

The Adventure Zone: Ethersea — Episode 43

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

I think in the history of this show, this is the first dragon you all have fought. You see that Kodira... has... obliterated every single one of the coral beings.

Koda: Well don't freeze up now, Miss Gris. Your destiny is waiting. Will you join me to erase magic from this world, before it can penetrate another?

I am capable of taking control of one of my servants, yes. But if that is not something—

Amber: Aw, man. Aw... [thumps her hands together in thought]

Koda: We could come to an arrangement.

Amber: You had to use that word, didn't yah?

Koda: I should be clear. You will submit.

Clint: *Healing Spirit*... calls forth a nature spirit to soothe the wounded, and it's the shape of a great big manta ray.

Griffin: You maybe don't notice as the... debris pile that the dragon collapsed into starts to shift. Because Zoox climbs out of the pile. But then he snaps to an almost sort of militaristic pose. And looks down at you. And aims his crossbow right in your direction.

[intro theme music plays]

Griffin: Devo.

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: Zoox is now standing in front of you, having climbed out of the pile of coral rubble formed when the dragon basically toppled over on top of him. Orlene is still in his ship, high above, out of sight. And the machine that his ship is sort of

built into, this coral machine is still running, still accelerating, it's getting louder. And... you've noticed, I think, during this battle that time is getting weird around where this machine is built.

[electric charging sound effect plays]

Griffin: Just now, you see a chunk of coral like fall off of the platform, and then it falls again, and then again, before it ultimately just sets itself right back up into its original position.

Travis: I see.

Griffin: And—

Travis: And that's abnormal, right?

Griffin: That's not [chuckles] normal, yes. And... Zoox, who is... under the control of Orlene, is up first and he aims his crossbow at you. And when he does that, you hear Orlene's voice in your mind, and he sounds tired, he sounds pained. But... he says...

Benefactor Orlene: [in a reverberating voice] You are wounded, Devo. Stand down, just— just for a few moments longer.

Devo: Uh, no. [pause]

Benefactor Orlene: W—

Devo: Sorry, you had to expect that this was the answer, right? Like... do you think that at this point I would be like "Okay, you got me". Here's the thing, Orlene. Do you not realize like... what— why would I do this f— Like what up to this point have you done that makes me think like "Maybe Orlene isn't all that bad. Maybe he's not a piece of shit and whatever he's doing isn't, you know, going to fuck everything up", right? Like at this point, you've given me no indication not to do everything I can to stop whatever it is you're doing.

Griffin: Zoox uses his first attack to fire a crossbow bolt.

[trigger snapping sound effect plays]

Griffin: Right between your feet. And Orlene says...

Benefactor Orlene: You may not believe this, Devo, but... I do not wish... to harm you any further. I just need to finish what I started. Stand. Down.

Devo: I have a different idea. How about instead, right? You pause what you are doing, and you explain to me everything you're doing, why you're doing it, uh, what you think the outcome will be. Once I've heard this out, if it seems to me like "Okay, this isn't all that bad", I will let you do it, right? But right now, I don't know what I'm standing down from, you have been, uh, very withholding. Which, as I imagine you know at this point, I do not like when people do. And you have been very, let's say it, antagonistic to me. So if you do not wish to hurt me, then how about... you tell me what the fuck is happening?

Benefactor Orlene: I'm sorry, Devo.

Devo: Okay, see this is— Okay.

Griffin: He—

Devo: This is what I'm talking about.

Griffin: He says that, and Zoox fires at you. Uh... That is an 18 versus AC.

Travis: I mean, yes. This do— That does hit. I'm wearing a suit.

Griffin: Yeah, that's not the strongest.

Travis: I mean, it's— Listen.

Griffin: There's better.

Travis: It's beefy, sure.

Griffin: There's better armor.

Travis: But—

Griffin: Than that. Uh...

Travis: But there's worse! I could be wearing butter!

Griffin: There certainly is worse.

Travis: I'm just—

Griffin: You taaake, uh, six points of piercing damage.

Travis: Well, I'm down again.

Griffin: The crossbow bolt... goes right into... your chest.

[trigger snapping sound effect plays]

Griffin: And... you fall backwards. And you begin to lose consciousness, and as you do, you are staring straight upwards in this top floor of the tower, and now you can see that there are cracks in space, surrounding Orlene's ship. Like a— Like a window that has been shattered. And through some of these new sort of fragments that are forming in the air... you see a different... reality, maybe? You see water, but it is obsidian black, lifeless water. Not like the sort of shimmering, you know, arcane-enriched water of the Ethersea. It is— It is an abyss.

Travis: Is it the same thing, Griffin, I saw when Tolliver was like transitioning into something?

Griffin: No. This w— Tolliver, for his, you know, shadiness, was a very vibrant, you know, being. This is— This is—

Travis: Uh-huh.

Griffin: This is the absence of life.

Travis: Got it.

Griffin: And from the cracks surrounding those fragments, some of that water starts to spray into the room. And... you... fall unconscious. For just a moment. And then you... hear a sort of high-pitched groaning sound? And... the manta ray heals you once again.

Travis: Yay.

Griffin: Even though Zoos doesn't appear to be in control of his body right now... his— his swarm that he conjured up to help you remains. And so you're—

Travis: Hell yeah it does.

Griffin: Going to heal. I can roll that.

Travis: Oh, I did it.

Griffin: Oh, you did it?

Travis: It's a d6 right? Yeah.

Griffin: That's probably for the best, 'cause I got a one.

Travis: Yeah, I got— I got a three.

Griffin: Okay. Moments after you go down, you snap back to, catch your breath. The crossbow bolt just like falls out of your chest, and there's— you are still definitely, severely wounded, but you are, once again, conscious. And it is your action.

Travis: [sighs heavily]

Devo: Orlene. If you can hear me. [sighs] You are not a stupid man. Look around. Pull your head out of your ass, and pay attention to what you are doing. The effects that this is having outside of your ship. Look at the goddamn ceiling, you stupid bastard, and pay attention. And don't just like think about what you're doing, you shorts— Sorry. It's getting away from me. Just like pay attention, okay?

Travis: Ummm aaand then I'm going to cast... Okay... How's your Wisdom saving throw, Dad? I'm gonna cast *Charm Person* on Zoos.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: How's your Wisdom, Dad?

Clint: Plus one.

Justin: I can answer that.

Griffin: [giggles]

Travis: That's the— oh.

Clint: [chuckles]

Travis: That's not— not great.

Justin: That man once put butter on Pop-Tarts. [wheezes]

Travis: Yeah.

Clint: Mmmm.

Travis: Hey, that's— There's nothin' wrong with that.

Griffin: Uh—

Clint: Gosh, see now I want some. Ah!

Travis: Hell yeah I do.

Griffin: So you are— you are using your a— That's an action, right? To cast that spell?

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: Okay. You— You have done this a couple times now where you have sort of contested an already existing charm that has been placed on a living being.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: This time you know instantly that something is different, and you feel an icy pit in your stomach. Because what happens when you cast this spell on Zoox... You've cast spells on Zoox before, you know what that feels like, to influence him in that way. It is different this time because there is no... audience for your words. There is no... target that is there. Zoox is standing in front of

you... but Zoon is being piloted... by Benefactor Orlene. And for whatever reason... that appears to have... simply erased the consciousness you know as Zoon from existence.

Travis: Aw, bummer.

Clint: Jeez, yeah!

Griffin: Zoon. You are... standing on the pristine, flat, waveless surface of cerulean blue ocean waters.

[wave crashing sound effects fade in]

Griffin: And standing just before you is the coral tower. And it's just as you saw it from outside, before you sort of scaled it and went in. It and you are not surrounded by the coral dome that, you know, in your conscious state surrounds the tower in the real world. Curiously, that dome is far off in the distance, as is a coral battleship that is just kind of sitting atop the water, just next to the dome.

And you see a few of those coral beings and they're standing upright, all just looking at the tower, or more specifically the middle of the tower, where you can see that door going into the foyer. The one that you sort of climbed into. And there is just this very faint pulsating prismatic light shining through that door.

Those coral beings are not alone either because swimming laps around the tower, with almost childlike glee, is a blink shark. There's no water here, it appears to just be kind of swimming through the air. And as you are sort of observing this, you hear a voice from behind you. And it says...

Voice: Well, I... I didn't expect to see you again.

Griffin: And you turn and... First, of course, you see the giant clam. And he is so, so much larger than he was when you first saw him. His outside now seems to match his, you know, magically expanded interior volume. He's gigantic. But then you focus in on a much nearer figure, the one who just spoke to you, and it is Finneas Cawl.

Clint: [chuckles]

Griffin: And he says...

Finneas Cawl: I'm... I'm not a hundred percent sure what this means, if I am being completely honest.

Zoox: Um... I'm not even five percent sure. Uh... what this means...

Finneas Cawl: Did you di— Did you die? Is this heaven?

Zoox: I don't— I don't— I don't think so? Um...

Finneas Cawl: I don't think they let big clams in heaven.

Zoox: Now— No, um... I... I was under a giant pile of coral. And it felt kinda natural, and... then I was here, but... To be honest... Mr. Cawl, I don't feel so good.

Griffin: [giggles]

Travis: [snorts]

Clint: [snorts]

Travis: [laughs]

Justin: [snorts]

Griffin: He nods, and he says...

Finneas Cawl: Why don't we take a walk?

Griffin: And he breezes right past you, walking toward the tower, and as he gets close to it... the ocean kind of rises to meet his footfalls and begins to form a sort of spiral around the outside of the tower, going upward. And he starts up that spiral, then turns back to you and gestures for you to follow.

Clint: [sighs heavily] Okay. He follows. He trudges along.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Trying to figure out what the hell's goin' on.

[watery footstep sound effects play]

Griffin: You find this spiral made of water just as easy to climb as some stairs, and he is walking just in front of you, and he says...

Finneas Cawl: So, what is your take on all of this?

Zoox: [scoffs helplessly]

Finneas Cawl: Of— Of—

Zoox: [chuckles]

Finneas Cawl: Not *this*.

Griffin: He gestures to this scene around you, and he says...

Finneas Cawl: But the— There's a bunch of beings that look like you.

Zoox: Mm-hmm.

Finneas Cawl: Living on the bottom of the ocean.

Zoox: Right.

Finneas Cawl: All tunneling a hole through this world into... the next. Do—

Zoox: Mm-hmm.

Finneas Cawl: What do you think? Do you think it's— Is it time for the mortal world to move on?

Zoox: I— No! I don't think so at all! I'm not with them. No, I'm— I— I like the mortal world! I like the— I like the— I like the oceans! I like— I like most of the people I've met, and I like *all* of the creatures I've met! I— I don't know why anybody would want to... get rid of this.

I— I understand that people... have lives and memories and all these things about the past but, you know, I recently learned that I'm not gonna live in it. I— [chuckles] I don't have that past to live in! So I don't wanna tunnel into...

whatever Nirvana [chuckles] or whatever these people wanna do, I just— I wanna enjoy this beautiful world that we have, this existence we have! I wanna appreciate it, I don't— I don't see any sense in tryin' to go somewhere else! [emphatically] I'm not with them!

Griffin: And he looks back at you and kinda cocks his head. He looks curious, and he says...

Finneas Cawl: You inherited the troubles that you have from... from your mortal friends and the world around you. Didn't you?

Zoox: Wh— What troubles?

Griffin: He shakes his head and stops and thinks for a second. And... then he speaks. And as he is speaking, you are very quickly realizing that these are— these are your thoughts that you are having, that he is laying out to you. He says...

Finneas Cawl: Okay. When you... When you first joined a contract crew, what did you want?

Zoox: What did I want? I wanted to explore. I wanted... adventure, I wanted to see the world, I wanted to experience... all the abundance of life and all— I wanted to enjoy it!

Griffin: He... looks at you, kind of in, um, in— kind of skeptically. And he says...

Finneas Cawl: Of course. But... What about yourself, Zoox? What—

Zoox: When I—

Finneas Cawl: What did—

Zoox: When I first started, I was very curious about, you know, where I came from and what made me, you know, special. It seemed like I was different from everybody else and I— I really... worked and really tried to figure out what was my deal. And... and then I realized finding out where I came from wasn't that important! It was more important to... be in the moment and enjoy my life as it is!

Griffin: You're approaching the top of the tower now, um, and... the roof is gone. And as you sort of scale the last of this spiral, you look down into the room you were just in, and it is... sort of frozen in a tableau. And Finneas Cawl says...

Finneas Cawl: Then I am glad that you were able to... complete your quest for self-discovery. I am glad... you were able to find peace. Before...

Griffin: And he looks lost for words, and he gestures down into the room, and you see yourself. You see your body, and it is... It appears to be fighting with some sort of shadow that you cannot quite make out. But it is attacking with sort of wanton violence that is like *not* your— not you. It's not your [chuckles] style. And... Finneas Cawl says...

Finneas Cawl: This is not heaven, Zoox, but you are no longer.. in the traditional sense, at least... alive.

Griffin: Amber.

Travis: Via transition. As I'm fighting, I yell...

Devo: [yelling] Amber? I need you to hurry up and get down here— get back up here!

Travis: And then like the camera goes wee-ee-ee, down to where she is.

Justin: There's actually not a camera because, um—

Griffin: It's all voices.

Travis: I've been watching a lot of *Umbrella Academy*, and it's sort of—

Justin: Alright, I'm thrilled to speak. [clears throat] It's dust— dust has covered my throat.

Travis: [cackles]

Justin: Sorry. Special guest, Justin McElroy.

Griffin: Amber. You are... facing down your old friend.

[electronic beeping sound effect plays]

Griffin: Who's... Who is now Kodira, and Koda has completely taken over. You see no sign of your friend, Oxana, anywhere inside of there.

[tense music plays]

Griffin: And... it— Koda seems like he had the drop on you, but... he sort of stands down and just sort of starts— He approaches you, but he does not leap to strike. And it is— it is your action. What do you wanna do?

Amber: Ah. I see your arms are as big as mine.

Griffin: [chuckles quietly]

Amber: What's, uh— How did you come to this lowly state, huh?

Koda: What do you mean?

Amber: The arms, they— th— Is the— I mean, are you copying me? Or what's your deal?

Griffin: He laughs. He enjoys— He is enjoying himself. Roll an Insight check for me.

Justin: Okay.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: [chuckles] That's a great start with a beautiful natural one.

Travis: You are actually looking the wrong way. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah, right?

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Um... With a natural one, uh... You are— You are uh— You're joking around, but like this— this figure is terrifying. You are— It is hard not to be— It is hard to stand your ground in front of this thing. And Koda says...

Koda: You would be shocked if you learned the history of the powers you possess, and I possess, and... many others like you possess.

Amber: You wanna clue me in, or give me some hints? I mean, seems weird to just have this and not have much knowledge of it.

Griffin: He says...

Koda: I have made my intention perfectly clear, as have you.

Griffin: And he rears back an arm, ready to strike. But it is still your turn.

Justin: So he's— he's making a move on me.

Griffin: Yes.

Justin: I'm gonna s— try to step behind him. And grab him from behind.

[upbeat battle music plays]

Griffin: Interesting, okay. We're going to make a contested check then. Why don't you roll... This is probably like an Acrobatic maneuver, I'm guessing?

Justin: Um... Yeah, I think that makes— Yes.

Griffin: [chuckles] Okay.

Justin: Yes, he says, checking his modifiers. Indeed.

Griffin: I'm gonna make a Dexterity check to see if he is, uh—

Justin: So I do an Acrobatics check.

Griffin: Acrobatics check, you're lookin' to beat a 12. You have plus five.

Justin: Okay, here we go.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: 16 plus five, 21.

Griffin: Excellent. You are able to do that. You skirt around Kodira and you are just trying to grapple Kodira?

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay.

[battle music fades out]

Griffin: I always have to look up the rules for grappling in 5e.

Travis: Yeah, they're hard to grapple with.

Griffin: [amused] Oh, Travis.

Travis: I know.

Griffin: "Using at least one free hand, you try to seize the target by making a grapple check instead of an attack roll." Okay, so you're not gonna roll an attack roll. We can go Strength on Strength, Dex on Dex, uh... Those are the two options.

Justin: Ummmm... Dex on Dex, I guess.

Griffin: Okay. Then roll a Dexterity check, contested. Let me roll mine first, I'll tell you what you're— what you're lookin' for.

Justin: [in a stage whisper] Let's create the drama.

Griffin: Uhhh, oo boy. That's a six— You need to beat a 16 on your Dexterity check to grapple.

Travis: Welcome to the drama factory.

Griffin: Welcome to *The Drama Factory*, the new name for *The Adventure Zone*.

Justin: Okay, Dex on Dex.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: 18! Plus two.

Griffin: That is a success.

Justin: Hoorah.

Travis: [exhales heavily]

Griffin: You uh— Describe it. What's this grapple look like? You can use—

Justin: It's literally just like I see it coming and I duck behind Kodira real quick. And like I know, on some level, I think I can read her actions maybe, that is why it helps me to successfully pull it off, and I just like I just wanna talk.

Griffin: Okay. Using your real arms, your glowing arms, everything you have at your disposal, you manage to contain all [chuckles] of the arms of Koda, inside of Kodira's body. And you have her from behind in a big bear hug.

Amber: Shh shh shh shh. No. We're not doin' that. We're not gonna— No. What is going on? Where is the source of this power? Wh— What is my role in all of this? People keep talkin' about me openin' doors, closin' doors. Wh— What i— What's my part? I'm not gonna fucking fight you, what's my part?

Griffin: Koda says...

Koda: That is for you to decide, it is for all of us to decide. This life you have chosen? Is it so much better than the one I offer you? Living contract to contract aboard a vessel that could only charitably be called seaworthy. Is that so much better than joining me?

Amber: Yes! I don't wanna serve you! W— We've been over thi— Come on!

Justin: Alright, I wanna try to— [sighs] I wanna cause some pain. I don't— But I'm trying to just like [snaps multiple times] see if there's any of her in there. I'm not tryin' to like fight.

Griffin: You have used your action on this grapple.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: Do you have a way of [chuckles] inflicting pain with a bonus action?

Justin: Umm... Yeah, I mean I could use I guess Flurry of Blows.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: But ve— I'm, you know, non-lethal. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: I don't think that's a concern, but...

Griffin: Okay, go ahead and mark down a vibe point and make two attack rolls.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: 13 plus five, 18.

Griffin: That's a hit.

Justin: The first one missed. Sorry, I should've said it, I just—

Griffin: Okay. Roll, uh, roll damage. Are you using your regular fists or your big fists?

Justin: Uh, Flurry of Blows is— is the— the big fists, I believe it has to be.

Griffin: Okay, then 1d8—

Justin: No. No maybe not, but still, that's what I'm using.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, 1d8 plus two, then. For damage.

Justin: I feel like realistically, it's the only arms that I would have free to— [chuckles]

Griffin: [chuckles] Sure, sure.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: To give noogies. Oh, that's a six. Alright, not too bad. Plus three, nine.

Griffin: Uh... Okay, you—

Justin: Like I'm thinking like body blow, you know what I mean? Like a—

Griffin: Sure.

Justin: Like an arm— a green arm pops out and just punches her right in the stomach, like knock— trying to knock the wind out, nothing too serious.

Griffin: Okay, you hear Kodira kind of... exhale sharply as you do this. And... H— You can tell that he is trying to— Koda is trying to fight back, trying to force his way out of this and take you on head on, but shockingly he is struggling. And he says...

Koda: Wow, she... really... doesn't want me to fight you.

[electronic beeping plays]

Griffin: And... you see a red light shine against the wall of the room that you realize is just this red eye on her forehead glowing brighter. And then the arms— the big red arms flex and he is going to try to break out of the grapple with his action. It's a contested Strength save. He got a dirty 20.

Justin: Dang.

Griffin: Is what you are going to need to beat.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: Maybe this three plus two will do it.

Travis: Oo, la la.

Griffin: It does not. Uh...

Justin: Wait. Check the ma— Okay, yes. You're right.

Griffin: Uh... okay.

Travis: You forgot that Justin has advantage.

Griffin: Uh, no, he doesn't.

Travis: Because he's pure of heart.

Griffin: Yes, your kindness lets you cheat at *Dungeons & Dragons*.

Justin: [chuckles]

Travis: [in a wizardly voice] Do you remember, in the first session?

Griffin: [wheezes]

Travis: That strange hermit you helped.

Griffin: [chuckles]

Travis: Well, it turned out...

Justin: He was an angel.

Travis: [normal voice] He was Jesus Christ.

Griffin & Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Ye— Basically, Koda just flexes those red arms so much.

Griffin: More Dungeon Masters use Jesus Christ in their games.

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: [thoughtfully] Uh, well...

Justin: Yeah.

Travis: He should come up more.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: He's really strong. He flexes—

Travis: Yeah, Matt Mercer's the only one who uses him.

Griffin: And there's a re— I mean, their show's successful. Um—

Travis: Well, that's true.

Griffin: He flexes those red arms so much that they grow to a point where you can no longer sort of lock them down.

[somber music fades in]

Griffin: And he pushes you away. And... steps back and his four arms kind of like flex behind him, and he... looks at you, through Kodira, and he says...

Koda: Quick question. You were there on the shoreside, weren't you?

Amber: [quietly] Yeah.

Koda: Were you on the ship naming committee?

Amber: [snorts] It was a bit before my time, but I am a fan.

Koda: Why? The Biggest Baby?

Amber: Well... [pause] There was a sh— another ship called the Big Baby. And this one was just bigger. [wheezes] [through laughter] I'm sorry, it's too—

Griffin: He dashes forwards and brings two of his fists down on you, and is going to try and hit you with Flurry of Blows.

Justin: [snorts]

Griffin: That is a crit fail. He is way deep in his emotions about the Biggest Baby.

Travis: Ohhh, yeah yeah yeah. He's in his feels.

Justin: That makes sense. Blinded by fury.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, the second strike is... going to be—

Justin: Now how did he get to take an action to break out of the grapple and ta—
—

Griffin: Flurry of Blows is a bonus action. You literally just did it.

Justin: What? Yeah, I guess you're right.

Griffin: That is going to be a 14 versus AC.

Justin: Feels like cheatin' when somebody else does it, doesn't it.

Griffin: Yeah it does, right?

Justin: Okay. Sorry. No, my AC is si— is not— is not 14.

Griffin: What is it?

Travis: It's higher?

Justin: It's higher than that, yeah.

Griffin: Are you— Why are you being ca— I'm look— It's 16. I can look at your sheet.

Justin: I didn't know if the— I didn't know if saying it outright made it less engaging for the listener.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Ohhh. Our listeners love numbers.

Travis: Oh.

Griffin: He— You know this shit. Like, this is *your* trick.

[upbeat battle music plays]

Griffin: And you easily dodge out of the way of these swinging fists. And... he... stands up and grits his teeth, clearly like very frustrated now, and he says...

Koda: I... cannot believe... how well you're doing.

Amber: It's not— It's nothin' surprising, really. I mean... it's all about like... vibe. You know what I mean? Like are you in sync with yourself and your body and your mind. They all gotta be vibin' together. You're not gonna be ready for it, right? Like you're at odds. You got two people runnin' around in there. Y— You're just not gonna have the vibe. Let me show you what I'm talkin' about. Vibe check!

Justin: And I punch him in the— in the snot locker.

Griffin: [amused] Okay.

Justin: Like right in the face.

Griffin: Make an attack roll.

[sound of dice rolling]

Travis: *Snot Locker* was my favorite Bigelow movie, by the way.

Justin: 15.

Griffin: 15 does not hit.

Justin: `Kay.

Griffin: But you may attack again.

Justin: [quietly] Thank you.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: [quietly] Fuck. Three plus five, eight.

Griffin: That is also not a hit. Do you wish to flurry again?

Justin: Yes, I shall flurry.

Griffin: Two more attacks. I demand it!

Justin: Well, let me spend my vibe point. Hold on. Okay.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: 18, plus five. 23.

Griffin: That is definitely a hit. Roll damage, 1d8.

Justin: Let me do the other one first.

Griffin: Yeah yeah, sure sure sure.

Justin: And then I can roll the damage together.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: Four plus—

Griffin: No.

Justin: Okay, 1d8.

Griffin: One hit. 1d8 plus three.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: Okay, six.

Griffin: Okay. You... punch Koda/Kodira right in the snout locker, as you have described it, and... Koda goes flying backwards. And kind of like lands on his hands and knees, and when he stands up, you can see that Kodira has a little bit of blood dribbling from the corner of her mouth.

You also see something else. You see, at the far end of the room, near where Koda landed, one of those circular ring gateways stands. That was not destroyed while you were upstairs. And... it seems to be... glowing. It seems to be reacting to something. And... make a Perception check for me.

[sound of dice rolling]

[battle music fades out to ominous music]

Justin: 13 plus three.

Griffin: A spray of blood from Koda landed on the coral forming this ring. And... this ring, this gateway that these coral beings were building, appears to be opening.

Devo.

Justin: Sorry, what— So what is— what is opening?

Griffin: This portal.

Travis: That's my name, don't wear it out. Boom.

Griffin: I— You really... burned me bad.

Travis: Hey Griffin, I'm sorry. That was so uncalled for, dude.

Griffin: It really was.

Travis: Like that cuts so deep, and I— [sighs] I feel terrible.

Griffin: Devo, uh... Zoon is gone. You know it, for sure. You know that your friend is not in there. It is— He is not— You can't bring him back with a spell.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: And... How are you?

Travis: Uh, physically, emotionally... spiritually... bad.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: All three of those, at the same time. Um... hurt.

Justin: Bad, up and down the board.

Travis: Yeah. You know like, oh man, like if this was a performance review of how Devo was doing? It would all be "needs improvement".

Griffin: Okay. It is actu—

Travis: Except for he's full. He's not hungry.

Griffin: That's good.

Travis: He had a snack before this.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: It's always so important.

Justin: That's so important.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: It is actually—

Travis: Blood sugar? Doing great.

Griffin: It is the being formerly known as Zoox's action.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: And he—

Travis: Whoox?

Griffin: He is going to drop the crossbow and draw a dagger.

[sword sching sound effect plays]

Griffin: And—

Travis: Oh...

Griffin: Jump towards you.

Travis: Where'd he get that from?

Griffin & Justin: [chuckles]

Griffin: Uh... Zoox's first attack is an 11 versus AC.

Travis: That's a miss.

Griffin: Okay. And he is going to try and swing at you once again. That is a crit.

Travis: Well, yeah. Okay.

Griffin: Uh...

Travis: That does— Hey. Yup, that hits.

Griffin: That is gonna hit you for— Wow, 10 points of slashing damage.

Travis: I'm down again, baby.

Griffin: You go down, and once again...

Clint: Charles is still there.

Griffin: [chuckles] Charles the Manta Ray surrounds you. And revives you.

Travis: Perfect.

Griffin: And you are healed. Roll a 1d6.

[sound of dice rolling]

Travis: Uh, okay. I'm... Oh that's a six. Yeah, what up?

Griffin: Yeah, you're back up. Cha—

Travis: How many charges got— How many Charles Charl got? How many charges?

Griffin: Charles in Charge has—

Clint: That was his third.

Griffin: Has five. And that was—

Clint: And he has two more.

Griffin: He has two more. He appears to be fading. However, you... Despite the fact that you know that that is not Zoox anymore, you are familiar with the nature of magic, and even though the magic that Zoox did is not the same as the magic that you do, you know that it requires a certain amount of presence to maintain a— a entity like this manta ray. To maintain some sort of conjured being. And... I don't know if you know what that means, but that long and short of it is—

Travis: I mean, he is—

Griffin: You're—

Travis: He ain't— He ain't that far gone.

Griffin: Uh...

Travis: [in a dramatic voice] He's near. I can feel his spirit.

Griffin: Yeah. But you are back. You are healed for six points of damage. And it is your turn again.

Travis: Hmm. [pause] Griffin.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: I'd like to try something wild crazy kids.

Griffin: 'Kay.

Travis: I want to use my will... as a— as a—

Justin: [through a deep voice filter] My will.

Travis: What?

Justin: [imitating *Borat*] My will! [chuckles]

Travis: Oh, okay.

Griffin: He did it in a scary voice, I hated that.

Travis: Yeah, I don't know why. It was like the Devil—

Justin: [deep voice] [crosstalk] now but I can't hear it on my end. How's it sound?

Griffin: It sounds pretty scary, man.

Travis: Fucking terrible.

Griffin: It's the scariest—

Justin: [deep voice] I'm trying to turn it off, so please— [chuckles] Please ignore me.

Griffin: [chuckles] It's like—

Justin: [deep voice] The volumes are too low and I tried to change this one slider and now I sound like this!

Griffin: It's—

Travis: [chuckles] Oh no!

Griffin: It's— It's wonderful to me... that you got this fun new soundboard in our penultimate episode.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: [wheezes]

Clint: [snorts]

Justin: [deep voice] It's not— I've had it for a little bit, but normally I don't have these long gaps.

Griffin: Yeah, sure sure sure.

Justin: [deep voice] you know, to—

Griffin: To really—

Justin: [deep voice] To try to get my sound to—

Griffin: To have fun with it.

Justin: [deep voice] to [unintelligible]— [wheezes]

Griffin: Okay. You're gonna use "[*Borat* voice] Your will" to do what?

Travis: My will.

Justin: [normal] Is that better? Is that better?

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, you fixed it.

Justin: [chuckles smugly] Yeah.

Travis: As I've seen Orlene do, to try to... To try to will the, um... coral into a new body for Zoox?

Griffin: Interesting. Um... [makes thinking noises]

Travis: Here's my thinking, right? So it's not just meta-gaming, right? If I can feel his presence nearby, I also know about like the Brinarr and how that whole deal works. Of like coral body.

Griffin: Yeah, for sure.

Travis: Ethersea. Bring their spirits into it, right? So it's just like, oh— Okay, well that body is taken.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: So we need a new one.

Griffin: Okay. We can say that this is your action. We will add your spell... Your spell attack modifier, which is plus seven. So I'm gonna say roll a d20, plus seven. The number you are looking to beat, uh... I mean a 15, you will... You— Something will happen. With a 20 or higher, this— this action will be more successful.

[sound of dice rolling]

Griffin: What that means—

Travis: Oh, my boy. That's a 25! 18 plus seven.

Griffin: Okay. With a 25... this is what happens.

[calm, dramatic music plays]

Griffin: Zoox's body, that has been continuously sort of lighting you up, still has that bright sort of pattern of color that was— You know, that surrounded him in life. When you cast this spell, it is like you have pulled a plug out of the bottom of him, and that color just floods out. And it pools... all across the floor, where you all are standing.

And... it covers the entire floor of this room. And moments later, you do not see a body form. You see spires start to grow out of the ground like vines. And... as they grow, these just sort of spontaneous stalagmites, you see spikes jutting out

of the sides of them. And... within moments, there is just a field of these surrounding the room. So much so that it is almost difficult to like navigate. There are dozens and dozens of them. And... all of them are in the same shape, and you recognize them as the shape that Zoox created downstairs, just moments ago. It is language. And it is the same word over and over and over again. It's the word "promise".

Um... And when that happens, the Zoox body, that is now completely gone bleached white, looks around and then looks at you, and then... falls apart.

[crumbling coral debris sound effect plays]

Griffin: Back down into the pile. And within moments, it submerges into the floor and is reintegrated into the tower.

[ad break]

[music fades out]

Clint: Well, it was a good run!

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: Yeah, I don't know how— Yeah, was that good? Was it bad? Who knows! But it's definitely something else.

Griffin: Here's what I'll say—

Clint: Wait a minute. Wait wait wait, give me a minute. I gotta roll up a new character..

Griffin: [laughs] The— The manta ray is still there. And in fact, I will say this, it seems refreshed. And... it is going to— Right away, it is going to heal you again, for d6 points of damage.

Travis: Okay. For a d6?

Griffin: Uh, yeah just 1d6.

[sound of dice rolling]

Travis: That's one point.

Griffin: Okay, it's better than nothin'!

Travis: Thanks Charles.

Griffin: Um—

Travis: Hey Charles, thanks for trying.

Griffin: But he seems l— He was beginning to kind of go, you know, Marty McFly like translucent. He's back. And he is... just kind of circling around you. And you feel well.

Another thing that happens when you do this, uh, you feel a tremendous amount of pain from... Benefactor Orlene. You are still sort of connected to him in this like psychic channel you've been talking with, and it is through that channel that you feel a— a horrific amount of pain, that fortunately you don't experience, but you do sort of empathize with. What do you do?

Devo: Benjamin. If you can hear me, and I know you can. Here's the difference between you and I. I do want to hurt you. So this is your last chance to stop what you are doing before I come up there and rip your brain apart from the inside out.

Griffin: Make an Intimidation check for me.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: That was supposed to be intimidating? [snorts]

Clint: [chuckles]

Travis: 21.

Justin: He was just [chuckles] stating [chuckles] stating—

Clint: I guess it was. [laughs]

Justin: Stating the fact [chuckles] that this is something that he would like to do.

Griffin: Um... There is no response for.. a few moments. And... there's— [sighs] Those cracks that are forming around the ship are getting more and more violent. In fact, at your feet, that pitch black water is starting to rise, and it is also draining through the floor. I would say Amber, you see it now too, just sort of dripping from above like a, you know, an upstairs bathroom has sprung a leak.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: And it is raining this black water down on you and Kodira, in your fight. Keep on— Yeah.

Justin: Oh.

Griffin: And... a moment passes and the machine is growing... brighter and louder, and then a new color appears. And it is a green circle surrounding the hatch on the back of Orlene's ship, facing you.

Zoox. You... You see this, and you see all of these spires form inside of the room. Conjured up, apparently, by this shadow. And you see your body die. You see your body vanish. And... Finneas Cawl looks at you. And says...

Finneas Cawl: You know what you are, Zoox Anthellae. You are... a consciousness.. You are awareness. And that awareness was shunted from the body that it occupied. That was not you anymore. You are... not like anyone else, Zoox. You must know that by now.

Griffin: And he jumps down into the room, surrounded by all the colorful spires. And he floats down gently, as he lands. And he looks up at you and gestures you down.

Travis: It's a trick!

Clint: Oh— He jumps down. He jumps down to join him.

Griffin: Okay. You slowly levitate down to the ground, and as you do, the ceiling of the tower is back, and you are standing in this room where a Devo-shaped shadow is still standing in front of this big pile of dead coral that your body has

been absorbed by, and also by these dozens of messages. And they look different from everything else. There is a bit of um— The color in here is not as saturated as it was back in the real world, but these spires are... are even brighter and more sort of reactive than they were in the real world. They are— They are shimmering in every imaginable color. And... Finneas Cawl looks at you and says...

Finneas Cawl: Zoox, you are spontaneous. And I mean that in the best way. You are spontaneous both in character and in origin. You set out on a mission to discover the world and discover yourself, and you have completed that mission with aplomb. So. Now I ask you... what do you want now?

[peaceful synth music plays]

Clint: Okay, hold for a second.

Griffin: `Kay.

[music stops]

Clint: I g— I just need a little clarification.

Griffin: Sure.

Clint: Okay. So, we are back in the scene. But as a consciousness, right?

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: There's— Devo's there. The spires are there. Orlene's ship is still up there?

Griffin: Yup.

Clint: How high up?

Griffin: 30 feet up. You are— You are still in this like weird dream state.

Clint: Yeah.

Griffin: It's just that you are like—

Clint: I got that.

Griffin: Okay. I would urge you to just answer the question as straight-forward as you possibly, you know, want to.

Finneas Cawl: What do you want?

Zoox: I— want to help my friends.

Finneas Cawl: That desire. *That* is what matters. That... focused intention of a million motes of light. That is what you are, Zoox. Not a body. So, so much more than just a body. I... am just a reflection of a memory of a guy you never really met, but this tower... and the beings that once inhabited it? That is another story entirely.

Griffin: And... You feel... [sighs] You feel the real world. You feel present in the real world. It is different than it felt when you were just Zoox the, you know, Brinarr walking around. You have access to senses and to... appendages that are completely unfamiliar, and yet you feel... [sighs] at home embodying. And you realize that all of these coral spires around the room, and all of the coral that this color has pooled over, and the coral spire that is still embedded downstairs, so many parts of this coral tower are you. And... he... looks at you one last time, and he is fading as you are sort of regaining this new kind of consciousness. And he says...

Finneas Cawl: Song's not over, Zoox. It never is.

Griffin: And then you are awake, and... you *are* the tower.

Clint: [chuckles excitedly]

Griffin: What do you do?

Clint: [inhales deeply] Alright. What is, uh— Where is Amber?

Griffin: Amber is downstairs. Still, um—

Clint: Okay, what—

Griffin: Sparring with Kodira. Y— Kodira has been uh... knocked on her ass, right next to one of these circular gates that is opening. And it is opening to another

world. You know that, you see it, you feel it, you *are* it. And... they both look pretty— they look both bad off, definitely Amber is sort of struggling to stay on her feet. She took a lot of damage in the last fight, and—

Justin: Yeah, I'm not— I'm not feelin' great.

Griffin: Yeah. That is what you can see.

Clint: Okay. Um... And the portal is open?

Griffin: It is opening, yeah. It's not fully— I— I think it's just sort of like a pane of white light that is filling the circle. It i— There is no... destination that is visible quite yet, but something is taking form.

Clint: Is it safe to say that if Kodira goes back, she's gonna screw up this continuity by doin' something in the past?

Griffin: So this—

Travis: This is two different things, right?

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Here's how I understand it. Upstairs, right? We've got Orlene in his ship. He has constructed some sort of machine within this tower that will allow him to send a message back to, as I understand it but has not been exactly confirmed, his younger self, to change something he did or something that was done in the past. Right? That is what, uh, Devo has been dealing with upstairs.

Downstairs, we have the scene between Amber and Kodira, who is being inhabited by Koda. Koda believes that Amber is going to be responsible for opening a portal to the next world, whatever it is. So there was a portal that brought the Vestiges to our world, bringing magic with them, and Koda's like "This far, no farther. We're not going to take this escape hatch to whatever the next world is, because we will simply pollute that as well. So instead, I'm going to stop you from opening whatever this portal is".

The two seem disconnected in like mechanism, but connected because something Orlene has done of like being here, he promised them the people, the you know,

the Drinarr, he said "I will help you open this portal", but instead he actually just wanted it for himself to send this message.

Griffin: That is correct.

Travis: Okay.

Clint: Zoox opens up the floor of coral... that... Kodira? Is laying on?

Griffin: Sure.

Clint: And engulfs Kodira.

Travis: What?

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Just sucks it right— Sucks `em right down into the floor.

Griffin: She is going to make a Dexterity saving throw. I think you're definitely catching her by surprise. I'mma say she does it with disadvantage.

Travis: I'm gonna say that too.

Griffin: Okay, that is a 15. With a 15... she catches herself as she falls, and now she is just holding herself up on the floor, sort of half-submerged downward. Are you opening up just like a straight hole, what was it, like 40 feet down to the ground?

Clint: Well, she was laying down on her back, right? Wasn't she prone?

Griffin: Yeah yeah yeah.

Clint: I was just gonna have it come smearing up over her. Just kinda... cover her.

Griffin: Uh—

Clint: Suck he down into the floor and then cover.

Griffin: Okay, with a f—

Clint: I was gonna leave her face— I was gonna leave the face exposed.

Griffin: [chuckles]

Travis: This is—

Griffin: Okay, well— Ultimately then this action was successful, 'cause now as the floor kinda closes back around, it is closed around her... her waist. And her legs have been [chuckles] swallowed up by the floor of the room. Um... We'll jump to Amber. Amber, you see this happen. And... I don't know that you know exactly why it happened, but the long and short of it is that Kodira is trapped in the floor. And... just instantly, she starts using her fists to try to punch the ground away from her waist to lift herself back up.

Zoox: Ouch! Oo! Ow!

Griffin: [laughs]

Amber: I— I gotta say, I don't wanna be a— I see you're in a bit of a pickle, but I gotta say, that's two portals in a row that I didn't have fuck all to do with.
[chuckles]

Clint: [laughs]

Amber: You opened the first one and the *floor*, I guess, opened the second one? So what am I— I mean, of portal openers, I feel like I'm pretty low on the list right now, eh?

Griffin: She looks back at the portal behind her that is opening up and you can see sunlight coming through it. And you can see a horizon through it. And then she looks back at you and— Why don't you roll another Insight check.

Clint: A better one.

Griffin: A better one this time.

Justin: It almost— It would have to be.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: 19.

Griffin: It is— It is mortal terror. It is *immortal* terror. This look on her face, as... what is effectively Koda's worst nightmare, the— the... end result that Koda has been trying to prevent this entire time, appears to be coming to pass. And... Koda shouts...

Koda: Stop! Do not take one more step towards this portal, or I will end everyone in this tower. Your friends, you... Myself, if I need to.

[electronic beeping sound effect plays]

Griffin: The red eye flashes, and then there's a few moments of silence. And then there's a high-pitched whistling noise.

[whistle sound effect plays]

Griffin: And then from outside, through the big open door out of the foyer, you see an explosion.

[deep boom sound effect plays]

Griffin: It blows a chunk out of the dome.

[coral debris falling sound effect plays]

Zoox: Oo! Ow. Jeez.

Griffin: And... I will say this actually. Zoox, you are not embodying the dome right now. You are just— You are just the tower.

Clint: Okay.

Griffin: And through the hole in the dome, you can see the Biggest Baby is floating. Just—

Travis: [in a deep voice] Goo goo, gah gah!

Griffin: [laughs] And—

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: The white coral battleships are engaged in a— a furious dogfight, trying to hold it off, and it is not going well for them. And... Koda... shouts...

Koda: You may be able to defeat this form, but you... You cannot stop me, Amber. I will destroy... everyone in this tower. Unless. You agree to become my new vessel. Become my vessel, your friends can get in the ship and leave.

Griffin: And as he says that, you see the Coriolis get sucked in through that hole, and it kind of like plops down into the water, and through a loudspeaker outside, you hear Urchin's voice say...

Urchin: Uh, we're— We're alright! We're okay!

Griffin: He says...

Koda: Your friends, even Kodira. Get on the ship and sail away. You join me, we obliterate this place, and leave together as one. I know you harbor no love for magic. You have seen what it has done to your world. Please, help me eradicate it.

Amber: I wanna watch `em both get on. Let me see `em... Let me see `em get on.

Griffin: The... water outside... raises up. And... it brings the Coriolis basically to dock, right outside of the foyer. And when that happens, you see a... panel of hull just spontaneously snap off of the Biggest Baby and then fly toward the hole in the dome. And when that happens, it patches it, and the water starts flo— stops flooding in. And... he says...

Koda: I will need... to... extricate myself from the floor. But... I— I can agree to that.

Amber: You're pretty powerful, you can't do it stuck in the floor? [chuckles]

Clint: [laughs]

Amber: If you can't— If you can't get them on the ship while you're stuck in the floor, what the fuck all am I worried about? Huh?

Griffin: He... growls.

Justin: Uh-huh.

Griffin: And you hear just a cluster of explosions outside of the dome. He is—

Justin: What's the status—

Griffin: He is— He is flexing on you, trying to remind you why.

Justin: What's the status of the hole?

Griffin: Of the hole?

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: In the— In the— It has been patched up by—

Justin: The one that was opening.

Griffin: Oh, the one that—

Travis: Oh, the portal.

Griffin: Oh, it clo—

Justin: The portal.

Griffin: Ohhh, okay. Um... Roll a Perception check for me.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: 20, plus three.

Clint: Ooooo!

Griffin: [from a distance] Wow!

Travis: That's a nat 20.

Griffin: Okay. With a nat 20, you see everything, Amber. You see through this portal like it is a grand open window, and you see... an unfamiliar world. The sky is... a shade of... aquamarine that is just a little bit greener than the sky of the world that you left on the surface. And the oceans are like a shade of almost like dark purple. And you see a cluster of suns in the sky that are all much smaller than the sun. It's hard maybe to judge that precisely because it's been a while since you've seen the sun, but there definitely was just the one of them. This is a different world entirely, and... this scene that you are viewing is all ocean.

And in the ocean, you see figures surfacing to... observe what's going on. They are looking up, back at you, as you are looking down at them. And it is... a herd of blink sharks. As far as the eye can see. They are looking up at you, in this portal, and... they are still.

Amber: So here's what I'm not gettin'. You look in that hole, you see the same thing I do, right? Magic's *there*.

Koda: Not like this.

Amber: Not like what?

Koda: What you see in that world is native to that world. The magic that came to this world is a virus that polluted and destroyed it. And if any of us take one step. *One step*. Into that world, it— it— [sighs] It will lead to its doom as well. Please. Not one more step forward.

Amber: Alright. If there's something listening, can you let Kodira go? We're fine.

Griffin: Zoox, you— you don't hear that, but you feel the resonance of the sound waves leaving Amber's mouth and understand it.

Clint: Mm. [chuckles ruefully] [sighs heavily] Gosh, I really wanna... cut Kodira in half. But okay! Alright. Um... Zoox... Actually, I'll go even one better. From under Kodira's feet, Zoox... opens up the hole and raises Kodira up like a— like a trapdoor.

Griffin: She just steps up, back onto ground level, and she walks toward you, Amber. And... she... or rather Koda, holds a hand up in the air. One of— One of the red hands.

Amber: Uh, bap bap bap bap. No. I want to see them get on the ship. When I see the two of them get on the ship, then we can talk.

Griffin: Kodira closes her eyes. And then... opens them, and you hear Koda say...

Koda: There are... two other beings in this tower than us. But I... don't believe... one of them is your friend.

Griffin: And then we'll hop back to Devo. Rather, Zoox. You see into Devo's room. You see it way better than you do in the room that Koda and Amber were just fighting in, because your presence in this room is just so much... so much more potent. Just from the— the sheer volume of spires that are built in here. And you see... You definitely see the door to the— to the ship unlock, and you also see Devo standing, you know, 30 feet below that platform.

Clint: The door to...

Griffin: His ship.

Clint: Which ship?

Griffin: Benefactor Orlene's ship, which is connected to this machine.

Clint: Zoox is gonna make Devo's dream come true.

Travis: What? Flying ponies?

Clint: The other one.

Travis: Oh, okay. Stairs.

Clint: A stairway to heaven.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, it's— it's a little late—

Clint: He's gonna— He's gonna form the spires so that Devo can reach, in like a stairway. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Leading up to Orlene's ship, to make the path for Devo to get up to the ship.

Griffin: Okay. Devo, you see those spires stretch upward really quickly now. Much quicker than when you conjured them up in the first place.

Clint: And it's almost like you can hear Zoox singing "[to the tune of "Stairway to Heaven"] And she's buying a stairway..."

Griffin: [chuckles]

Clint: "... to Orlene."

Griffin: Yeah, canonically, definitely that happens. And...

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: As they stretch, they start to kind of like twist around and angle downward, like toward the ground, and then they raise up in tiers. And they form a... staircase.

Travis: As soon—

Griffin: A perfectly sort of like—

Travis: As soon as possible, he's like walking up it as it's forming.

Griffin: Okay. Sick.

Clint: Oh yeah, let it form as he st— Oh, yeah!

Griffin: That's the good shit. That is the good shit, right there.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: It takes a while to scale this 30-foot gap up to the platform, but you make it. And as you reach the platform, you are just being like bombarded by this black water that is spraying through. Not just bombarded, but it's like blasting you in sheets and then unblasting you and then blasting you again. It's not enough to knock you off your feet, or do any kind of like damage to you, but it is — it is getting difficult to kind of like... stay cogent in this space where... time and reality are not behaving.

Travis: Devo places his hand on his jacket and casts Light.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: So that he is a shining beacon as he walks through this like black water and shit around him.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: And just— This is perhaps like, [shakily] mmm, maybe the most focused Devo has been.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Since we've met him. Walking up these stairs towards this door to Orlene's ship.

Griffin: Why don't you make a Wisdom saving throw, just to see how well you are able to keep your wits about you in this really fucked up space.

Travis: Oi... I mean, with advantage 'cause of the light, right? Um...

[sound of dice rolling]

Travis: 'Cause that's a five.

Griffin: Um... No, it's hard.

Travis: And I've got Charles with me, right?

Griffin: You do have Charles. Go ahead and take another d6 of healing.

[sound of dice rolling]

Travis: Thanks Charles. Another four points.

Griffin: Okay, heal for four.

Clint: [from a distance, in a deep voice] You're welcome, Travis.

Travis: Charles?

Clint: [deep voice] It's my main purpose in life.

Travis: I love you, Charles.

Clint: [quietly] I love you too.

Griffin: It is hard for you to... like, move your body. And process everything that you are seeing as you approach this green hatch on the ship. Your mind is lost in a fog. And this ship is not entirely familiar to you. This hatch may be unlocked, but you do not see any way of opening it from the outside that, in your current state, you can surmise.

However, you do see Orlene through this like glass window on the hatch, and he is... sitting on the floor, with his back up to the wall. And... his nose is bleeding profusely. It is— uh, it's kind of everywhere. And he is just sitting there still, his eyes just kinda glazed over, barely open. And behind him, you can just barely see into the cockpit of the ship, and there is just a bright white light that is shining inside of there. But again, you do not see any way of opening the door in your current sort of fog.

Devo: [calmly] Open the goddamn door, Orlene.

Griffin: And he... looks down at you. And he looks— he looks so tired. And... yet, he kind of grins, not menacingly, but in a way where he has genuinely kind of tickled himself, as he says...

Benefactor Orlene: [tauntingly] Make me.

Clint: [quietly] Oooooo.

Travis: Devo casts *Suggestion*. On Orlene.

Griffin: I don't even think he has the ability to save against that. He... just sort of nods and— In fact, it happens so fast, you're not sure if he was going to do it anyway or not, but he definitely is compelled. And he... crawls over to the hatch and pulls a lever, and the hatch slides open. And he props himself back up against the wall, and... is just resting there.

Devo: Tell me what you have done, and what I need to do to undo it.

Griffin: He... sits still for a moment. And as you climb into the ship, you can see um... You can see into the cockpit a little bit better, and you see not just light, but like images appearing on the viewport in there. You would have to sort of get in that space in order to exactly surmise what the images are, they're just sort of shapes that are difficult to decipher in your time fog. But he says...

Benefactor Orlene: Okay. I... I was happy. Once. As difficult as that may seem to believe. I was loved. And... content.

[reminiscing music plays]

Benefactor Orlene: And then... a voice from... the ocean itself compelled me away from... the people that I loved, and I... listened. And there is not a moment that goes by where... I do not regret that decision. I discovered a way to warn myself of my folly. But...

Griffin: And he's— He is gently crying now. He says...

Benefactor Orlene: I am not... strong enough... to make them hear me.

Griffin: And he looks up at you and he looks outside. And he says...

Benefactor Orlene: [in an emotionally breaking voice] I have tampered with forces clearly far beyond my control, Devo. [whimpers] You never said goodbye when you left the Hermitage.

Devo: Y— Yeah. No. Why would I?

Griffin: He smiles and he says...

Benefactor Orlene: We knew you would do great things, and it is difficult to separate that from... any kind of real affection that we may have felt for you once. And I am... for what it is worth, which I imagine is very little, very sorry for that, but... You were put on this world to do something. And... I think... [pause] The time for your purpose has arrived.

Griffin: And he... closes his eyes.

Devo: Orlene? Orlene?

Benefactor Orlene: Yeah.

Devo: Oh, okay. I thought you had died.

Benefactor Orlene: Not yet.

Devo: W— Are you dead?

Benefactor Orlene: No, not—

Griffin: [chuckles quietly]

Devo: Okay. Why did you kill the Hand of Guidance?

Griffin: He says...

Benefactor Orlene: I didn't. I— I was... I was extraordinarily crass earlier. I— I am sorry about Guidance. We were close once. That—

Devo: Okay, so who killed the Hand of Guidance?

Griffin: He... coughs. And there's a great deal of blood that comes out. Clearly this— Trying to engage you in psychic battle has... as you suggested, torn his mind apart from the inside out. He says...

Benefactor Orlene: You... You have her book, don't you?

Devo: Yes.

Griffin: And he... sort of slumps down, and he says...

Benefactor Orlene: I tried to warn her.

[pause]

Devo: Wh— Sorry, what? Warn her about what? What does i— You said the book and then you said that, that is cryptic. Just like for once, in our like 17— well, longer really, but like at least 17 years of training, just like say the thing to me.

Griffin: He doesn't respond.

Devo: Are you dead now? Is this what has happened? [pause] Okay.

Griffin: He— He is... He has gone silent.

Devo: [sighs] Ugh, fuck. Okay. Um...

Travis: I wanna look at the pictures. You said there were images like in the machine. Like what do I see when I look at it, like specifically.

Griffin: You step into the cockpit [sighs] and... you first see what you assume Orlene was seeing when he was constructing this machine and attempting to use it. You see Orlene and he is younger. And he is... in a... a pretty posh-looking Hominine house, and he is... playing with two kids, a boy and a girl.

[pleasant music plays]

Griffin: And in a corner, you see a woman who is reading a book, and she is occasionally just kind of looking up at the three of them playing and she smiles. And... the machine seems to react to you as you approach.

[machine whirring sound effects play]

Griffin: And... the image... changes. Pretty rapidly now. And... you just see this panopticon of scenes. You— They are surface images, surface world images, that's what strikes you first. It is the surface as you have only ever heard it described. Because you never lived on the surface, and honestly? It is not nearly as bad as they made it sound.

There is this— You see a verdant plateau overlooking these fertile plains that span the continent. You see these tall, rugged mountains dotted with points of light from these vast citadels to your right. You see tropical islands off of glistening white shores to your left. And the storm over the ocean, it's there and it's— it is definitely imposing, but it has not swallowed up the world like... everyone says it has.

And then you kind of start to zoom into these different cities and you see people living in them. You see sailors from the archipelago aboard ships, looking at the storm in terror. And you see Homininian scholars praying at a Benevolent altar, just desperately searching for divine answers. And you see Delmer work platoons boring into a mountainside, beginning to build a shelter for— from the storm. And you see Einarr, not in their like incorporeal form, but as they once truly lived, in these great migrating groups, all gathered on the plateau's sheer edge, looking out at their... their world, that is beginning to crumble in terror.

And then you see... the shoreside. And... it is... completely uninhabited.

Travis: I look at Orlene, where he is sitting still, and I say...

Devo: Goddamn you. [sighs heavily]

Travis: And Devo—

Griffin: When you— When you say that, Devo?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: One of these scenes... It's a small group of Delmer that are working on boring into the mountainside?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: They... stop their work and they set down their picks and their drills, and... They look up. And...

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: It is almost as if... they heard you. And they react—

Travis: Well Griffin, that's 'cause they did.

Griffin: — to your voice.

Travis: And Devo is going to pour his will and his training and everything about being persuasive and being... the powerful voice that leads people. And he is going to recite the words that he knows so well from listening to Brother Seldom's historical broadcasts, and he is going to repeat the call to the sea that led everyone to the shore in the first place.

Griffin: [quickly] Do you need me to remind you what that was?

Travis: I do, yes.

Griffin: When kingdoms fall
The sea provides
A home for all
Beneath the tides.

Devo: [in a reverberating voice] When kingdoms fall
The sea provides
A home for all
Beneath the tides.

Travis: And he looks at the image of Orlene. And focuses hard on Orlene, and says...

Devo: [reverberating voice] And bring your family.

Griffin: [quietly] Hmm.

[pause]

Griffin: In this grand vista of... of scenes from around this world, this unspoiled world, people look up as the Delmer worker looked up.

[somber music plays]

Griffin: And they are people from all over. And... while everyone else around them continues to work with toil to escape the apocalypse or simply observes this

storm over the sea in abject terror, these people that hear your voice... they gasp. And... they smile. And they look at each other. And they look at the people around them who didn't seem to react.

And the cracks outside... recede back into the machine. And... the water that is being sprayed outside is gone. The fog that was sort of filling your mind is gone. And... like being sucked up with a vacuum, the cracks vanish into the machine, and Orlene... looks at you, one last time, through the viewport. He gasps too. And so does the rest of his family. And then the machine goes still.

Travis: Devo turns from the machine and I'm gonna say... the most tired he's maybe ever felt. That was— Not only was it like *a lot*, and a lot to like process, but it was also like he poured whatever will of his was left after the day into—

Griffin: For sure.

Travis: — his voice and he's just like "Ugh". So he just like turns, walks past, I imagine, his— Orlene's still body. Or whatever. I don't know. Maybe. He's not even really paying attention at this point, and like just heads down the stairs. When he gets to the bottom of the stairs, he's like calling for Amber, he's calling for Zoox. Like... not really sure what to do next.

Griffin: You find Amber down in the foyer. And... she appears to be in a standoff with Kodira. Kodira has conjured these bright red arms that you have not seen before, but immediately you can tell that this is not a great situation.

Devo: What did I miss?

Griffin: Kodira does not break eye contact with you, Amber, and you hear Koda's voice say...

Koda: There is no-one else in the tower. It is just you and him, and this body, Kodira.

Devo: Well, this is not entirely true because Zoox is in the tower. Uh... That I think is on me? I'm not entirely sure. But, uh, he made stairs for me.

Griffin: Koda does not break eye contact to address Devo. And... says...

Koda: This is it. This is the offer. They can go. And you... will join me.

Amber: Shh, shh. Give me a sec. Zoox *is* the tower?

Devo: Yes. You know— You see how the floor has like swallowed Ko— part of Kodira? I have to imagine this was Zoox.

Amber: Real quick, Devo. Look through that portal.

Devo: Okay, yes. [pause] Oh, shit!

Amber: Okay. I just wanted you to see it once.

Devo: No that's— This is wild!

Justin: And, uh... [pause] Amber uses Step of the Wind to dart towards the portal.

Griffin: [amused] Shiiit.

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: And as she's darting... She shouts at Kodira...

[upbeat battle music fades in]

Amber: If you want to keep magic outta here... You better come get it.

Justin: And then tosses herself into the portal.

Griffin: Okay. Fir— Okay.

Clint: [from a distance] Whoa!

Griffin: [excitedly amused] F— A few things are going to happen first. She is going to try and grab you as you run away from her. As a— As an opportunity attack, she's going to try and grapple you. We are going to have a Dexterity contest. I will tell you the number that you have to beat.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: You need to beat a 14 with your Dexterity check.

Justin: Okay.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: That's a 19 plus thr— two, 21.

Griffin: Jesus Christ!

Clint: Yeeeeeah! [claps]

Griffin: Okay. You escape her clutches. And... you take... two steps up this mound of coral, that has grown vibrant and bright as the color has spread from this— this central message spire. And you... launch yourself into a new world. And as soon as you cross the threshold, as soon as you step through the ring, you feel — You feel alive. You feel your ears pop first as... you are instantly sort of thrown into a different like atmosphere.

[battle music fades out as pleasant music fades in]

Griffin: You are instantly thrown into this sky that is not your own, into this air that is not your own. You feel your breath leave you and you struggle to catch it.

And... you see as you ar— fling yourself backwards, you see Kodira leap forward, and outstretch one of these glowing red arms to try to grab you out of the air. And... you feel... a tight grip around your right ankle, and you are suspended in the air by one of these red arms. And you see Koda, within Kodira's body, looking down at you. And with the other three red arms, he is holding himself tethered to [chuckles] the world that you just left. And is looking down at you with terror and rage and... desperation. And he says...

Koda: You fool. What are you doing?

Amber: [matter-of-fact] I'm gonna fight some more blink sharks.

Justin: Then I activate my vapor suit.

Griffin: [laughs quietly] There is a howl of pain as... the light of your vapor suit activates around you, and severs a part of this hand that was holding you. And you enter freefall.

Justin: And they hear— I think they hear, on the other side of the portal, they just hear a shout.

Amber: [shouting excitedly] Kella sai, guppies! Momma's home!

Griffin: And the rest of you see her falling, like a fireball, down into the water. And... Devo. You see... Koda, inside of Kodira's body. And she stands up, looking down into the portal, looking down into the world. And... He takes a deep breath, and then you hear Koda's voice say...

Koda: Once more then.

Griffin: And... he flings himself into the portal. And as he crosses through it, the light filling this ring... dissipates. And the portal goes inert. And... from outside, you hear a booming thud... as the Biggest Baby... sinks down to the floor of the ocean... completely inactive.

[outro theme music plays]

[chord]

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