

The Adventure Zone: Steeplechase - Episode 19

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Krystal: Hey, Steepies! Krystal with a K here. And I know we've been on a little bit of an Ephemera kick lately, but we've got some new menu items at Bumpershoots! The themed restaurant honoring galactic heroes, Taako, Magnus Braveaxe, Merle the Pious, and Girth the talking Dire Wolf. We're talking Onion Pedals To The Metal, Pearly Fries, Jeff Angel Food Cake, Paloma's Pavlova, Void Fish and Chips, and even Beef Roswellington. All we want now is the option for Barry Blue Cheese Crumbles to be added to any entrée! Luckily, we here at Steeple Watch never know when to stop—
[slurping sounds]

[Steeplechase theme song plays]

Weaver: You will find it in the pyre... I'm certain of it. It was a pepperoni and green pepper. Search the pyre...

Griffin: [chuckles]

Weaver: I hunger...

Justin: Hello, everybody, and welcome to The Adventure Zone: Steeplechase. An adventure.

Griffin: I have thought of nothing else since— Luckily, we've recorded two episodes this week, so that the span of time where it occupied my every waking and sleeping thought was lessened. But I thought of nothing else but the end of the last episode since we last recorded. So, I'm quite excited.

Justin: Well, that's gripping. Hold on one second, I need to grab one thing I forgot. One sec. I'm gonna grab my guitar.

Travis: Oh boy... That's ominous. You know when Justin says that, it's not like a comfort thing. It's not like, "Yeah, whenever I record, I like to just be able to see my guitar, and it keeps me calm."

Griffin: No, no, no.

Clint: Well, at least it's not the sax again.

Travis: You know that never leaves his side, dad. He's got a holster for it.

Griffin: Yeah, he's got a special—

Travis: Yeah. He's grafted it on to himself.

Clint: While we have a pause, I gotta tell you, this new Rosalía flavor of Coca-cola Zero? Whew.

Travis: Rosalía?

Justin: [plays a note on the saxophone]

Griffin: I just heard it.

Travis: Now, that could have been the saxophone, or the sound of our universe imploding.

Griffin: Or a chair squeaking.

Travis: Or a chair.

Clint: I think the whole, "I'm going to get my guitar," was a ruse so he could whip out the saxophone.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: Anyway, this doesn't matter. Okay.

Taako: So, do you guys want a table or what?

Montrose: Yes, if you have one available.

Beef: A round table! A round table for us knights, verily.

Montrose: That's not really part of the Bumbershoot aesthetic.

Taako: Yeah, they're just regular tables... Okay, yeah, over there works.

Justin: And you start walking through. There's pictures throughout, of characters that you don't really recognize. They're not... they're not ones that are extremely familiar to you. Montrose, you might have picked up some of it through your previous journeys. But it doesn't seem to be— this seems like a restaurant that was heavily themed maybe some time ago, but now is much less so.

Taako: Do you want me to walk you through specials, or do you wanna do the selfie thing, or...

Beef: Sorry, what? The selfie thing?

Taako: Yeah, over there.

Justin: And you see like card cutouts, like a cardboard cutout with a place for you to put your face.

Taako: Yeah, you can... Over there, verily, you can have your picture taken with the original Horny Squad. There's me, there's Magnus Braveaxe, Merle the Pious and Girth the talking Dire Wolf. The original— all the original guys. And you can just put your head in there and do a picture. Some people like to do it.

Beef: And they were— wait, sorry, they were called the Corny Squad? That's terrible!

Taako: The Horny Squad. The Horny Squad.

Beef: Wow, that's awful?

Taako: Yeah, it's— you know, everybody learned about these guys a while back. Haven't heard much since then, but you know, we try to keep the legend alive here at Bumbershoots. Their incredible, you know, adventurers.

Beef: Yeah, I'll pass.

Montrose: Yes, let's not leave any more photographic evidence of our being here than absolutely required. I'm sorry, this menu is... is an alien object to me. Where is the... There're so many things! Where's the Phoenix Fire Buffalo Wings?

Taako: Oh, yeah, those were too spicy and they were outlawed. Here's what we got, let me hit you guys— here's my personal recco's, if I can be so bold. There's the— we got the Root Beer Levitation Potion, that's big. We're advertising that a lot right now. We have Ground Dragon Sliders, we have a Beyond the Beyond Burger, which is half fake meat and half real meat.

Beef: Could I just get a Shirley Temporal Chalice?

Taako: Do you want the collectors cup, or do you just want it like a regular to go?

Beef: How much more is it?

Taako: Whew... an amount of money that would make sense contextually.

Beef: Yeah, I'll take it.

Taako: All right, if you're sure.

Montrose: Do you have Angus Burnside— Do you have Magnus Burncider on tap?

Taako: No, no. You mean— do you mean... Sorry, sorry, you said Magnus... You mean Magnus Braveaxe?

Emerich: I think he was making a cider reference...

Taako: Oh, yeah. We have— we have ciders. We also just—

Montrose: I changed— I'd rather— You know what? I'll have the Merle Highball. Just—

Taako: Yeah, no problem, you got it. And—

Beef: Could I have the Black Angus McDonald Burger, with my Shirley Temporal Chalice?

Taako: No problem, we also got some Fuchetta Bread Sticks, delicious.

Montrose: Now, this is confusing, 'cause on the menu, you also have an item called the Angus Beef Burger?

Taako: Right?

Montrose: Now, is one of these not—

Taako: One has blackened spices on the outside, delicious.

Montrose: But... okay—

Taako: There's Jalapeño Fireballs...

Emerich: Yeah, I would like the Gaia Sashimi.

Justin: [laughs]

Taako: Excellent, excellent choice! Yeah, I can tell you got a refined palate. Anybody else have any orders?

Montrose: I'm sure I could think of a few if you give me a minute or two.

Emerich: That's probably why he didn't give us a minute or two.

Taako: Yeah, well, you've had— you've had a few days. [chuckles] I figured these were your... the results of your labors?

Clint: [chuckles]

Montrose: Could I have a side of Garfield the Rice Pilaf, please?

Travis: [chuckles] Yeah, no problem— Wait, he says we're out.

Beef: Who does?

Montrose: Who says we're out?

Taako: God and his friends. [chuckles]

Montrose: Oh...

Taako: No, the chef, man! The chef!

Beef: Okay...

Montrose: Well then, I suppose we'll just have the cornucopia of different Angus Beef Burger options you have on here.

Taako: Yeah, fair enough. Oh, wait, oh, oh, oh, the entertainment's starting, let me— let me go work on that and you guys take a listen.

Justin: And you see up on the stage, a guy stands up. And he's dressed in like kind of medieval garb. But he's got a bunch of instruments strapped to him.

Johan: Hey, everybody! I'm Johan, the music man! The one-man band! And I'm gonna be cranking out the tunes for you for the next few minutes. And I'd love to get started for you!

Beef: Oh God, we gotta go.

Justin: No, shh, it's okay, just listen, it's a bit.

[guitar plucks out seven notes]

Griffin: [chuckles] I'm so proud.

Montrose: That's the whole song? Is that... is that the whole song?

Justin: Wait, let me try again, I gotta get it clean. It didn't come through clean.

[guitar plucks out seven notes]

[comedically bad saxophone plays]

Griffin: [laughs]

[sax continues]

Johan: Thanks, everybody! I'm gonna take a break, I threw something out. But you know, don't forget to tip. I really appreciate it.

Montrose: That was inspiring.

Taako: Sorry. Normally, he goes longer. Okay, I got your food.

Beef: That was fast!

Montrose: That was really fast.

Taako: Just the appetizers.

Montrose: Oh, okay.

Taako: And here's your drinks.

Justin: And in every drink, there's a little umbrella.

Travis: Aw!

Justin: Isn't that cute? Don't you wish this place was real? Let's open this— this is basically a pitch—

Griffin: It's great.

Justin: ... Deck for the theme restaurant I wanna open.

Travis: Yeah, let's follow the success of your Planet Hollywoods...

Griffin: Your Mars 21-12s...

Travis: Yeah. Is Rainforest Café doing all right? [chuckles]

Justin: Just then, the front door blasts open. Not literally with magic, just like with a big push. And you see a large— what appears to be a large, green ogre coming through. And he's got a bulbous nose, and two sort of green, trumpet-shaped things coming out of his head.

Shroog: Hey, where are thee? It's me, Shroog!

Beef: Shroog? I haven't seen you since high school.

Justin: You don't know Shroog.

Travis: I know, I was trying—

Justin: Why would you fucking lie, man?

Travis: I was trying so hard to build some connection here, to justify Shroog's existence.

Shroog: I've been looking for the three of you all throughout! Fancy meeting you here! It's me, Shroog!

Beef: You were looking for us?

Shroog: Yeah, my manager said that you guys were VIPs, and I was supposed to give you the grand tour!

Griffin: [laughs]

Shroog: But I've had a really busy day, kissing people!

Beef: What?

Montrose: Kissing people?

Shroog: That's the main thing people want to do here. They find Shroog and then they want to kiss me!

Griffin: [laughs]

Beef: To break a curse, or is it a sexual thing?

Shroog: It's not sexual, but I do like it!

Clint: [chuckles]

Shroog: I like kissing—

Beef: Is it— sorry, sorry, sorry, is it Shreksual? That's what I meant to say.

Shroog: Who's Shrek?

Beef: Your brother?

Shroog: I'm Shroog!

Beef: Okay.

Montrose: He's Shroog.

Beef: Obviously.

Shroog: Before we begin the tour, any of you want a smooch from Shroog?

Montrose: Sure.

Griffin: I'll kiss— I'll kiss Shroog. On the mask.

[peck sound]

Shroog: There you go!

Justin: And he reaches into his fanny pack, and he has this huge roll of stickers. And he pulls one out and it says, "I smooched with Shroog." And it's got a picture of his face on it, and he puts it on to your shirt.

Montrose: All right. I wasn't thinking that I would sort of publicly declare this act of—

Shroog: Word of mouth, that's how I get more kisses!

Beef: Ah, word of mouth! Huh?

Shroog: Get it?

Clint: [chuckles]

Shroog: That's a Shroog original!

Montrose: Where's... where is Donkled?

Shroog: Donkled? Oh, this is a sad tale...

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Shroog: Are you sure you want to hear the tale of Donkled?

Beef: Yeah!

Shroog: Even if you know it'll come from this voice? [chuckles]

Beef: Yeah!

Montrose: Yeah, I must know about Donkled's whereabouts.

Emerich: That makes it even more imperative.

Beef: And I will just say— frankly, I don't know about everybody else, but this voice is making me feel a lot of drama, a lot of emotion. So, I'm ready for it.

Montrose: Yes, I would love to hear it interrupted for several minutes.

Shroog: It was in— Well, it was embezzlement, wasn't it? He embezzled from the company, and they had to let him go. He made a real... ass of himself!

Clint: [chuckles]

Montrose: That would be hysterical, if... if they knew who Donkled... Yeah, you could probably figure it out—

Shroog: He's a donkey!

Montrose: What about Pussy Shoes?

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Shroog: They made a spinoff musical about him and he... and he does a stage show five times a day.

Montrose: Ah, I gotta get tickets for that.

Beef: Five times a day?

Shroog: Yeah, it's well worth— well worth watching.

Montrose: Say, Shroog, we are hoping to have a sort of... special, once in a lifetime experience here. And well, we were hoping that we could maybe go up in that beautiful tower, that beautiful spire at the center of that park?

Shroog: Yeah, of course! I'd love to give you the tour!

Montrose: Then that— I did not expect that answer, Shroog, if I'm being honest.

Shroog: Yeah, I've been instructed. My manager told me, "Give them whatever they want." Of course! Who wouldn't want to see the tower?

Montrose: Can we have a different tour guide? Do you think... No, Shroog, I can't do that to you. I think... I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Shroog: Okay, are you sure? 'Cause I can ask around, I guess, if you don't... if you don't...

Travis: Hey, Justin?

Shroog: If you wanna give me the kiss off, that's fine!

Travis: Justin, just...

Shroog: Back to my swamp.

Travis: By sight, is this a person in costume and makeup? Or is this—

Justin: Travis, you will be damned— you would be damned if you could tell. You've been staring at this guy—[chuckles]

Griffin: That good.

Justin: You've been staring at this guy for quite some time, and you— for the life of you, cannot fuck'n figure it out. And you're pretty adept at it, right? You've been through enough, seen enough of like Dentonic prosthetics and all that stuff, you have not fucking idea what the deal is with Shroog!

Travis: Okay. In more ways than one.

Clint: And he's not— and he's not Hard Light, either. He's not Hard Light, either.

Griffin: No, I kissed him.

Travis: You can kiss Hard Light?

Justin: You can kiss Hard Light. That's what it says on the T-shirt.

Clint: Trust me!

Griffin: I can— I can—

Clint: You can kiss Hard Light.

Griffin: I can tell the difference.

Shroog: Hard pass!

Justin: All right. So, you follow—

Shroog: Did you want to eat first?

Montrose: Yes.

Justin: Okay. So, you pass a very pleasant hour or so, waiting for you food and—

Travis: Somewhere in there, Beef takes the first bathroom break of this entire series.

Griffin: Yeah, it takes 16 whole minutes.

Justin: [chuckles] My favorite part in any game, especially video games— I love, in video games, when 15 to 20 hours in, the main character starts begging you to shit.

Travis: [chuckles] Yeah!

Justin: Just, “Please help me shit.”

Clint: [chuckles]

Travis: “Please, please... Just once...”

Justin: You enjoy your food, it is passable.

Travis: Ooh?

Justin: But not great.

Travis: But it’s passable.

Griffin: A burrata— a burrata of balance? Is that anything?

Justin: I think that’s something, I’m not positive... But he leads you into— he leads you out the door, after you settle up. And—

Travis: Oh wait, first, I visit the rail shitter.

Justin: [chuckles]

Clint: [laughs] Because he has a raging, flaming, poisonous poop.

Griffin: No...

Justin: I was really hoping that there would be more brand excitement for Grith the talking Dire Wolf, who was the—

Travis: Hey, Justin?

Justin: Yeah?

Travis: Trust me, you made it too obvious that you wanted us to comment on that.

Griffin: No, I turn—

Justin: Was it? Okay.

Griffin: Montrose turns around.

Montrose: Excuse me, Shroog.

Griffin: I go back into the restaurant. I put a quarter in the box under— [chuckles] underneath of the dire wolf, Girth.

Travis: The animatronic dire wolf?

Griffin: Uh-huh?

Girth: [howls] How are you doing? It's me, Girth!

Clint: [chuckles]

Girth: I'll be having my body!

Montrose: Can... Now, wait a minute. Can we— we can't talk? I put a quarter in you?

Justin: Wait, who can't talk?

Griffin: Can Girth understand— Can Girth have a conversation—

Justin: No, it's a robot, Griffin?

Griffin: That's what I thought! Okay!

Justin: [chuckles]

Girth: [howls] How you doing?

Montrose: Pretty good.

Girth: Ready for adventure?

Montrose: I keep trying to talk to this damn thing! It's so—

Travis: To be fair, that fits with Montrose's whole deal with animatronics.

Griffin: That's a very— that's a very good point.

Justin: You hear— you hear a compressor go out, like tsss, like the air go out. And then his jaw just hangs down limp. [chuckles]

Travis: Oh no!

Justin: Like he keeps talking, you can see it trying to flap, but it's just not happening.

Clint: Oh!

Montrose: Your Girth is broken! You gotta fix your Girth.

Taako: I haven't heard any complaints so far?

Montrose: No, it's broken, the machine is broken.

Taako: Oh, the dog? Yeah, it goes out every once in a while. It's fine, most people don't seem to notice.

Montrose: How much you want for it?

Taako: Oh? For Girth?

Montrose: Yeah, I'm a collector. I wouldn't mind purchasing a piece of beat-up art history.

Taako: One suite.

Montrose: All right, you got it.

Emerich: Can we have it shipped somewhere?

Taako: Yeah, if you fill out this form and give me a drop off point, I can have it delivered anywhere in Steeplechase.

Emerich: Are you familiar with Pop's?

Taako: Yeah, Poppy's Place?

Montrose: Fuck Poppy's Place! Fuck Poppy and fuck Poppy's Place!

Emerich: No, no, no, Poppy's Place is our place.

Montrose: So is The Future is You, in the Butter Cream.

Justin: Yeah, but this guy's not gonna deliver to the Butter Cream.

Travis: He doesn't know about the fuck'n Butter Cream.

Griffin: Yeah, that's fair, that's fair. All right, Poppy's place it is.

Travis: Does Shroog know about the Butter Cream?

Justin: No.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: Well, I don't know. You gotta talk to him.

Travis: Ooh?

Justin: I don't know, Justin doesn't know.

Montrose: Shroog, do you know about the Butter Cream?

Shroog: What is that?

Travis: Okay. Asked and answered.

Montrose: Oh, okay.

Griffin: Is he lying?

Clint: It's sort of like a parfait.

Travis: Wait, hold on.

Shroog: Parfait?!

Justin: Guys... I thought— I knew it wouldn't go good. But in my head, through saying things that I've heard Shrek say, I thought that I'd have a Shrek. But it turns out, I only have a Shrek if I'm saying the things that Shrek says. [chuckles]

Travis: Yeah, Justin, it's called a contextual Shrek. A lot of people have a contextual—

Justin: Conshrektual. [chuckles]

Travis: They have a conshrektual impression. A lot of contextual Borats out there.

Griffin: Sure.

Travis: Like... yeah.

Griffin: I think Shroog is salvageable, if you think about changing his name to Shrekula?

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: No, it's Shroog.

Griffin: Shrekula the vampire? Okay.

Justin: It's done. What's done is done. So, you follow Shroog out and you start heading towards—

Travis: I just wanna— before we get past it, Montrose did wanna know if Shroog was lying about not knowing about the Butter Cream.

Griffin: Yeah, is Shroog a scoundrel?

Justin: I mean, you would have no way—

Griffin: I asked him and he said no.

Justin: No, he doesn't—

Griffin: He said he didn't know where the Butter Cream is?

Justin: He doesn't know about a thing called the Butter Cream.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: God, you're being so fucking cagey about Shroog, I love it.

Justin: Well, you have a superpower to tell when people are lying. So, tough nuggies. [chuckles]

Griffin: [chuckles]

Justin: Gotta find a technicality or two here or there. All right, so you start heading towards Gallspire Castle. It is... It continues to be impressive, no matter how close up you are. But you can see the stonework starts to become... the cracks in it start to become a little more evident. And I mean the breaks from it being a real construction, you can start to see a little bit

of where the... you know, the construction is made. Because it is supposed to be a complete recreation. So, it's supposed to look just like it did before.

So, it's clean, but it's obviously not perfect, because that would be a giveaway. You walk through. In the castle, you are... when you sort of get to the main entrance, there's a large passageway that goes through the main part of the castle. There are doors to either side that are locked to the public. It is surrounded by a sort of moat. And why don't you tell me, give me an idea of some area where you'd like Shroog to guide you to. And we... and we'll take it from there.

Travis: Within the Gallspire?

Justin: Yeah, in the Gallspire area, yeah.

Beef: Shroog, I'm curious, like... are there any like events that happen on a scheduled basis? Or you know, you mentioned the Pussy Shoes show? Are there other things that go on, you know, that people tend to like gather for, that we could go check out?

Montrose: We must— I must say, be careful, because we have said that cat's name twice now. If we do say it a third time, he will appear. And it will be—

Beef: Who, Pussy Shoes?

Justin: [chuckles] He's too busy, he can't come.

Travis: Oh, no. You hate that!

Justin: I'm pretty sure that the voice I would do for Puss— for Antonio Banderas' Pussy Shoes, would get locked—

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: Would not be great, yeah.

Justin: Locked in jail for good. Locked in jail for good.

Travis: "Did you hear, the McElroy Brothers finally got cancelled?"
"Oh, what for?"
"Pussy shoes." [laughs]

Justin: Pussy shoes. [chuckles]

Griffin: Not worth it! Not worth it!

Clint: [sings] What's new, Pussy Shoes? Oh-oh-oh!

Justin: Nope, hard pass.

Travis: [laughs] I like Dad's thing.

Shroog: Well, there's the festival?

Travis: Wait, was that Pussy Shoes? 'Cause it's starting to sound—
[chuckles]

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: No, no, pussy Shoes isn't in it. [chuckles] Okay?

Travis: The festival?

Griffin: [chuckles] He's not in this one.

Shroog: There's a festival every night. We have the annual Feast of The Seven. Powered by Westminster Oyster Crackers.

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Beef: But those are the finest oyster crackers in the land?

Shroog: They started a sponsorship, and it was very early on in the days of... of Dentonic. And they signed a very long deal, forever! In fact, the company doesn't exist anymore, but they still— they still got their name on the annual Feast of The Seven. Which takes place every night.

Beef: Any feats of strength?

Shroog: There's... Well, it's pretty exciting. Have you not seen? It's pretty exciting! There's fireworks once a night, and they are— Oh, look, right there!

Justin: And then he points up to a sort of wire that's connected from... near the peak of Gallspire, over to a non-descript sort of meadow, which is at a higher elevation even than the tower itself. It's really high off the ground, almost the same height. You can see what's basically a zipline, that goes from one to... into the tower.

Shroog: That right there, that's where... that's where Infinite Jesse the Specter Fairy makes her grand entrance every night. She begins the festival. There's fireworks and it's... it's really incredible!

Montrose: She takes a zipline? Oh, it's like a flying sort of make believe...

Shroog: I shouldn't have told you the way they do the trick, but it is fairly obvious.

Emerich: So, is there some kind of like anchoring spot? Where that wire that we're not supposed to know about attaches to the top of the tower?

Shroog: Do you see the shack?

Justin: And he points at like a small construction.

Emerich: Mm-hm?

Justin: A wood construction near the peak.

Shroog: That goes down into a dressing room below, where Infinite Jesse gets ready for the show.

Emerich: Oh, I wanna see that!

Shroog: That's off limits. That is off— I'm sure I'd love to see it too! But it's off limits.

Montrose: Actually, they said it was okay.

Shroog: They?

Montrose: Yes. The Ephemera higher-ups who assigned you to be our escort. I was texting with them earlier, they said it was okay.

Justin: All right, Griff, you know that you're gonna have to roll that beautiful dice, see if this lands. Give me a second to hop in to— I actually was not yet in Roll20, so let me bounce on over there.

Griffin: Yeah. What do you think risky, desperate?

Justin: Okay... This is... risky, because you're probably not gonna get another—

Griffin: Another chance at it, yeah.

Justin: ... Chance at it. But the effect I would say is limited.

Griffin: Okay?

Justin: Because he definitely should not do this.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: 6, 2, 1. That's a 6, baby.

Justin: All right, that... that does it. I mean, what do you want? That does it, you did it.

Montrose: You can wait outside if it would make you feel uncomfortable, Shroog?

Shroog: [sighs] All right. Come on.

Justin: And you start the long, long hike up the hill. Halfway up—

Griffin: Do you have a map, by the way, Juice, that—

Justin: You start to realize that— What?

Griffin: Do you have a map you're working off of?

Justin: no.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Halfway up, you realize you're sort of off the path that is meant for the public, it starts to get a little rougher. There is probably another way to get in, but Shroog does not— does not know it. But as you start to slide up the hill... Hold on, let me do a fortune roll here.

[sound of dice thrown]

Justin: Emerich, you lose your footing, and trip and start to slide down the hill. Headed towards a rather precipitous drop off.

Griffin: I'll grab him.

Justin: You'll just grab him?

Griffin: You know—

Clint: Which hill is this?

Justin: The... *the* hill? I mean, just the hill that you're climbing to get up to the shack, where the tie—

Clint: Oh, the shack is—

Travis: Opposite, opposite.

Justin: The shack is elevated because it's a zipline. So, you're crawling—

Clint: Gotcha, the shack is on the hill, okay.

Travis: Opposite, yeah.

Justin: The shack's on the hill, the shack is covering a dressing room for Infinite Jesse, yes.

Clint: Okay, gotcha.

Griffin: Yeah, I'm just gonna sort of reflexively reach down and grab his wrist.

Justin: Okay, give me a... give me a finesse, I guess?

Griffin: Okay. Posish?

Justin: Posish is desperate. And effect is standard.

Griffin: [chuckles] I'm gonna use my new ability. Which lets—[laughs] It adds one D to your roll, if you also take minus one D to any resistance rolls against consequences from your actions. So, that's fine.

Travis: Yeah, what could go wrong?

Justin: We usually forget to resist anyway.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: 5, 5, 1, 5!

Justin: 5, 5, 1, 5, okay. You... you reach down as he's sliding down, and he grabs you by the hand. You manage to save Emerich from, I mean, a

terrible fate. But in the process of doing it, you accidentally run into a tree that pokes your arm and gives you a nasty scratch. Which is a level one harm.

Clint: Whose arm?

Justin: Griffin's, Montrose.

Griffin: Me...

Clint: Okay.

Justin: But you trudge, it takes another hour. So, it's a long hike. And Shroog is like, not doing well.

Shroog: All right... if you can go up and look, here's... [panting] I'll swipe you in.

Justin: And he swipes on the keypad, on the door.

Shroog: I'm gonna stay out here and not talk.

Montrose: That's for the best, I believe.

Beef: You know what? Do you want me to stay out here, Shroog? And we can talk to each other and share stories?

Shroog: I'd rather not.

Montrose: That's an even better idea!

Shroog: [chuckles] I'd rather not talk for a bit.

Clint: [chuckles]

Beef: You can tell me everything. No? Okay, I'll go in. You stay out here. Drink some water.

Justin: He's waving you off, he's like not talking. [chuckles]

Travis: Okay, we go inside the shack.

Griffin: When you... Can I ask real quick, when he swiped us in, can you tell me the details of that?

Justin: It was an RFID system, where he held his... It's clearly a keycard. It takes the form of a medallion for him, just to keep people in-world. You heard a definite like mechanical beep when he held it up to a certain... strangely square stone embedded into this natural looking shack, otherwise, that popped a latch and opened the door.

Griffin: Have we seen other of these medallions or of these sort of locking stones?

Justin: You definitely— Taako had one, and Shroog had one.

Griffin: Okay. But we've seen other doors with this— I'm trying to tell if this is like a key for this shack or a universal sort of key code.

Justin: I don't think it's a— this is the system that would be used throughout, but not every... but you would only have access to the things that you—

Griffin: That Shroog would have access to.

Justin: Yeah.

Clint: So, different levels of—

Griffin: Not that I'm thinking of stealing—

Justin: Exactly, right. Taako's medallion probably wouldn't have worked on this.

Griffin: Gotcha, gotcha, okay.

Clint: I don't think I have to take a roll for this, but I... using Ghost Mind, I think Emerich would make some kind of quick scan to see if there was any Hard Light technology he could locate in the shack.

Justin: When you get into the shack, it's very mundane. There is one wall, it's covered in glass mirrors. There is a Formica countertop in front of it that is thoroughly stained with what appears to be makeup. There are several orange wigs on heads, you know, mannequin heads. There's a word for it, but the word escapes me. But there's wigs hanging up there. And then hanging up, you see obviously the world-famous Infinite Jesse, the hyper fairy costumes that are just sort of hanging from the various hooks. And then you see these like three black harness— No... One black harness— [chuckles]

Griffin: [chuckles]

Justin: ... That is hanging up. And you do not sense Hard Light, but you sense a prism within that harness. Which I don't know if you wouldn't necessarily grock, but I'm gonna just chalk this up to not superpowers, just like your knowledge of Hard Light.

Clint: Well, then I do wanna make a roll. I would like to do a study roll.

Justin: Okay, okay. What are you hoping to— what are you hoping to learn from that?

Clint: The function of the prism.

Justin: But you realize that it's a harness? How are you gonna study it? Let's start with that.

Clint: Well, there's a prism within the harness, correct?

Justin: Yes.

Clint: Is it visible?

Justin: No, it's not. I mean, there's— it's like a black box in the center of the harness. You're assuming the prism is within.

Clint: Okay. So, I would have to open the box to be able to study the prism?

Justin: Yeah, but like it's... it is no more tricky to figure out than like a battery door. It just pops off and you can see the prism inside.

Clint: Okay. Then I think I just— I think he would study the prism to see if he can determine what its function is, what it is meant to project.

Justin: Okay. So, in the process of doing it, you decide to just put it on, and slap the big button on the back. When you do, rainbow-colored wings emerge from your back. They're large, as tall as you are. And they are rather than being sort of like natural and flowing, they look crystalline, like they're made out of... it's all angles, with these crystalline rainbow-colored wings.

Travis: J-man, I wanna take a look and see if I can make out like where the zipline connects on the other side, to the Gallspire. Like, what that whole situation looks like.

Justin: Yeah, there's definitely a... It is I think purposefully not entirely evident, but there is definitely a window going into Gallspire, towards the top of the tower itself, where the other end of this wire connects to it. But you can see that just, you know, by looking.

Griffin: The fireworks apparatuses, are those here? Are those visible from here? You mentioned fireworks.

Justin: Are they visible from here?

Griffin: I don't know if this Shack was also sort of the... where the pyrotechnics sort of are situated.

Travis: Would it be a controlled kind of thing?

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: You don't see anything that looks like that in the area of the shack.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: It doesn't seem to be coming from this immediate vicinity.

Travis: Are there any windows?

Justin: Of the shack?

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: No.

Travis: Okay. Is there any kind of like thing on the inside of the door that we might be able to tamper with, to disable the locking mechanism?

Justin: An interesting idea, I mean, I don't... I mean, without like a thorough knowledge of how this system works, nothing like occurs to me. I mean, you could try to leave it propped open, I guess? But I mean, you would be running a risk that Shrek— Shroog would notice.

Travis: Got it.

Beef: Okay so, fellas, what are we hoping to accomplish here?

Montrose: I mean, we have a potential means of entrance and egress, we... Assuming we need access to the tower.

Beef: Or at the very least, a way to send something into the tower from here.

Montrose: Sure, sure.

Beef: You know, if wanted to just like blow up stuff...

Montrose: Yes, we do... From what I understand, we do not need to recover the tower. Simply destroying it, revealing the truth of it would— well, obviously, we would—

Emerich: Surely, there's some way we can do this without destroying the prisms powering the building?

Beef: Emerich, here's the thing though, from our experience over these last couple of jobs, having backup plans I think would benefit us immensely. Right? Because I think the thing that we're dealing with here is we need to pick a time when all eyes are on the tower, right? But when they won't notice what we're doing.

Montrose: Yes. We also need to get our hands on one of those medallions. I believe something with a little bit more... access than Shroog would be able to get us access to. Sorry, I said access so many times, I'm... I'm pretty freaked out right now.

Beef: I think we need to get to the... what was it, Gerrick, was that it? Eric dude? You know, they guy...

Montrose: It was either Gerrick, Derek or Eric, for sure.

Beef: Ooh, Gerrick... Gerrick Elder Scroll, something like that?

Emerich: Elder Garrick, the Day-shaper.

Beef: Yeah, that guy!

Montrose: He's new, I'm... anyway... Yeah, let's keep moving. It feels like this is gonna give us options.

Griffin: I'm assuming there's not one of these medallions just lying around?

Justin: Wow! I'm so glad you asked, there's three of them. And there's—

Travis: [gasps]

Justin: [chuckles] No. There's not.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Only two?

Montrose: Let's not worry about sabotaging the door or anything. I think the key here is going to be... well, a key.

Travis: Oh, one last question, Justin. On the outside, is there any kind of security camera or anything we can see?

Justin: Hm... I gotta think if there would be. Eh, yeah, probably. I mean, there's probably— yes, probably. Yeah, there would have to be.

Travis: I shouldn't have asked.

Justin: Yeah, you shouldn't have asked. [chuckles] But there is.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: That's rule one for Steeplechase. [chuckles] Rule one of Ethersea is everybody has a knife. Rule one of Steeplechase is they probably got a camera.

Griffin: Yeah.

Beef: Hey, Shroog... hey—

Emerich: Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait! Do you think it would be a good idea to abscond with one of these many wigs? One of these large wigs?

Beef: Well, I... My worry is I don't wanna raise any suspicion right now, right? Like, better to come and go without making any changes, right? Because then of someone's like, "There's a wig missing." And Shroog's like, "Yeah, I took the guys there."

Emerich: [gasps] I just had a realization. Oh my— oh dear heavenly lord.

Beef: Man, I hope it's related to this.

Emerich: These are people in costume!

Montrose: Okay. How about—

Emerich: These are not— these are not actual fairies! Oh my God...

Montrose: I cannot tell what the meaning of this bit is.

Emerich: This changes my perception...

Beef: Let's go.

Montrose: One moment.

Griffin: I take off the wig I'm wearing and replace one of the wigs that are hanging on the wall.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: And I put that wig on— well, no. No, I'll just tuck that one away.

[music plays]

[ad break]

[music plays]

Beef: Hey, Shroog! It's us again, we're back out here. Where do the knights hang?

Shroog: What happened to your hair?

Montrose: I... lost it. It was a piece, and one of those damn Roombas sucked it right off of my head.

Beef: So anyways, where do the knights hang out?

Shroog: The knights?

Beef: Yeah! This is like a fantasy land kingdom kind of thing, right? So, where are the knights?

Shroog: Oh... They may be hanging out at the weapons shop?

Beef: Oh! I mean, that sounds...

Shroog: Any other questions about the Gallspire? Or any— the festival or anything, before we head out?

Montrose: So, festival, we got fireworks happening. Any other sort of loud and distracting events set up?

Shroog: There's an incredible stage show.

Montrose: Oh? Tell me more.

Shroog: A bunch of different characters from all throughout Ephemera get up on stage and they do some songs about believing and magic. It's incredible!

Montrose: Mm-hm...

Emerich: Does that include you? Are you a member of the show?

Shroog: Shroog is in the show, yes!

Beef: Shroog, I did wanna know too, are there times when the public does not have access to the Gallspire? You know, do they close it during the fireworks, anything like that? Or can we go visit any time?

Shroog: You can walk through, but the main castle is closed to the public.

Beef: Oh. How do we get to the main castle?

Shroog: Well... are you duly elected royalty?

Beef: How do we get to be that?

Griffin: [chuckles]

Shroog: Are you asking me how you can be born into the royal line?
[chuckles]

Beef: You said elected! You introduced the idea of elections?

Shroog: Ah, all right. I'll... Let me explain the—[chuckles]

Justin: Are you sure? Man, you shouldn't have asked about it. Damn it!
Hold on...

Shroog: The current nobility in Ephemera is extremely complicated.

Beef: Okay?

Justin: And I'll tell you what Shroog explains to you.

Griffin: No.

Travis: Ah, man!

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Justin!

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: Hey, Juice? Hey, Justin? I won't listen. I won't listen.

Travis: Yeah, I'll ask again and again.

Shroog: The top of the nobility is the regent! [laughs]

Griffin: [chuckles]

Shroog: Altaïr Goodhope, of the Starfield Goodhopes who inherited the position from Tanveer Goodhope, of the Starfield Goodhopes. He's the highest power in the land, but he doesn't really rule. Now the grand duke, Silvio DuBrook, has taken over the guardsmen for Ephemera in what he considers to be a successful coup. But the guardsmen only humor him by calling him sir, and they don't actually follow his orders. So, he is not the true power. There's of course Viscount Milo Rumbleshadow and his twin sister Mila Rumbleshadow.

Beef: Yes, of course.

Shroog: They've been skimming from the kingdom's coffers, everybody knows about this. But the real power, the closest we have to an authority figure is Elder Garrick the Day-Shaper.

Beef: The day walker! [chuckles]

Shroog: No, day shaper! He wields incredible power. We're not sure what it is, but we've been assured it's terrible!

Montrose: Are those the first five members of the Council of Seven? Or...

Shroog: No, they're not the Seven.

Montrose: Oh, my mistake.

Beef: Are we the Seven?

Shroog: The Seven...

Emerich: Are deities, are they not?

Shroog: Sure! Of a sort... Nobody's very clear. We've been saying things about the Seven and to the Seven... We actually are not exactly clear,

people have been saying stuff about The Seven for much longer than any of us have been alive. We just kept on doing it!

Beef: Shroog—

Shroog: The Seven!

Beef: Okay, for the Seven. If I—

Shroog: Indeed! For the Seven!

Beef: If I draw—

Shroog: Sounding like a true Ephemeran!

Beef: If I draw the sword, do I become royalty?

Montrose: That's not—

Shroog: No, but you do get a free dinner at Bumbershoots!

Montrose: And a sword.

Beef: Okay.

Shroog: And a sword.

Montrose: If we wanted to gain... access to parley with one the members of nobility, just off the top of my head, the Viscounts Rumbleshadow... Would we need to make an appointment or complete a certain number of quests? Or have some sort of achievement point or—

Beef: Or is there like a meet and great we can wait in line for?

Montrose: That's the other—

Shroog: I'm trying to think, they usually come out in waves, people during the festival of the Seven, the Feast of the Seven, excuse me. They usually

come out in a wave of people— Ah... I can't remember if we've got any questlines that connect to them anymore.

Travis: Hey Justin, here's a question I have that we would know—

Justin: There's a lot of questions coming to me today, guys! And I'm hanging on by a fuck'n thread!

Travis: Hey J-man, I was ready to go hang out with the fuck'n knights and you were like, "Ask some questions."

Justin: I don't have knights! Okay?! I don't have knights!

Griffin: He doesn't have knights, guess again!

Justin: Guess again!

Travis: People like spend the night in Steeplechase, right? Like, there's on-site accommodation?

Justin: Oh, sure, yeah. There's inns and stuff.

Travis: So, we don't have to complete this job today?

Justin: No.

Beef: So, Shroog, is there like— what's the accommodation like, where do we sleep? Where's you know, an inn or something?

Shroog: Ooh, let me check... Hey, where are these guys staying?

Justin: And he puts a finger to his ear.

Shroog: Where are these guys staying?

Travis: To which ear? The trumpet ear?

Justin: To his... to his— where is— yeah— to— yeah. [chuckles]

Travis: Uh-huh? Cracks!

Justin: Yeah, that's— yeah, to one of those. [chuckles]

Travis: The cracks in the illusion.

Justin: [chuckles] No, he just raises it to the side of his head.

Shroog: Where are these guys— Okay. No, I just guess I'll— I'll give 'em... Yeah, okay. Cabin 37!

Justin: And he points to a like... it looks like a... If you've ever flown over like a new housing development and seen like all the... all the McMansions, just like in a huge— it's like so dispiriting. It's just house after house, it looks exactly like all the other houses. It's kind of like that, it's like... just a bunch of like fantasy inns. But there's maybe 100 of them, just lying out in rows, in this big... a big area to the side of the main town square area.

Clint: Very Stepfordy.

Justin: Yeah.

Shroog: If you head over there and check in, they can give you your medallions that'll let you get in and out of your room.

Beef: Perfect! I think that would be ideal, don't you guys?

Montrose: Yes, for sure. If we had to get in touch with you, Shroog, what would be the best way to do that?

Shroog: Anywhere... that the righteous are being oppressed.

Montrose: A phone number or...

Shroog: Eight!

Beef: Eight?

Shroog: Teen!

Beef: 18, okay, got it.

Justin: [chuckles]

Shroog: Ask at the counter and they'll get me.

Beef: Okay.

Montrose: All right.

Emerich: Are you— do you get uncomfortable in that costume?

Shroog: What's a costume?

Beef: We should let Shroog go, to rest his voice. [chuckles]

Montrose: Shroog, are you gonna need help getting down from here?
'Cause we—[chuckles] we are quite high up.

Shroog: I'm gonna take another breather. [chuckles] And then I'm gonna slide down.

Montrose: Is there no easier— certainly, the—

Shroog: I just said sliding?

Montrose: Yes, but the fairy doesn't climb up— clamber up a treacherous hill to get up here?

Shroog: I think she comes up from below, but I'm not sure how that works.

Montrose: I see... Well, if you figure it out, let us know!

Shroog: Okay!

Travis: Hey J-man, as we make our way down, I wanna do a... I think we should all three do some surveying, now that he said that, to see if there is any kind of like access panel or—

Griffin: We are pretty high up—

Travis: What?

Griffin: Oh, yeah. I'm thinking of looking at the tower itself, to see if I— I mean, survey the location.

Clint: I do think we need to go in. I think we need to go in to Gallspire, don't you?

Travis: Okay, but we have to do one thing at a time, right?

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Okay.

Griffin: Why don't you do your thing first, Trav?

Travis: Because I'm thinking about like the access tunnels and stuff that we know about, in relation to Ustaben and the Butter Cream, and all that stuff, that if we can find an entrance to those tunnels here...

Griffin: Good idea.

Clint: Well, Emerich has two in study?

Travis: Yeah, but I think it would be survey, right?

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Well, he has one in survey.

Travis: So, this is controlled, I would have to think.

Justin: What are you— what are you specifically trying to achieve?

Travis: I'm looking to see anything that looks a little more like... like it would cover an entrance to something, you know? And a little less like it blends into the scenery—

Justin: Outside of the shack?

Travis: Anywhere like on the hill, at the bottom of the hill. Anywhere where it's just like, "Oh, this is where like the door to the elevator is." Or something.

Justin: Okay.

Travis: Anything that looks like an access tunnel or channel.

Clint: Like a secret tunnel.

Justin: Okay. I'm going to make this... this is controlled.

Travis: Uh-huh?

Justin: And because it makes sense that you would wanna poke around here. I'm going to say that it is limited effect, because it is going to be hard to find that.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: It won't be immediately evident. And if you mess this up enough, Shroog will start to get suspicious.

Travis: Okay, I'd like to push myself, 'cause I have zero in survey.

[sound of die thrown]

Griffin: Oh my God.

Justin: Holy shit.

Clint: 6!

Justin: Amazing, Trav. Amazing. As you're walking through just the immediate forest area that's sort of adjacent to the clearing of the shack, there is a tree with a large knot in it that looks to be... that you notice is like a little too perfect. And when you press your hand to it, you can see a sort of person-sized panel on this tree, the line around it. That sort of like shakes a little bit when you press on it, but does not— does not open.

Travis: Mm-hm, okay. So, this might be another place where we need a medallion to access it. Got it. Okay, cool.

Montrose: Oh, Shroog, would you mind... We found an easier way down for you.

Shroog: Oh yeah? What is it?

Montrose: I believe it's this here tree?

Shroog: Ooh... a secret path?

Montrose: Yes, more importantly, one where I'm not going to eat shit going down it as I did going up.

Shroog: Let me try and see if my badge works!

Beef: Ah, magic—

Shroog: Nope! [chuckles]

Beef: Oh, okay.

Shroog: Tough shit for me!

Justin: And then he starts running down the hill. [chuckles]

Montrose: Don't run! Ah, Shroog!

Travis: Wait, hold on! Justin, please make a fortune roll! Make a fortune roll, please? For Shroog?

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: It's a 6.

Justin: Shroog has a 6, he does it perfectly, everyone's amazed.

Travis: Ah, he Naruto runs right down the hill!

Justin: [laughs]

Shroog: I'm coming!

Travis: What?

Justin: His wife, he's going to see his wife.

Griffin: Oh, wow.

Clint: Could Emerich study the locking mechanism for the door?

Justin: Yeah. Yeah, Shroog left you guys unattended here. What are you trying to discern?

Clint: If it is... hackable? If there's any way around it?

Justin: Okay. Well, why don't you make a study roll for me? We're gonna call this... risky, standard, because we have established the presence of cameras. So, if you make too much of a meal out of this, you're gonna draw attention.

Clint: Okay. I'm gonna push it, too. I have stress to spare. Anybody wanna help?

Griffin: I do not have stress to spare.

Travis: I just pushed myself, sorry.

Clint: Okay, all right. Here we go!

Griffin: Wait, who got—

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: Oh, hey, hey!

Clint: 6, 2, 5! 6, 2, 5!

Justin: Okay, dad, you study the panel, and you take— I mean, probably, it takes you a good 15 minutes. You look at it with your equipment, you scan some of the different technology that it uses. You look at the patterns that it is generating and see the waves of electricity that are being pulsed out in different, specific patterns. And after 15 minutes of study, you realize there's no fucking way that you can hack this thing, it is iron clad.

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: But you know that perfectly and concretely now.

Griffin: You... that's great.

Clint: That's how I get rewarded with a 6, okay!

Justin: Yeah, that's a 6— No, dad, you know it. You achieved exactly what you set out to do, which is to figure out if it could be hacked. And the answer is absolutely not! [chuckles]

Griffin: Fucking no way.

Justin: [chuckles] No way.

Clint: Awesome!

Justin: Yeah, it's good. [chuckles]

Travis: Dad, you nailed it. Good job, bud!

Justin: Okay. So, what are you guys gonna do now?

Griffin: While we're still up here, I wanna do one survey also, just to see if I can find the fireworks launchers. In case we need to—

Justin: Oh? Okay, cool.

Griffin: Kind of... if that becomes part of the plan, I'd like to know—

Justin: Full— I mean, you just had Shrek here, could have— Shroog here, could have asked him, but... It's not Shrek, he has nothing to do with Shrek.

Travis: You know Justin, something was just giving us the impression that Shroog was maybe running out of words to say?

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: Yeah, I really should have asked Shroog. I got a 2.

Justin: [chuckles] A 2? I didn't even give you— I didn't tell you if it was risky or controlled or anything? You just went for it, hey?

Griffin: I mean, I assumed it was controlled to look out over a beautiful vista?

Travis: Were you desperately looking?

Justin: Controlled... you don't see anything. I can let you roll again, because that would not be that suspicious, right? If you wanna do it again, we could do it again and make it risky. That's how I view controlled. So, if you wanna do another survey, you can.

Griffin: Fuck it, I'll just ask somebody later.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: It's not necessary.

Justin: Sure.

Griffin: I don't wanna get spotted! I don't wanna get fuck'n caught.

Justin: No, I mean, that makes perfect sense.

Travis: Let's go to the hotel! Beef needs a shower!

Justin: Okay. You go through a gate that is not locked, and find yourself in a sort of quad in between all these... let's say there's 50, that makes more sense. It's a long row, some are stacked on top of each other. There's 50 discrete buildings, discrete ends. And each one has one of those like... it's like the arch door, you know what I mean? With the stone, made of planks.

Travis: Oh, sure, sure.

Justin: It looks very, very well-themed. But they're all pretty much precisely the same.

Clint: I would assume the interiors are all different themes, though?

Justin: You haven't been inside, so—

Clint: I know, I'm assuming? I'm looking forward to it, being in character.

Justin: I'm looking forward to finding out what's in there too, Dad.

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: So, you see, as you're walking through into the atrium, or the— sorry, the quad, the sort of main area in the middle. Between all of these, there's a cobblestone path winding between some of the different buildings. And you see a... sign that says, "Check in here."

Travis: Oh, okay?

Justin: Yeah. [chuckles]

Griffin: Seems this is the place to be, man.

Travis: We go there.

Justin: Okay, you go in and there's a person sitting behind the counter. He's about 5'7", he's wearing—

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: [chuckles] He's wearing a T-shirt and jeans.

Beef: Hail and well met!

Justin: Hey.

Beef: All right.

Justin: My name's Justin, welcome.

Beef: Woah?

Montrose: You're not 5'7", are you?

Justin: No, the character in the— what are you talking— no, this— the character in the game is 5'7".

Montrose: We're staying in cabin 37, may we please have our medallions as quickly as is possible?

Justin: Oh, yeah, sure.

Justin: He reaches into a drawer without even looking and pulls out three medallions.

Justin: Here you go, you're in cabin 37.

Montrose: All right. Do you need a credit card on file for incidentals?

Justin: No, it says here that it's covered.

Montrose: That's... It's covered?

Beef: Oh, really?!

Justin: Yeah.

Emerich: Really?

Justin: Yeah, it's covered. All incidentals are covered.

Emerich: Is there a spa?

Justin: What? No.

Emerich: Do you have a spa?

Justin: No.

Beef: Is there a mini bar?

Justin: No.

Beef: Can we charge things to the room?

Justin: No. There's probably just a bed in there. [chuckles]

Montrose: Just one?

Justin: Three.

Emerich: Oh, thank God.

Justin: Yeah.

Beef: Okay.

Montrose: I thought we were about to have ourselves a little Kevin McCallister, a little... a little party in there.

Justin: There— yeah, there's three.

Beef: Could we... could we request some extra pillows?

Justin: Yeah, sure, you can request that.

Beef: Will we get `em?

Justin: Nope.

Beef: Ah...

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: It's... it's pretty sparse accommodations. They want you to go out and... you know, adventure and earn your pillows, I guess? I'm not exactly sure how any of it works. I just sit—

Beef: Oh, that's it, okay. So, the rewards for quests—

Emerich: It's only a place where you sleep.

Justin: Yeah, I just sit here. It's very boring and doesn't seem to be important. I just kind of sit here and wait for people to come, like yourself. And then hand them the medallion for their room, and then... just kind of cease to...

Montrose: Oh, well, sir—

Beef: Can I have—

Montrose: You must have more of a higher aspiration—

Justin: I mean, I have other stuff I'd like to do. But I—

Montrose: Oh, like what?

Beef: Like what?

Justin: Well, I like to do podcasting, actually.

Beef: Really, podcasting?

Justin: Yeah, I'd like to get into podcasting. But I'm not great with voices, and I'm worried that it'll be—[chuckles]

Beef: Oh, okay?

Justin: Did you guys wanna leave?

Montrose: Everyone has some impressions? Let me hear— for instance, let me hear your Shrek, Justin?

Justin: Donkey!

Montrose: That's very good.

Beef: Good.

Emerich: That's good!

Montrose: Say some more—

Justin: I'm an onion, Donkey!

Montrose: Okay, can you say something that maybe Shrek didn't say in one of his classics?

Beef: Like, "Have fun in your rooms, call me if you need anything."

Montrose: Yes.

Justin: [in silly voice] Call me if you need anything.

Beef: I mean, I'd give it a six?

Montrose: It's not— I'll tell you something, Justin...

Justin: Yeah?

Montrose: It's better than Shroog did.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: That's... that's wild. Thank you, that's so... that's super nice. Did you guys wanna go ahead and go?

Beef: Do you have a map of the area you could give us? Or help us...

Montrose: That would actually be very handy. One for each of us, please.

Justin: Yeah, here you go!

Justin: And he hands you the map with all the different places in it.

Griffin: Fuck yes.

Travis: Nice.

Montrose: Give me a keycard, Justin.

Beef: Okay, and do you do turndown for us? Or...

Montrose: Answer his question and then my threat.

Justin: [chuckles] No, it's pretty much just beads that you go and sleep in, and they're not really that interesting or important.

Beef: Okay.

Emerich: Warm cookies?

Justin: Nope.

Emerich: No warm cookies?

Justin: Nope.

Montrose: Hey, that said it was cool for you to give us your keycard.

Justin: [chuckles] Who's they?

Montrose: The, you know, higher ups here at Ephemera.

Beef: Shroog.

Justin: I don't actually think that is... that doesn't seem true to me...

Montrose: We are in the with the Viscounts. Please, do not—

Justin: The thing— the only things that I've ever done in my life are get medallions out of this drawer and hand 'em to people, that's it.

Montrose: Well then, you should be pretty well equipped to hand over the medallion that you have on your neck right now.

Justin: I don't have a medallion. They don't let me go into any of the rooms. This door in front of me, the one that you just walked in, it's always unlocked. I'm a fucking sitting duck here. But—

Beef: Hey, it sounds like you hate your job? Have you ever been—

Justin: I don't hate my job, I don't love my job. I nothing my job. I don't have anything interesting to say or do about my job.

Beef: You are fascinating! We're gonna come back and talk to you. I can't get enough of this.

Emerich: I don't know what you're gonna talk about in your podcast. What will you talk about in your podcast?

Justin: People that stay too long in here when there's nothing for them to do or see!

Beef: Oh yeah, I hate that, man! I hate when people do that.

Montrose: I just, I—

Beef: I'd listen. I'd listen to your podcast.

Montrose: I'm updating my speed dial on my phone, and my emergency contact at the hospital, to Justin and Shroog.

Justin: I can't leave! I can't leave this room, I've never left.

Montrose: The door's unlocked.

Justin: [chuckles] I've never left this room.

Montrose: The door is unlocked, though.

Justin: I was born in this room, I'm terrified to leave.

Beef: Oh, come with us!

Justin: No.

Montrose: Come with us? We're having a—

Justin: [laughs] I'll never leave! I'll never leave this room.

Travis: Justin, I pick up Justin and I carry him out the door with us.

Justin: [chuckles] The second you touch Justin—

Montrose: [chants] Justin, Justin, Justin!

Justin: [laughs] The second you touch Justin, you're electrocuted, for level one harm.

Clint: [chuckles]

Travis: Okay, Justin, I use my Circuit Breakers, which are the names of my new brass knuckles.

Griffin: Oh, that's good!

Travis: And I punch Justin.

Justin: Okay?

Griffin: Yeah, let's kick his ass!

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: You punch Justin—

Travis: Hold on, let me roll skirmish!

Justin: Yeah, roll skirmish.

Griffin: I don't wanna—

Travis: This is risky or desperate? Where are we at here?

Griffin: I got swept up in it, Juice, I apologize.

Travis: I'm gonna say it's great effect, 'cause I have my—

Justin: Yeah, yeah, yeah, he's just a regular person.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: A mixed success with a 4.

Griffin: Oh, kick his ass, Justin!

Justin: A mixed success. Okay, you take a swing at Justin. And you're... he—[chuckles] Your fist lands squarely against his jaw and he is knocked out. It is a beautiful punch. But it isn't until this exact moment that you see the camera directly behind Justin that starts—

Griffin: [chuckles]

Justin: And you noticed it's turned directly at you. And you start to hear the phone on Justin's desk ringing.

Travis: I pick it up.

Montrose: Real quick, Weekend at Bernie's. We've practiced for this. We have practiced this!

Griffin: I put an arm under Justin's armpit.

Justin: Hi, this is Justin in security. Is everything okay over there? 'Cause it looked like Justin got punched out or something—

Beef: No, he wanted to learn about stage combat, and I was showing him how to do a punch. He's here, though. Say hi, Justin!

Clint: I'll wave his arm. I got a hold of his arm and I wave it from behind him.

Justin: Hm, okay, Beef, you're gonna need to roll for that. I'd think—

Griffin: What a— God, what a fuck'n...

Justin: I didn't— nothing of this is mine.

Griffin: He did nothing.

Justin: I just said, "Go to the weapons shop," and then everybody wanted to go to the hotel that didn't exist, so I had to make one up. And I didn't—

Clint: [chuckles]

Travis: Okay, who wants to help me with sway?

Clint: I am! I'm helping. I'm manipulating his jaw. So, I'll give you one.

Travis: Okay. Is it desperate?

Justin: Yes, 100%. It's extremely desperate.

Travis: And what's the effect?

Justin: Standard, I'll say it's standard, 'cause they don't—

Travis: Okay, and dad's helping. So, that's plus one. Oh boy...

Emerich: Ugh!

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: It's a 1 and a 1, Justin.

Justin: Wow!

Griffin: I cannot... This is unprecedented! Let it be known in the future, that if the DM or GM shows up in the game—

Justin: It's not me, it's a character named Justin that was just supposed to be very boring, to keep you all moving.

Travis: But he electrocuted me?! He shocked me and I reacted?

Justin: It was just nature's way of telling not to interact with him!
[chuckles]

Travis: Well, you did— you're nature?! Why didn't you tell me?

Justin: The— okay—

Travis: You should have made it clear that you didn't want us to talk to him anymore.

Justin: You know what? Don't worry, don't worry.

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: We're sending— we're sending several guards right now.

Beef: Okay, great, perfect.

Travis: And I hang up the phone and we go to cabin 37. [chuckles]

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: Okay. Hold on one second.

Beef: I can tell when I'm not wanted.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: Hold on, hold on. I need to write some of this down.

Travis: Oh no. Wait, there's consequences? Justin, we were just having a fun bit!

Justin: Okay, you walk into cabin 37. When you walk in, there's three very normal beds, and one pamphlet lying on the ground for the weapons shop.

Beef: Ooh, let's go to the weapons shop!

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: We drop off our bags.

Justin: Smart.

Travis: And we go to the weapons shop.

Justin: You throw open the door and there's higher ceilings than you expect. There's large glass windows that are illuminating the man who is standing behind the counter. Lining the walls, there's all manner of weaponry and armor. And it's clear that he's been tinkering with a few different pieces there on his counter. And when you walk in, you see a large muscle-bound bald man, wearing a leather vest. And he looks at you and says:

Dave: Hey! Welcome to Dave Balista's weapon shop! I'm Dave Balista! How can I help you?

Emerich: Dave, I... I have to tell you, this is excellent workmanship! This is amazing!

Dave: Thanks, partner! What's your handle?

Emerich: I'm Syzygy, Syzygy Craig. And up until now, I had never realized the beauty in true armament. I mean, you... this is art!

Dave: Thanks! I've been studying for a real long time. I really... It's just very flattering, guys, thank you! Thank you.

Emerich: How long did it take you to learn this?

Dave: Oh, I've been working as a tradesman since I was... oh, gosh, six, I suppose? My dad was— ran Dave Balista's before me. He was the original Dave Balista, I'm technically Dave Balista Junior.

Emerich: DB II, yes.

Darla: Mm-hm, sure, yeah, if you want. And yeah, so it's been, well, 35 years now.

Emerich: Ah, this is... this would tie in so nicely with something I'm working on. May I just look at your wares while the others—

Dave: Oh, please, yeah. Poke around, this is what the shop is... the shop is here for. If you got the galleons, I've got the guns. Not guns, but you know...

Emerich: Oh, this wonderful.

Dave: Crossbows and stuff... What about you two, how can I help you? Are you looking for regular armaments? Are you looking for heavy artillery kind of stuff? Or what are you in the market for?

Montrose: I'm in the mood for something... I'm in the mood for the classics, Dave.

Griffin: And I reach into the pockets of my nether...

Travis: What?

Griffin: Cloak.

Travis: Oh.

Griffin: My nether... my nether cowl. And I place a black coin on the counter, with a rune with a green hand on it. And just look him square in the eyes.

Dave: Oh? I'm sorry, I had no idea.

Justin: And he does a complicated hand gesture to you.

Griffin: I do it right back.

Dave: Okay, well let's dispense with the pleasantries. You don't want any of this garbage. What do you... what do you really need?

Montrose: The night calls out to us.

Dave: Oh?

Montrose: We have dark work to do and... we need the darkness to be able to do it.

Travis: Beef's eyebrows are crawling so far up his forehead. [chuckles] Like, "What?" He's just looking back and forth between Montrose and Dave.

Dave: Hm... hm... how...

Justin: He looks around.

Dave: How large of a target are we talking about here?

Montrose: About... three targets. Not large, about the size of a... of a phantom hog.

Dave: Oh, by the Seven...

Montrose: The Seven need not be concerned with the work we have to do.

Dave: Do you need... Soft or hard targets, what are we talking?

Montrose: A mix of both. Medium.

Beef: Yeah, like three hard and like I don't know, soft might get in the way? Is that...

Dave: Are you attacking like a person or like a building, what are you trying to do?

Montrose: Oh, a building, sorry.

Dave: Okay, thank you. No, it's fine. All right.

Montrose: Do you want me to say it in like a cool way?

Dave: No. For most people, yeah, I would insist on it. Because immersion is big for me. But I know where your heart is at. Or where it used to be.
[chuckles]

Justin: And you both knowingly nod at each other for a few seconds.
[laughs]

Dave: Okay... okay, okay, okay.

Justin: And you see him pacing. And he's rubbing his chin, flexing his large muscles in a glistening way.

Dave: Oh, okay... [mumbles in thought] I know— I know what you need. You need the kind of artillery that can bring down a god. And I can make something like that for you, something real, real nasty. But I need something from you first.

Montrose: I am honor bound to at least hear out your demands.

Dave: Bring me the heart scale of Jeltfrimpin the Dragon!

Beef: Yay!

Montrose: I think I might actually have one, hold on.

Beef: No, come on...

Justin: We're done, there's no more podcast today.

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: We're done, there's no more.

[Steeplechase theme song plays]

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