

## The Adventure Zone: Ethersea – Episode 38

Published on May 20, 2022

[Listen on TheMcElroy.family](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

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

**Griffin:** There's just Guidance, slumped over her desk. But you have never seen a tone wheel on her desk before. 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."

**Devo:** Who did this?

**Kodira:** It would seem that she did it, Devo.

**Devo:** Oh, no. This is the bullshit part. No, no, no, no, no.

**Griffin:** She wrote this note. Something hits you like a sack of bricks.

**Justin:** She never called him Devo.

**Griffin:** Exactly.

**Devo:** 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.

**Griffin:** A lot of people in, like, Joshy's Knuckle are not psyched about the Parish.

**Devo:** Aloysius Supreme is dead.

**Joshy:** No way!

**Devo:** There's an open spot for a Ballaster who knows their way around finance and trade. 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?

**Travis:** Devo walks out of the room.

**Amber:** I'm sorry, wow.

**Joshy:** Yeah, I do not want him in here anymore.

**Amber:** [shouting] Vibe check!

**Joshy:** That was a really good one!

**Amber:** What's up!

**Joshy:** Not me! Go ahead and call the doctor.

[theme music plays]

**Griffin:** Uh, Amber and Zoox, as you leave Uncle Joshy's Cloaca... I don't actually like having it be possessive like that. Um, because—

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** But it is.

**Griffin:** It's not a hole in Uncle Joshy's body. He's got, I would say, sort of the standard human holes. Uh—

**Travis:** Well, we'll just assume that when you're saying Uncle Joshy's Cloaca, we mean the building. And that if you want to say the cloaca that Joshy has in his body now that the sallow has happened, you can say "Uncle Joshy's sallow, bracket, body— or cloaca, bracket, body."

**Griffin:** Uncle Joshy's tangible clo— yeah, sure. Okay.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Well, anyway, you all come out of his place of business to find Devo, uh, stewing outside after having been, uh...

**Travis:** Uh, he's crying.

**Griffin:** ... removed from— oh boy. Okay.

**Travis:** But like an ang— it's definitely an angry crying.

**Griffin:** Yeah, what other kind is there?

**Travis:** Frustra— well... I mean, there's sad crying, Griffin.

**Griffin:** Yeah, it just makes me angry.

**Travis:** Ohh, okay.

**Devo:** [loud, exaggerated sobbing]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Zoox:** Oh boy. It's okay!

**Devo:** [shaky breathing]

**Zoox:** There are lots of other cl— cl— cloacas to expore. Explore. Ew! Hmm. No? Amber? Are you... are you pissed at— at Devo?

**Amber:** [softly] No, no, no. Why would I be pissed at Devo? Why on Earth, why on Earth, when he wandered into my home away from home for the past 20 years and started shittin' the bed in front of everybody? Why on Earth would I be pissed off? [voice raising in volume] Just because I was hugely embarrassed and almost had to put him on the ground at Joshy's behest? No, no, no. Why would I be pissed off? There's no reason for that.

**Zoox:** Oh, whew, good. Bullet dodged. [nervous laughter] Phew! And— and so, Devo, no need to cry.

**Amber:** Hey, kid?

**Zoox:** Mm-hmm?

**Amber:** Hey, kid?

**Zoox:** Devo?

**Devo:** Yes, Amber?

**Amber:** I'm not talking to you. Get it the fuck under control, alright?

**Devo:** How about, uh, I'm your friend, and we work together, and you didn't stand up for me in there, and in fact neither one of you have asked if I'm fucking okay!

**Amber:** Why do I care if you're okay or not? You're a grown— I know you were raised as a baby in a— in a baby prison. You're a grown adult.

**Devo:** Yeah.

**Amber:** You got thrown out of a bar for good.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Amber:** For actin' like an ass. Tough nuggies.

**Devo:** That's not what the fuck I'm talking about!

**Zoox:** What— okay, alright! Everybody just... take a breath. Um...

**Amber:** No. You know what? You wanna pamper him?

**Zoox:** No—

**Amber:** You wanna powder his bottom, you go right ahead. I'm done.

**Zoox:** No, no! No, no, why are you mad at me?! What did I do?

**Justin:** Amber— Amber— Amber walks away.

**Zoox:** Wait— Amb— Amber! Amber! [sighs] What is going on? What did— what is happening with us?!

**Devo:** Well, let's see. Um, my mother figure of 17 years was murdered. And so I'm feeling a lot of emotions, and Amber is acting like a callous piece of shit. So I think one of us might be in the right, and one of us might be wrong. That's just my—

**Justin:** Ah, dammit. Okay, Amber chops him in the throat.

**Griffin:** Whoa.

**Travis:** You can make an attack roll?

**Justin:** I am. That is what I'm doing.

**Clint:** Whoa!

**Justin:** Let's see here.

[dice roll]

**Justin:** Wait, no. I roll— sorry, I rolled the wrong thing.

**Travis:** That says unarmed strike to hit. 12.

**Justin:** Is that right?

**Travis:** My AC is 13, baby!

**Griffin:** Wow. That's hugely embarrassing.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Amber:** That— that was a warning. You do not know how close— I feel like I came within one of really doing some damage, alright? That's 'cause it was a warning.

**Devo:** Okay.

**Amber:** You can run your mouth to other people. Joshy has too much respect for me to bring you down, but I don't— I don't— you and I?

**Devo:** You and I what?

**Amber:** You're a good kid.

**Devo:** I am an adult, if I remember your words correctly.

**Amber:** There you go. Look, see? You're learning already.

**Devo:** So how about you treat me like an adult?

**Amber:** Act like one! Out here? Out here, you don't get handed things. You don't get people bringing you things and telling you that you're the future, alright? You left that behind. That was your decision. Out here, you get respect by deserving it. Joshy's done more for this community than you could possibly imagine. And yeah, I know, he's got his rough edges. But down here? That's how you get treated like an adult.

**Devo:** Listen, I—

**Amber:** That's how you get respect, is you earn it.

**Devo:** From what I can tell, from what I've seen, you have a bunch of friends who treat you like a piece of shit, and you've been treated like a piece of shit a lot in your life, and I'm very sorry about this, but... at least at the Parish, uh, people would occasionally say "How's it going? How is your day? Are you doing okay? Oh, you look like shit! Are you okay?" Some sort of, um, interest beyond just what someone can do for them professionally, or on a job, or something along— they would have some kind of personal interaction. And here I am, uh, in... real, uh— having real issues, and if I try to bring them up, you either walk away or try to punch me in the throat.

**Amber:** Maybe if you— maybe if your response to this was not the exact same response as *any* time someone looks at you cross—

**Devo:** Mm-hmm, yes.

**Amber:** — maybe if it wasn't the same fuckin' outburst every single time things didn't go your way, maybe I would have a little bit more compassion.

**Devo:** Well, maybe if you were comfortable talking about emotions, huh? Maybe if you could talk about emotions without it making you uncomfortable, or bored, or whatever, then maybe it would be something you could help me deal with, instead of expecting me to take care of everything on my own.

**Amber:** This is— this is— this is— this is what kills me about you. This is what kills me about you. You care so much. You care so much about her. You're so sad. Yet... whoever did it is out there running around right now, and you'd rather cry on a haul and make an ass of yourself at the Cloaca than get out there and do something about it. That's being an adult.

**Devo:** Your assumption is that I can control my emotions. I am magic, not perfect.

**Amber:** Yeah, you can try.

**Zoox:** Okay, okay, okay. Stop. Both of you stop! Listen! This is something we can hash out at some other time. I'm sorry—

**Griffin:** Uh, I want all of you to make perception checks, please. As you are carrying on in the middle— in the middle of the street in Joshy's Knuckle.

[beat]

**Clint:** So carry on, my wayward sons.

[dice roll]

**Travis:** I got a dirty 20, Griffin.

**Griffin:** So you did.

[dice roll]

**Justin:** 15 minus 1.

**Griffin:** That's a performance check you did roll, Justin.

[dice roll]

**Clint:** I got an... 8?

**Griffin:** Okay.

[dice roll]

**Travis:** A talking cat?!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Oh, that time I got a natural 20 plus 3, 23.

**Griffin:** Okay, yeah. Uh, Devo and Amber— especially you, Amber, you notice the shit out of it. In fact, maybe you were so— you were distracted by what you see that you don't actually hear Zoon's intervention as he steps in to try to squash the beef between the two of you.

**Justin:** I probably should've had to roll with disadvantage.

**Griffin:** Why's that?

**Justin:** Because I'm—

**Griffin:** Because you're heated?

**Justin:** Well, because I was, like, mid conversation with somebody else, right? My perception wouldn't be, like, at it's best.

**Griffin:** Well, but you have... I mean, you do have to stay hyper vigilant, for sharks and attacks from your—

**Justin:** Fair, okay, yes, you're right. You're right.

**Travis:** [simultaneously] We are right outside. We're right outside the Cloaca.

**Griffin:** Right outside. He could be— he could— and you just got him, you know? Like, he's waiting for the ch— the chance to get— anyway.

[mysterious music plays in the background]

Between the two of you, where you are sort of squared off in the middle of the street here, you see a message appear in faint, glowing script on the street between you. And this message reads...

"Stop making a scene. Meet me at Nermal's Pile at lights out. The Beholder."



**Clint:** So it was literally a street sign.

**Griffin:** It was. And it's there for a moment, and Zoox, we'll say that, you know, Devo and Amber stop fighting and look down at the street for a bit, and it catches your attention, what they are looking at, and you see it too, before it vanishes.

**Justin:** Uh, Griffin, I'm—

**Clint:** Well, okay— [wheezes] I think that Zoox would take that as meaning they were hanging their heads in shame!

**Griffin:** Oh. [laughs]

**Clint:** So he thinks, "Ahh."

**Griffin:** Mission accomplished. [laughs]

**Clint:** "Mission accomplished! I did it!"

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Uh, Griffin, I want to see if I know anything about, like, messages like this, if I've seen this before.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I mean, you don't have to roll for that, right? This is a magic— this is a very basic illusory script spell. Like, this is— this is—

**Travis:** Is that something that, like, they teach in the Church? Or is it something like... you know what I mean?

**Griffin:** Maybe, but it's also I think a thing that, like, you can buy a... projector. Like, you don't have to be a wizard to do this. Like, there's devices that can achieve this, right? Um, yeah. And so you see this message that kind of, you know, you all take a beat, and then it's gone.

**Clint:** Can you tell us what the message was, again? I'm not trying to be difficult, I—

**Griffin:** Sure, sure, sure. "Stop making a scene. Meet me at Nermal's Pile at lights out. The Beholder."

**Justin:** Hmm.

**Travis:** Off of my dirty 20 and Amber's 23— well, I won't speak for Amber. I'm looking around, because the "Stop making a scene" makes me think somebody is watching us.

**Justin:** Yeah, I'm really perceptive right now. Is there any— do I spot any sort of, like, anybody who's—

**Travis:** Shrouded figure?

**Justin:** Yeah, right?

**Griffin:** Uh... I will say that, uh, there's some people are the street who are just watching you.

**Justin:** [singing quietly] People on the street.

**Griffin:** Having a fight.

**Travis:** [singing unintelligibly]

**Griffin:** All of the patrons inside of the Cloaca are— are looking in at you. Uh, looking at you. I think you see Jo— Uncle Joshy is there kind of, like, rubbing his head, and Chauncey is there, and he looks very, very emotionally fragile right now, seeing you all fight. Uh, there's— you know, I think there's a lot of people around here, and it would be impossible to kind of tell who was the one who— who put this down.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Travis:** I think Devo looks at Amber and says...

**Devo:** We are not done discussing this, but I... suddenly am aware of how public this is, and I think we need to move on for now.

**Amber:** Yeah. Yeah, alright. Come on, let's get outta here. Zoox, great point or whatever. Let's go.

**Travis:** It's later.

**Griffin:** Well, it is—yeah, it is not even close to lights out. So, uh, you know, you have some time to kill. What is it that you all are doing next?

**Justin:** What time is it right now?

**Griffin:** Uh, lights on. Lights on.

**Travis:** [holding back laughter] Lights out— half till lights out.

**Griffin:** I haven't worked out how time works in a place where you can't see the sun. Uh, so I imagine— lights out I think refers to the weird starfish with faces that— that are sort of on the shelf wall across from the city. That is the main sort of form of illumination and maybe probably—

**Travis:** But they would've definitely had to develop some kind of, like, light cycle for the—

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure, they probably did. But for— this message just said lights out.

**Justin:** [snorts quietly]

**Griffin:** That's all it said.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Justin:** Alright.

**Travis:** Okay. Also, can we ride light cycles around?

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Sure, yeah. That's in the next—that's in the DLC.

**Amber:** Alright, y'all. Let's stand motionless for six hours.

**Devo:** Okay.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Oh, we're gonna— oh, we're gonna hit— we're gonna hit, uh—

**Justin:** In real time.

**Travis:** — uh, select? [laughs]

**Justin:** In real time.

**Travis:** Oh, okay. Or we could go talk to Brother Seldom to see if he knows anything about the Whisp, and...

**Justin:** Oh. [laughs quietly] Yeah, fine.

**Travis:** [laughs] Okay. We'll release the—

**Justin:** I thought mine was a little bit more vérité. [laughs] You know what I mean? Like, it really brings you to the moment.

**Travis:** We'll release yours for BoCo. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Alright.

**Justin:** Release to us the six hours of silence you guys actually recorded.

**Griffin:** Do you guys know what I would do... for six hours of silence?

[all laugh]

**Griffin:** I would risk it all— I would risk it all for six hours of silence. That is an impossible dream.

**Clint:** And then we'll go.

**Travis:** Devo's already walking. Devo's already walking.

**Justin:** But I'm— Amber's walking first, and she's walking faster than him.

**Clint:** [wheezy laughter]

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Devo's walking cooler.

**Justin:** Ugh.

**Griffin:** Do— how do you counter, Amber?

**Justin:** Well... hold on, wait—

**Griffin:** You just gonna take that?

**Justin:** Let me roll athletics.

[dice roll]

**Justin:** 22. I mean, she's absolutely walking faster.

**Griffin:** But— and stronger. [crosstalk]

**Justin:** No, he's— I'm—

**Griffin:** Like a stronger walk.

**Justin:** No, don't put words in my mouth. She's just faster.

**Griffin:** Oh, okay.

**Justin:** She doesn't see his walk, 'cause she's in front of him.

**Griffin:** Okay. Well, then—

**Travis:** I rolled a 21 performance, so I'm fucking killin' this cool walk.

**Griffin:** Okay. Zoox, how do you— how are you walking?

**Clint:** Uh, [stammering] dejectedly, but... bringing up the rear.

**Travis:** Roll a sadness check to see how dejected your walk is?

**Clint:** Let's see, sadne— I don't have sadness check.

**Travis:** Oh, you don't have sadness? You gotta roll sadness, my dude.

**Clint:** How about pissed off?

**Travis:** That's not on there, I don't think.

**Clint:** Everybody's pissed off. I think— no, Zoox isn't pissed off.

**Travis:** I mean, I'm not pissed off. My character is?

**Justin:** Yeah, we were acting, Dad.

**Travis:** That was acting, Dad.

**Clint:** [simultaneously] No, I know.

**Justin:** Your Da— your Dad reflexes triggered though, and you were like, "This drama has gone on too long!"

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** "I'll turn this podcast around!"

**Justin:** [simultaneously] "No drama on this podcast!"

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** "Let's get back to rolling about swords!"

**Clint:** Hey, fine! Go— go— [stammering]—

**Justin:** Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.

**Clint:** Beat the hell out of each other!

**Justin:** That's the truth. No, you made your choice. There was a dramatic scene happening, and your character said "Enough drama!" [laughs] "[through laughter] And no acting! We have to get back to the mystery!"

**Clint:** How about enough circular rhetoric? Where it was just [mocking mumbling].

**Travis:** [high-pitched] Ooooh!

**Justin:** You're not wrong. You're not— now—

**Clint:** [continues mumbling]

**Travis:** It's getting too real!

**Justin:** Okay, now I'm mad at you for real!

**Travis:** It's getting too real!

**Justin:** I'm not mad at Travis, I am mad at Clint.

**Griffin:** [laughs] [snorts] Oh, man. This is— this is definitely gonna fuel the, uh, "The McElroys secretly fight all the time when they're not recording" conspiracy theory.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs loudly] It's not secret! [laughs]

**Travis:** It's public now, baby. Let it all out.

**Griffin:** Let it all hang out.

**Travis:** Air that dirty laundry.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Next scene.

**Griffin:** Okay, so because of how fast you are walking, the door to the schoolhouse in the Ballast opens up, and it's just Amber standing on the doorstep, just kind of panting while Devo's just, like, you know, 100 feet behind just doing a really cool strut.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Still kind of angry about it, and Zoox pulling up the rear. Uh, and when the door—

**Travis:** Walking like Charlie Brown. [laughs quietly]

**Griffin:** Yeah, exactly.

**Travis:** [humming Charlie Brown theme]

**Clint:** Wah, wah, wah. [laughs]

**Griffin:** The door opens, and there's nobody there. Uh, but then you look down and you do see Skittles is looking up at you, and he looks confused at first when he just sees you, Amber. But then we he sees the other two, he kind of nods, and then opens the door wider and says...

**Skittles:** [unintelligible gurgling]

**Griffin:** And gestures you in.

**Justin:** Mm-hmm. I go in.

**Griffin:** Uh, you walk into the schoolhouse.

[calm music plays in the background]

**Griffin:** And it is late enough that school is not in session. It's quiet. You see Beck, actually, first. And she is—

**Travis:** Playin' the washboard.

**Griffin:** Playin' the washboard and, uh—



**Travis:** With two turntables and a microphone.

**Griffin:** — with two turnta— fuck! Okay. Um, no. She's actually packing. She is throwing some of her stuff into a big bag. She doesn't seem to be in, like, a hurry. She's not, like, evacuating or, you know— her pace doesn't seem to be one of panic, but she is sort of getting her stuff together. And she looks over and sees the three of you and she's like...

**Beck:** Oh! He— hey! Oh my god, it's— it's you all! It's great to see you. What are you, um— what are you all doing here?

**Devo:** We are looking for Seldom. But are you going somewhere?

**Beck:** Yeah. I'm, uh, gettin' back out there. I actually have been saving up for a while, and I bought a ship. Um, it's nothin'—

**Devo:** Get the— what?

**Beck:** Yeah, it's nothin'— I mean, it's, you know, sort of a single person— and one octopus— cruiser, so nothin' huge. But, you know, enough to get out there and do some jobs. Thought about applying for the Brokerage, but I might just kind of do my own thing for a while.

**Devo:** Remind me, how old are you?

**Beck:** Old enough. Hey—

**Devo:** Okay.

**Beck:** — there's a funk— like, since you all walked in here, there's been a sort of tangible funk, sort of in— like, a miasma in the air. Is everything okay?

**Devo:** [stammering] Amber is the one who always wants to talk about emotions, so Amber, what do you think? Is everything okay?

**Beck:** That's, like, exactly what I— that— what— that— what just happened there, that's, like, exactly what I'm talking about.

**Amber:** Yeah. So where's Seldom?

**Griffin:** He, um, yells from an adjacent room...

**Seldom:** I'm— I'm here! One— one moment.

**Griffin:** And, um, he walks in and sees the three of you.

**Devo:** We need to talk, Selly. But, uh, Beck, be careful out there. I'm not gonna tell you what to do, it's your life, but be careful. Uh, and if you need us, you have our numbers, right? Or do you? Here it is. This is our numbers.

**Travis:** I write them down.

**Beck:** This is a lot. This is, like, 35 numbers.

**Devo:** We have three phones, so it's...

**Beck:** Okay. That does not divide evenly three ways, but okay.

**Devo:** Well, just do the first ones. It doesn't matter.

**Griffin:** She says...

**Beck:** Alright, I'll keep an eye out.

**Griffin:** And she gives Brother Seldom a big hug, and so does Skittles, and she heads out the door with her stuff. And he sighs, and he says...

**Seldom:** Um... how— how are you— how are you doing, Devo?

**Devo:** Thank you so much for asking. Um, not good.

**Seldom:** Yes, um...

**Devo:** Um...

**Seldom:** Me— me— me either. It's, uh... do you want a drink?

**Devo:** Yes.

**Griffin:** He, uh— he grabs some— some glasses. Uh, actually they're sort of like stoneware mugs. And he—

**Justin:** Are you sure?

**Griffin:** He sets— well, let me think about it. No, you're right, Justin. They're glasses.

**Justin:** [wheezes] Thank you, okay.

**Travis:** Like— maybe they're carved wooden goblets, the cup of the carpenter?

**Griffin:** No, that's ridiculous.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Griffin:** They're— they're— they are glassware. He sets them down and, uh, pours some wine. He looks at you, Zoox, and he says...

**Seldom:** Um, would you like to imbibe? I don't know if that's something you... care for.

**Amber:** Just falls out a different hole.

**Zoox:** Yeah, I'm not— do I—

**Seldom:** I mean, that's— that's what happens to most of us.

**Justin:** [wheezes quietly]

**Zoox:** I'm not sure if I've ever had— have I had... ? I mean, I had some of that skunk stuff, right?

**Amber:** Oh my god, this is what my day's about now. You gotta try a little bit.

**Seldom:** You don't have to if you don't—

**Zoox:** Yeah, I'll take a— I'll have a snoot full.

**Seldom:** Okay.

**Griffin:** He—

**Amber:** Look at you. You already know some of the lingo going in.

**Griffin:** He hands everybody a glass and he raises his glass, and he says...

**Seldom:** Um... to Guidance. Uh... not the easiest person to have in your life, but she... she will be missed.

**Griffin:** And he drinks his glass.

**Amber:** Hear, hear.

**Seldom:** So, um... what can I do for you?

[melancholy string music plays in the background]

**Devo:** Well, Selly, from what we can tell, you are the last person to have seen her alive. At least this is what Adelaide says. Adelaide says that there were no other visitors after you left.

**Seldom:** Yes, that is, from what I understand, what— what the truth of the matter. Um, we were working fairly late on decrypting the artifact that you recovered from that golden ship. Um, and we had not yet cracked it, but she was tireless in her pursuit of the knowledge contained within. And, um, I retired to my quarters, and... that was the last I saw of her, either.

**Devo:** When you left, did you feel like you two were making progress?

**Seldom:** It's hard to say. This technology, Devo... I'm not sure how well-versed you are in sort of the old ways, but, uh... those devices are not the easiest things to crack into, as it were. So, um, it felt like it, but I would be surprised if she managed to get all the way through the defenses of the Whisp before, uh... before she was found dead in the morning.

**Devo:** Uh, this is very, very important, maybe the most important question, Selly, so I really need you to think.

**Seldom:** Okay.

**Devo:** When you left... was there a tone wheel on her desk?

**Seldom:** Why would there be a tone wheel on her desk? She had a receptionist, did she not?

**Devo:** She did, yes. This is why this is important. Don't just answer offhand, remember. Picture the room. Was there a tone wheel on her desk.

**Seldom:** I... I... I do not— I don't know. Maybe? That— I wasn't— my attention was elsewhere. It's— it's possible. I genuinely cannot tell you.

**Devo:** So, Seldom, can I tell you the... the thing that is bothering right now, right? So, it seems to us... it seems to me, um, that what happened was, somebody controlled Guidance via the tone wheel to make her drink the poison. And there are not a lot of people that are strong enough to make the Hand of Guidance do this.

**Seldom:** I... [sighs] I understand why this may be difficult for you. It is never easy when someone who has left such a large footprint in your life leaves it. But I... [sighs] I think you might be... chasing shadows.

**Devo:** [in disbelief] Wait, wait. Selly, you think she would do this?

**Seldom:** I think that she lived an incredibly difficult life, and I think her separation—

**Devo:** [scoffs]

**Seldom:** — from Benevolence himself was a— a pain that she carried with her quietly. And I—I... I don't think there was anything more than that, unless you know of someone who would harbor a grudge against her.

**Devo:** Um, let's see. Um, *anybody* who didn't like the Church, anybody who didn't like the way that she ran the Parish? Uh, Benefactor Orlene's a piece of shit. He could've done this. Uhh, there could have been a spy from, uh, you know, the— uh, from Hominine, uh, who infiltrated the city when there—we had the last— uh, you know, the fleet came in. Um... you haven't asked me if *I* did it, and I seem like a fairly o— I mean, I didn't do it—

**Seldom:** I would never— you would not do anything like this.

**Devo:** I mean, maybe.

**Seldom:** Okay. I— I—

**Devo:** Did you do it?

**Seldom:** [flatly] No, I did not do it. Are you really asking?

**Devo:** Okay, see—

**Amber:** That would've been actually so easy.

**Zoox:** Damn! That would've been very cool.

**Griffin:** He says...

**Seldom:** I am—I understand my position as a potential suspect. Um, I have not been permitted entry into her quarters by the Chaperones for that very reason. I—I... [sighs] I understand the need you have to find answers to this, but I don't want you to... [sighs] make this process harder on yourself than it needs to be.

**Devo:** Seldom, I can tell you the most convincing argument for why she did not do this. I do not know if this has occurred to anybody else, but unless stated otherwise, which from what I can tell, she did not... her death would leave me the Senior Hand of the Parish in Founder's Wake.

**Griffin:** He puts a hand on your shoulder and he says...

**Seldom:** Maybe... she did know that, Devo. And maybe that... brought her some small comfort. I— I— [sighs] you look very tired. Have you— have you slept since you've got back to Founder's Wake?

**Devo:** Seldom. I know that I can be impulsive, and I know that I can be hotheaded and difficult. This is not be grasping at straws. This is not me being unwilling to accept the truth. There was a tone wheel on her desk when we went into her office, after she had died. She did not have a tone wheel on her desk. She wrote the name "Devo". She would've called me Devotion in something as serious as a note like this. She did not do this.

**Seldom:** The— and what of the— the Whisp? Did she... did she finish decrypting?

**Devo:** It was without power, Seldom.

**Seldom:** Huh.

**Devo:** So if it was working when you left... either she spilled a really big glass of water on it, or somebody fucked with it.

**Griffin:** He looks at you, Zoon and Amber, and he says...

**Seldom:** And what do you think of the matter?

[beat]

**Amber:** Oh, I don't think my opinion's worth much here.

**Seldom:** It is, to me.

**Amber:** Oh, boy. You know... I've seen it happen to a few folks. A lot of times... you don't see it coming. You can't always tell from the outside. But... something felt off about it. It just felt wrong. There was something not... there was something not right. It's just my gut, but... the tone wheel's weird, the note's weird, it's weird! I mean, I tell you... there ain't no harm in lookin'. 'Cause if we look and we're wrong, then... there ain't nobody to catch.

**Clint:** Do we— do we have the note?

**Griffin:** Yeah, I think— yeah, you were handed the note by Kodira. So you definitely have it on you.

**Zoon:** I have a— a question for— well, we've been discussing some of these other— these other theories. Would it be possible to control somebody through the Whisp, if it was powered?

**Seldom:** I mean, the Whisp is just a— a means of storing information and retrieving it. I— I— perhaps? There would— it could be some sort of trap that one could decode, uh, some sort of message from the Whisp? But that defies my admittedly limited understanding of Oration.

**Zoox:** What about through the shell phone? Is that possible, to control somebody's mind through a shell phone?

**Seldom:** I... I have not heard of that happening before. But again, it's not my area of expertise. I am an—

**Zoox:** And you haven't answered Devo's question. Was— was the power on the Whisp when you left?

**Seldom:** There— it was, yes. I was aiding in the decryption of the device when I left.

**Devo:** Seldom?

**Seldom:** Yes.

**Devo:** What if it was not controlled through the shell phone, but just triggered?

**Seldom:** I don't understand.

**Devo:** That if it was something—

**Justin:** That's a bad sign, if he doesn't understand, 'cause Griffin makes him say things.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Devo:** — that it was already planted in her mind, and it was just triggered through the phone.

**Seldom:** I— [laughs weakly] this is exactly what I was worried about. This— this is... I believe you are getting into conjecture about the nature of magic, which... there are seldom few answers waiting—

**Amber:** [quietly, simultaneously] Nice.

**Seldom:** — for you there— yes, I und— yes, I understand. I try, actually, to avoid that word for that very reason, but...



**Amber:** Makes sense, yeah.

**Seldom:** I— [sighs] if you— if you must continue on, I do believe that Orlene would be a better first primary source about the nature of Oration. Um... but I don't want you to go too far with him. Because I know the nature of your relationship.

**Devo:** Okay. Um, I will attempt not to kill him.

**Seldom:** I— I would appreciate that as a personal favor.

**Griffin:** You all are, you know, finishing up here talking to Brother Seldom. And from outside, uh, you see the lights dim a little bit, and then come back on. Which is, you know, like a, um... like you're at the theater and they're about to come back from intermission, which is the sign for lights out, where they sort of lower the, uh...

**Travis:** It's sleepy time!

**Griffin:** Fake illumination for the people to sleep in the city.

**Travis:** It's sleepy time for little boys.

**Griffin:** It is sleepy time for—

**Seldom:** Oh, looks like it's sleepy time for little boys.

**Griffin:** Says Brother Seldom.

**Devo:** Oh, already? Time flies, eh? Um, we... we need to go, Selly.

**Seldom:** Okay. Um, okay. Be— be safe. Um, and let me— let me know what you find out.

**Devo:** If there's anything you remember, if there is anything you know...

**Seldom:** You will be the first one I contact. You have my word.

**Travis:** Uh, and Devo... gives him a squeeze on the shoulder, and leaves.

**Clint:** Boy, that's— that's pretty emotional for...

**Griffin:** Yeah, no.

**Travis:** Well, we— I just lost the Hand of Gui— like...

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** I'm goin' through the shit!

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** I think you guys have forgotten that even though Devo is kind of an asshole, he still has emotions.

**Griffin:** Maybe he has too many emotions.

**Travis:** Well, I mean, that's often connected, isn't it?

**Justin:** So we're outside?

**Griffin:** Yeah, you're outside.

**Travis:** [blows raspberry and laughs] So anyways, the lights? Where are we at with those?

**Justin:** Aw...

**Amber:** Aw, dammit. I forgot.

**Devo:** What— what did you forget?

**Amber:** Oh, well that place is real important to you, so I was planning to make an ass of myself and just start yelling at people randomly. Shit!

**Devo:** [sighs heavily]

**Amber:** Aw, next time, right? Next time. Pound it!

**Devo:** Oh, I see. Okay. This was a dig at the fact that I lost my temper—

**Amber:** What? No, no, no! It has nothing to do with you!

**Griffin:** [muffled laughter]

**Amber:** What?

**Zoox:** It's camaraderie! Camaraderie.

**Amber:** No! Zoox buried it! Remember when he said some— something?

**Devo:** Oh, wait, sorry. Uh, Uncle Joshy is coming?

[beat]

**Amber:** What?

**Travis:** And when she looks, Devo starts headin' for Nermal's Pile.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Amber:** Dammit!

**Justin:** She doesn't act like someone with plus 3 perception, I gotta say!

[all laugh]

**Travis:** Well, you forget, I have a plus 9 persuasion, so mine—

**Justin:** [laughs loudly]

**Griffin:** Yeah, right.

**Travis:** My natural persuasion.

**Justin:** I mean, that's just math. I mean, it's just math.

**Travis:** Yeah, my natural persuasion.

**Clint:** And you're a plus 6 with gullibility, apparently.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Alright.

**Justin:** That— that would be a good character match where it was like, they could see everything, and every time they see anything they're like "Aw, hell yeah! I gotta get over there!" [wheezy laughter] "It's— that sign says free ice cream? Hell yeah! I saw it from 30 yards away! That looks extremely free!"

[calm ambient music plays]

[ad break]

**Griffin:** Hi everybody this is Griffin McElroy, I am your dungeon master! I am your best friend! I am a stuntman! I'll do flips, I'll do a punch. Punch me! Drop a building on me, I don't care, because that's my job, and my job is also to tell you about our sponsors this week on The Adventure Zone.

[ads]

**Graham:** Hi! My name is Graham Clark, and I'm one half of the podcast *Stop Podcasting Yourself*, a show that we've recorded for many, many years and, uh, at the moment, instead of being in person, we're recording remotely. And, uh, you wouldn't even notice. You don't even notice the lag.

[extended pause]

**Dave:** That's right, Graham! And, uh, the great thing about this—

**Graham:** The—

[pause]

**Dave:** Go ahead?

**Graham:** No, you go ahead.

**Dave:** Okay, and—

**Graham:** [simultaneously] Okay, go ahead?

[pause]

**Dave:** And you can listen to us every week on Maximumfun.org.

**Graham:** Or wherever you get your podcasts.

[pause]

**Dave:** Your podcasts.

[ad ends]

**Speaker One:** Did your neighbor back into your car?

**John:** Bring that case to Judge Judy.

**Speaker One:** Think the mailman might be the real father?

**John:** Give that one to Judge Mathis.

**Speaker One:** But... does your mom want you to flush her ashes down the toilet at Disney World when she passes away?

**John:** Now, that's my jurisdiction. Welcome to the court of *Judge John Hodgman*, where the people are rule, the disputes are real, and the stakes are often unusual.

**Speaker Three:** If I got arrested for dumping your ashes in the Jungle Cruise, it would be an honor.

**Speaker Four:** I don't wanna be part of somebody getting a super yacht.

**Speaker Five:** I don't know at what point you want to go into this, but we have had a worm bin before.

**Speaker One:** Available free right now at Maximumfun.org.

**John:** *Judge John Hodgman*. The court of last resort when your wife won't stop pretending to be a cat and knocking the clean laundry over.

[meow]

[ad ends]

[cheerful music plays in the background]

**Griffin:** You all walk down the smoky, darkened corridors of the—

**Devo:** You guys are going to love the selection here.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Devo:** They have everything. Um...

**Griffin:** Of the back alleys of— of Joshy's Knuckle, uh, following Devo, who leads you towards the storefront known as Nermal's Pile. Only when you roll up on Nermal's Pile, uh, she is not there.

**Griffin:** And her shelves that she has sort of constructed in this alley are empty, similarly. It is well past closing time. Uh, you do—

[music with a strong beat and heavy bass plays in the background]

**Travis:** So, how far after lights out is that?

**Justin:** [snorts]

**Griffin:** Uhh... six... tides... [laughs]

**Clint:** Ooh, yeah! Use the tides! Tides is a good idea!

**Griffin:** Yeah, but you're deep in the ocean, so how can you— do you—

**Clint:** Well, there's still tides. You still sense the tides

**Travis:** [holding back laughter] It's the overtow and the undertow.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I guess so. I'm gonna— there's clocks. And by fuckin' complete coincidence, it uses the same times as us.

**Travis:** Oh, what are the odds?

**Justin:** Wow, that's wild.

**Griffin:** So it's— so it's—

**Travis:** So this *is* Earth in the future!

**Griffin:** So it's 1 AM in this future Earth. Um, no. That's not canon. Stop it.

**Justin:** [snorts]

[mysterious music plays in the background]

**Griffin:** Um, you do see someone seated on the, uh— the rim of this big pipe that Nermal is usually sticking out of. Uh, it is a— a big person. They are sort of tall and wide, and wearing a dark blue cloak that is covering their— you know, their hair and their mouth, disguising their appearance. This figure looks up at you, and see a— a— a red glow on their face as they light a pipe, and they hold it out, and they say...

**The Beholder:** You came. As I expected.

**Devo:** And you sent for us, as I expected.

**The Beholder:** [false laughter] What a coincidink.

**Devo:** Indeed. I knew it was you the entire time.

**The Beholder:** Then who am I?

**Devo:** Ah, fuck. I don't know. I was trying to be... fuck.

**The Beholder:** Uh-huh. I did sign my message, so... bad job sort of paying attention. But I am...

**Zoox:** The Beholder!

**The Beholder:** The Be— well done! 10 points.

**Zoox:** Thank you.

**The Beholder:** For the— for the— for Zoox.

**Devo:** Well, I was trying to give a real name. I could've said The Beholder too, if I wanted to, but I was trying to... I thought you meant like a real name, like Rumpelstiltskin or something.

**The Beholder:** [congested noise] How did you know? Just kidding.

[all laugh]

**The Beholder:** I am, uh, but a— a witness to the happenings of this city, and a— a fly in the— on the wall *and* in the ointment of the— of those who would ha— who would have total control, but not of me. Because I'm The Beholder!

**Devo:** I— I am so sorry. May I— I— I know that I, by nature, am fairly rude. And, uh, I interrupt a lot. But right now, if I may, uh, I am someone who often is trying to impress and persuade and things. You are laying it on a little bit thick.

**The Beholder:** Am I? I— it felt like it.

**Devo:** Yes.

**The Beholder:** Okay.

**Devo:** It was the confusing thing when you say fly on the wall and fly in the ointment. Like, it's— it's—

**The Beholder:** You can't really be both of those. Okay. Anyway... I'm but a humble little housefly. And it's amazing what you can glean from people when they pay you... no mind. Think of me as an info broker. Joshy may think of himself as an info broker, but he's merely my pawn.

**Devo:** Did you say crypto broker?

**The Beholder:** Yeah.

**Zoox:** [Whispering] Info, info broker.



**Devo:** Oh.

**The Beholder:** I got this Doobercoin here.

**Travis:** [snorts]

**Clint:** [giggles]

**The Beholder:** And it'll cost you—

**Justin:** No. That's one— we can't joke about that, 'cause the one thing in ethersea is that crypto is illegal.

**Griffin:** Oh, right.

**Justin:** It's a— it's a nightmare future—

**Travis:** Even to— even to talk about. Even to mention, will have you— you'll be arrested for 20 years.

**Clint:** Rule number—

**Justin:** It's a nightmare future where the fiatspiracy caught up with us, and all crypto is illegal, [holding back laughter] except in the hands of a few brave miners, always one step ahead.

**Travis:** [laughs] They used— no, they used theirs to fly to the moon, uh, and they never came back.

**Justin:** Their pockets full of crypto.

**Clint:** Rule number 6: all crypto is illegal.

**Griffin:** [laughs] Everyone has—

**Clint:** Except for miners.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Justin:** It's illegal but it exists, right? There's a brave group—

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** They're always one step ahead— I just outlined it!

**Griffin:** No, here's the thing.

**Justin:** This is a compelling side story!

**Griffin:** Crypto— crypto is illegal because crypto mining is what destroyed the world in the first place.

**Justin:** [laughs loudly]

**Travis:** [laughs loudly] No, it was crypt mining. It was going into crypts and finding magic and spells and stuff.

**Griffin:** Right, and that just releases so much... so much stuff in the atmosphere. Okay. Uh, this—

**Justin:** [Crypt Keeper voice] I still accept cryptocurrency!

**Travis:** Normal?

**Justin:** No, it's the [wheezing] Crypt Keeper!

**Travis:** Ohh!

**Griffin:** Oh, that's really good, too.

**Clint:** [laughs] [humming]

**Griffin:** Alright. The—

**Justin:** "[Crypt Keeper voice] So would you like slash or card?" That was cash or card. Yeah.

**Griffin:** You said slash because it's like a— that's how you would murder someone.

**Justin:** Blood— yes, exactly.

**Griffin:** Like scary blood stuff. Okay. He says, uh—

**Justin:** "[Crypt Keeper voice] We— we don't accept hollers!"

**Travis:** Is that— oh, that's dollars.

**Justin:** Dollars, yeah.

**Travis:** Ohh, okay.

**Griffin:** Let me know how many of those were—

**Justin:** Okay, I'm done.

**Griffin:** No, you said you were done last time and then you did one more, so why don't you—

**Justin:** No, but I was real— I'm real— I'm really seriously done this time.

**Griffin:** So.

**Justin:** [wheezes]

**Griffin:** Uh, the Beholder takes another long drag of his pipe.

**Travis:** All I can think is, we also accept Pisscover? [through laughter] But that's just piss in there!

**Justin:** No, I would've gone with fear-at currency.

**Griffin:** The Crypt Keeper doesn't say piss.

**Justin:** "[Crypt Keeper voice] Fear-at!" Like... currency.

**Griffin:** The Behol— now mute your mics. You all are bei— I'm putting you in time out.

**Justin:** [laughs quietly]

**Griffin:** You're in Crypt Keeper joke time out. The Beholder says—

**Justin:** Blame *The Flop House*! [laughs]

**Griffin:** I know. This really is starting to—

**Travis:** I always do.

**Griffin:** The Beholder says...

**The Beholder:** I am— I rarely would, uh, offer my services for free. But, uh, the Hand's death is one too many destabilizing events facing this city, and there is more danger than you even know about, but I know about it, because I'm just a little fly. Bzzz! So I'm willing to make an exception.

I do want to say first that I do watch you all, and I see every— I watch you all, and I see everything. And can you all, like, get it the fuck together? I'm sorry for cussing.

**Devo:** I think we've been fairly effective. We have yet to fail a mission.

**Amber:** We've guessed— I think I've guessed his true name.

**Devo:** Huh?

**Amber:** Reddit. [wheezes]

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Oh boy.

**Griffin:** He says, uh...

**The Beholder:** It's just, you know, Devo, you're— you always roll in, and you come on so strong. And, like— but Amber, you're always like, "Stop it, kid!" But sometimes he knows what he's talking about, and sometimes she knows what

she's talking about. And the whole time you got— you got Zoox rollin' with you, and he's, like, some miracle of nature, and you two are just going on yellin' about... whatever. And it's like, come on! You know what I— you know what I mean? This isn't— this isn't a way to— what kind of team building is that?

**Zoox:** Aww, you think I'm a miracle! Thank you!

**Amber:** I— well, our dramatic conflict has been resolved. Sorry for the stress, everybody.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**The Beholder:** Uh—

**Devo:** So are you done with your fanfiction? Uh, would you like to share the—

**Amber:** Yeah, any theories?

**Devo:** Information? Or...

**The Beholder:** Uh... yeah, alright.

**Griffin:** He, uh, rummages around in his cloak and, uh, it takes him a while, rummaging around in this cloak. Uh, and at one point he— like, he drops his pipe—

[metal clanging]

**Griffin:** — and it falls down the big pipe.

**Clint:** Into the pipe.

**Griffin:** Into the pipe. He's like...

**The Beholder:** Oh no! Aw, god. Oh, god.

**Travis:** [giggles]

**The Beholder:** Sorry. God, I hope that doesn't hit the catfish people. Um... oh, here it is.

**Griffin:** Uh, and he throws down a big stack of papers, held together with clips. And it lands at your feet, and the contents of the paper, at least the one on top, appears to be, like, scribbled text and, like, sort of hastily etched images, almost like somebody traced or maybe, like, hastily copied over what you see there. And he says...

**The Beholder:** Uh, so that is a copy of a book that you all actually recovered during one of your earliest jobs with the Brokerage. That's the— that's the journal of Heretic Knob. You secured it at the abyssal auction, and you returned it to Joshy for payment, and then he turned it around and sold it to *his* client for a tidy profit. And that client was none other than Benefactor Orlene.

**Devo:** Oh. Okay, yeah, no. Um... okay? So he killed, uh, the Hand of Guidance?

**The Beholder:** I— man, I don't know!

**Devo:** Well, so, wait! Why do—

**Zoox:** Wait, you're an information broker!

**Devo:** Why do we need this book? But... [sighs] okay. So what does the book tell us?

**The Beholder:** Well... man, hold on.

**Griffin:** He hops down from the pipe and he comes over and he picks it up, picks up the journal and, like, puts it in your hands. He's like...

**The Beholder:** I didn't think you'd just leave it laying on the ground.

**Devo:** Okay. Uh, sorry.

**Travis:** I take it.

**Griffin:** Uh, as he hands it to you, you see that this journal— and I think maybe Joshy set this up for you when he hired you to recover it, you know, in the first place— it's a bunch of blueprints for a bunch of, like, pretty out there looking devices. Uh, roll a— roll a... history check.

**Travis:** Everybody?

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

[dice roll]

**Travis:** I got an 18 total.

[dice roll]

**Clint:** I got a 4!

**Griffin:** Okay.

[dice roll]

**Travis:** Yeah, I know— I know history.

**Justin:** Yeah, a 9— 9 here.

**Travis:** [in Devo's voice] I've read the books, yes.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you've— you've— you've read about Heretic Knob. He was a sort of well, um, respected member of the Delmer society, which... it's been a while since we've sort of—

**Travis:** Was Heretic a title, or his name?

**Griffin:** Uh, it became his name, more or less. Uh, the Delmer society was, like, very anti magic, anti, you know, Benevolence. And so, like, they, you know, thought of themselves as more technologically inclined. And Heretic Knob was a, you know, well known inventor. He created the— he created tone wheels. Like, a lot of the sort of magical tech that you all used on a daily basis in the— in Founder's Wake were his creations. Uh, but he was branded a heretic and sort of shunned from Delmer society because his, like, designs became way too, like, magical and, um... and that sort of went against the Delmer beliefs.

Uh, and this journal is sort of a— a catalog of some of the blueprints that branded him as such.

**Devo:** Wait. Is the— is the blueprints for a Whisp in this book?

**The Beholder:** No. No, that's, um... that's a different thing. That's, like, Hominine stuff.

**Devo:** Okay, so then what— why— okay. Beholder? I feel like, um—

**The Beholder:** Please, call me The Beholder.

**Devo:** The Beholder.

**The Beholder:** Uh-huh?

**Devo:** I feel like you have led the proverbial horse to water. And I want to drink so badly. Oh, boy, do I want to drink! But I'm going to need your help here. I don't know what it is I am supposed to drink.

**The Beholder:** Huh... but—

**Devo:** So, let me see if I get this straight, right?

**The Beholder:** Yeah— yeah.

**Devo:** Orlene wanted this book.

**The Beholder:** Yeah.

**Devo:** Uh, so we got it at the auction, we gave it to Joshy, Joshy gave it to him.

**The Beholder:** Yeah. But not before I got a copy of it, using my own crafty wiles!

[beat]

**Devo:** Okay, great. That's— I assume so, 'cause you have one here. What does this have to do... with the death and, uh, you know, the Whisp, and everything with the Hand of Guidance?

**The Beholder:** Because, like, it's— it's a book full of magic stuff, and big magic designs, and Benefactor Orlene wanted it... and then one of his old buddies just



happens to get— just happens to die? And I think it was murder. So maybe she found out—

**Devo:** [simultaneously] Okay, thank you, yes.

**The Beholder:** — that, like, he was... doing something bad, with the books— with something from the book. And he was like, "Well, I'll never let *you* find out about it." And then he poisoned her... drink. He went in— he snuck— he hid under her desk and waited for her to go to the potty. And then when she was in the potty, he put a poison in her drink.

**Devo:** Okay. So...

**Amber:** How— how do you know this?

**Devo:** He's guessing.

**The Beholder:** I see— I am a— buzzz. That's me.

**Devo:** Okay. Yes, he's a little fly. I think he is guessing. Um, so I really, really appreciate— can I have the book? Can I have this?

**The Beholder:** Um... yeah—I mean, yeah? I— I—

**Devo:** Okay.

**The Beholder:** — I'll be honest, I expected sort of more of a reaction from you all.

**Devo:** Because you're telling us not to trust Benefactor Orlene?

**The Beholder:** Yeah, because he has this— he's doing something bad with the book.

**Amber:** I won't— I wasn't crazy about that guy to begin with, honestly.

**Devo:** Yeah.

**Zoox:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

**The Beholder:** Oh, there is one more thing.

**Griffin:** He reaches into his—

**Devo:** Oh, thank god.

**Griffin:** — cloak, and he pulls out a, uh, silver spike that is etched in runes. And he says—

**Amber:** The fuck is that?!

**Devo:** What—

**The Beholder:** It's a tracer spike. I— I planted one on the— on Benefactor Orlene's ship.

**Devo:** Lead with this!

**The Beholder:** Well, I thought that the book was, like, a bigger thing! Like, he's— you know? 'Cause it is—

**Devo:** He's doing weird shit with the book? Ohh, yeah. We definitely mulled over that.

**The Beholder:** I have established motive and opportunity for you all.

**Devo:** I already thought it was him!

[beat]

**The Beholder:** You did?

**Devo:** Yes!

**Amber:** [laughs quietly] It was more of a working theory, though, to be fair.

**Devo:** I mean, but I look at that and I say, who has the power to kill the Hand of Guidance with— with, you know, magic? Oh, Benefactor Orlene.

**The Beholder:** Oh.

**Devo:** Who is a piece of shit and would do it? Benefactor Orlene.

**The Beholder:** [laughs]

**Devo:** Who would like to have more control within the Parish?

**The Beholder:** [laughter becomes villainous] Thanks for all the info!

**Justin:** [wheezes and laughs loudly]

**The Beholder:** Right into my ointment.

**Amber:** Alright, I like this guy. [laughs]

**Devo:** Okay, wait, no, hold on. Did you say into your ointment? Is this, like, you're catching the flies now with the ointment?

**Amber:** [wheezes]

**The Beholder:** Yeah.

**Devo:** That's not the same!

**Amber:** [through laughter] That's not—

**Zoox:** This— this metaphor is really screwed.

**Devo:** Are you— hey. We live in a world of magic—

**The Beholder:** Yeah.

**Devo:** — and recently there was the sallow, and it turned people— gave 'em fish stuff. Are you a fly?

**The Beholder:** Hmm! No. I'm just a guy. I'm just a dude.

**Justin:** [snorts]

**Devo:** Ah, a guy fly?

**The Beholder:** Someone you'd never even expect.

**Zoox:** A fly guy!

**Amber:** I do have to say, you're pretty— pretty fly for a fly guy.

**Devo:** There you go.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Devo:** Should we guess your name? I'm going to say you're Guthrie. I've been looking for him for a while now.

**The Beholder:** Ohh, that stinker. I know who that is, definitely, but do you know, say it out loud now?

**Devo:** Guthrie?

**The Beholder:** Yeah, who is that? You say it so you— I know that you know it.

**Devo:** Okay, so you don't know.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Devo:** I'll take the tracer spike, please, so I can find Orlene and... probably kill him, if I'm being honest.

**Amber:** Not with the spike, though. That would— that would be—

**Devo:** I don't know!

**Amber:** — pretty hard to fight in court, wouldn't it? [laughs quietly]

**The Beholder:** No— um, okay. You are gonna kill him, though?!

[beat]

**Devo:** Nooo.

**Zoox:** No!

**Devo:** [quietly] Maybe.

**Amber:** No, we won't kill him.

**The Beholder:** Well, hold on, 'cause I don't want someone's death on my conscience if it turns out he didn't do it.

**Zoox:** No! No, no.

**Amber:** I won't. I sw— I— kidding aside, I wouldn't let him kill him. We'll bring him to... justice.

**Zoox:** Justice.

**The Beholder:** Okay... well, just, uh, be careful. And, um...

**Amber:** Alright, thank you. What was your name again?

**The Beholder:** Oh, Chauncey. Oh! [stammering loudly] Beholder?

**Amber:** [laughs] Alright, Chaunce.

**Chauncey:** Fuck! Son of a gun!

**Amber:** Take— take it sleazy, man.

**Chauncey:** Shoot! Hey, listen. Hey, wait, stop. Now you can't go. Stop.

**Devo:** Bye!

**Amber:** Oh, you gonna kill me, Chaunce?

**Chauncey:** [through tears] I'm gonna kill all three of you now. [muffled sobbing]

**Devo:** Okay. Bye!

**Amber:** Hey, listen. Your— your secret's— your—

**Chauncey:** You cannot tell Joshy! He will be so PO'd if he finds out.

**Amber:** Chauncey, listen.

**Chauncey:** You c— he will be so PO'd!

**Amber:** Take that off— hey, take the— hey, hey. Take the—

**Chauncey:** [unmuffled] [holding back tears] He will be so PO'd if he finds out!

**Amber:** I know. Hey, listen. Somebody with as many secrets as you, I can't afford to betray. Alright? Your secret's safe with me.

**Chauncey:** Alright. Hey—

**Amber:** As long as you stay on the right side of the— of— I was gonna say "good," but I think I meant "us."

**Chauncey:** Yeah. Um... can I... before you— before I spilled the beef, um, did— how was it?

**Devo:** It was pretty good!

**Zoox:** Yeah!

**Amber:** It took me a good three minutes before I knew precisely who you were, yeah.

**Devo:** Uh, next time I would say, uh, say less?

**Amber:** Ahh, yeah.

**Devo:** You— yes.

**Amber:** But hey, you're— it's a work in progress, right? You'll get 'em next time.

**Chauncey:** This is actually— I'm not— this is part of it. I'm not Chauncey, it's an illusion.

**Devo:** You took your hood off—

**Amber:** Oh my gosh!

**Devo:** We can see—

**Amber:** Hook, line, and sinker. Alright, well, we gotta go, alright?

**Chauncey:** [laughs weakly]

**Devo:** Goodbye, whoever you are!

**Amber:** Keep those eyes—keep those peepers peeled, whoever you are! Winka, winka.

**Griffin:** He says, uh...

**Chauncey:** Thanks— thanks for falling right into my trap!

**Griffin:** And then he runs and he climbs up on the pipe and looks down at it, like he's gonna jump into it, and then he just kind of stands there and waits for you all to leave.

**Devo:** Okay. See you at the Cloaca!

**Amber:** We gotta— we gotta turn— [whispering] we gotta turn around.

**Chauncey:** Here I go!

**Amber:** [quietly] He's gonna hide behind, we have to turn around.

**Devo:** Okay.

**Travis:** Uh, Devo turns around.

**Chauncey:** [getting farther away] Whoaaaaa!

**Devo:** [exaggerated surprise] Where did he go?

**Amber:** Aw, shit! [holding back laughter] He fell right in the damn pipe! That was cool as hell, Chauncey!

**Chauncey:** Thanks!

**Amber:** No! Don't—

**Chauncey:** Aw, shit! [laughs]

**Amber:** [laughs]

**Zoox:** [laughs]

**Devo:** Be Chauncey.

**Zoox:** That guy was not a fly!

**Griffin:** Okay. Uh, what are you all doing now? We can pick up with you all sort of, uh— do you have money? [snorts]

**Clint:** We should have money!

**Justin:** I mean, we have some spare Lux, right?

**Clint:** Did we ever get paid for the— did we ever get paid for the last... mission?

**Griffin:** 15 Lux for bringing the perpetrators to justice, 6 additional Lux for the auroch's safe return. So 21 Lux, total.

**Travis:** And we brought back other animals too.

**Griffin:** Ehh, I still think 21's quite a— quite a bit. So I will add that to your total now, and if you want to do some shopping before you hit the road again, that is—

**Travis:** What? Wait, hold on. So we got the spike though, right?

**Griffin:** Yeah, you have the spike. You have the— the journal.

**Amber:** I'll come with.

**Travis:** Yeah, let's go shop— is this— are we doing ship stuff?



**Griffin:** Um, yeah, we can do sort of a one stop shop if there's, uh, things... let me see. I haven't updated the gear list. Uh, but I guess it is still there. Uh, so yes, if you look at the gear tab that's there. We can say that this is a one stop shop. If you need stuff from Nermal's Pile while you are in the Phantom Sea Coast Co., that— that— they can make that work for you.

[bright music plays in the background]

**Griffin:** So you look at weapons, tools, parts, and facilities. You can see all the different ship upgrades. There's consumables, too, and gear. It's been a while since we've gone shopping, so if you have any questions, um...

**Travis:** I'm gonna take six cloaks of billowing.

**Griffin:** 'Kay. Don't you already have one?

**Travis:** That's 12. I'm taking six of 'em, for different occasions, different... you know, for different temperatures and—

**Griffin:** You just bundle 'em all up and cuddle into 'em at night time.

**Travis:** Um, guys, can we pay off my debt?

**Griffin:** If you wanna split your 21 three ways, then everybody's got 7.

**Travis:** No, I don't wanna do that. I'll keep sitting on my debt till I can pay it off.

**Griffin:** Jeez. It's going to keep increasing. In fact, it should be 6 now and not 5.

**Justin:** The juice.

**Travis:** I know how the juice runs, Griffin.

**Justin:** The juice!

**Clint:** The big!

**Travis:** But as long as I owe Felix money, Felix is invested in keeping me alive.

**Griffin:** Do you think Felix is gonna fucking kill you?

**Travis:** No, but I mean... I don't know. Maybe he's a little more invested in my wellbeing.

**Griffin:** Sure, okay.

**Travis:** I think we should get— if we're going after a criminal, we should get the brig. Right?

**Clint:** You really plan on arresting him and not killing him?

**Travis:** Well, I mean, we're assuming it's Orlene. But it would be nice to have the facilities.

**Griffin:** Listen. I think the best way to do this, 'cause you all are stymied a little bit right now, is to split it 7, 7, and 7, and you all do whatever you wanna do with that money.

**Travis:** Okay. As— as the, um... pilot, I think I'm going for propulsion.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** So I'm gonna get the experimental fins.

**Griffin:** Experimental fins, I see. Okay. So, these have a plus 6 speed modifier, but a much higher repair check, which is an 8. Which is essentially just a flat— flat d20, and you have to roll above that.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Okay. Um... so that is 5 Lux for the experimental fins. I will update this.

**Travis:** Um, and then I will put my 2 back into the— the pile.

**Griffin:** Uh, okay. So that is now 18 Lux total.

**Clint:** Okay. As the kind of scout? Ranger? Um, I'm going to purchase... the astral sextant.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** A navigational tool that taps into extra planar energy to aid in navigation, which basically provides a permanent plus 2 bonus to readiness rating.

**Griffin:** I think as the person who has rolled the most disastrous readiness checks, this as a sort of mea culpa makes a lot— makes a lot of sense to me.

**Clint:** Yeah. So that's what, uh... that's what Zoox is spending his 5 on.

**Griffin:** Okay. Uh, that leaves y'all with 13. Juice.

**Justin:** Uh, yeah. I was looking at the tools section, and this— this one that you added under cockpit relay sounds really good. I'm gonna grab that, I think.

**Griffin:** Okay. That is— uh, two problems with that. Uh, it is grayed out, which means that you all don't actually have access to it. Now, it does— I do see, actually— hold on. There's... okay. So I did hear some typing this time for sure, and it does turn out that— it looks like Justin has added something to the tools worksheet. Which is—

**Justin:** I learned how to use Excel. [wheezes] I meant to tell you guys.

**Griffin:** That's— not very well! Just looking at—

**Justin:** Oh, it's not gray.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** The— you put it in here. It's not gray.

**Griffin:** Oh, part of it's gray— okay, so kickass flame decals. And the description is "Fuckin' looks sick as hell. When any intelligent being encounters them they must pause for at least 15 seconds to audibly say 'Hell yes!'."

**Justin:** [wheezes]

**Clint:** Aww, man!

**Travis:** Hey, Griffin, thank you for adding that. I think that's gonna be really useful.

**Griffin:** Um, if you want to add kickass flame decals that can— oh, it costs negative 1 engine power, so you— it actually generates—

**Travis:** Oh, awesome!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** That is kickass!

**Justin:** It gets the engine pumped. [wheezes]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Even the engine's into it. I like that.

**Justin:** [wheezes] The engine is like, "I can do better."

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** "Hey, you guys see this shit?"

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs] It's like the engine is strutting.

**Travis:** "I'm gonna work harder!"

**Griffin:** Okay, you know what? I'm gonna do— I'm gonna take this and I'm gonna work with it, okay? Kickass flame decals, they fuckin' look sick as hell. This costs zero engine power because it's decals.

**Justin:** Okay. That's not negative 1, but okay, nerfed.

**Griffin:** So I've— I have— I have improved it by reducing the amount of engine power required. I've increased the cost to 5, because—

**Travis:** What?!

**Griffin:** — what these, the kickass flame decals, do, is they do cause the enemy pilot to pause for a moment to audibly say "Hell yes," which grants Devo, or the pilot of your ship, advantage on the first position roll of combat.

**Justin:** Yeah. And how much can I spend?

**Griffin:** I mean, you have 13 left in the kitty.

**Travis:** Well, you have sev— okay, 'cause I do think we need a better engine.  
[laughs quietly]

**Justin:** I thought you said we split it.

**Griffin:** Well—

**Clint:** Yeah, you have 7.

**Justin:** Okay, perfect.

**Amber:** I gotta get the decals.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Devo:** Oh, yes, I understand.

**Amber:** Yeah, those are new. I've never seen 'em before.

**Zoox:** Those are boss!

**Amber:** Yeah, thank you. Um...

**Griffin:** Felix looks at them like...

**Felix:** Where did these come from?

**Clint:** [laughs quietly]

**Amber:** Um... yeah, that— yeah, those are new. Thank you so much!

**Felix:** Okay.

**Amber:** I did— I special ordered 'em [holding back laughter] via ISDN number.

**Griffin:** [laughs] He says—

**Justin:** It's a intra— it's a intra-shop loan.

**Clint:** Oh, and listen, uh, Juice. If you wouldn't mind, how did— how did you— uh, I mean, how would one learn how to change an Excel? How would one—

**Justin:** Your wife has to run for office—

**Griffin:** [laughs loudly]

**Justin:** — and then you have to spend fucking... the— the— the last few months of your, like, healthful years staring at it as you add, like, expenses to it.

**Griffin:** Yeah, that sounds boring as hell.

**Clint:** Oh, it's just as well. We don't need rims, right?

**Griffin:** Yeah. Uh, it would be fun. You notice a ship worm from his sort of menagerie poking out of the water, uh, digging in your pocket. And he pulls out real quick and nods at him, and Felix says...

**Felix:** Well, that leaves, uh, 8 Lux. Which, let me look at the books... uh, yeah, that's enough to pay off your debt! Uh, if that is— so that's one way you could spend that money. Is to pay off your debt of 6 Lux. And then wouldn't it feel good to not have that weighing on your soul and your heart?

**Devo:** Yes. Uhh... uh, yes. Um, how about this? How about this. Uh, we do— we move up to the basic engine and pay off the debt. Hmm?

**Clint:** Okay. Hold on a minute. So, doing the math, we each bought something worth 5, correct?

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Clint:** That's 15. 21 minus 15 is 6.

**Travis:** We had 23 total.

**Griffin:** You had 23. You had 2 Lux already.

**Clint:** Ahhh, alright.

**Travis:** So we could pay off the 6, and get a basic engine, which is 2, for the remaining 8.

**Clint:** Or we could— we could... we could get a combat engine, and pay off most of the debt. I'm just— I'm just throwing that alternative out there.

**Travis:** But at this point— I mean, we don't have any other things that require engine power.

**Griffin:** Alright.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Devo:** So let's do this, yes. We pay— if you all will allow, we pay off the debt. And then we have 2 left over. Huh?

**Clint:** Okay. Alright, cool.

**Griffin:** Um—

**Clint:** I— I say we do that. That sounds fine with me. I mean...

**Zoox:** That sounds fine with me. Amber?

**Amber:** Yeah, sure. What do I care?

**Griffin:** Uh—

**Travis:** We paid off our student loans. That feels good.

**Griffin:** You hear, uh, a sigh of relief from behind you, and you see a very nervous looking ship worm holding a sock filled with Lux that he was about to, uh—

**Travis:** [laughs] Oh no!

**Griffin:** — club Devo over the head with. And he— he is looking kind of weepy as he, like, lowers back down into the water. Uh, and Felix collects— or rather I guess another ship worm collects the 6 Lux debt, clearing the slate. And a choir of angels sings in celebration. Uh...

**Devo:** Now would you like to do another loan and we could get some more cool stuff, or... ?

**Felix:** I mean, I— I made a— a hefty fortune on interest, just because of your sort of malfeasance, so I'm not opposed to it.

**Devo:** No, we don't do this. No. I'm going to be solvent.

**Felix:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Um—

**Devo:** I'm in the— in the black? As they say.

**Griffin:** Uh, one thing, just as your DM. You may want to spend this 2 Lux on, uh, some food.

**Travis:** Oh, right!

**Griffin:** You have your rations still on you guys from last time.

**Travis:** Oh, right!

**Griffin:** Uh...

**Devo:** Uh, yes. Let's get some generous rations.



**Clint:** And I would like to say that I am very proud of the decision we made to pay off the debt. Because you know, when you live underwater, it's good to achieve li— liqui— [hesitantly] liquidity. Li— li—

**Travis:** Oh, you were so close to getting there.

**Clint:** [emphatically] I was so damn close!

**Justin:** So close to a— Dad, it was really a heartbreaker.

**Clint:** Liqui—liquidy? Liquidity?

**Griffin:** Liquidy.

**Travis:** Liquidity. You were right there. You got right to the finish—

**Clint:** Ah!

**Justin:** I feel like— I feel like—

**Clint:** Can I have it? Can I have that one?

**Justin:** The black circle was, like, closing in your face, like, giving you a "That's all, folks!" and you fucked it up, and then it opened back up. I wanna give you, like, another pass at it and just, like—

**Clint:** Okay, thanks. Yeah.

**Justin:** Yeah yeah yeah, go ahead.

**Griffin:** And I actually just— I've decided that this is gonna be, like, the end of the episode, so you need to do it—

**Travis:** Really nail it.

**Justin:** Yeah yeah yeah. This is like— I want Dad to send it out with, like, no pressure.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Justin:** And don't make it— we often do a bit where the bit is that it's not a bit and it's like, I really need you to nail it, and I'm not— I'm gonna remove that sort of safety net.

**Clint:** Okay. [clears throat] It's— it's very appropriate, because we are underwa—

**Travis:** No, you stumbled. Try again, try again, one more time.

**Clint:** Oh, yeah, yeah, I'm sorry, okay. It's very appropriate, since we're underwater, that we achieve liquicki— [shouts] dammit! Liquidi— liquidi—

**Justin:** No, Dad. Don't make it a bit. I want you to just do it, and that'll be the end of the episode, okay?

**Griffin:** Yeah, definitely don't—

**Clint:** It's— I'm not making it a bit! I'm having trouble saying liqui— li—

**Travis:** Liquidity.

**Griffin:** [simultaneously] Liquidity.

**Clint:** Liquidity, liquidity, liquidity, liquidity, liquidity. Okay, I'm ready!

**Griffin:** Alright, and go.

**Travis:** Do it, nail it, get it!

**Clint:** And I think it's very awesome that we are underwater and we have achieved liquidity.

**Griffin:** It wasn't really worth—

**Justin:** Shit!

**Travis:** [loud, exaggerated laughter] I get it!

[theme music plays]

[chord]

Maximumfun.org.

Comedy and Culture.

Artist Owned.

Audience Supported.