

The Adventure Zone: Ethersea – Episode 33

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

So, you all manage to recover the sprite that was being remote controlled by the Auctioneer. That is the working theory.

Devo: Maybe that you already know something about this Auctioneer.

Curator: I will tell you this, and you probably have known this, because anybody who has met Aloysius Supreme for more than like 45 seconds knows this, but he is uh... very flatterable.

Devo: We find ourselves needing to... procure some things that maybe might be hard to find, and we have heard mention that perhaps the... [mutters discretely] Abyssal Auction.

Aloysius Supreme: You all were the turquoise team, weren't you?

Griffin: He pulls out a fairly thick, black business card. It says "Crescendo."

Yeah, so what you have picked up is that a dude named Matt, who's a delivery driver for a company called Faracore, is in a ship that its engine's been dead for a long time.

Devo: Then let's help this guy out, I guess.

Amber: Two things. One, it seems not dangerous. Two... I think I have sea-seeing.

Griffin: Devo and Amber, from aboard the Coriolis, you see this green light appear and illuminate Zoox, before this windshield that he was looking through shatters and then he is pulled into this ship in the resulting implosion, and then is gone.

[intro music plays]

Griffin: Zoox, you are sucked into this big shipping freighter.

[vacuum sound effects play]

Griffin: Just the vacuum effect as the windshield bursts apart, it sucks you into the main cargo hold of this ship, and it is a disorienting sort of journey on your way there. And as you make it into this gigantic cargo bay, the bulkhead seals shut behind you, sort of keeping the largest area of this ship from flooding.

[metallic door sound effect plays]

Griffin: This room is a three-story tall, just cavernous chamber, that is lined with metal walkways on all three levels, and it is—it is derelict. Like no living thing has sort of tread these grounds in quite some time. There are cobwebs almost everywhere, most of the like freight that is onboard here is rotted out crates, for the most part.

The green whatever it was that you saw in the ship when you illuminated it with the *Faerie Fire*, you cannot see right now. It's very, very dark in here, naturally. Do you have any kind of like... good vision? Cool vision?

Travis: [snorts]

Devo: What's it called? Cool vision, I think it's called.

Justin: It's cool vision.

Travis: Cool vision, I think. Yeah.

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Cool vision.

Griffin: I don't think you do.

Travis: Dope eyes.

Clint: [mutters] No, he has nothing like that...

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Um...

Travis: Science isn't sure how he sees at all.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Well—

Travis: That's okay. He's got little seahorses in his eyes going "Uh, go left."

Griffin: "Go left here. But don't worry about it, Zoon. We've got cool vision."

Clint: I guess I could recast *Faer*—let me ask one question, so I can—

Griffin: Sure.

Clint: It was not aggressively grabbing Zoon, it was—it just broke the glass, broke the screen?

Griffin: Right.

Clint: Zoon got sucked in... But I thought he was being sucked into like some kinda control room or something. But it was not, it was a—

Griffin: I mean, you got sucked in like waterslide-style, through the bridge, like you know...

Clint: Okay.

Griffin: There was an on-rush of water that pulled you basically into the cargo back here.

Clint: Okay, I think, um... Zoon is gonna use swarm.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: To generate a bunch of the tiny little fish with the phosphorescence.

Travis: Anglerfish?

Clint: Bioluminescence?

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: With the little lanterns on their head, like the anglerfish?

Clint: The fish are—yeah, wouldn't that be cute.

Travis: I mean, no—

Griffin: Those things are horrifying. The scariest imaginable creatures.

Travis: They're fucking horrifying. Have you seen those things? They've got like weird teeth and stuff, but it's—no, yeah. Super cute. I guess we could've done tiny, you know, like tiny jellyfish, but we've done that.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: We've done a whole—

Griffin: Yeah, jellyfish are played out on *TAZ*.

Travis: We've done the whole jellyfish thing.

Griffin: Okay, so you are using these guys to...?

Clint: This is *Gathered Swarm*.

Griffin: Right.

Clint: Which I can do once a turn. And Zoox— he just emits a whole— as many of these little tiny phosphorescent fish that he can generate.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: I have no idea what the limitations of that would be.

[Justin snorts]

Griffin: Well I mean, are you casting *Light*? Is that—is that the spell that you are casting?

Clint: Well, he doesn't have that spell.

Griffin: Oh, okay. Well...

Travis: What's the description on Swarm?

Griffin: It's mostly it can assist you after an attack, to do like a little bit of damage or have like an extra effect, but it also provides you with some spells like *Mage Hand*, *Faerie Fire*, and *Web*.

Travis: Hmm.

Griffin: So...

Clint: Well, then I guess instead of that then, I'd just cast *Faerie Fire* again.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: But you said this was massive, right?

Griffin: Yeah, this is— So *Faerie Fire* covers a 20 foot cube. This is—this is uh... [chuckles] Much larger than that.

Travis: And it—

Griffin: This is a huge space.

Travis: —doesn't move with you?

Griffin: No? I don't think so.

Clint: And it only lasts a minute.

Griffin: Oh you know what, actually, "Every creature in the area when the spell is cast is also outlined in light, if it fails a dexterity saving throw." So if you cast it on yourself, "objects and affected creatures shed dim light in a 10-foot radius." So yeah.

Clint: Yeah, but it only lasts for 60 seconds.

Griffin: Oh, does it? Oh, okay.

Clint: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Well, okay then, I'll swap—

Clint: Ho ho! Me pullin' out the minutia!

Griffin: [wheezes] Yeah sure.

Travis: Take that, Griffin.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Dad—

Travis: Dad was paying attention.

Justin: Dad with a competent understanding of his own spells.

Griffin: Right.

Travis: On a game that we've ostensibly been playing for about seven years now.

Griffin: Sure. If you—

Travis: Take that! Now you look stupid.

Griffin: I think with this—you can do this move, right? Spend a spell slot on *Faerie Fire* and, you know, try to look around this chamber, but you will have 60 seconds of light essentially to do it, unless you wanna burn *Faerie Fire* again. So it's like not the worst play 'cause you cannot see anything in here otherwise.

Clint: Okay, I don't see anything else that he could do.

Griffin: Okay. Sure. Alright. You do this and uh... Your bod— What color is the light this time? I think you did green last time.

Clint: Let's do violet.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Nice.

Griffin: A nice violet light.

Clint: Let's do violet, Violet.

Griffin: What are you doing? Are you just like trying to get the lay of the land in here? Is there something specific that you are looking for?

Clint: Um... Well he has absolutely no sense of direction, right?

Griffin: Right.

Clint: I mean because— um...

[pleasant, twinkling music plays]

Clint: But he knows... Okay, he turns around 180 degrees.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: And tries to swim back to the way he came in.

Griffin: Okay. This room is not flooded. The bulkhead sealed behind you.

Clint: Oh, okay.

Griffin: Yeah. So, you can see the bulkhead door.

[ominous synthesizer music plays]

Griffin: It is firmly shut, and as you try to like turn the hatch wheel to...

[squeaky wheel sound effect plays]

Griffin: You know crack it back open, it does not—it does not give. You get the impression that this is sort of an automated s— You know, safety protocol. To, you know, pr— Safety for the cargo of the ship and not necessarily the [chuckles] crew of the ship. Because as it sensed sort of flooding happening, it sealed off this chamber. So the door that you were sucked in through does not open.

Clint: Okay, then turns back, with his back to the door.

Griffin: Okay. You are able to tell—so you are on the lowest level of this sort of three level tall room. Give me a... Give me an investigation or perception check. Probably perception.

Clint: How about perception?

Griffin: Yeah, we'll do perception, 'cause you're not like specifically sort of dialing into something.

[sound of dice rolling]

Clint: That would be a measly 10.

Griffin: With a 10, you see just a flash of faint green light of the spectral vision that you saw earlier. It is up a level and you saw it for just a second, and then it was gone. With that, you also can tell that there is a cargo bay door on the floor of this room in front of you, maybe 30 feet away. It is also sealed shut, from what you can see.

Clint: Like a hatch kinda deal?

Griffin: Yeah, yeah. Well, you know, more of a loading dock situation than like a door. It looks like it lowers down into like a ramp-style thing.

Devo and Amber, you just saw Zoox get sucked into this ship. I guess you guys are still in contact 'cause you all still have your shellphones. I'm assuming Devo, you got yours back from—

Travis: Yeah. Well, I mean really at this point, I'm just gonna say a few words. And then I think it's time to move on. We've got a mission to finish.

Griffin: Sure.

Justin: Yeah.

[Clint laughs loudly]

Amber: I—Listen, I'm gonna miss him, I know you are too, right?

Devo: No, yes. We have to keep our eyes on the prize, you know?

Amber: Alright, let's move out.

Devo: And we can swing back on our way.

Amber: Hey! Hey, Zoox! What the fuck happened, bud?

Zoox: I— Um... I sluiced into this big ship.

Devo: Gross.

Zoox: And just kinda— It was really kinda— It was actually a little fun. And now I'm in a great big uh cargo hold! And it's—and it's all locked up.

Amber: What's it look like in there? What do you see?

Zoox: [laughs nervously] Um... Well... I can't see anything 'cause it's real dark.

Amber: You just—

Zoox: And I've already burnt two spell slots trying to see.

Amber: So what—

Justin: Okay, I have a question.

Griffin: Sure.

Justin: This is a question. What light source did he have when he was diving through the ocean?

Griffin: Uh, I—

Justin: It's dark down there too.

Travis: Oooh...

Griffin: We've described sort of the ocean as having its own sort of um...

Travis: Magical glow.

Justin: Narratively convenient luminescence. [giggles]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Narratively convenient luminescence. No I mean, this is— It's, Justin, it's magic water.

Travis: It's magic as hell, my dude.

Griffin: So it's— it's enchanted water, so it has its own sort of ambient—

Justin: Alright.

Griffin: —sort of light going on. I mean also, the light from the Coriolis. You guys were probably giving some light to Zoox as he swam up to the ship. But there are no windows or, you know, portholes or anything in this cargo hold. It is a secure room.

Zoox: So come and get me, okay?

Devo: Well, hold on just one second, okay? Um, Amber? Zoox can like, breathe water and swim really well. Why don't we just blow a hole in the side of the ship and he swim out?

Amber: That's real good. I am worried a little bit about, um... sorta collateral damage.

Devo: I mean as—at this point, there’s something in there that pulled him in and—hey, Zoox?

Zoox: Mm!

Devo: Um... Is it like cool in there, or like, bad?

[pause]

Griffin: Make a dexteri—

Zoox: Well, nothin—

Griffin: [amused] Make a dexterity saving throw, Zoox.

Clint: That’s one of my good ones.

Travis: Well, we’ll see. Hypothetically.

[sound of dice rolling]

Clint: No, not one of my good ones. That’s an eight.

Justin: Oof.

Travis: Mmm... Mm-hmm.

Clint: I trip over the hatch! Whoa!

Griffin: No, actually a crate from the second level flies down at you and lands on top of you.

[crate smashing sound effect plays]

Griffin: Sort of shattering as it does, covering you in old, very, very smelly fish. You take 13 points of bludgeoning damage.

Travis: So—

Clint: From fish?!

Justin: Fuck! What was in that crate?! [wheezes] Jesus.

Travis: So on our end, we just hear like “Well, is it—” [imitates loud crashing noise and squishing sounds]

Amber: Ah, alright. Alright. Blow him out.

Devo: Yip! I would aim for like the end. Not near the front, where he might be, yeah? You aim. You’re better.

Justin: Let me pull up ship combat worksheet. Give me one second.

Clint: And Zoox will be safely cushioned by all the fish laying [chuckles] on top of him, so don’t worry about it.

Amber: Alright. Hang in there.

Zoox: [muffled] Okay! Oh my god, are these albacore? God these stink.

[Griffin giggles quietly]

Amber: Fir— Hey, are you like... aft? Or starboard? Or port?

Zoox: I don’t— [muffled] I don’t know!

Devo: Are you in the front?

Zoox: [muffled] I don’t know!

Devo: The front of the ship, near the bridge? Or the back of the ship?

Zoox: [muffled] All I can tell yah, there’s a hatch in the bottom?

Devo: This means nothing.

Zoox: [muffled] So may— Well, but I mean maybe that is access to the water? I don’t know!

Amber: Alright, be— Alright, big boy. Hold tight. Hey listen, you see light, you start swimmin’.

Zoox: [muffled] Okay.

Justin: And I'll fire the slug launcher into the side of the vessel.

Griffin: Okay. Go ahead and roll a d20 plus Sensor, which is plus six, for the Coriolis.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: Six?

Travis: Mm...

Justin: Plus six, that's 12.

Travis: That is a 12.

Griffin: Oh man, people are gonna get mad at me for doing this, but this ship is not moving. Right? It's not a—this isn't necessarily a dogfight, this ship is not active and moving. So— I mean, I guess you miss.

Justin: That's not—how?

Griffin: The slug goes wide.

Justin: How?!

Griffin: I don't know, but the ship's not moving.

[Justin wheezes]

Griffin: So if you wanna try it again—

Justin: With a 12 I don't hit a stationary ship?!

Travis: Maybe we dent it?

Griffin: Yeah, it just sorta dinks off the side of it.

[dink sound effect plays]

Travis: Bink!

Griffin: You think maybe if you got it closer to a se—

Justin: Alright.

Griffin: Closer to a seam.

Amber: Zoox. Zoox, did you hear that? That dink?

Zoox: [muffled] Yeah! Wait, there was a big dink. What was that?

Amber: Yeah, move away from the dink.

[Griffin wheezes and chuckles]

Zoox: [muffled] I— Okay.

Travis: That's a t-shirt.

Amber: That was a war— I'm us— That was designed to use echo-location.

Zoox: [muffled] Ohhh! Good thinking!

Amber: To help you.

Zoox: [muffled] Good thinking.

Amber: Alright, move away from the— Move away from the dink.

Devo: Are you still under the fish? Get out from un—

Zoox: [muffled] It's pouring out. I'm getting out from under it now.
[normal] Phew, oh my god! That was a lot of fish.

Justin: Alright, I'm firing it again.

Griffin: Okay.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: Thank God, 18 plus six.

Griffin: Yeah, that's it. That is a good hit. I like this. You moved away from the dink, Zook. So when a hole is punch in the side of this, you know, kind of brittle ship that has been down here for quite some time, there is a— a nasty sort of decompression that happens.

[air decompressing sound effect plays]

Griffin: And a lot of the cargo gets sort of thrown against the side of the ship.

[thudding sound effects play]

Griffin: And then all of a sudden, this chamber fills up with water in the blink of an eye.

[running water sound effects play]

Griffin: Which doesn't bother you so much, because you are— you are of water. You now have an exit, but standi— floating, rather, between you and it is that ghostly shape that is just sort of looking at you, between you and the hole, and waiting for you to make a move.

Clint: 'Kay. A bunch of eyes. Whole buncha eyes. Yeah! I think he's gonna swim right at it.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Bold.

Clint: Extending his big ol' knife in front of him.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: And... see what happens. [wheezes]

Travis: [snorts] I love this, Dad.

Griffin: Sure, sure.

Travis: I love this step one of like an eight step plan, and step two is “see what happens.”

Clint: Yep! That’s what’s— I’m just gonna swim right at it.

Travis: Yeah!

Griffin: Make— Okay, make an attack roll, if you’re like— If you’re trying to go at him with the knife, I think that’s going to be an attack roll.

Clint: [mutters] Okay...

[sounds of dice rolling]

Griffin: Whoa. Whoaaa.

Justin: Nat 20.

Griffin: Whoaaaa!

Justin & Griffin: [simultaneously] Whoaaaa!

Travis: That’s what happens.

Griffin: [amused] Shit, okay.

Travis: That’s what happens!

Griffin: Alright, roll damage, double— but with double the dice. So for your dagger, I guess, that would be 2d4 plus three.

[sounds of smaller dice rolling]

Clint: Okay, well I rolled one too many, so that’s four.

Griffin: Plus three.

Clint: And you said plus three?

Griffin: Yeah, seven.

Clint: Seven.

Griffin: Okay. Your knife goes clean through it and it's like the image distorts for a second, but you get the impression that you did not— You know, even with a nat 20, you did not sort of take a chunk out of this thing. A big chunk out of this thing, rather. With your, you know, non-magical knife.

I need you to make a charisma saving throw.

Travis: You fall in love.

[sounds of dice rolling]

Travis: It was the one thing you didn't plan on.

Clint: Alright.

[Justin chuckles]

Clint: That would be 13.

Griffin: Aww, man. On a saving throw, tie goes to the runner, I think.

Travis: Yep.

Griffin: Okay, shit.

Justin: Was that a good "oh, man" or a bad "oh, man"?

Travis: I mean, it's a good "oh, man" for Dad.

Griffin: It's a good "oh, man" for Dad. This thing, when you float through it sort of, with your you know, mid-dash attack with your knife out in front of you, the image flickers for a second. And when it comes back, it is trying to sort of overlay its form on top of yours.

And when it does, you feel it trying to take control of your body. And you sense surprise from it. You sense surprise specifically that you were not already inhabited by a, you know, an Einarr spirit of some kind. And then

just as soon as that, you know, feeling passes, the ghost moves away from your body and then looks around and vanishes.

That was a clutch, I will say, a clutch DC 13 Charisma saving throw, which was exactly what you needed to roll to not be possessed. That's what— That's all I have, vis-à-vis the ghost. What do you do, Zoon?

Clint: Hmm.

Griffin: I will say it is brighter in this chamber now because the water is, you know, has now flooded into it.

Clint: He makes an investigation check, or perception check.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Perception?

Griffin: Yeah, perception's fine.

[sound of dice rolling]

Travis: Wah, wah.

Clint: That's a 10.

Griffin: Yeah, sorry. With a 10, you— You know, even though it is brighter in here, you just sort of see a derelict cargo hold, you know, in a clearer picture now—

Travis: Full of rotten old gold.

Griffin: Full of rotten treasures.

Travis: Just old candelabras.

Griffin: Uh-huh.

Travis: And stinky diamonds. Ugh!

Griffin: There is no sign of the ghost anymore.

Travis: You busted him.

Clint: [growls in frustration] Okay, this is one of those situations where... I wanna stay and investigate.

Griffin: [from a distance] Sure.

Clint: But I don't think Zoox does.

Griffin: Right.

Travis: This is—can I just interject? This is really fun 'cause we started this mission and it was like, "A ghost stole the animals!" and it's like, "There's no s—that wasn't a ghost." And then like an episode later, Griffin's like, "There's a ghost." [wheezes]

Griffin: I literally—

Travis: [chuckles] There's a different ghost.

Griffin: When you—I forget what the number is that you rolled for the random encounter, but when I saw "ghost ship encounter," I was like "Aw, fuck."

[Travis laughs]

Griffin: Another ghost thing? Aw, man.

Travis: It's a thematic episode we've got here.

Clint: Alright. He now has access, 'cause the chambers flooded, right?

Griffin: Right right right.

Clint: But he can't see anything.

Griffin: No, there's light in the water now. You ha—you are having an easier time, you do not have a light issue anymore.

Clint: Then I think he needs— he— Aw. He would look around. He—this mystery of the ghost. [taps on his desk]

Griffin: I mean—

Clint: Okay.

Griffin: If you can give me another skill check that is not perception, I will accept that, but you're—you know, some DMs I think have different feelings about this, of just like, "Well, you know, I'm just gonna keep looking around until I find it," and keep rolling perception over and over again.

Clint: No.

Griffin: I think—

Clint: No, I don't wanna do that.

Griffin: Yeah. I co— 'Cause I think of it as like Zoox did look around for a long time, and that was the perception. Or you know, maybe you didn't look around for a long time, 'cause it was just perception, not investigation.

Clint: I think he wants to go back to the Coriolis. At least to run things by what the other two think.

Griffin: Okay. That's fine. You zip on back up—

Clint: Trying to be a team player.

Griffin: Sure. You zip back up through the moon pool that you usually sort of go in and out of the ship from and you are back aboard.

Travis: Devo is there to meet him, ready to heal, should it be required.

Zoox: Um... I could use about 13 points.

Devo: Okay. So, what was it? Was it like one of those weird like bleached coral? Was it uh, I don't know, some just like...

Zoos: It—

Devo: Robber? Pirate?

Zoos: It was—

Devo: That kinda thing?

Zoos: It was a big ghost, with a bunch of arms.

Devo: Hm.

Zoos: And a bunch of faces.

Devo: S—

Zoos: And—

Devo: Wait. When you say a big ghost, do you mean like a hard light like hologram?

Zoos: I—I don't—I swam right through it.

Devo: Mm-hmm.

Zoos: I swam right through it, and it was really creepy and I had the weirdest feeling it was trying to, you know, communicate with me?

Devo: Mm.

Travis: Devo—

Zoos: Take over...?

Travis: —is giving you a back rub, by the way, and you heal for 10 points of damage.

Devo: Oh, wait. So like—

Griffin: You're just rubbing—

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: You're rubbing coral?

Travis: I don't know what it looks like. What, is it just a touch, I guess? I'll just touch your face in a weird way, like, "Ooo," and I just rub my fingers gently down your face and you're healed back.

Zoox: Excuse me, what are you doing?

Devo: Oh no, this is not necessary, but it's fun. [singing] Egg cracking on your head, spiders walking—

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [singing, amused] Cat scratch, dog bite.

Devo: Yes.

[Griffin pants]

Devo: Okay.

[Griffin continues panting]

Devo: Cool breeze, tight squeeze. You heal for 10 points of damage.

Zoox: Thank—thank you. Listen, with the whole—

Devo: Yes, the ways of the Church are [chuckles] mysterious and powerful!

[Clint, Justin, and Griffin laugh]

Zoox: With all the multiple arms, maybe Amber knows somethin' about this? You know, 'cause it kinda looked— You know like when arms spring out the side of her.

Devo: Yes.

Zoox: And there's a bunch of arms and stuff?

Devo: Might I recommend that you be careful how you phrase this so it isn't like, "This was weird and you're weird, so you probably know how," yes.

Zoox: Oh, okay. Okay.

Devo: That's just a tip from me to you. Was—I don't want to seem crass, but was there valuable stuff in there? Was it—or is this like a mystery—

Amber: [muttering conspiratorially] He mi—he knows what you mean.

Zoox: Um... I dunno. If you were a picker, maybe? There were a bunch of boxes and a bunch of crates. It was a great big hold! There was a whole bunch of stuff in there, I just couldn't see it real well.

Devo: Oh. So we need light and maybe some sage to burn, and we go back down there and we—

Zoox: Think it's full of water now, I don't know if sage would burn.

Amber: Yeah, we just sunk that shit. Let's go.

Devo: Well it was already sunk, to be fair. It was sitting on the floor of the ocean. It wasn't going anywhere.

Zoox: Hey, I have an idea!

Griffin: Mm.

Zoox: Call—somebody call Matt and ask him what the hell that was.

Devo: That was Matt.

Zoox: You think?

Devo: [exasperated] Yes, Zoox. It was a ruse.

[Griffin snorts quietly]

Amber: Yeah, we did get snowed a little bit.

Devo: When you—we all did, but only one of us went down there. Sorry about that.

Amber: I actually—I thought it's weird that you went down there.

Devo: Yes.

Amber: Honestly. [chuckles]

[Clint laughs]

Amber: When I— I didn't wanna say anything.

Zoox: You could'a said something!

Amber: I thought there might be gold bars.

Devo: Yes. And you know, you breathe water.

Amber: Yeah.

Devo: And I think you have fish that live in you or something.

Amber: And hey, you know it all— all's well that ends well, you know.

Zoox: [quietly] Yeah. Okay.

Devo: Well, another good adventure. Let's head back— No wait, what? What are we doing?

Amber: We should try blowing up our adventures before we waste a bunch of time on them in future.

Devo: This is a good— Yes. This is— We blew up— Let's see, we blew up Cambria—

Zoox: So much destruction.

Devo: We blew up the ship.

Amber: Yeah, let's blow 'em up.

Zoox: Just start shootin' stuff first, right?

Devo: Yeah, this is way better.

Zoox: Let's get the hell outta here.

Devo: Let's go shoot Founder's Wake.

[Griffin chuckles quietly]

Devo: Just see what happens!

Amber: Wrap it up. [chuckles]

Zoox: We're leavin' a bunch of ship behind, let's go!

Griffin: Alright—

Devo: Okay, but did— Do you want to go back there, Zoox? 'Cause, ah—

Zoox: I don't know. I was kinda curious about the— I mean, we're lookin' for a ghost. That was a ghost. I mean, come on.

Devo: Okay, Zoox—

Zoox: What are the odds it was just some one-in-a-hundred roll?

Griffin: A different ghost. [snorts]

Devo: Just to make sure that we are all on the same page, Zoox. We're not looking for a ghost. We figured that out a while back.

Zoox: Right, right, right.

Devo: And you know what? It's like I always say, sometimes a ghost is just a ghost.

Zoox: I'm— I say we leave then. I'm—

Amber: Alright, let's go.

Zoos: Yeah.

Griffin: Alright. You all zip away. The incre—

Clint: It's not very satisfying though! Sorry.

Griffin: The incredible treasures of the [sobs] of this ship.

Clint: Aw!

Travis: Okay Griffin, between you and me.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: What— what was in there?

Justin: Yeah, let's save it for a— save it for a— the—

Griffin: The *TTAZZ*?

Justin: Yeah, the *TTAZZ*.

[Clint laughs]

Travis: Was it full of cool jackets?

Justin: Don't tell him. Don't tell him.

Travis: Aww, okay.

Justin: I don't want— I wanna save this gem.

Griffin: How many jackets do you guys fucking need? I've— You're drowning in jackets. You're lousy with jackets.

Travis: You mean in real life or the game?

Griffin: Both.

Travis: I have a special area of my closet that's like just jackets.

Griffin: Wow, that— That must be really nice.

Travis: It is nice. It is, Griffin. And some of them are just for fashion.

Griffin: Right, okay.

Travis: I don't have any pants though. I need to get on that.

Clint: Onward to glory we go!

[deep synthesizer music plays]

[ad break]

[pulsing synthesizer music plays]

Griffin: So you all continue on, following this tracker card. Just continuing out into open ocean. And not long after you leave the ghost ship behind, you see a large... Ship isn't the right word for it. You're not exactly sure how to classify the structure that you see, but the card is like flashing now, so you know this is the place.

It looks like a very fancy like taco. Like it is an arch, like a semi-circle, with these like wings of bright wood and silver kind of coming up off of it, and they are—these two wings, there is a layer of what looks to be like really thick glass kind of bridging them. And there's a big iron-shaped structure. "Iron" like the—like a thing you use to make clothes flat? You know, an iron? Towards sort of the front end of this vessel, and you can see these massive turbine engines sitting at the rear of the ship. This whole thing is just like fancy, shining wood and chrome.

Travis: We shoot it. No, wait. Hold on, sorry. No no no.

Griffin: I mean if you to. As you get close, you see that that like big iron-shaped part of the ship has a dock sort of underneath it that you can move up to, and as you get close to this installation, your tonewheel lights up.

[tonewheel ringing sound effect plays, and continues]

Devo: Okay, wait. Stop. Before we answer. Let's take a lesson from our encounter with Aloysius Supreme, right? We don't say any— We don't volunteer information. We answer the questions that are asked. Sometimes, we lie, right? So we are going to say that we are on a mission from a rich benefactor to purchase a one-of-a-kind item, right? We are not going to say "We're here to recover the stolen animals, you monsters." Okay?

Zoos: Yip!

Devo: Zoos? I'm looking at you, Zoos.

Zoos: I said yeah!

Devo: Okay, 'cause sometimes you are very honest. And I— This might not be the time for this.

Zoos: You— I— I'll have— I've learned my lesson.

Devo: Okay.

Zoos: I went down there and almost got killed by a great big thing full of fish, so—

Devo: Yes, because you were honest. You got attacked in a derelict ship.

Zoos: 'Cause I was honest.

Devo: Yes.

Zoos: I went down there.

Devo: And—

Zoos: Actually, you guys attacked. I was just—

Devo: Amber?

Amber: Yeah?

Devo: You're going to keep a lid on the secrets, right?

Amber: I was tryin' to and you started talkin' to me. I'll get— I'm there.

Devo: Okay.

Amber: Just noddin' and maybe like the occasional chin stroke.

Devo: Okay, yeah. Oh, this is good. It's very mysterious and powerful. Okay.

Travis: Devo answers the tonewheel.

[ringing stops]

Tonewheel Voice: [through the tonewheel] God almighty, that took so long!

Devo: Sorry, it was in my other pair of pants.

Tonewheel Voice: Uh, come in. What's your—what is—identify yourself.

Devo: I—

Amber: No.

Devo: This is the Coriolis.

[Griffin snorts]

Zoox: [whispers] Good job.

Devo: We are here to—we are looking for some... Uh, let's say some very special vintage, wink?

Justin: [cackles] Fu— They should blow us out of the fuckin' sea.

[Clint laughs]

Justin: Should turn us into squid housing right here and now.

Tonewheel Voice: Uh, technically permission to dock aboard this ship is by invitation only. So you'll have to come back another time, after you've—

Zoox: [whispers] Use the card.

Tonewheel Voice: — secured an invitation.

Zoox: [whispers] Use the card.

Amber: Shh.

Devo: We— Actually, we have a card that was given to our boss, the one who sent us here. Is this the invitation? Sorry, this is our first week on the job and we're just really worried about getting fired. So we're a little—

Tonewheel Voice: Who— Who i— Who is your boss?

Devo: I don't know if we're allowed to say. Are we going to get in trouble if we say?

Tonewheel Voice: That was actually a test.

Devo: Okay.

Tonewheel Voice: And you passed.

Devo: Phew.

Tonewheel Voice: Great job. Uh, okay. I'll open up the dock for you. Please wait aboard your ship.

Devo: Thank you. Oh, what was your name?

Tonewheel Voice: Uh, I—that's another test.

Devo: That was a test, yes.

Tonewheel Voice: Yeah.

Devo: This was a test and you passed.

Amber: [quietly] There it is.

Tonewheel Voice: Excellent. Alright, well um... See you aboard. Please don't start any trouble.

Devo: Of course, yes. Of course.

Griffin: And... the gate sort of covering up the docking bay opens, permitting your ship to enter.

Justin: Let's enter.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: 'Kay.

Travis: We do it.

Griffin: So, in very short order, the Coriolis surfaces inside of this installation. And when you sort of get the all clear to open up the airlock to the world outside—

[air decompressing sound effect and pulsing synthesizer music plays]

Griffin: You see that the inside of this place matches the outside like to a tee. Like it is— It is not the sort of like marble, ancient vibe that a lot of the stuff— The fancy, fancy stuff in the Conservatory has, like this— There is a sort of warmth to this, like a really fancy mountain resort. Like with just wood and there's a fire.

Travis: A chalet you would say, Griffin?

Griffin: A chalet, yeah.

Travis: Ooo!

Griffin: And there's like a bar that you can see, like on the far side of this loading dock, which is not—

Travis: I was about to say déjà vu, but of fucking course, 'cause it's the same guy who ran the Abyssal Auction.

Griffin: Yeah. Only this time, you open up the door, and you see a woman, and she is wearing a red pant suit. And when you look around, like, there's actually a lot of people wearing—

Travis: Red pant suit?

Griffin: — the same sort of red suit, yeah.

Justin: Mmm...

Griffin: Around this room. All sort of doing busywork. She has a clipboard and she says...

Woman in Red: Okay, uh Coriolis? This part's not a test. I do need your names before you come aboard, just so I can check you in.

Amber: Alright, now wait.

Justin: Alright, hold on. I wanna run um...

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: 'Cause I feel like someone saying "this isn't a test"—

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Justin: — is like oldest—

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: Okay, six plus three.

Griffin: The rolls haven't been very—

Justin: They haven't been very good.

Griffin: Except for Zoox's nat 20 dagger attack on a ghost.

[Justin laughs]

Griffin: They haven't been particularly great.

Justin: We come through when we need to, but yeah it's a six plus three, nine.

Griffin: You don't know. You're pretty sure this is— that she is telling the truth and this is not a test.

Justin: Alright.

Devo: My name is Henri. And this is uh, Gree, and uh, this is Sooz.

Woman in Red: Those are some wild names.

Devo: Okay.

Woman in Red: You all recognize that, right?

Devo: Henri? Henri?

Amber: Yeah.

Devo: Henri is a wild name?

Amber: They're regular.

Woman in Red: I guess you're right, yeah. You know what? The ocean's real big, isn't it.

Devo: Yes!

Woman in Red: And it takes all— it takes all kinds.

Devo: We don't come to where you— "What's your name? Oh, that's weird."

Amber: And I think you'll discover, for us, anonymity is a privilege.

Woman in Red: Sure, sure.

Zoox: So what's your name?

Woman in Red: [sighs] Come on.

[Justin wheezes]

Griffin: And she writes some stuff down in her clipboard, and she looks back at you and she says...

Woman in Red: Okay, weapons on the ship. Leave 'em. We will keep everything secure here while you are aboard the facility.

Devo: [quietly] Of course.

Woman in Red: If you want, you can go and wait in the parlor. And—

Amber: That— That doesn't count knives, I'm assuming?

Woman in Red: Of course not, yeah. You— Of course you can keep your knife. No, yeah. Leave your knives on the ship. How big a knife?

Amber: Well, we always have a knife.

Devo: We have a couple like fishing, you know skinning, paring, uh deboning.

[Zoox giggles]

Woman in Red: Would you— And if you stabbed a person with it, would they die from that?

Devo: It depends on where you stab them, really, but—

Woman in Red: Yeah, it probably best to leave them on the ship then. 'Cause that's where we—

Devo: Okay, but you could say this about pencils and pens and drumsticks and...

Woman in Red: Yeah, yeah, I could say it.

Zoos: Letter-openers?

Woman in Red: Okay.

Zoos: How about a letter-opener?

Woman in Red: Leave all your— sure.

Zoos: Can we hang onto that?

Woman in Red: Leave all your drumsticks and letter-openers on the ship too, okay?

Devo: [shocked] Drummy?! No!

[Justin snorts]

Devo: This is my lucky drumstick, I can't leave Drummy on the ship.

Woman in Red: Okay. I'm— This— Can— I don't know if you can tell from the vibe in here, but we're all like, really busy.

Devo: Oh.

Justin: I think— If *TAZ* has a unifying theme...

Travis: Uh-huh.

Justin: And I've had a lot of thoughts about it...

Travis: Yeah?

Justin: And if *TAZ*— The *TAZ*-mosphere has a unifying theme, it is... bullying people in administrative positions.

Griffin: Sure.

Travis: This is true.

Justin: It is like we can't fucking resist— A normal person is just like, "I'm just trying to get by."

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: You know what I mean?

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: And like we can't— And it doesn't matter. I could be like a dragon that is— uh, a sleeping dragon that can transform into a hermit, it doesn't matter. If somebody's like, "Just put your shoes in there."

Griffin: Right.

Justin: I'd be like, "How 'bout you stuff 'em up your butt?"

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: "Bazinga!"

Griffin: I wanna—

[Clint giggles]

Travis: The simpler and more straightforward the request, the harder—

Justin: Right.

Travis: Like if someone was like "You need to drink this bubbling gold in order to pa—" We'd be like "Yeah, let's do it, boom!"

Justin: Suck it down, one try.

Clint: Yup, yup.

[Griffin chuckles]

Travis: But if they're like, "Just sign here," and we're like, "Well, this is the next 15 minutes."

Justin: Yeah. [chuckles]

Griffin: [chuckles] I will say that one time this season, Zoox did start sort of a socialist uprising with a worker at the—

Travis: That is true.

Griffin: – at the Auction, so it’s— You all have a mixed track record at best. Are you—

Travis: Yeah, we leave—

Devo: We will leave our weapons and we will wait in the parlor. You go on about your job, worker! You’re doing such a good job, you deserve a raise.

[pause]

Woman in Red: Have you—

Amber: Well— Now, wait. I can’t leave my weapons behind.

Woman in Red: Your fists are your weapons? You’re gonna say like your fists and strong arms?

Justin: Am—Amber flexes.

Woman in Red: Yeah.

Amber: This is— This is Puncho, and this is Stephanie.

Woman in Red: Um...

Travis: Did you say “Stiffanie”?

Amber: And this is— Stephanie.

Travis: Oh, Stephanie.

Amber: Puncho, Stephanie, Rebecca Junior.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Amber: And Hummingbird.

Travis: Okay... Did you name Puncho first or last?

Amber: I started with Puncho.

Travis: Okay.

Woman in Red: Okay.

Travis: Ran out pretty quick.

Woman in Red: I'm actually gonna walk with you guys to the parlor, because—

Devo: This is a good idea.

Woman in Red: — at this point, I feel like if I left you to your own devices here, aboard this facility, you would... Um, destroy it. Just—

Devo: Well, we'd probably get lost. Just we're not very good with directions.

Zoox: We don't know where the parlor is.

Woman in Red: Yeah, so I'm going to walk you there.

Devo: Do you have— Have you heard of a map?

Amber: Yup.

Devo: If you have one of these— It's called a map, and it will show you how to get to the parlor, mm?

Woman in Red: Uh, okay.

Griffin: And she goes over to the— a desk, a small sort of information desk and picks up a piece of paper and jots something on it, and hands it to you. And it's just a note that says, "Just fucking follow me."

[Justin laughs]

Griffin: And she walks towards a small door on the right side of the room.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Alright.

Travis: Devo goes in.

Zoox: I like her. I like her a lot.

Griffin: It is—

Amber: She handled that really well. [wheezes]

Griffin: The room that she leads you to is a really chill situation.

Travis: Mm.

[chill jazz music plays lightly in the background]

Griffin: It is, you know, an even smaller, even cozier sort of fancy place. This is like a fancy person's library or office. There's leather furniture, there's an actual honest-to-god bearskin rug on the floor in front of the—

Travis: That's hard to get, under the ocean.

Griffin: A big roaring fireplace. It sure is!

Travis: Is it a water bear?

Griffin: And... there is you know, a series of couches in here all around the t— There's a table with a, you know, what's it called, decanter?

Travis: Yup.

Griffin: Is that what it is?

Travis: It depends on what you mean.

Griffin: Filled with— It's like a bottle with brown juice in it.

Justin: Mm.

Travis: Yeah, a decanter.

Justin: Yeah.

Travis: Or the—

Griffin: You know how fancy people always have like a fireplace going, but then they also have like a fancy bottle with brown juice in it?

Travis: Yeah yeah yeah yeah.

Griffin: And you don't know what's in the brown juice bottle and then you'll be like in their place, and they'll be like, "Do you want some?" And I'll be like, "I don't know what that brown juice is, so I should get out."

Travis: I always thought it was weird how they called it "brown juice."

Justin: Mm.

Griffin: It is... nice and cozy in here. She says...

Woman in Red: Okay, wait here. I will go and... find— So you're looking for wine, you said?

Devo: Eh, yes, wink.

Woman in Red: Alright, I'll pi—

Justin: Is he saying "wink"?

[Clint wheezes]

Travis: Both.

Griffin: Okay. She says...

Woman in Red: Okay. I'll go and I'll get a—we have a person for that.

Griffin: And she shuts the door behind her, and now you all are alone in this very fancy study. That was the word I was looking for, study!

Travis: Study. Of course.

Griffin: Study.

Travis: Study!

Justin & Travis: Oh!

Griffin: When you're talking about a fancy person's library or office.

Travis: Yeah, yeah.

Griffin: You understand—

Travis: Study.

Griffin: — where a study is the middle ground between those two.

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay.

Amber: Yah know they call 'em a sommelier?

Griffin: She's already gone.

Devo: What?

Justin: I'm not talkin' to her.

Devo: Complete— Hold on. Wait, sorry. They call what a sommelier?

Amber: Like, if you know a lot about wine.

Devo: Oh.

Amber: You can't just be like a wine expert. They even have to come up with something fancy for that.

Zoox: Mm-hmm.

Devo: Oh.

Amber: So it's a sommelier.

Devo: Oh, I like this. Now—

Amber: And that was fun to say.

Travis: Griffin, are we alone in this parlor?

Griffin: You are, yeah.

Travis: Okay.

Devo: So... Now what do you guys think we should do?

Zoox: Well I think perhaps you should praise us, because not once did we say the name of... anybody.

Devo: Yes, very good job not fucking up. I do really— I am proud of both of you very, very much.

Justin: What's our plan here? What's our plan of action?

Travis: Okay, so—

Clint: I say we search the room.

Justin: Yeah, absolutely.

Travis: Well, let's think about objectives, right?

Justin: 'Kay.

Travis: 'Cause what we need to do is I guess... like level one would be to find the Auctioneer, but the main thing is like returning the animals, right?

Justin: Mm-hmm.

Travis: So Zoox is pretty good with like nature and animals and shit. So having Zoox do some like tracking stuff? Seeing if he can hear animals or smell animals or...

Justin: We have— We have a limited time window where we are at— unattended right now, right?

Travis: Correct.

Justin: Okay, I—

Travis: Yeah, we need to find a way out— Like—

Justin: I'm gonna do a— [sighs] I'm not good at this, but why not. I'm gonna do an investigation of this room to look for any texts about animals, like animal books.

Travis: I think we all three investigate. I'm looking for a way to sneak Zoox out.

Griffin: A way to sneak Zoox out of this room?

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: So Amber, why don't you roll an investigation check, since you're looking for a specific thing.

[sound of dice rolling]

Justin: 13.

Griffin: Okay. With a 13... you... You focus sort of your search around the desk, if that is what you are looking for. And you do not find any kind of like, you know, flyer saying, "Hey everyone, we're gonna rob the Menagerie."

[Justin giggles]

Griffin: "Let's goooo, baby."

Travis: God, that would've been so easy if we had.

Griffin: You do find— Huh, let me think.

Justin: I was looking [chuckles] specifically for text about the care and feeding of animals.

Griffin: Oh, you don't find anything like that.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: So maybe you can intuit from that that [chuckles] whatever they're doing with these guys here, their care and their diet is not necessarily of the utmost importance.

Justin: Alright. Let me do another one for the cooking and preparation of—

[Griffin laughs]

[sounds of dice rolling]

Justin: Seven. [wheezes] I did even worse! I— Amber's like...

Amber: Some— Alright. I know that I'm an adult woman. Someone please explain to me again the Dewey decimal system.

[Griffin chuckles]

Devo: Oh, I—don't look at me.

Griffin: You— Yeah. You're not finding any sort of books about animal husbandry that you could, you know, get it—

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: Get a lead from.

Travis: What about animal wifery?

Justin: It was a long shot.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Okay, I'm gonna do an investigation check, looking for I don't know, ventilation or...

Griffin: 'Kay.

Travis: I don't know, anything.

Griffin: Okay. Roll that beautiful bean footage.

[sounds of dice rolling]

Travis: Aww, it hovered on 20! It's an 11.

Griffin: Okay... Yeah with an 11, you don't find a—I mean there are vents in this room. But they are—you are not sure if a person could fit in them. It would be an awfully tight squeeze if you did.

Travis: Hmm...

Justin: And certainly not a Zoox.

Griffin & Travis: [simultaneously] Yeah.

Devo: Okay, so we could go with plan B. Which is... [sighs] Zoox has to go to the bathroom. Right? When they come back, we say, "Yes, we're ready to go— "

Amber: Do you use—hey, real quick. I'm not gonna get weird. Do you, hmm... bathroom?

Devo: I didn't— I did—

Zoos: Mm-hmm. Yes. I have a hole for that.

Devo: [simultaneously] I didn't mean literally.

Amber: [simultaneously] How many holes?

Devo: I didn't mean literally bathroom, I mean like maybe he needs to go soak in water and see if they have a place for this, or...

Amber: [in a hushed voice] Oh, that's good! That's good, that's good!

Zoos: Yes.

Devo: And—

Zoos: I need to dunk! I need to take a dunk.

Devo: You gotta dunk and we say, "Yes, he needs a dunk."

Justin: Alright. I open— I open the door of the room.

Amber: Hey! Someone, please! My friend's dried out!

Griffin: The woman walks back up to you.

Woman in Red: What's— What is the matter? Please don't yell.

Amber: [in a hushed voice] My friend Brinarr is dried out, you gotta help him.

Zoos: [pants heavily]

Devo: He needs a dunk.

Amber: Look, look at him!

Zoox: [labored] Oh, god.

Amber: He's chapped in all sorts of weird places.

Woman in Red: Okay, come on.

Zoox: I need a dunk.

Woman in Red: You, you come with me and you two stay put, okay?

Devo: Okay, but he gets nervous, okay? So tell him it's okay and give him his space.

Woman in Red: Okay, yeah.

Devo: He gets a little shy sometimes when he has to dunk, you know what I mean?

Woman in Red: Yeah. I— Yeah, I know what you mean.

Devo: And if he gets nervous, say you'll give him a few M&Ms if he does a good job.

Woman in Red: What is the arrangement here with you? Was this a field trip that you all—?

Amber: Hey. Guppy, can you please just soak my friend?

Woman in Red: Okay, let's—let's go.

Griffin: And she walks you back toward the dock. And you get, you know, pretty much right next to the Coriolis and she just gestures to the water that it is floating in. She's like...

Woman in Red: Just hop— hop in, I guess? And how long does this usually take?

Zoox: Eh, uh... It depends on—and I'm pretty dry, so this may be, I don't know, 10 minutes?

Woman in Red: Okay.

Zoox: Fifteen?

Woman in Red: Alright. Um, okay. Well—

Zoox: Give me 15 'cause I've never been here before and this is kind of—
You know, I am—

Woman in Red: Sure.

Zoox: I have very shy..

Woman in Red: Got it.

Zoox: Habits.

Woman in Red: Okay.

Griffin: And she walks back to the information desk.

Travis: Wait. While they're over there..

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: While she's over there, I wanna stick my head out and look the opposite way down like the corridor or way or whatever. Are there like guards, other people, like watching, or is it just people milling around?

Griffin: Make a... Make a perception check for this one. 'Cause there's lots of people milling around.

[sounds of dice rolling]

Travis: Mm.

Griffin: There's lots of people wearing those same—

Travis: A 10 plus three.

Justin: Damn.

Griffin: Jesus Christ, guys. [chuckles] The sidebar on this round is a rough one, a rough ride. Yeah, you don't notice any guards, but also like there's a lot people here, maybe some of them are, you don't see any weapons that they are carrying, if they are indeed carrying weapons.

Devo: Amber, when she gets back, say I went looking for her and Zook and I got lost.

Travis: And Devo changes his Glamor Weave to match the red of the jumpsuits.

Griffin: Ohh! Okaaay.

Justin: Cool.

Travis: And heads out the door.

Griffin: Um... So in— I— What does the Glamor Weave specifically say, right? Is it a—I thought it just like changed colors and shit.

Travis: Uhhh... When—Well one, when you make a performance or persuasion check while wearing it unencumbered, which I do, you add a d4.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Let's see. Ohhh... Uh, I mean I can't change the look of it, I can only change the color of it, but I'm just changing the color to match the red.

Griffin: Okay. Fine, yeah.

Travis: I'm just trying to blend in.

Griffin: Cool, alright.

Clint: So it's not like a TARDIS Chameleon Circuit or anything.

Travis: No no no.

Griffin: Alright.

Clint: Okay.

Travis: I'm just going to—I'm trying to move in the sea of red without standing out. [pause] Oh, wait! One more thing. I wanna look around, is there a clipboard anywhere in this room? 'Cause that's like if you have a clipboard, no one fucking questions you.

Griffin: Uh, there is one on the information desk.

Travis: I grab it.

Griffin: I mean, the woman is sitting right there.

Travis: I thought she was over at the pool with Zoox.

Griffin: Okay, I guess if you wanna try and time that out very, very specifically. Why don't you make a sleight of hand check for me? Just see if anybody in this room notices.

Justin: Come on, one.

Travis: A 12 plus two, 14.

Griffin: Okay. I'll be benevolent here, I will say that is adequate for you to pick up a [chuckles] clipboard without being detected.

Travis: Thank you.

Griffin: And sure, you kind of could pass as an employee here. Albeit one in a, you know, not formally acknowledged outfit.

Travis: But he's walkin' with purpose, right.

Griffin: Right.

Travis: And that's like the best accessory you can have.

Griffin: Sure, sure. Okay, so Zoox and Devo, you have sort of your own sort of stuff going on. Amber, you are still in the study. Is there anything

that you are doing while these two are doing their own sort of shenanigans?

Justin: Hmm. I guess I'm just waiting.

Griffin: Okay.

[pause]

Justin: I don't really know. I mean, it's gonna be insane if she comes back and there's nobody here.

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: And at least if I'm here, I can try to cover it.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: I think it's the right thing to do. I just like the image of her coming back and like Amber's just like reading a book and is like, "I dunno where the other two went, but this book—do you have any more of this brown juice?"

Griffin: [chuckles] Okay. Uh, Devo.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: What is it that you are specifically trying to accomplish here? What are you—you're just trying to find the employees only area?

Travis: I mean yeah. Frankly, at this point, he's just like walking around with like all sense—he's listening, he's looking around, he's smelling. Like any indication of like, "This might be where animals are kept," or catching a snippet of conversation. Like I am just trying to move inward.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: I'm gonna say like following the like best advice you can in a maze, which is like go left. You know? If you reach a turn, just go left.

Griffin: Just over and over again?

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay. Here is what I will, uh... Here's what I will tell you about this—this large entry room that you are in, 'cause now you are able to sort of move about it freely. There are several of the studies lining the wall that your study was on. And there are some people sort of standing guard outside of them. And by people I mean like just people wearing those red suits.

There is... a lift on the far end of the room, and you can actually look up and see that the ceiling of this room is transparent like glass, and there is just another dock immediately above you. And there is a ship that is— There are several ships that are docked up there, but you cannot quite sort of make them out from where you are in the room.

And then there's just like on the far end, there is a set of double sort of swinging doors that literally says "Employees Only" on it. And you cannot see what's beyond that.

Travis: Okay, real quick. First, a quick investigation check.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: This one's really gonna work. Looking around the dock we're on now.

Griffin: Right.

Travis: Do I see any like super fancy like individual ships where I'm like "That's the Auctioneer's ship right there, baby"?

Griffin: Umm. [makes various thinking noises] I mean— [makes a strained noise] I will give you this for free. Looking up through the glass into the like upper dock... The ships that you see there are like quite large.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: And you would estimate are like much nicer than the Coriolis, even if you can't necessarily see the full extent of them from underneath.

Travis: Okay, I make my way to that elevator.

Griffin: Okay. Yeah.

Travis: 'Cause I think going into the employee—just to give you my reasoning. If I get into that "Employee Only" area.

Griffin: Mm-hmm.

Travis: I feel it's gonna be a lot less crowded, and a lot easier to single out like, "You don't belong here." But if I can stay in like crowded docking areas, I think I can move a little easier.

Griffin: Okay. You make your way up—

Travis: He says, as he heads to a tiny elevator.

Griffin: Sure. [chuckles]

Travis: But.

Griffin: No, I mean the elevator, nobody is like standing guard or anything like that. This isn't like a, you know, um... A co—you know, like, James Bond enemy compound. Like there are people here who are more concerned about appearances and cleanliness than like, you know, kill the intruders.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: So you go up this elevator and as you actually arrive on this higher level, you see another ship pulling into sort of the farthest, you know, pier from where you are standing. And you recognize the ship instantly, you recognize *The Dreams of Deborah* as it surfaces. And some workers go over and pop open the airlock and extend a gangplank, and from out of that ship walks Aloysius Supreme.

Travis: Mm.

Griffin: What do you do?

Travis: Is it like crowded enough that I could like tail him with very little—or is it like “Oh, you’re gonna—

Griffin: You can try anything. It’s—

Travis: But I mean like what— What’s the landscape, I guess is what I— You don’t have to give me like a read on it, just—

Griffin: Right. There are maybe half a dozen workers in here, and they are— One of them is cleaning a ship with like a— with what looks like a... Like water-pressure— What are those things called?

Travis: Yeah, no, yeah yeah. Oh, yeah.

Griffin: A pressurized water sprayer.

Travis: Pressure-washer.

Griffin: Pressure-washer! Thank you. There’s another ship and there are two workers kind of loading cargo off of the back of it.

Travis: You know what, Griffin? I worked a lot of retail jobs.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: And I would bet a billion doll hairs that Aloysius Supreme is not the kind of person who like even registers workers faces, let alone like cou— I bet I could walk right next to him and he’s not gonna like noti— I don’t think he gives two shits about the employees of the place. That’s my bet. So I’m going to follow him, without like sneaking around, right? I’m just gonna move around like a worker and act like I’m checking things on that clipboard.

Griffin: Okay. If you are going to attempt this, you are going to roll a stealth check.

Travis: Now hold on, I’m not sneaking. This is a performance check. I am performing like a worker.

Griffin: Huh.

Travis: I'm not trying to hide, I'm not trying to sneak. I am trying to—

Griffin: That is a convincing— That is a convincing enough argument.

Travis: Thank you.

Griffin: So roll a performance check then.

[sounds of dice rolling]

Travis: 15 plus six, a 21.

Griffin: Yes. The role of dock-worker tonight will be played by Devo Lamont.

Travis: It's nice to just start somewhere, you know what I mean?

Griffin: Sure.

Travis: Oh, I'm the guy— I'm the guy where like the detective comes like, "I didn't see nothin'! I was busy unloadin' all the crates! I didn't see nothin', I had to get these crabs offa the boat."

Griffin: [chuckles] You are able to follow him then for quite a while. One of the workers, another woman in the, you know, red uniform greets Aloysius Supreme and he looks like he's down for business right now. He is not the sort of like jovial douchebag that you have seen him be in the past, like—

Travis: He's a serious douchebag.

Griffin: He's a serious douchebag right now. So you are able to sort of like walk through the docks as he is lead up some stairs and to another hallway that you follow down. And you know, you work your way through this facility, until finally on this sort of higher up floor, the woman leads him to a much different looking sort of doorway. This has lost the chalet vibe and this is like secure, iron bars.

[ambient synthesizer music plays]

Griffin: There are two guards standing out in front of the door and they are wearing like actual plate mail armor, with gilded halberds. And they are biiiig boys. And she sort of registers with the two of them and they bang their halberds on the ground, and the doors open.

[hiss sound effect plays]

Griffin: And it's only open for like a second as he passes through the door. Go ahead and make a... perception check.

Travis: Oh my god.

Griffin: Just as you get a glimpse through this secure doorway.

Travis: That's a five plus three, Griffin.

Griffin: Uh, oh man. You— There are some people in there.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

[Clint laughs]

Justin: People-shaped shapes.

Griffin: There are people sitting— You see people sitting around what look like kind of like dining tables? You also saw that the back wall of that room was like just a big window, looking out over something. That is what you get from that.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Unfortunately not a ton. One of those guards looks over in your direction.

Travis: Okay. I'm gonna check my clipboard and shake my head and kinda slap my head.

[Griffin chuckles]

Devo: Ohhhh!

Travis: And turn back around.

[Clint laughs]

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: And I'm gonna hop on the— on my shellphone.

Griffin: Okay.

Devo: Uh, okay. Amber, Zoox. On the— There is a higher level with more docks. Aloysius Supreme docked here? And immediately went to talk to somebody important, I couldn't get a look at them but I think we may be double-crossed sometime soon. But Zoox, if you could make it up to that higher level, there is some kind of window you might be able to peek in and see if you can figure out what is going on. Amber, I am making my way back down to you.

Amber: [whispers] Alright. Be safe.

Griffin: Zoox. What's your plan here?

Clint: Well. [wheezes] I had something in mind, but I mean it sounds like I have got my marching orders.

Justin: You're—

Travis: I mean you can do whatever you want, I just had new information that would be useful to you.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Okay. Okay, that's cool.

Travis: I'm not gonna not pass it on.

Griffin: There are so many things you do not know about this [chuckles] facility, and so like that was not Devo sort of taking the scouting job from you.

Clint: I gotcha. Okay.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Okay, alright. Okay. Well I think the first thing I gotta do is— Zook is swimming around and he finds that that usually clears his head.

Griffin: Sure.

Clint: That's usually good. And he casts *Locate Animals or Plants*.

Griffin: That's the name of the spell?

Clint: "Describe a speci—" Yeah, *Locate Animals or Plants*.

Travis: Which one—

Clint: It's a range spell.

Travis: Which one are you gonna do?

Clint: Animals.

[Griffin laughs]

Travis: Okay.

Clint: "Describe or name—"

Travis: Wouldn't it be weird if he were like, "Lettuce." [wheezes]

[Griffin laughs]

Clint: I want to find some cabbage. "Describe or name—" I think... I think since he's already had contact with a horse, he wants to find a horse. He wants to look for a horse somewhere in this base. So he concentrates on the voice of nature in his surroundings and learns the direction and distance to the closest creature or plant of that kind within five miles, if any are present.

Griffin: Uh... [sighs] There's no horses nearby, that you can t— Does it only focus on a specific type of beast or plant? What as the kind of—

Clint: I just went back to the horses that were stolen.

Justin: What?

Griffin: No horses were stolen.

Clint: I thought—

Griffin: Aurochs were stolen.

Clint: Okay. I thought it was polar bears, aurochs, horses, tufted rhinos, and silver striders.

Griffin: Wow, you took—you took notes for all that? That means a lot.

Clint: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Long-clawed serval, tufted rhinos, silver striders, polar bears, and aurochs. You rode a horse. You got on a horse, back at the Menagerie.

Clint: Right. Then I have to go with tufted rhinos.

Griffin: [chuckles] Okay.

Travis: Wh— Hey, where's the tuft, Griffin?

Griffin: You would never guess.

Travis: Can I guess?

Griffin: It's not—The top three places you think it would be tufted are all wrong.

[Justin snorts]

Travis: Penis, left testicle, right testicle.

Clint: Taint. It's taint. It's a—

Travis: Oh, that's the fourth one.

Griffin: That's all of 'em. Great job, guys. You made up the whole list of all of them. Great work, guys.

Travis: Oh, I can think of more.

Griffin: It's so wild that like your job is to locate an animal on this mission and you just have a spell that's just locate animals.

Travis: It's like if there was a job that was like, "Hold four things at the same time," and Amber was like, "Oh, well yeah. Got it."

Justin: I got a Bag of Holding, or a Finny Pack, in our parlance.

[Clint giggles]

Griffin: Okay, you detect two of them. Both of the stolen tufted rhinos, because they came, you know, in pairs in the Menagerie. And you know the exact distance and direction of them. It is higher than where you are at, and it's close to the top of this installation, you get the sense. You—

Clint: Well let me ask something. You said there's a bay above this bay? Can I get to it?

Griffin: Sure, of course. You can get—here's what I want you to keep in mind is like you can get anywhere in the water. Like you could swim around the ship and do recon that way, or you could leave this bay and go into the top bay, or you could— You know what I mean? Like there's—

Clint: Does the top bay have its own access?

Griffin: It does, yeah. As you swi— Are you— Is that where you are trying to go?

Clint: Yeah, I think that's what I— that Zoox would try.

Griffin: Okay, as you like leave the ship to go back upward toward the higher bay, you sort of follow this feeling of the rhinos up the arc of the ship.

Travis: Follow the feeling of the rhinos.

Griffin: The feeling, the rhino spirit. You sense that it is like very much at the top of the ship. And also I think using what Devo told you about where he went on his little journey, it sounds like the same sort of room that he has described is where this rhino sense is.

Clint: 'Kay.

Griffin: What do you do?

Clint: Um... Swims up to that other bay.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Now is that where Aloysius's ship is?

Griffin: Yes, Aloysh-sh-sh-sh ship, *The Dreams of Deborah*, is there and let's say there's one sort of worker here, pressure-washing it.

Clint: Um... Well, I— There's just one worker?

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Okay.

Griffin: I mean there's others in this big room, but the only one working on *The Dreams of Deborah* is one.

Clint: And where exactly on *The Dreams of Deborah* is he doing that pressure-washing.

Griffin: He's doing it from the dock, like from the pier.

Clint: And this is the ship we used to have.

Travis: Correct.

Clint: Okay.

Griffin: Well, it's the ship you stole.

Travis: Well, okay. We used to have it though, Griffin.

Griffin: Sure.

Travis: I mean, the wording is still true.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Um... Okay. I think he's going to sneak onboard *The Dreams of Deborah*.

Griffin: [amused] Okay.

Clint: Through the moon pool.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Through the moon pool? Awesome.

Clint: Which is very fucking cool.

Justin: Of course.

Travis: Of course you would.

Griffin: Of course— Yeah, I'm not even gonna make you roll for that. You are able to get up in *The Dreams of Deborah* like no problem.

Travis: [laughs] All up in it!

[Clint laughs]

Griffin: And it's just as you remember it. The escape pod isn't there, it hasn't been replaced since Guthrie sort of stole it, after shooting you right where you're standing right now, in the cargo hold of *The Dreams of Deborah*, but you are inside of the ship.

Clint: Would it be safe to say that he remembers where the... main cabins are?

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Clint: I think he would try to find Aloysius's cabin.

[quiet piano background music plays]

Griffin: Okay. Yeah, I mean there are captain's quarters that are... the most sort of like trashy rich style. Like there's—he has, for whatever reason, one of those big glass like champagne bathtubs that looks like a— It looks like a big champagne glass with bubbly water inside of it. He's got all kinds of stuff. He has a desk that looks like the fuckin' president's desk in here.

Travis: I thought you said it was trashy, Griffin, but this all sounds very classy.

Griffin: Yeah, sure. It is very nouveau riche, let's say. And it's also pretty messy. But you are able to locate his private quarters, no problem.

Clint: He investigates the ca— I wanna do an investigation check around the desk.

Griffin: Okay, what are you looking for in particular?

Clint: A uh... A log. A captain's log.

Griffin: Okay, interesting. Roll an investigation check for me.

[sounds of dice rolling]

Clint: That's a three.

Griffin: That is a three, okay. Yeah, sorry Dad.

Travis: You can't find the desk.

Griffin: You are... looking through this desk and it is surprisingly like all of the ch— the drawers are locked, and there doesn't seem to be anything particularly useful that is just sort of sitting on top of the desk.

[low, mechanical pulsing sound effects play]

Griffin: But as you are looking, you look up and see that a—in fact, it might be the same Security Sprite that you all battled the first time you all broke onto *The Dreams of Deborah* is now just floating in the middle of the room. It is not like sounding out any kind of siren or alert, but the ship's security protocol is now sort of active in the room that you are in.

Amber. Back with you.

Justin: Yeah. Yeah.

Griffin: You are just kickin' it?

Justin: I mean, so far.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Has the lady come back yet?

Griffin: She has not. I mean, it hasn't been 15 minutes, I guess.

[jazz piano music plays]

Justin: [sighs] Yeah, I'm ki—I really—I don't know what I would do right now. Like I really—I don't—they're both doing stuff that's like—and this is not me like checking out, I like literally like—I feel like the best I would do is just start [chuckles] walking around 'til I got caught. And that, I mean, I guess you know, that's always an option, but it doesn't seem that uh... effective right now.

Griffin: Describe to me what like Leisure Amber looks like in this incredibly leisurely room.

Justin: Is the lady still at the desk?

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: What does she think I'm waiting for?

Griffin: She is waiting on Zoot to finish using the potty, essentially.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: Before she comes back in here.

Justin: You know what, I'll go talk to her.

Griffin: Okay. You step outside and you see her reading a magazine at her desk, just like occasionally glimpsing over toward the water, you know near the Coriolis. But she notices you walking out and she says...

Woman in Red: Is it so—that room is nicer than my apartment by a huge margin! If I had the opportunity to just sit in there and have the good brown juice, and warm up by the fireplace and read my magazines, do you realize that I would— I would live in there! I would move in! And yet you all just keep kinda coming and going, like it's a—a public restroom or something!

Amber: I was just bored.

Woman in Red: Okay! Well, that's not my issue.

Amber: I looked for books and um... I didn't find any about animals. Aaaaand so I came out here to see what you're doing. I was bored, I was just bored and kinda lonely. It's spooky in there a little bit, it feels like um... It feels like a spooky kinda, like a Gothic horror or something, you know what I mean? Like a bird is gonna start being like, "Amber..."

[Clint laughs]

Amber: "Amber, I'm behind you."

Woman in Red: Yeah.

Amber: You know, that kinda deal.

Woman in Red: I can pretty much assure you we don't have any birds—

[Amber starts making popping mouth noises]

Woman in Red: Well we did have the striders, but they're not—that's not gonna be [chuckles] an issue anymore.

Amber: What are you readin'?

Woman in Red: Um... I— I— Here.

Griffin: She hands you—

Amber: Hey, wait wait wait.

Griffin: She hands you her magazine.

Amber: Hold on. What did you say?

Woman in Red: I shouldn't have— It was nothing. I shouldn't have said that.

Amber: Just as— Just as friends, chattin'. I'm just bored. I know a little bit about what's goin' on. You're in safe company.

Woman in Red: What's goin' on? You tell me.

Amber: What?

Woman in Red: What's goin' on? If you're in the know.

Amber: [talking softly] So... Uh, let's just say it is... Sort of a... Yah know? It's sort of um... Zoological in nature? I might know some people that wanna get their hands on... some... choice cuts. [chuckles] If you know what I mean.

[Clint chuckles]

Woman in Red: I mean, we don't really hang onto the— We're not in the butchery busine— Well, we kind of are, a little bit, but we— I don't think that we can— Well, I guess anything—

Amber: Oh...

Woman in Red: Everything has a price, right.

Amber: This is the— This is the problem with the underground, isn't it? I've been sayin' this, things get all twisted up.

Woman in Red: Yeah.

Amber: So like I came lookin' for exotic meats.

Woman in Red: Right.

[Clint snorts]

Amber: 'Cause I heard you all had those. You know?

Woman in Red: I mean, I guess we do. And we don't— You know, I guess it would be good to use all parts of the— of the quarry, but uh...

Amber: But you— Now that I think about it, I'm kinda being silly, 'cause I— we would do the butchering on our end. We don't wanna be haulin'—

Woman in Red: You—

Amber: — stinky old meat.

Woman in Red: Mmm. Ah, there might be an issue with that though, because then it's like are you all the last ones to eat the special meat, like than the person who, let's say, acquired that meat might get upset about that, do you know what I mean? 'Cause then they're not the last ones to kind of put their mark on it. This place is— This place is—

Amber: Yeah, but you all are—

Woman in Red: — fucking wild, by the way.

Amber: [whispers] Weird— It seems weird.

Woman in Red: Yeah.

Amber: [whispers] I'm getting' like a weird vibe.

Woman in Red: Yeah.

Amber: It is kinda creepy, right?

Woman in Red: A little bit. So, anyway.

Amber: Yeah.

Woman in Red: Here.

Griffin: She hands you the magazine and says...

Woman in Red: You can— You can borrow that, uh... just leave it in the room when you're done.

Amber: What is it?

Woman in Red: It's a magazine.

Justin: I'm asking you. [wheezes]

Griffin: Oh. It's— Asking me Griffin, or asking this character.

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Oh, it's an ex—

Justin: It's an extent magazine in your fantasy world. What magazine is it?

Griffin: [strained] It is a gossip magazine.

Justin: Called?

Griffin: About all the hoi polloi of—

Justin: [wheezes] Called?

Griffin: The magazi— the gossip magazine? It's called *Scuttlebutt*.

[Clint laughs]

Travis: [simultaneously] Very good.

Justin: [simultaneously] *Scuttlebutt*, I like it! That's great. That's great.

Travis: It's good that there is— That finally someone opened up a competitor to *Sea and Be Seen*. S-E-A.

Griffin: Right, sure sure sure.

Travis: *And Be Seen*.

Griffin & Justin: [simultaneously] Yeah.

Justin: That's very good, yeah.

Amber: Alright.

Griffin: You're—So you're going back to the parlor?

Amber: Hey, where are the animals? I was gonna check 'em out 'cause I'm pretty bored.

Woman in Red: No no no no. That's— That's... You're not here for that explicitly, um...

Amber: Alright.

Woman in Red: So that's— yeah.

Amber: Alright.

Woman in Red: 'Cause that's— When— I don't want to get in trouble.

Amber: Yeah. [blows a raspberry] Hey, listen. I get it. For sure. For sure. Um... But, I— Listen. [whispers] God, this is so awkward. Ugh. Um, I didn't know any of what you have told me. So that's kinda weird.

Woman in Red: Wait.

Amber: For you, I feel like.

Woman in Red: What do you mean?

Amber: Well, I was just kinda guessin', and you kinda looped me in on like everything that's happenin'. Is that part of your job description?

Woman in Red: You're telling me that you were just pressing me for information?

Amber: Just pressing you for information. Hey, you got it. So you're not always thick.

Woman in Red: So what are you actually doing here?

Amber: Um, well right, uh I'm blackmailing you.

Woman in Red: Oh. See, I wish you woulda just said that up front.

Amber: Well, that's not very effective blackmailing.

Griffin: And... she stands up from the desk. And... she has got what looks like a perfume bottle, but with like a spray nozzle attached to it, like a Windex bottle. And she points it in your face. Make a constitution saving throw.

Travis: Okay, this is it. Come on.

Justin: This will be where the good rolls come.

Travis: Yeah, we need it!

[sounds of dice rolling]

Justin: [meekly] 13?

Griffin: You... feel moisture on your face, you smell like a really intense chemical smell, and then you blackout. And when you come to... You don't have anything on you, right? Like your—even your wallet or whatever is totally gone. That's the first thing that Amber notices. The second thing you notice is that you are actually lying in like, dirt.

As you look around and get your bearings, you realize that you are actually in the middle of the jungle. And... you... are still sort of coming to your senses, shaking off this anesthesia.

[outro music starts fading in]

Griffin: And as you rise up to your feet, you see... a figure coming out of a nearby pond, paddling in your direction. And it climbs from the water and shakes its enormous body, sending water just flicking off everywhere. And then it looks up and meets your gaze, and a polar bear rears back on his hind legs and... jumps towards you, claws extended.

[outro music plays]

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