

## The The Adventure Zone Zone: Ethersea Wrap-Up!

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[*Ethersea* intro music plays]

**Griffin:** As one book— The chapter of the la— of the book closes, another one...

**Travis:** [snorts]

**Griffin:** Hasn't opened yet. But then the authors of the book kick in your window.

**Travis:** Yup.

**Griffin:** They smash in through the window and they say "Hey, readin' the book, huh? Which part did you get to?"

**Travis:** That's my favorite part of reading any Stephen King book.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [amused] Uh-huh.

**Travis:** When there's a knock on the door and I'm like "Yeah?", and he's like "How far have you gotten?"

**Griffin:** "How far have you gotten? Did you get to the part where the car eats the guy?"

**Travis:** No, not yet.

**Griffin:** Anyway, we're here to ask you if you've gotten yet to the part where the gu— the car eats the guy in *TAZ: Ethersea* season one. And this is everybody's favorite talk show done by the sh— the guys who do the actual show, it's *The The Adventure Zone Zone*. And we're all here, we're back to talk about—

**Justin:** We're back again, haters.

**Griffin:** Back again. Please don't hate it. That's the first thing, I guess.

**Clint:** Here, wait, let me rephrase that. Back again, lovers.

**Travis and Justin:** [simultaneously] No.

**Clint:** No, that's not—

**Griffin:** That's bad too.

**Clint:** No, that's bad.

**Griffin:** Uh we're gonna talk about season one of *TAZ: Ethersea*. We got about a billion questions here. It's been, I will say, a while since we wrapped up. We recorded a bunch of *Etherseas* to have them in the chamber so I could have a bit of time to relocate myself and my family across the country, but I think it's still fresh enough. In our gourds.

**Travis:** Do we wanna—

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Do we wanna save like the reveal for what we're doing next?

**Justin:** [simultaneously] Yeah, we'll talk about other stuff.

**Griffin:** [simultaneously] Yeah, of course.

**Justin:** We'll save that to the end, I think.

**Griffin:** Or else people won't listen. That's the only reason people listen to this shit.

**Travis:** I know, that was my way of like teasing it.

**Justin:** Ohhh, you—

**Griffin:** Oh.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** So, so sassy.

**Clint:** We're hooking them.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Clint:** Hooking them.

**Griffin:** Um...

**Justin:** I love that.

**Griffin:** Can we— We never do this on *TTAZZs*, but how are y'all feeling now that we're, you know, about a month and a half out from recording the last episode, about finishing up the first season of *Ethersea*?

**Justin:** Hmm.

**Travis:** Um—

**Clint:** Well, I think you've answered one big question right off the bat by calling it "season one".

**Griffin:** [from a distance] Yeah.

**Clint:** So there will be more.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Well, we talked—

**Travis:** Yes.

**Justin:** We've enjoyed it that much.

**Clint:** Yeah, I know.

**Griffin:** We've been pretty straightforward about that.

**Clint:** Yeah, but not to me. Nobody told me.

**Travis:** Well.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** We only talk to you when we're legally required to by creative law.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Um I would say— I feel— It's interesting because this was also the first time that we did, you know, like a *Quiet Year*, like did the world-building together. And it's interesting to me because I have a similar feeling to what I did when we finished *Quiet Year* and went into *Ethersea*, which was like... there's so much possibility now. Like I— I feel...

We've never really done a like chapter, like kind of you know, seasonal arc with our *Adventure Zones* before, and it's interesting 'cause it feels like it was a complete season, but there's so many more things now that I wanna do with it, you know?

**Griffin:** Yeah. I— I feel the same way. I am happy with the way that season one wrapped up and the choices that y'all made, and kinda the... the weird and sort of abstract ending that your characters and the world itself kind of had at the end of that first season.

Like it is not hard for me to think of... what we could do with a season two. Like the ways that we could build off of the ways that the world changed, and um sort of what potential still remains there.

That said, I am loving not DMing. It's a— It's a sweet treat every time you get that little—

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** You get the chance to kick— kick up your feet.

**Travis:** It's sorta like a boat, you know? Like buying a boat and sailing a boat, where like the second most fun you have DMing is that first session, and the most fun you have is right after finishing the last one.

**Griffin:** Yeeeeeah. Juice, Dad? How 'bout y'all?

**Justin:** I really enjoyed it. I thought it was a cool world. I realized that I was uh... I was starting to come up against my limits of how much mythology I could keep in my head at one time.

**Griffin:** Mm-hmm.

**Justin:** It was a ve— It was like— It's interesting because... we created such a broad world at the beginning... Like it started out feeling very big in scope. Like it started out with like so much to sort of like know and keep track of. And that was— It was easier for me once I sort of like just dialed in on the character and like she only needed to be an expert in the things that she would interact with. And like— But uh... Before that, when it was like I needed to keep all the poli—

Like secretly, that's part of why like... like Amber always pushed to like stay out of conflicts with like the government and other authority figures and everything like that, is because I had a little trouble like remembering how all of the politics worked. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Yeah, right?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Justin:** So I just avoided— [wheezes] I just said that she didn't like— she doesn't like politics.

**Griffin:** It got much easier to keep that stuff straight when you all either murdered or sort of led to the unintentional deaths of pretty much all of the city government leaders.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Yeah, we cleaned up a lot of excess storylines there, I would say. Just wrapped those—

**Griffin:** Trimmed—

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Trimmed a lot of red tape, so to speak.

**Travis:** What was— It was really interesting— Again, you know, we've been playing together for many, many years now, but I think *Ethersea* really highlighted for me the difference between the sort of information that Justin and I are able to hold into our separate heads at separate times.

Like at any given point, I could lay out for you big broad scope what's goin' on, who hates who, why are we here, right? But then you said like "Yeah but right now, in this scene, what are you trying to do?" and I'd be like "Oh, I don't know". [laughs] It's like—

**Griffin:** I feel like Dad is the best at keeping all the big picture st—

**Justin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Travis:** Well, Dad writes things down. I—

**Clint:** Well that was the— that was the key for me. I kept a Zoox— I called it "Zoox' Log".

**Travis:** Gross.

**Clint:** Now I just had this notebook and I started writing stuff down in it. And originally, it was just to write down names so I could look 'em up and— but it also became a log of uh... jokes and— And it is very important because this is the official record of these seven rules of *Ethersea*.

**Griffin:** Oh, wow.

**Clint:** So far.

**Justin:** That's so— That's so hard to do. Like I— It's hard for everybody, right? But like, you are really talking about like splitting your mind in twain when you're like "I need to keep the character stuff straight, like I need to be my character and portray them moment to moment", but you're also tryin' to keep all of this character's real-world knowledge in your head, and also your— the mechanics you want of *Dungeons & Dragons* you need to be thinking about.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** And also can you [chuckles] please make it entertaining and funny.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** What I'm saying is we are stunning talents.

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Justin:** Like honestly, once in a generation.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** I wanted to say, and I'm curi— This is my big takeaway for the season. This season I tried more than ever to not prepare shit and see where the story took us. And... I would say that that led to a pretty challenging uh... finale. Like trying to find a way to make it coherent and satisfying in, you know, whatever ways we possibly could. It was tough trying to figure out a way to do that.

I think my biggest takeaway for this season was I love doing it that way. I love the like fully uh— Not fully, but more improvisational, big picture storytelling stuff. I do think this is the last season I will want to run that has a mission-based structure. That has a— Obviously, that was like the whole conceit of the freelance, you know, you guys are contractors and you get to pick your jobs.

**Justin:** Right.

**Griffin:** And that was very cool, but I also feel like it is hard to do that structure with that kind of storytelling and make it coherent. So like I— I think next time I do run a season, um... I do not want it to be like you guys taking on different jobs. I like the— I would be curious what it would look like if you guys were just on a— a quest, and how you went about it was up to you, and... the way that the path changes is entirely determined by play. Like I— I would be very interested how that would go.

**Justin:** I will say— Sorry, to answer your question, 'cause you asked about the more open-ended structure. I will say that it was— [sighs] The only thing that was challenging about it was like you know when you go into a movie and you like read the tagline of the poster? And like you have the vaguest idea of what the movie is?

**Griffin:** Mm-hmm.

**Justin:** When we were doing these more open-ended things, you know, compared to *Balance* where like you sorta knew that you were doing a... *Fast & Furious*, or you kinda knew that you were doing a— an Agatha Christie thing, whatever it is. We were sort of like— f— Like having the agency to sort of decide along with you what kind of thing it's going to be was pretty intimidating at first. I mean it's, 'cause it's like I didn't know what kind of— Is this the kind of vibe where like I can kill someone, or—

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Is it not that kind of thing? Or are we doing— being sneaky? Like you know, having it be open-ended like that, I felt like a lot more confident about the midpoint of each arc where I was like "Okay, I know what it is, I know what we're doing. Like let's go from there". Which isn't like bad or good, it's just a different sort of uh— That freedom made for a different sort of challenge.

**Griffin:** Yeah, for sure. Alright, let's do questions. Travis, did you have one that you wanted to lead off with?

**Travis:** Um yeah, let's just start with the first one, 'cause I like it. This is from a listener who asked "How surprised was Griffin when that nat one was rolled?". I assume you mean the nat one that Dad brought the Sallow back with us.

**Griffin:** Yessss.

**Travis:** Is that— yeah, that one. "Was that planned to be something the party would have to deal with as an in-game threat, or is it something that would've happened without the one being rolled?".

**Griffin:** Uh, it would not have happened without the— the one being rolled. That was like— I had a few of the bigger beats that we kinda



touched on in the *Quiet Year* set up episodes that were sort of attached to those— that random encounter table. And I wanted the... one to be... like pretty bad. And for me, that was the Sallow.

Like for me, that was— The way that the Sallow comes back is if you do as bad a roll on this board, that incorporates these different gameplay mechanics, uh... I— Then I would hit you with the Sallow. I did not think it would be... Was that the second roll? Was that the second random encounter?

**Justin:** I believe so. That feels right to me.

**Griffin:** Yeah, no I— I genuinely uh... I didn't like that that was happening then. 'Cause it was like we're just— we're still, you know. This crew is still coming together and we're still kind of getting our footing with this season. But at the same time like there is no way we could've rerolled that. There is— That would've betrayed, I think, the whole...

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** You know, the whole ethos that we were going for with uh... We didn't fake a single roll this season, I feel very good about that.

**Travis:** You know what I found really interesting about it?

**Griffin:** What?

**Travis:** Was like we set out at the beginning saying these are just three regular people. These are not like three chosen ones, these are not like three, you know, epic beings. And then it was like those kinds of rolls were like "Well! Now hold on", right?

**Clint:** [snorts]

**Travis:** Because we had to do all of it, like it came so early and so big, and us dealing with that shit and being tied to it made the characters more important to the set— Like... I mean, I— Yeah, there were character choices made and there was stuff that we did, but there was stuff like that where it's just like the story is going to move quicker.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Than Griffin had planned.

**Griffin:** There was also—

**Travis:** And that was really interesting.

**Griffin:** There was an element of like writing a cheque about a... like pandemic storyline.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And then like looking at that cheque and being like “I do not... have enough finances [chuckles] in the bank”.

**Travis:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** “To cover this cheque, to do a—” Because like, I don’t know, I did not want that— Especially after it happened and we all kind of reacted to the roll, and the audience reacted to sort of the reveal and were like “Ehhhh. Not crazy about a pandemic storyline right now, that’s not particularly fun”. And so it— I tried to soften that as much as I could, while sort of more focusing on Cambria and that whole element of the story. But—

**Clint:** How was it worded, on your chart? On your random encounter chart, what did “one” say?

**Griffin:** [quietly] Let me see, hold on.

**Travis:** It said “After Dad rolls this, then...”

**Griffin:** [laughs] “The ship inadvertently brings the Sallow back to Founders’ Wake”.

**Clint:** Okay. Alright.

**Travis:** Yeah, there it is.

**Clint:** Wow.

**Griffin:** And I kinda knew like— I had this big board that had like what the Sallow was. This like, you know, fish evolutionary— forced fish evolution thing, and sort of tying that back into, you know, the Cambrian Explosion, which was a, you know. The number of people who messaged me and were like “Damn, I didn’t even know you were a Coheed and Cambria fan”.

**Travis:** Ah!

**Griffin:** It was not that, it was the other thing. Uh... That I, you know, I had that idea in place. But yes, that was the... what was on the actual table. Alright. How `bout another question?

**Travis:** Okay, go ahead.

**Justin:** Start.

**Griffin:** Um... I’ll do this one really quick. “Griffin, did you know—” This is from Sierra. “Did you know that this was where the ending was going from the beginning, or did it only come to you after a few missions?” It didn’t— I— It— Nothing came to me, I feel like. It was entirely the choices that the boys made.

I feel like uh... tying the— I kind of figured out, like okay blink sharks— What if blink sharks are from like another world and we are like the Vestiges that come back and wreck that world, and so they’re on a mission to stop us. Specifically Amber, and have that be the source of the beef, like stuff like that.

But I mean, that ending that Devo had, I kind of came up with between the penultimate episode and the final episode, when Travis decided to change something.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Griffin:** I was like really racking my mind of like “How does that work?” uh—

**Travis:** I got my favorite Griffin reaction, which is when my character does something and Griffin goes “Huh”.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And I'm like "Oh, yeah, got him!"

**Griffin:** Yeah, I mean really all that stuff was pretty late. I did not uh... I had nothing planned. I really didn't.

**Clint:** And that was on purpose.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** I mean we discussed going in, and I mean you told us going in "I don't have this big, long, you know, plotline all laid out. Let's just see where the story takes us".

**Griffin:** Yeah, that addresses a few questions. There's people who asked about like Devo's... alternate timeline shit. Like that was— That was purely— That was in the moment.

**Travis:** I had a question about that, because from how long out were you intending for Devo to be like the voice? The Call and stuff like that? Was that like— I remember like when we were recording that scene and like the machine was open, and I was like "Am I s'posed to do it?" 'Cause I didn't want to do it if I wasn't supposed to do it.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** But then I was like "I think I'm s'posed to do it".

**Griffin:** I think it was when I was like putting together the... last... mission. I'm trying to— Okay, so here's— Here's, uh... We rerecorded I think only one bit the whole season, which I feel pretty good about that hit rate. And it was the— I forget the specifics of it, but it was while you all were sort of investigating— You were doing the murder mystery.

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** And there was originally this scene where you all went to... like confront— You thought that Orlene was at the schoolhouse and so you go

there, and then there was like an explosion, which is not fun. And... It was— It kinda just got away from us a little bit.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And I think the revision for that was this mission where you go to the coral tower where Orlene is trying to connect with the— reconnect with the past, which was always kinda his arc for the season. Is that like he made some decision when he was called away that he regretted and has spent time trying to fix that. And so I think that that— You being the Voice kinda came out of that revision.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Griffin:** That— Realizing like “Oh, okay. If he has a thing that he is trying to use to communicate with himself in the past, like what if— ” And we have this whole thing about like Devo is a convincing speaker, like those two things kind of just connected and that was it. Um, yeah.

**Travis:** Amanda asked “How much of Devo’s section in the epilogue was planned out ahead of time?” All those big reveals were figured out on the spot, Amanda. I did not know any of that, except that I do know that Devo is a Cern. Other than that, everything else was like I’m very—

**Griffin:** Will that keep in the show— You revealed in like the midnight hour. I can’t remember if— Did that make it in?

**Travis:** Everyone else kept referencing it!

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** Like in my Twitch chat and stuff, so I think so.

**Griffin:** Okay, alright. Um Juice, what about this one? “Did Justin have regrets about sending Amber through the portal? I feel like Amber’s question of Kodira of ‘Did I make a mistake?’ was more like Justin asking Griffin relative to the gameplay choice. Did you have a discussion after the penultimate episode about whether or not to keep that action, similar to destroying the crystal in *Balance*? Was this not enough out of line to consider that?” That was from Randy.

**Justin:** No, it was like— I was thrilled with that. I mean, it was like— You set up something that is like this character who... has always been sort of like looking out for herself and, in many ways, sort of like... fearful? You know, somebody who's making it from moment to moment, and doesn't uh... necessarily have a heroic instinct. But like they were in— She was like in the place at the time where... her exact... thing, her exact lifetime had led up to like this moment.

The fact that there was like— She ran out of— [sighs] She was designed to fight blink sharks. There was a door to a world full of purpose, right? Of like— She didn't have the interpersonal relationships with like so many people back home where it was like as hard of a decision. Like this is what dri— has driven her her entire life, so like the fact that there was an opportunity to do something that would help others like save worlds, but also like fulfill her... You know, her individual purpose, I think it was like— I felt great about it.

**Griffin:** What I really loved about that was that this was a— a moral quandary that I wanted to pose to you all in some way, right? Of like making— setting up that this world has been destroyed by this power that came from the Vestiges, who travelled from— who tried to escape from their world. Like if I posed that question to you all, would you make the same decision?

And it's so cool to me how the... that— [sighs] There was another factor that came into the— into play at the very end there, right before you jumped into the portal, which is that you realized that if you did not stop Koda, Koda was going to destroy the tower, which was Zoox, right? And so, unless I'm misremembering, once you realized like "If I don't get Koda out of here then Zoox is going to be destroyed by Koda".

**Justin:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** You jumped through the portal.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And I thought that was fucking rad! Like that was— It's a uh... It's a less sort of like explicit recognition of like how the relationships between these characters like grew and changed. 'Cause there was like animosity and um... Not animosity, but you know.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Disagreements.

**Travis:** Friction! Is the word—

**Griffin:** Friction between the characters.

**Griffin:** Yeah. But then, when faced with like “Oh Zoox is dead if I don’t do something about this. Welp. Here we go”. Like that was very— That was the highlight of Amber’s like, I think growth, for me.

**Clint:** And it says more about the sacrifice coming in that regard, to me. I thought, you know, showed that Amber felt that she had to do what she had to do, regardless of, you know, the— Everybody wasn’t like... sittin’ round the campfire, holding hand and singin’ Kumbaya every episode.

**Justin:** I— I also... And I’m sorry, I always hate— In a sense, I hate talking this way because I feel like it attaches too much like introspection to the work that we do. And I will speak for myself here that like I don’t necessarily love talking about practice in this way, ‘cause it’s sort of like— I don’t know, it seems sort of hokey to— to feel like I should—

I like working without a net. I like making a decision in the moment that... I don’t exactly know what happens as a result of it, right? Like I— And I think, to a point— And this isn’t just *TAZ*, it’s everything. I think to a point that it probably makes me tough to work with sometimes, is like I get really creatively energized by throwing myself into something that like I don’t actually have a path forward for. Like that’s what gets me pumped. So like, when I see an opportunity to do something like that where I don’t know the next scene that follows it, like I will very often uh... you know, head that way.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Because I find it very energizing.

**Travis:** You like that fear, baby!

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** I do. I do.

**Travis:** I have this question, and so did a lot of people, and this is from Buddy and many others. Dad. "Why oh why didn't Zoox tell Amber about his interactions with the blink sharks?"

**Clint:** Well, I have two answers to that. One, I was— I tried to play Zoox as very naïve. Very impressionable. Um... And I think that became a big part of his character, the fact that he was— could be [chuckles] so easily swayed, or so easily impressed by other people. And I really tried to play him like somebody who... was... You know, wasn't a real deep thinker or devious. I think I tried to play him as very honest.

I think I've said it before that when I was, you know, I keep things on my desk as a visual aid to help me, you know, keep the character in mind, and one of the things I've got is I've got a FUNKO Pop of Commander Data, you know from *Next Generation*.

**Griffin:** Is it an officially licensed FUNKO Pop, because—

**Clint:** It is a real one.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** Yes.

**Griffin:** You've sent us—

**Clint:** It is not one of the—

**Griffin:** You've sent us unlicensed FUNKO Po— You sent me a *Mary Poppins Returns* FUNKO Pop of— of Mary Poppins and also Lin and they were unlicensed FUNKO Pops, and I felt very guilty.

**Clint:** [shocked] Really?!

**Griffin:** Yeah. You got `em for Henry.

**Travis:** I thought those were licensed.



**Clint:** Well then what are you bitchin' about?

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Well we played with them in the bath and he called them Mommy and Daddy for a lon—

**Clint:** Ooo.

**Griffin:** For a long time.

**Travis:** You wish, buddy!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah, right?

**Clint:** But you know, that child-like— You know, I tried to play that child-like— It was funny, we designed these characters completely separately, and yet, you know, there were elements of Zoox and of Devo of, you know, fresh out of the nest.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** You know, new to the world kind of thing, but I think there was enough difference in those.

**Travis:** Oh, yeah. But that doesn't— So that— How did that influence not telling Amber?

**Clint:** It— Okay. I went back and looked through the Zoox Log that I talked about and I went back to that scene, and I have written here very clearly "Don't tell". And if— I mean, if I'm remembering right, they charged Zoox with killing Amber, right?

**Griffin:** Or killing all of the bleached coral.

**Clint:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Which w— yeah.

**Clint:** And so I don't think— And they instructed him not to tell Amber, and I think that my first explanation is that he— he... was never gonna do either one of those two things.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Clint:** But he didn't wanna violate their trust by telling Amber. My second reason is the one thing happened in one episode, and by the next episode, I forgot.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Yeah, okay.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Griffin:** That's fair.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Clint:** [chuckles] So I'm just tryin' to go back and rec— But I can remember being in the moment of— of thinking that Zoox would think "Well, why tell Amber this?" You know, maybe it was wrong, but I mean I just— I just didn't think it— I don't think he gave it any credence whatsoever, so it never— didn't occur to his— his very, you know, one-plane mind at all.

**Justin:** I have a question here from Madison. "I'm wondering how having an editor impacted the making of *Ethersea*. How much did or does Rachel know about the story? Do her editing decisions ever affect the course of the story? PS Rachel, you killed it. Love the extremely high quality of the editing, music, and sound effects". That's from Madison she/her.

**Griffin:** So, Rachel and I had meetings sort of before the season started to talk ab— 'Cause this— Rachel I think started shortly before...

**Justin:** I was very close to the beginning.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It was very close to the beginning of *Ethersea*. And so there was a lot of discussion about sort of like tone and vibe and... really granular production-level stuff of like in past seasons, like what have been the times we have used music or sound design in the past? Which has been like very, very, very sparing, I would say.

I mean, having Rachel as an editor for all our shows has impacted I think all of the shows very positively in a lot of ways.

**Clint:** Here here.

**Griffin:** And straight up, like my sort of workload. Like we... had a baby. It's a boy.

**Travis:** Oh, you beat me to it.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I'll never let that one go by without catchin' it. Also kind of around the time that I think pre-production or something like that started. I for— I— The last year has been a fuckin' blur, year and a half has been kind of a blur. So the timetable doesn't track a lot.

In terms of like story stuff, we didn't really have like... meetings about that so much. After the... you know, after the *Quiet Year* episodes were in. Aside from, you know, Rachel and also I'll say Amanda and Sarah do a lot of like first listens, like let us know uh if the vibe for something is bad, or if uh there is a story inconsistency, or uh you know, if we said the wrong name here or there. They are really excellent at giving us the heads up on that, so that either we can fix it or they can fix it.

But the story was not something that I really could even give her a big heads up on as we went, like before we started recording, because it wasn't particularly planned. And that's a tall order, I fully recog— Like that's not usually how production and post-production works on like narrative things, and uh I cannot commend her enough for the work that she did under those circumstances.

[eerie synth music plays]

[ad break]

[pleasant synth music plays]

**Griffin:** I wanna ask you all— Roberto asked this question specifically to Travis, but I'm curious— I think it works for all of you. "At any point, did you as a player suspect Brother Seldom in the murder mystery at the end?"

**Travis:** It's interesting, 'cause— [sighs] You mentioned the... one thing we rerecorded.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Travis:** And I feel like we've— In there was a conversation where Devo like said to Orlene like "There's only a couple of people who would be powerful enough to compel her to do something, and it would be like me or Seldom or you, so where were you?" I think there was something like that that I said and like Orlene reacted to it in a way that there was part of my brain that was like "Huh". But also one, we didn't end up using that stuff, so I threw it out, right? Of my brain.

**Griffin:** [quietly] Right.

**Travis:** But then also like I wanna say I— And this might be just because of how often Devo squared off against him. I think Orlene is one of like my favorite kind of quote unquote "villains" from any *TAZ* we've done. Because like I didn't like him, but I also like... Every time he showed up, I'd be like "Aw, fuck yeah". Right?

Like there was som— I loved... like his interactions with Devo and vice versa, but— So I like I never trusted him, but there was the certain point of like Devo— He was one of like the few people Devo had known all his life?

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Travis:** So it was also like a little bit of comfortable too? Which was so weird.

**Griffin:** I understand that.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** To walk through the sort of Seldom reveal. I didn't— I was kind of hoping there would be another scene with Seldom where he could kind of explain. Like obviously, murder is bad, folks. You don't need me to tell you that. But this like belief of "Well, if Koda ever finds out where Hominine is, like Koda will blow that city out of the sky".

And so it is of the— You know, if he is a Whisper, which Travis kind of set up as like these spies of Hominine, protecting that information would be of the utmost importance, right? And so if um... If the Hand of Guidance had, you know, found out from this machine where Hominine was and wanted to sort of like reconnect with the flock, and that is why Brother Seldom did what he did, because he was afraid that if Koda finds out where the city is, he will completely destroy it. And all of the like, you know, innocents that also live there.

I also— As long as we're mentioning things that straight up weren't in the story, Jules asked "When the Coriolis crew ran into the Butt Munch/Gut Punch crew after saving the city from Cambria, it seemed to imply that the Gut Punch crew had done something significant for the city as well. What were the Butt Munchers up to during the Cambria arc?"

**Justin:** [giggles]

**Travis:** What a great—

**Griffin:** "Will that be of significance during the second season? Also for the second season of *Ethersea*, would you consider setting it in another contingency plan than Founders' Wake, eg Hominine flying city or the Delmer city in the mountains?" Okay, those two things are connected. Uh if I— I have not talked to you three about this, so this'll be fun.

One of the like potential storyline things that I had sort of on the vision board was uh the Delmer necropolis, right? When the world falls, the Delmer like build a city inside of a mountain, and... So there was this one mission that you all did not choose at the beginning. I think it was the "Alloyed Menace". And it was— there's all this metal, all this scrap metal that keeps like showing up in this spot. And it's your job to go find out what's going on there and destroy the, you know, big beast or whatever that keeps armoring itself with this stuff. That metal was coming through like... underground... like cave river like cenotes, from the Delmer

necropolis. They are trying to like escape, but keep getting like smashed up in this cenote as they try to escape.

And so like, I thought that one potential arc could be finding a way to get there, which could have been like a like incredibly dangerous surface expedition to the mountains, I don't even know what that would look like. But y'all didn't take that mission and they did. And so I had this idea of like is there some way that at some point during the season, if we need some vine to swing to, where you all get brought in. Like "The Gut Punch has done great work to reconnect us with our kin".

But it just never happened. And now I think things have kind of moved on past that chapter in Founders' Wake's history, and so I think in a second season, we'll definitely wanna... touch on what happened with those other cities, but I, you know, I think the Butt Punch missed their window.

**Clint:** "Justin, Travis, and Clint, did you find yourselves starting to conceptualize your characters during the *Quiet Year* gameplay, as the world and its inhabitants were being fleshed out, or did you start that process after the prologue was done? For example, did Clint know he wanted to play a Brinarr as soon as they were introduced, and how long after creating Uncle Joshy's School for Psychic Blink Shark Fighting did Justin decide it would be his character's alma mater?"

Um for me, I will say, and I think we all agree that *Quiet Year* was a blast.

**Griffin:** Yip.

**Clint:** We loved playing that game and creating that world. And just so you know, going in with any kind of intentions in that, to massage things into what you want, does not work. I had— It just doesn't. Because of the way the game plays and because you're, you know, it's turn based and people are coming up with their own ideas.

The only thing I thought going in was I really wanted to play a warforged. Started reading about warforged when we were doing *Graduation* and I knew I wanted to do a warforged. It wasn't until we got into [chuckles] this whole realm of it being underwater I realized "Wait a minute, how is that gonna work? A warforged and underwater?", so I kind of put it to the back of my mind. And Griffin, you even cautioned us, "Don't start coming up with characters".

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** "Until we're done with *Quiet Year*", so.

**Griffin:** I said that, but also when you started talking about this idea of like coral suits.

**Clint:** The magic coral— Yeah.

**Griffin:** I was like, oh fuck yeah. Like Dad's on some shit. That made—

**Clint:** When we started to talk about the magic-infused coral.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** I said "Okay, there's a material that might work", and so that was tucked in the back of my mind. To be honest with yah, I even went so far as to say "Ampersand Five". I thought "Hey, that'd be a cool character name, you know, to go with that". Because you know, it was gonna be Finneas and five other Einarr.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Clint:** So "and 5" made sense. But you know, I really tried very hard not to because it's not possible. It's not possible to steer *Quiet Year* into anything.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Clint:** Juice, what about your part of the question? About Joshy's School for Psychic Blink Shark Fighting?

**Justin:** I just— I thought it was the i— That place seemed the most interesting to me. I found the idea really funny, and I like the idea of— I like the idea of someone making up something and then it having like devout followers 25 years later.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Justin:** I think that that's really powerful.

**Griffin:** But it also let us keep Joshy in the picture, in a way that was...

**Justin:** Right.

**Griffin:** Delightful.

**Justin:** Right.

**Griffin:** For me, specifically, it was delightful.

**Justin:** Yeah, I always loved scenes between Joshy and her.

**Travis:** For Devo, it was a combination of like two card flips in *Quiet Year* that I got, of one was like a travelling— a troupe of performers comes to town, and then like the religious leader comes to town, that brought the Hand of Guidance.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And so then I started thinking about like what if there was a child of a member of the like travelling troupe.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** That ended up being raised by the Church. And like—

**Griffin:** Yeah, I forgot about that element of it.

**Travis:** What?

**Griffin:** I forgot about that element of it, that Devo was adopted from the travelling troupe. We never really circled back to that really at all.

**Travis:** Yeah. And a lot of— Just cause I— I don't know if it was ever clear. Devo's mom was with him for like seven years at the Church, and then one day disappeared, and the rest of the time raised by the Church alone. Just cause I think that there was some ti— I remember saying at one point like "For 17 years" or something, and then seeing someone be like "Isn't he 23?" Like oh yeah yeah, it's— Oh yeah, sorry. [chuckles] That timeline was weird, that was why.



**Griffin:** Yeah. There's a lot of questions, I want to try and knock them all out in one sort of broad thing, asking to share like the random event table and like a campaign setting book, uh... And like all of the sheets that we use to track ship stats and vendor inventory and all that stuff.

And I wanna say that for the— I know a lot of people asked about the random event table. I definitely wanna keep using that, so maybe someday, but not— I don't wanna share that right now, 'cause it was a lot of work [chuckles] to come up with a hundred things.

**Justin:** Some are bad, huh?

**Griffin:** Some are quite bad.

**Justin:** You got some duds.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Well no, you've gotta have some duds in there, right?

**Travis:** Yeah. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** There are some real stinkers in there. I will say that the uh ship like worksheet is available for [bit.ly/mfd](https://bit.ly/mfd), for Max Fun Drive, mfd2022bonusgoals, because it was a MaxFun Drive bonus goal for this past drive. So if you wanna see all that stuff. And there's a lot on there. There's a lot— I think it's also got like the different vendors and all that stuff, but like I don't think anything else is ready for prime time yet.

**Justin:** This one was for me and I didn't wanna miss out on it, 'cause it gives me an opportunity to dunk on myself. "How did you end up coming up with some of Amber's lingo? Did you have specific words they came from, or were they off the dome? 'Guppy' I get, but what about 'keppa' or 'clasper'?" That's from Ori, they/them.

I thought it was a fun idea. I liked the idea of, you know— Any time there's like slang in a fantasy world, I feel like it helps it be more like lived in. You know, stuff like the Mandarin in *Serenity*, or like the adaptations you see of like Earth profanity that you see on like *Battle Star*, stuff like that. Like I think that that is a lot of fun. So I started doing

that with her, and I— it was like the absolute height of arrogance to think that I would be able to like keep track of that.

**Travis:** [chuckles] Mm-hmm.

**Justin:** And implement it while I was recording, like is absolutely... unhinged. So it kinda fell by the wayside, is the point that I'm making.

**Griffin:** I don't think that's fair.

**Justin:** Well—

**Griffin:** I don't think it did. I still think about like "kella sai", "guppy", like "keppa". Like "clasper" is the best, 'cause "clasper"— Do you wanna tell what a clasper is?

**Justin:** Clasper's a shark penis.

**Griffin:** That's it. [snorts]

**Justin:** That's it. That's what a clasper is, it's a shark penis. Uh "kella sai" is... "Kella" is probably nonsense, I don't know, but "sai" I am certain came from *Gunslinger*. Is where like that part of— You don't get to choose which parts of your brain make up words for yah.

**Travis:** Yup.

**Justin:** So that— It was *Gunslinger* day that day, apparently. [wheezes]

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Yep. [chuckles]

**Justin:** And it brought in "sai" from that. "Keppa" sounds like "keep up". That's— and that's why that one is the way it is, so yeah. I had intended for that to be much more robust and filled out than it became.

**Travis:** [sighs]

**Justin:** But I ended up—

**Travis:** I— No. I think it was perfect the way it was.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Because it was like seasoning, rather than the thing, like—

**Griffin:** Yeah, 'cause then it would be too mu—

**Justin:** That'll work.

**Griffin:** Like I never had trouble— Like—

**Justin:** Too much paprika on the sandwich.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Exactly. I loved that part of Amber's role.

**Justin:** Oh, cool.

**Griffin:** In this web.

**Justin:** Glad to hear it.

**Travis:** So this is a question, 'cause I wanted to talk about— "In the Cambria arc flashback, did Griffin and Justin's character know that Justin would be the saboteur ahead of time?" From Katie.

**Griffin:** [chuckles mischievously] Probably the— Probably—

**Justin:** What are we talking about? Remind me.

**Griffin:** The—

**Travis:** This is the one when we go to Finneas's—

**Griffin:** The flashback were—

**Travis & Griffin:** [simultaneously] Yes.

**Griffin:** Dad played Finneas and you and Travis played like Finneas's associates, and you go to Cambria's city at the bottom of the sea. I—

**Justin:** Oh, so we're gonna talk about this. Okay.

**Griffin:** I told Justin he was the saboteur before we started recording, and so tried to like back-channel with him during that arc. Which, in retrospect, is a bad idea, because it basically led to keeping Dad and Travis like purposefully in the dark, in a way that we have not done before, nor was a way that I think they knew was possible.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** We had to stop at one point because like Dad was—

**Justin:** It was a bad fight.

**Griffin:** It was a bad— It was bad. Dad was doin'— Dad was trying to like hold it together with the like narrative stuff that we knew that Finneas had to do, Travis was playing his character and like trying to like have an— have an impact and be this like very coherent character. And those two things were kind of at odds with what Justin and I were doing, right. Which is— Inherently they were at odds, because Justin was trying to fuck everything up, and I was trying to encourage both things to happen while not giving away Justin's thing.

It was, straight-up like, it was— We got to the end of it and it was uh one of the worst, I would say, play experiences we had had because nobody really felt like they were getting a fair end of the stick. Like we weren't playing— We aren't playing the game or recording the show in the way that we always had? And so while I think that conceptually it is a neat idea, I definitely would've done it differently if we could go back and do that bit again.

**Travis:** I think it ended up being a really important object lesson in like the difference between like— understanding the difference between like player knowledge and character knowledge, right? Because I think that's the thing that we ended up getting to is like the reason I think it was hard to do both those things at the same time is that without that connection— without the player knowledge, we couldn't facilitate the story that was trying to happen. You know what I mean?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** So like I think that's what I think we ended up talking about is like I think it ended up being a really cool kind of story concept and I was playing this flashback, and oh man I love everything from them like running to the ship, to trying to escape on.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** It's like some of my favorite shit.

**Griffin:** Which is I think when we had to stop and be like "Okay, so here's what's happening". [chuckles]

**Travis:** Right.

**Griffin:** "We have to— We have to— That's what the secret—" I think around the time that the reveal happens is when we had to stop and say like "Okay, here's what me and Justin have been doing, we've been having sneaky texts in the background".

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Justin:** It really— This is such an— Like doing what we do, especially with TAZ, is such an exercise in trust. And like trusting your collaborators that like everyone's working towards the same thing, that you're gonna be generous when you need to be, and I feel like the— Completely with the best of intentions, it f— it hit so bad because it felt like a betrayal of that trust.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Justin:** Like were not all creating something in the moment, but were rather trying to lure two people into a [wheezes] a trap that we had created outside of them. It's actually— It's actually unhinged, now that I say it back.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Yeah.

**Clint & Travis:** [cackles]

**Justin:** [laughs] It's actually pretty demented [wheezes] actually. It would be equivalent to if we were recording *My Brother, My Brother and Me*, and I just started chanting a thousand-character long series of numbers, and it's like "Well, this is the show now, I guess". [wheezes]

**Travis:** "Okay, do we join in?"

**Justin:** "Okay?"

**Travis:** "Or is it your favorite number?"

**Clint:** Is that the one where I did *Ted Lasso* voice?

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** I don't know what voice you did.

**Griffin:** You did kinda do your Ted Lasso voice for that, yeah.

**Justin:** You tell me.

**Clint:** Well then I enjoyed it!

**Justin:** Okay, good.

**Griffin:** Can we talk about— We have a few questions here about the like character relationships.

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** And I'm curious how you all felt about it because the relationships between... specifically I would say Devo and Amber was definitely more contentious that we've had in past seasons, and Zoox there as a kind of like almost peacekeeper, mediator. Like we have not had that before, but at the same time, I don't know that we've tried to play characters like the three characters you all played this season, and I'm curious like what your thoughts on that experience was like and like how those relationships kinda turned out.

**Justin:** With Amber and Devo, we came to that conflict fairly late. And the sour— In the arc, I think. And the source of that was this. I found Devo, personally, from my perspective, to be so like— like very annoying. Like very frustrating to be with, and like a frustrating character who's always like shooting his mouth off and like doing things that I found very frustrating. And then when I sort of like casually expressed this to Travis, he was like "Well, yeah. That's like, what I'm doing".

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Justin:** You know, like it is a feature, not a bug. So what I— what I did then was like allow the personal annoyance and frustration that I had with Devo to manifest through Amber. And like it took me way too long to sort of pick up on what Travis was doing with Devo, and that you know is also a trust thing. I probably should've just like tried to buy in a little bit more earlier on. But like, that is certainly a— You know, why we came to that a little bit later is just because I didn't exactly pick up on that from the beginning.

**Travis:** A lot of the Devo frustration with Amber is uh— I saw Devo very much as like an exposed nerve kinda thing. And Devo just really needed— Or not needed, wanted a mother figure approval thing. Especially coming off of his relationship with the Hand of Guidance. And that is not Amber's deal at all. And I—

**Griffin:** [while chuckling] No.

**Travis:** Yeah, so Devo started to get frustrated that Amber wasn't giving him what he needed. It was this thing of just like they're different people. And I actually really like that. Let me make this clear, is like that frustration, at least for me, never extended... like to the way me or Justin or Dad or anybody was playing it, right? I think it was just like we—

From the beginning, we never determined like why are these three people together? It was almost like "Well, we were all in the waiting room at the same time". And they worked well together, in that like the jobs got done in some form or fashion. But like I think that these people felt more like coworkers than some of our past teams of people did.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And I kinda really liked that. Like...

**Clint:** Yeah, there's nothing wrong with that.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I— I— At the same time, I understand people's... Uh the folks who did not rock with that. Not— Okay, I have no patience for the people who like used it as a like springboard for, you know, armchair psychiatry on our familial relationship.

**Justin:** Ew, people do that?

**Griffin:** I have no patience for that.

**Justin:** Gross.

**Griffin:** I get not wanting to listen to a show that has that friction, right? There were times for me, as the GM, where that friction would... serve as narrative friction to like— You know, there were times where I felt like you all were not necessarily working together to forward the mission, because this friction existed between your characters. But at the same time, like yeah, that is— That's how friction works, right?

So like I get— I understand the people who did not necessarily enjoy that part of it. But it— Like anybody who thinks that it was something more than that, or some reflection of our— the way that we make the show together, could like not be— I would hope you would give us a little bit more credit than that, at this point in the game.

**Justin:** We were raised Baptist, folks. If we ever have personal problems, you will never know.

**Travis:** You'll never know.

**Clint & Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Get the Hubble, get the world's strongest microscope, it does not matter, you will not see it. Will we see it in each other? Perhaps not.

**Travis:** I mean, I don't know.



**Justin:** What chance do you have? My wife doesn't know how I feel half the time.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Justin:** You're gonna guess? Through your headphones? Okay!

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Clint:** In narrative, and as, you know, since this is a storytelling podcast. I mean, we have to— I think we take it on ourselves and we embody these characters and we— You know, I think if it's all goody goody, everybody gets along, everybody's holding hands. I think that gets boring after a while. The whole— The word is conflict, and there has to be conflict in a story.

Now, you may not like interpersonal conflict, but to me, I think that was a defining— I mentioned it earlier, the fact that yeah, we weren't all best buds. But when it came time to make a decision about the welfare of the others in the group, I think that gave those decisions more impact.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** And I think it made it, you know mean more.

**Griffin:** And this is the season I think where that tone makes the most sense. You have taken the remnants of humanity and like forced them all to live in a very small place. I think that the friction existing this season— It tracks.

**Travis:** I also think— Uh at least— I won't speak for the other three, but for me, I was playing this as a much longer kind of game, I think inspired by *Quiet Year*. Where like I wasn't trying to rush like any kind of character development or inter-character development. And like if there had been a moment where like the tensions between, you know, Devo and Amber had come to a head, I think we would've played it, it just didn't happen.

But then it also then provided for me like when we got to the end of season one of this thing of like "I'mma kill a god. One, to stop magic. And

two, so I can get more blood to open this thing, so that Amber and I can finally figure this shit out". [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Like that was like Devo's main driving goal is like "Yeah, I wanna save Amber, but mostly 'cause like... there's unresolved shit we gotta figure out".

**Griffin:** Right.

**Travis:** To me, it's not done. Like that's— The tension is part of the inspiration for continuing the action.

**Griffin:** Season two, I don't have like that planned out necessarily. I do think— You guys keep say— Daniel says "You keep saying you'll return to *Ethersea* at some point but with different characters. Does that mean you're treating *Ethersea* as more of an anthology series, where each season we learn even more about the world, just through the eyes of different characters?" Like yeah, I think that that's— I think the world changed during the first season. And that you three will play different characters in that world, dealing with those changes.

**Travis:** Yep.

**Griffin:** But it will not be a fully standalone thing. But that said, like I have not even begun to figure out like what that looks like. And—

**Clint:** Well, since Zoon got turned into *Gigantor*, I guess so.

**Justin:** I think it—

**Griffin:** Well, Zoon turned more into like a— a Eva unit like mecha shit, which I'm—

**Justin:** I think it— And I don't wanna speak too much on this because we haven't had these conversations much internally, but I feel like think less of... Think less about what this means for *Ethersea* specifically because I think this is a better reflection of like how we wanna think about these worlds, like, going forward. Like we've made quite a few of them this time

and I don't think we necessarily want to start from scratch every single time we start a new arc.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Justin:** So the idea that these are worlds we can return to, rather than, you know, this sweeping epic that we do and then land perfectly and then never—

**Griffin:** Never return to again.

**Justin:** Return to.

**Griffin:** Until we do the graphic novel adaptation.

**Justin:** Exactly right.

**Griffin:** Until we do the animated series.

**Justin:** The breakfast cereal, the toilet paper.

**Griffin:** Um—

**Travis:** And so for the next season, we'll be doing all Sherlock Holmes's.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And one of those Sherlock Holmes's is a vampire.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Let's—

**Travis:** For 85 episodes.

**Griffin:** Let's talk about— We don't have *Ethersea* season two planned out. We do have the next two things that we're doing settled on, and one of those things already fully recorded.

**Travis:** So before we get into that, the lead in is we're going back to weekly. There'll be a live show next week, which I think is *Just Us 2*.

**Griffin:** So fun.

**Clint:** Ooo!

**Travis:** That we did at San Diego Comic Con.

**Griffin:** Y'all, the one that— The live show that ran this week was the Gorgon Ramsay one that I had literally have ejected from my mind.

**Travis:** Yeah, completely forgot.

**Griffin:** Completely forgot about.

**Travis:** Until I saw Lucas Hespeneide's art for it and I was like "Oh shit, yeah! Okay".

**Griffin:** Oh Bobby Mindflay, and yeah it's so good.

**Travis:** Yeah, and then, starting after that live show. Starting I believe September 1<sup>st</sup>, we're goin' back to *Dust*.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Clint:** Yeah!

**Travis:** We're doing— We have five episodes. An episode zero set-up session, and then four episodes of *Dust*, with guest star Erika Ishii.

**Griffin:** Yeah, episodes zero and one are going up on the same day.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And I don't know how necessary— I mean, it's up to you if you want to listen to zero or not. We set up our characters and remind everybody of the rules of *Urban Shadows*, but—

**Travis:** Yeah, I think you can start with one.

**Justin:** Yeah but I'd listen to it. What else are— If you don't like listening to this podcast, then why do you listen to this podcast?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** You know what I mean?

**Travis:** So we're— Yeah. So we're doing four episodes of that, *Dust*.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** It's already recorded. It's done. And frankly, I think it's top notch.

**Griffin:** It's pretty fucking good. Yeah.

**Justin:** It's good.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Can I say who I play in it?

**Travis:** Yeah, go for it.

**Griffin:** I play, uh, Indrid Cold. Moth Man is in this one.

**Clint:** [giggles]

**Griffin:** The worlds— The lines are blurring.

**Justin:** My fucking ultimate, ultimate dream.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Of the *TAZ*-iverse.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** I gotta come up with a better name for it than that.

**Travis:** It's all happening.

**Griffin:** It's very fun. We're— I think we're all playing new characters, except for Juice.

**Travis:** Yeah, Justin plays August—

**Griffin:** Who reprises Augustus Parsons, yeah.

**Justin:** What about the *Catsphere*? Because the real connective tissue is cat salesman.

**Travis:** Ohhh!

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** So just call it the *Fe*—

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** The *Fe*— The *Feli*— I'll come up with something.

**Travis:** The *Felennium*.

**Justin:** The *Felennium*!

**Griffin:** Oo, that's good. This very last question is from Sierra. "Justin, the people need to know. Will you GM? Please, pretty please. I think it would be very fun. Even just a short arc. You can take things fairly seriously, but on the surface are always looking for a joke, and I think it would be so amusing to even just do a one-off where the finale is like a punchline. You'd be so good at it."

**Clint:** That's from Sierra?

**Griffin:** And so many others.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Travis:** Oh, you convinced him.

**Griffin:** Alright.

**Clint:** Yeah. [cackles]

**Travis:** Sierra, we've been trying forever! You did it.

**Justin:** I'll do one after *Du*— Well, you didn't ask that kindly. You know what I mean?

**Travis:** Oh, I didn't say "pretty please".

**Justin:** I'll do one after *Dust*. Like I already like know what it is and everything.

**Griffin:** [mumbles] We've thought about it extensively, and we've...

**Justin:** I'll just do one after, it's fine.

**Travis:** Yeah, tell people.

**Griffin:** [mumbles] We have characters and—

**Justin:** No, I don't want to tell 'em what it is.

**Travis:** What?!

**Clint:** Well tell 'em—

**Justin:** I mean, I'm not gonna tell 'em what it is.

**Clint:** Tell 'em the title?

**Justin:** Eehhhh.

**Travis:** Tell 'em what game system.

**Justin:** Like which—

**Clint:** Yeah. Yeah yeah yeah!

**Justin:** Okay, okay. It's uh... It's— We're gonna be playin' *Blades in the Dark*.

**Travis:** By John Harper.

**Justin:** Thank you, Travis.

**Travis:** From Evil Hat Productions.

**Justin:** Thank you, Travis. *Blades in the Dark*, if you haven't— if you don't know, is a game about people who do crimes, and do nasty things. Like the player characters in this game are called "scoundrels". Like they're bad— they're bad people and they do bad things.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Justin:** And this game is set in a... fictional... theme resort that is... in scope... exponentially larger than anything in our world. It is a massive theme city, if you will. A theme city-state. Full of different theme parks within it. In much the same way that in Disneyworld you have like the Animal Kingdom and Epcot and things like that. These are um... massive... theme parks within this city. It's all run by one family and think like maybe there's a *Westworld* area, maybe there's a fantasy area. All that kinda stuff.

It is a world that is replete with the ultra-rich, who are there living out their incredible fantasies. And our characters will be people who are just below the surface of that, who are trying to carve out a bit for themselves in this world. It's called *Steeplechase*.

**Clint:** [laughs eagerly]

**Justin:** That's the name of the park and the arc, and it's gonna be nasty. It's gonna be— I have felt a little bit hemmed in by the fact that we started with like incredibly noble, decent heroes. And I feel like if there's one thing that's sort of like been consistent arc to arc, with limited um... variance, is that we have basically decent people who we're following.

And that may end up being the case here, I'm not sure, but there was an irreverence to early *Balance* where it felt like you could just kinda murder people and it wasn't like a big deal. And I will— I wanna push people pa— out of the comfort zone. I wanna push these three out of that comfort zone and start to f— to get in a little bit of the old nastiness, as we used to say in college.

**Clint:** [chuckles darkly]



**Justin:** So, it's gonna be a nasty story about nasty people, in a fantastically beautiful world that none of us could ever afford. So that's *Steeplechase*, and it'll be coming after *Dust: Part 2*.

**Griffin:** And *Blades in the Dark* is a brilliant system— like heist game system that I—

**Justin:** It's weird that we've never done it before. It's so on-brand for our stuff.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Um...

**Travis:** I wanted to say real quick too, before I forgot. *Urban Shadows* is the game system for *Dust*. It is written by Andrew Medieros and Mark Diaz Truman, it's by Magpie Games.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And it is incredible.

**Griffin:** It's a great one too.

**Travis:** One of my favorite ones to ever exist.

**Griffin:** So that's it. A month of *Dust*, and then on to *Steeplechase*, which will be a bigger season. I don't think Juice is— I don't know that we've talked so much about the scale of it, but it is— We are not—

**Justin:** 23 episodes.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs] That's if you get the season two pick up, right?

**Justin:** Yeah. Well if you pay for all the bonus— [chuckles]

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Justin:** We have some— A lot of times it says there's like 27 episodes. Five of that is just like behind the scenes and featurettes.

**Travis:** And there's some web-exclusives that you're only gonna get—

**Griffin:** Alright.

**Justin:** Yeah, making ofs.

**Travis:** On Quibi.

**Griffin:** That's— That's it for this edition of *TTAZZ*. I want to say a— a huge thank you to everybody who got into *Ethersea* this season. It's— It was a— I've never been so invested in... like a world we have created as quickly as I was with this one, and I'm so proud of it and really happy with how it turned out, and thank you all for listening and for listening to this.

**Travis:** I wanted to say something real quick before— 'cause I don't know if we'll do a *TTAZZ* like soon, but I just wanted to say how excited we were to work with Erika Ishii on *Dust*.

**Griffin:** Yeeeeeah.

**Travis:** If nothing else, like it already makes it one of my favorite things we've done. And it was just so nice to work with somebody who like responded to my emails quickly and like answered character questions in a timely manner.

**Griffin:** [interrupting] Alright, thanks for listening everybody. Here it is. Here comes the— It's that real fight.

**Justin:** Yup.

**Clint:** [wheezes]

**Griffin:** That real fight that we talked—

**Travis:** This is it, this is it.

**Justin:** Remember, what's our safe word?

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Justin:** Um, for when the fighting's too real. Thanks as always for listening to us.

[outro music starts fading in]

**Justin:** You know, with these two new things comin' up, if you enjoy *TAZ*. And this is weird, we like never talk about this, but if you would like tell some people. Like hey, you know, "Remember you've said you listen to that podcast a bunch and you said it's not for you. Well, they're doin' something different. Maybe you'll like that". You know what I mean? Just— Help us spread the word about the show. We'd really— We'd appreciate it.

**Griffin:** Yep.

**Justin:** So if you enjoy it, you know, please do that.

**Griffin:** Alright, thanks everybody. Thanks for listenin'. See you next time.

**Clint:** Thanks!

**All:** [simultaneously] Byeeeeeee!

[outro music plays]

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