sound pretty fuckin' cool. Did it work?

Devo: Has he been here? Have you seen him recently?

Joshy: Has he been here? Have I seen him recently? Uhh... no, not in... not that I know of.

Devo: Joshy...

Griffin: Are you trying to press him?

Devo: Are you keeping something from us?

Griffin: Roll an insight check.

Travis: [in Devo's voice] I'm going to insight on you.

[dice roll]

Travis: [in Devo's voice] Oh, it's a natural 1! Plus 8. Still a natural 1!

Griffin: He says...

Joshy: I— I mean, I know of the dude, right? Uhh, he's... up to some sort of... he studied big powerful magic shit. And so, you know, in the circle I run in, you know, you hear names of, uh, operators in that space. But I don't— I don't know from Adam's off ox, so...

Devo: Okay.

Travis: Listen, Devo knows when he rolled a 1, you know what I mean? Like, foof.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Justin: Well, that's my— that was my, uh, thought. Does anybody else have any...

Griffin: Any questions?

Justin: Anything they wanna... ask ol' Joshy?

Travis: Um, oh yeah! I got a question. Hey, Joshy.

Justin: Who's— who's that? [wheezes]

Travis: Sorry. Uhh...

Devo: Joshy. What do you know about Aloysius Supreme?

Joshy: Uhh, he's a fuckin' dink. And, uh, he should not be seated in any sort of position of power, 'cause he, uh... you know, he gets off on being sort of more in control of shit than anybody else, [getting steadily more angry] and our city is measurably worse since he, uh, joined the Ballast! So, uh, I know all that stuff about him.

Devo: What if I could offer you a piece of information that I guarantee would both benefit you, and you would be very excited to hear? If I could do this, do you promise to help us now find Benefactor Orlene, and solve the mystery we're working on when we need you?

Joshy: I don't know why you think I can do any of that, but I— you have piqued my curiosity. I'm just not sure I can upend— uphold my end of the bargain.

Devo: Do guarantee that you will do everything you can?

Joshy: Yeah.

Devo: This is all I ask. We trust you—

Joshy: I mean, I have no reason to— to— what's going on? Y'all are— y'all are—

Devo: Aloysius Supreme is dead.

Joshy: [delighted] No way!

Devo: There is an open spot for a Ballaster who knows their way around finance and trade.

Joshy: Yeah there is! Fuck yeah!

Devo: And I think that maybe this might be you, Joshy.

Joshy: Okay, okay, yeah. I mean, you have absolutely zero fucking power to get that done, but just the opportunities there, and... I'm gonna— I'm gonna— I'm gonna snatch it.

Devo: We have very good relationships right now with both Kodira and with Hermine. They owe us big time, uh, for a couple different things. And so it's not that we don't have power. It's that it's how we choose to use it.

[music plays in the background]

Griffin: He looks annoyed at you. He says...

Joshy: I have very good relationships with Hermine and Kodira as well. Look— listen, kid. Uh, I— I appreciate that every time you come into my place you like to, uh, you know... hang— hang brain and just kind of roll in like you're the coolest

dude in town, but I... I know the people that you know, and I've been doing this kind of stuff a lot longer than you. So, uh, I appreciate that, but I do not need to help to kind of work this angle.

[pause]

Devo: [sighs] Joshy, I'm trying really hard in my life to, uh, not be by default an asshole. Uh, and so here I come to you with information and an offer for help. Uh, if we mutually help each other. And now I can't help but think what you have offered me in return is a large amount of disrespect, and I am working *so hard*, right now in this moment, to not be an asshole to you. But it's really hard, and I want you to understand this. And if you ever call me kid again, I will control your mind and make you slap yourself in the face so hard that you piss your pants. Do you understand me?

Joshy: He looks at you, Amber, like "Are you fucking kidding me?"

Amber: I— mmm. Hey, Devo. A little respect, alright? It's Uncle Joshy. He's a psychic warrior who saved us from the blink sharks, so like, a little respect.

Travis: Devo walks out of the room.

Amber: I'm sorry. Wow.

Joshy: Yeah, I *do* know that dude. I do not want him in here anymore. Every time you bring that dude in here he makes a scene, and he threatens me, which is *so cool*.

Amber: It's, like, so outta line. Yeah, I'm so sorry about him.

Joshy: Yeah! Uh...

Amber: Um... he won't— he won't darken your doorstep anymore.

Joshy: Okay, see to it. Uhh... yeah, I'm sorry I can't be more help, but I— [laughs] what he's asking of me, I do not know how to pro-vide. So, uh...

Amber: And I appreciate that, Joshy. You alright? You a little shaken up?

Joshy: I— it's just— you know, I try to keep things happy. I try to keep things—

Amber: Sure.

Joshy: And I was riding this cloud— this cloud that I found out that Aloysius Supreme— how'd he go?

Amber: 'Sploded.

Joshy: F— oh yeah, that's the good stuff!

Amber: I know.

Joshy: That hits so right! It hits so—

Justin: Yeah.

Joshy: I mean, he's a person and he's not alive anymore, but that hits so good! Um, and then I— you know, it—whatever. I'm— I— I'm not holding grudges. He's just got a lot of growing up to do.

Justin: Alright. I wanna put my arm around Joshy's shoulder.

Griffin: 'Kay.

Justin: And say...

Amber: Hey. It's alright. And I'm sor— I'll talk to him. I apologize.

Joshy: Alright. Okay.

Justin: I've slipped my leg behind Joshy's leg.

Griffin: [holding back laughter] Okay.

Amber: Alright. No— alright?

Joshy: Alright.

Amber: I'm gonna take off now. Thank you for your help, I appreciate it.

Joshy: Yeah, no problem.

Justin: I'm gonna shove Joshy over my leg.

Griffin: [snorts] Okay.

Justin: To trip him.

Griffin: Make a, uh, unarmed attack roll.

[dice roll]

Justin: That's a natural 20.

Griffin: [distantly] Fuckin' hell!

Amber: Fuckin' vibe check!

Griffin: He goes—

Amber: Joshy! Fucking got you!

Griffin: [laughs]

Amber: Dog! What's up now?!

Griffin: He goes flipping ass over elbow across the room into, like, the—

[glass shattering]

Amber: [shouting] Vibe check!

Griffin: Into a fuckin', like, uh, credenza that just shatters under his weight. And he lands on the floor and looks up at you like...

Joshy: That was a good one! [applauds] That was a really good one!

Amber: What's uuup!

Joshy: Not me!

Amber: Chauncey, that was for you, dog!

Chauncey: Thanks, ma'am.

Amber: Happy birthday, little one!

Joshy: That's good.

Amber: It's the gift that keeps on givin', 'cause you can think about it and laugh your ass off whenever you want!

Chauncey: Yeah, thank you!

Griffin: And then Joshy looks at you and says...

Joshy: Yeah, so go ahead and call the doctor.

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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