

The Adventure Zone Balance: The Crystal Kingdom, Chapter Seven

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Griffin: Previously on *The Adventure Zone*:

Director: It's time for the regulators to roll out. We're sending you in to detain and extract Lucas for his abuse of confidential information. Standard protocol applies.

Griffin: You pull out from inside an old compact mirror. Inside is actually just a circular disc of emerald.

Travis: Okay, so he's stealing technological ideas from our world.

Noelle: [panicked] Guys, he's crystallizing! Guys!

Travis: I turn around and I chop it off! I chop it off!

Clint: Quit chopping me off!

Travis: I'm gonna chop it off!

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: You're chopping off my damn arm, seriously!

Justin: If we need a new arm, the good news is he's got lots.

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: So if we could figure out a way to make that work, that would be rad.

Clint: Yeah. I'm unconscious, thanks.

Justin: No, I'm not— okay, that's not what unconscious people say, but let's keep moving.

Announcer: I hope Merle's proficient in unarmed combat! I'm sorry, I'm better than that and you should expect more from me. It's *The Adventure Zone*!

[theme music plays]

Griffin: We come to you live from— breaking news story. A tragedy— a tragedy has—

Justin and Travis: [imitating news alert beeping]

Griffin: Oh my god. Well, don't both do it. When they do breaking news at TV stations, they don't have two different beep-a-deeps.

Travis: But they do have someone live do it, like on Carmen Sandiego when Rockapella would do the breaking news.

Griffin: Yeah, but if Rockapella did it they'd be fucking harmonizing and stuff. Anyway, breaking news story: Dad has just touched Justin's dice.

Justin: He touched me dice. Whatever it is, he got it all over 'em.

Clint: Good— get over it, dork!

Justin: Whoa.

Travis: That's not— you're not supposed to touch—

Clint: I'm a rebel, man. I got attitude! I got serious attitude.

Griffin: It sounds like Justin has implied that there is some sort of residue that Dad has left on them.

Justin: Not— not—

Travis: With his sticky Coke— Coke Zero fingers.

Justin: Not bad. It's just like, whatever he does...

Clint: Critical misses, you mean?

Justin: Just his critical stink is all over it right now. And I'm worried that, like—

Travis: Critical stink is a great D&D punk band name.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: [exaggerated British accent] 'Ey, we're Critical Stink. Let's roll! [imitates rock guitar.

Griffin: Uh, before we get into—

Travis: "Let's roll." Like a...

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: Thank you, Travis. Somebody appreciated it.

Travis: I liked it.

Griffin: [blows raspberry] Before we get into the excitement and action and resolution and shit, I feel like we need to do some corrections and amendments here at the top.

Justin: Okay?

Griffin: Just—Dad does have an axe. And he announced it in the first episode, and people were kind enough to remind me that Dad does have an axe. [distant thumping] Wow! Y'all hear that?

Justin: What was that?

Griffin: That's some fuckin' atmo. It's stormy as hell.

Travis: Oh.

Justin: Oh, okay.

Griffin: Just know that that's not in post. It's not storming inside of Lucas's lab. Dad does have a hand axe. He announced it in episode one, but it's basically a hatchet. It's like a hatchet that, like, a child would get for Christmas.

Travis: Like you would use in the book *Hatchet*?

Griffin: It's like a Gary Paulson hatchet.

Clint: Hence the name Lil' Choppy.

Travis: I also want to say, the reason we didn't use the red barrels is because we beat them anyways pretty handily. I don't think we took a lot of damage. We didn't need the red barrels. And it wasn't until afterwards when all you punks got to hear Griffin say "The red barrels" that you went "Yeah." Like, yeah, hindsight, 20/20, you guys.

Griffin: Another quick one. I learned this. There's no such thing as negative Kelvin.

Travis: But what if he's really sad?

Justin: There are also— what is it? Like, I think I said 1000 degrees Kelvin. That's not a thing either.

Griffin: Just one last— as long as we're piling on here, I've been saying the word "proboscis" wrong my whole fucking life.

Travis: You know what we're not? A factual show. This is not about science and learning. It's about Dungeons and Dragons!

Griffin: I saw somebody try to defend me like, uh, "Well, in this fantasy universe maybe it's pronounced probiscis." No. No, friend.

Justin: You're embarrassing yourself.

Travis: Wait, it's not probiscis?

Griffin: Me sweet friend, no. Proboscis with an "O".

Travis: Jesus!

Clint: Proboscis is a flower, so.

Travis: No...

Justin: I've been saying probiscis the whole time. Is it not probiscis?

Griffin: It's proboscis.

Clint: Proboscis.

Travis: Is probiscis like a weird West Virginia thing?

Griffin: Yeah. It's like ant, aunt.

Travis: Alright. Let's play Doongons and Draygons and get on with it.

Griffin: Okay. Um, who needs a refresher? Anybody? Dad's arm— Merle's arm got chopped off.

Travis: I just listened to it.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: I'm also— wait, one last correction. I'm sorry last week after we beat them that I didn't call them fartigrades.

Travis: Ah!

Clint: Oh, man!

Travis: Or nardigrades.

Griffin: A gross factual error from Justin.

Justin: Yeah, that's a gross factual— it was incorrect of me.

Travis: We got a lot of fan mail about it.

Griffin: One thing we also need to resolve. Merle, what is your dominant hand? 'Cause I think that's the one that we're gonna say got got, 'cause I don't see why you would grab a thing with your non-dominant hand.

Travis: I actually think he said he was ambidextrous.

Clint: I did at the very beginning of the show, but along with all these other facts, I guess that was forgotten too...

Griffin: [laughs] It's been two years! Um, okay.

Travis: It feels like five.

Griffin: Well, if you want to flip a coin, um, and tell me which hand got got.

Clint: I'll roll a die.

Justin: While Dad's rolling that die to tell you which hand got got, I should also mention that very early in the show I also said that whenever people are around Taako they get super horny and want to give him lots of money. I said that. Everybody was like, "Mm-hmm. Good, good, good."

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: "Yeah, we like that. We like that. That's—"

Travis: I actually wrote that down.

Justin: Yeah. They get super horny and we give him lots of money.

Clint: I lost my dominant hand. I lost the dominant.

Griffin: Nice. Which is your right or left?

Clint: My right.

Griffin: Okay. Um... Taako, I actually remember the super horny, giving you money thing. Like, has that not— that's just how it—

Justin: [crosstalk] It's like my acrobatics skill. It just hasn't—

Griffin: You just haven't used it.

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Um, so about 20 minutes have passed since you guys got Merle into this medbay room.

Travis: Merle's dead. He bled out.

Clint: I'm dead, right?

Griffin: And he— he died between episodes. It's a D&D podcast first.

Travis: But he's been recast as a younger— this is Oliver, the new Merle.

Griffin: No. He is alive, and through a series of medicines and salves that Lucas has applied, you're actually pretty lucid, and the pain from your grisly wound has almost completely subsided.

Travis: Hey, it was a very clean cut, thank you very much.

Griffin: I meant grisly— okay, yes.

Clint: Take pride in your work, Trav.

Travis: It was surgical!

Griffin: It was surgical in nature.

Travis: I am surgical with this bitch.

Clint: By the way, while we're on this subject, thanks to all those people who tweeted and said "Here's hoping Merle dies." Thank you!

Travis: Well, everybody loves a shakeup, Dad. I don't think that that's personal against you. But, like, you know, the interjection of a— who knows what celebrity we could get to play the next Merle, you know?

Griffin: The possibilities are very exciting. Let me— let's do some storytelling.

Justin: Wait, wait. Just to be clear—

Griffin: Oh boy.

Justin: Travis, you're saying that... we would not repla— let Dad play a new character.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Justin: We would bring his old character back to life with a new actor, like *Doctor Who*?

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: Okay, got it, cool, got it, perfect.

Clint: Thanks. Thanks, bud.

Travis: You could— you could come back as, like, maybe a whimsical spirit or some kind of, like, talking book.

Clint: Sure, yeah.

Griffin: Or talking dog.

Justin: Maybe more of a producer role—

Travis: [simultaneously] A dog book.

Justin: —in the back, taking a backseat.

Travis: [laughs]

Justin: A Robin to our Howie. You know?

Clint: [laughs] Why am I laughing?

Griffin: I don't know. It's very said. Merle—

Justin: That's what you'll be doing a lot of, though, and a lot of "Good one, sir"s.

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: And you'll be asked to leave the set because you're interrupting the filming.

Justin: "Excellent, young masters. Way to goof 'em again."

Travis: "Do you need any lemonades?"

Justin: "Thrilling plot twist."

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: [simultaneously] Okay, let's play.

Griffin: Merle, you have been treated. What I'm trying to establish is you're actually doing okay, aside from you're missing your right arm. And by right arm, it's mostly your forearm. It kind of just kind of stops at the elbow, and you're really thoroughly bandaged up on that arm. The bleeding has come to a stop. Things have calmed down in the 20 minutes that have passed.

Travis: And just to be clear, when last we left, Merle had explained to us that he heard a British guy...

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: ... who tricked him.

Griffin: Yes.

Travis: Um, and then Lucas, if I remember correctly, said "I'll explain everything."

Griffin: Yeah. Lucas right now is actually in the corner. He's actually removed a panel from the wall of this medbay, and you can see he's got some sort of, like, hastily constructed terminal that he's, like, rewiring some stuff in the panels and he's, like, fiddling with this terminal. And as he does you can hear sort of rumbling and some ambient noises coming from pretty far off in the lab. Um, and in this medbay, now that things have calmed down and you've got a chance to sort of take in your surroundings, there's some cabinets with medical equipment and medicines. There is some sort of scanning device. And there is a null suit chamber, much like the one that you guys had in the Bureau of Balance. It's maybe a little bit smaller than the one that you have in your lab that you used to suit up at the beginning of this adventure. And hanging off of the side of it is a suit, um, that is Lucas-sized. It is human-shaped. And Lucas stops messing with this panel that he's fiddling with and he goes...

Lucas: Okay. I've rewired and shut down most of the rest of my lab. It should buy us about an hour and a half to get downstairs and shut this thing down.

Magnus: Great. That should give us about an hour and 29 minutes for you to explain what the holy hell is going on, and one minute to get downstairs.

Lucas: [sighs] There—[sighs] what don't you already know? There was an accident, and somebody—

Magnus: Okay. What don't we know? I got a compact that lets me see into some strange world, A. B, there's a voice that keeps talking to us. C, some British guy, more or less, took Merle's hand. D, what the fuck is happening?

Justin: Oh, wow, he really shifted blame— I mean...

Clint: Yeah, "Some British guy."

Justin: Yeah, "Some Brit—" he's really excised himself from the story, huh?

Travis: If— if somebody got stabbed with a sword, would you say the sword killed him? No. I was merely the tool that operated on Merle through this British guy— I was a tool.

Justin: Travis is telling his shield, like, "I don't know. I never cut his hand off."

Clint: So this is like "Guns don't kill people... "

Griffin: Magnus—

Clint: "Axes kill people."

Griffin: —cuts— kills arms.

Justin: Right, got it.

Griffin: He says...

Lucas: Actually before we get started, Merle, I had an idea. Because we're gonna need your clerical ways as we go deeper. That I was thinking, I have a kind of idea of how I could maybe restore some of your two-handedness? If that makes sense?

Merle: I'm listening. I'm a little grumpy.

Lucas: Okay.

Merle: As everybody can understand.

Magnus: A little put off.

Lucas: Magnus, I understand that you may have taken a little trophy from Hodge-Podge after defeating him. Can I see it?

Magnus: Uh, give me a minute to find it.

Travis: Rustle, rustle, rustle.

Magnus: Not this one... not this one... not this one... not this one... thi—? No, not this one... not— is it thi—? No, not that one.

Merle: Well, you are really well armed.

Griffin: [laughs]

Magnus: Is it this one?

Lucas: Yeah, that's it.

Griffin: He takes it and holds it—

Justin: Oh, I was so hoping Griffin would say no.

Griffin: He takes the right arm and he holds it up to Merle, and it's really little! It's like a small— like a doll's arm. Like a toy— like a GI Joe arm. And he's like...

Lucas: No, I'm just— I'm just kidding. That would be ridiculous. It's like a little toy arm. Like if I could somehow plug this into you, how would you control it? That's sci-fi bullshit. Robot arms.

Clint: Today, the part of Merle being played by Kristen Wiig.

Justin: Yeah, I was just—

Lucas: Can you imagine?

Griffin: He actually goes back to that desk where he was messing around with a belt and a petri dish, where he was messing around. And you see him—

Magnus: Can I have that arm back, please?

Lucas: Well, I need a piece off of it.

Griffin: He unscrews this, like, cap at the end of it, and attaches it to this thing that he's tinkering with. And as he's tinkering with it, Carey comes back into the room and she says, uh...

Carey: Hey, I'm back. I got what you asked me to get from Jamie.

Griffin: And she is holding a potted plant with these four wooden shoots, it looks like, coming out of it. And if you'll recall, you saw this very briefly when you went into the bugbear chamber. And Lucas goes...

Lucas: Okay, no. This is the idea. This is gonna be great.

Griffin: And he takes that plant and removes it, de-pots it, takes it out. And as he's, like, taking it out of the pot and shaking the dirt off of its roots, you actually see the plant, like, kind of protest. Like it's trying to slap his hand away? Um, and he plants it in this petri dish that you can see has some sort of green, viscous fluid in it, and he sprays it down with something, and he picks it up, and it just kind of looks like this wooden plant is hanging off of this belt. And he— he creates this—

Travis: "Feed me, Lucas!"

Griffin: He creates some sort of concoction that he walks over to Merle and he says...

Lucas: Here. Drink this. Trust me, please. This is gonna be so sick. This is— Merle? I know you've been burned by people asking you to do stuff that maybe you don't trust in the past, like, 15 minutes, but trust me on this. This is gonna be tight as hell.

Merle: Sure. I'll do it.

Travis: [laughs loudly]

Merle: Yeah. Yeah, right!

Griffin: Your other arm. Your other— your other arm falls off.

Merle: I'm really down, so yeah, go ahead. Kick me while I'm— I'm vulnerable. I feel very vulnerable right now.

Griffin: Okay. So you're downin' this bev?

Merle: Mm, it's like an appletini!

Griffin: Uh, it actually tastes more like a carbonated wheat grass shot. It doesn't taste especially great. But as you taste it, you— and as you drink it, you see this wooden— these four wooden shoots hanging off of this belt kind of come to a standstill, and start to wrap around each other and tie around each other, and they form what looks like kind of a crude four-fingered arm.

[music plays in the background]

Griffin: And Lucas explains. He says...

Lucas: Okay. So, biology's not my specialty, but this is definitely gonna work. This is a plant called Soulwood, and it's a psychically tuned plant that can resonate with certain people that resonate with them. And it can sort of change its biology based on the whims of other living creatures. And Merle, from what I understand, plants are, like, kind of your specialty. So...

Magnus: Romantically.

Merle: Yeah.

Lucas: Romantically speaking. So my thinking is, uh, do you mind? I'm gonna get close. I'm gonna get intimate.

Justin: Hell yeah, it's ASMR.

Merle: Yeah.

Griffin: He starts whispering in nerd ASMR.

Lucas: [whispering] Okay, so what it's gonna do—

Griffin: Um... he takes this belt and wraps it around your shoulder, and then there's another fastener that goes around your chest, and as he's doing this—

Travis: Merle, how do you feel about auto-erotic asphyxiation?

Clint: [wheezes]

Griffin: As he's doing this, he is straight-up, like *Army of Darkness*, uh, attaching this wooden arm to you that is now roughly the size— it's actually kind of bigger than your other arm.

Travis: I chop it off.

Griffin: Oh no. That didn't last very long at all, huh?

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: No, I don't.

Griffin: Uh—

Travis: Not this time.

Griffin: Yeah, you have this wooden arm. And you feel this, like— this psychic link with it. You feel, like, a deep connection with this arm, made up of these four wooden shoots that have twisted around each other to form the shape of an arm.

Travis: So I guess it all worked out.

Clint: Yeah, everything worked out for the best!

Justin: It all worked out fine.

Merle: I want you to feel completely off the hook, Magnus.

Travis: And then Magnus and Merle engage in a very complicated, like, high five secret handshake, so he can test out the hand— we do the shimmy shimmy coco bop. Um, the Bureau handshake.

Griffin: Yeah, as you do the secret Merle and Magnus handshake, Merle, you feel like... you feel like it is, like, not a big deal to move this thing at all. It takes maybe a little bit to become as dexterous with it as you were your original OG dwarf hand, but yeah, you have pretty good control over this Soulwood arm. And it actually, like, kind of curls up towards you and gives you big thumbs up! As if to say "Hey, I'm your arm now!"

Merle: Wow! Creepy! Really creepy. Yeah. Good! It's really gonna cut back on my fireworks.

Travis: I want to, in the canon—

Justin: And hey, good news. Now you got somebody to blame for your rolls.

Travis: [laughs]

Justin: It's the tree!

Travis: I want it in the canon that Magnus is actually, like, a little bit jealous of his sweet new wooden arm. Not out loud, mind you, but just quietly to himself.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: And I would like it in canon that Magnus can kiss my Kenny Chesney tattoo.

Travis: That's fair. All of this is fair.

Justin: Can you imagine what delectable torture that would be, though, for Magnus to have a tree on his arm that he cannot split?

Travis: That's true.

Clint: Yeah. Well, he can.

Travis: Can Magnus make a tree even he can't split?

Griffin: So in terms of mechanics, Merle, you now have just a permanent disadvantage on Sleight of Hand rolls. That's just— your days of having good Sleight of Hand rolls are behind you.

Clint: My days of having any good rolls are behind me.

Griffin: [laughs] But, uh, you can now control this hand separately from yourself. You can... take it off, chuck it, control it like you would normally—

Travis: What?

Griffin: —like your hand, only you can control it remotely.

Clint: Nice!

Travis: That's awesome...

Justin: So it gave him superpowers. Basically.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: Great.

Travis: More so than the magic he could already wield. You know, summoning angels and all that.

Griffin: Magnus cuts both his legs off. Like, "Alright! Juice me up!"

Travis: "What do you got for me?"

Justin: Taako cuts his head off.

Travis: [giggles]

Griffin: He says, uh— Lucas says...

Lucas: Okay. So, we don't have a whole lot of time for you to get acclimated to your new arm, so you're gonna have to figure it out on the fly. But before we get out there, we're gonna need to recharge your suits.

Griffin: And Noelle says...

Noelle: Oh, that's right. Oh, gosh, sorry. I completely blanked.

Griffin: And a little compartment opens up, and a tank pops out, uh, that looks very much like the tank of a spray that they plugged into the chamber when you first got sprayed down to null suit yourselves. And Lucas slips into his null suit and plugs the tank into the chamber, and he's like...

Lucas: Alright, everybody. Pile on in! It's time to recharge.

Griffin: And I guess very awkwardly, 'cause there's more of you now, you're doing like a real world, road rules, like, how many co-eds can we fit into a phone booth challenge. You all get coated in another layer of null suit juice. The meters, you have these little panels on your wrists that are showing how much energy you have left in your null suits, are completely full up now, and everybody gets all sprayed down.

Clint: And may I say, in Amazon Reviews, I'm giving the null suits originally one thumbs down?

Griffin: [wheezes] That's no how Amazon reviews work!

Clint: I couldn't pass up a thumb joke.

Griffin: Oh, that's— good point. We're gonna have a lot of those now, I guess.

Magnus: Hey, Lucas? While we're all showering together, when Merle—

Merle: What is that?

Lucas: You're standing on my thigh, which is weird.

Magnus: Thank you for the boost. Um, when Merle mentioned a British guy, did that ring any bells for you?

Lucas: Okay. I swear, guys? The lying stuff is over now. I have no fucking idea what British guy—

Magnus: But you realize that, like, this is an all audio medium, so all I can do is ask questions, right?

Lucas: No, yeah.

Magnus: Like, I can't look around and observe.

Lucas: No, I get it. Um...

Magnus: Okay.

Lucas: If you want, I can tell you all about the compact.

Magnus: Yeah, that'd be cool!

Lucas: It would be easier if I show you the cosmoscope. Can you guys... are you guys ready to roll?

Magnus: Yeah?

Merle: Uh... [groans] yeah.

Taako: [croaking] Yeah— yeah, okay.

Merle: Still in a lot of pain, but okay.

Taako: Let's do it!

Griffin: Justin, I want to hear your—

Justin: The role of Taako today will be played by a ghost.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Your cold and flu version of Taako should be interesting.

Justin: Yeah. Taako silently nods in agreement.

Griffin: You guys make your way out of the medbay and through the decontamination chamber, back into the central hub. This room is kind of a mess, because the crystal golem started to form in here and kind of fucked shit up as he was, like, breaking pieces of crystal off. Um... and you make your way into the door that you saw earlier that was labeled the cosmoscope. And as you pass through the airlock into the cosmoscope, you enter into what you assume to be a pretty large chamber, although it is completely pitch black in here, save for a pillar of light which is illuminating what looks like a circular disc that is kind of free floating in the middle of the room, facing you.

And, uh, Lucas walks into the back of the room, into the darkness. You see him get out a flashlight, and you can see he's messing with some sort of lectern back there.

Travis: Time for scary stories!

Griffin: He says "This is tale of the... [strained] old sailor's... mummy!"

[all laugh]

Griffin: Uh, no. He flips some switches on this lectern, and you see an image pop up on this disc, and it looks like the lab that you are currently standing in, as seen from above. Um, from outside of the lab. And he says...

Lucas: Okay. I'm about to get into some pretty heady concepts. I'm probably gonna blow your whole mind, and just kind of reshape the way that you think about existence and stuff, so if it ever gets to be too much or you have any questions, please feel free to stop me. Okay?

Magnus: Okay, wait, stop. You've blown my mind.

Lucas: Okay. Boy, this is gonna take forever, I bet. Let's take this slow. My whole life, I have been obsessed with the concepts of taxonomy and hierarchy, that for everything that exists there's always a bigger thing that contains it.

Magnus: There's always someone cooler than you, right? That kind of idea?

Lucas: That's one of putting it, yeah. And— and so there's always a bigger thing that has a bigger thing that contains it, and so on and so forth, repeated on to just an inconceivable degree.

Magnus: Turtles all the way down.

Lucas: Turtles all the way down, turtles all the way up! Bigger turtles. Um, so...

Griffin: And he points to this disc in the middle of the room. He says...

Lucas: Okay. So, this is my lab. We could go way deeper on, like, the micro scale to, like, elementary particles and stuff like that. But for the lightweight version of this demonstration, let's start here. Here's my lab.

Magnus: Got it.

Griffin: And he holds out two index fingers and does, like, an iPhone pinch— pinches them together. And the image pans out. You see it zoom out, and now you can see, uh, the Stillwater Sea underneath his lab. He goes...

Lucas: Okay, so, here it is, floating over the Stillwater Sea.

Griffin: And he pinches the screen again and he says...

Lucas: Okay, and here's that sea in relationship to the neighboring landmasses, and here's the whole continent, Faerun. And... here's our whole world, Abeir-Toril.

Magnus: How'd you do that?

Lucas: Uh, just bear with me. We're gonna go way, way further.

Magnus: What?

Lucas: Here's our solar system...

Magnus: Huh?!

Lucas: Here's the local interstellar cloud, the local bubble...

Magnus: What?!

Lucas: The local arm, the galaxy...

Griffin: And as he's doing this, like, you are seeing just, like, the entire galaxy spiraling, and it's beautiful. You've never seen anything quite like it. And he goes...

Lucas: And here's the local—

Magnus: I've seen it.

Lucas: Oh. Okay. [laughs quietly] I wanna actually ask you guys about that here in a minute, but here's the local group, the local cluster, local supercluster, and... so on and so forth, until... here!

Griffin: Um, and you are just—

Travis: It's all just a collar on a cat.

Griffin: [holding back laughter] It's— yeah. He says...

Lucas: This is... the observable universe. This is everything we know, every place we've ever been, every person we've ever met, every— every place anyone's ever been is in here. But more importantly, so are the immutable rules that govern the people, places, and things inside of this universe. Things like gravity, and thermodynamics, and arcane interactions. And all that stuff, all that matter and energy and the rules that govern it, comprise this, our universe. You guys are just a handful of people who have ever seen the observable universe before, so... it's pretty cool, right?

Taako: Way into it.

Merle: Yeah.

Magnus: Yeah. Is there, like, a guest book we need to sign, or...

Taako: Hey, listen. Hey. Uh, listen. What is—

Magnus: Joe's [unintelligible].

Taako: Listen. What if I was to take one step past what you've shown me here?

Lucas: Taako, can I say something?

Taako: What's up?

Lucas: You have just made me very, very happy.

Griffin: He walks to the back of the room again—

Taako: And also, just to clarify, horny, right?

Clint: [wheezes loudly]

Taako: We're trying to circle back.

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: Also—

Taako: And also you have a deep desire to give me—

Clint: [singing] It all ties together...

Taako: —a lot of money.

Lucas: Uh, you've made me very horny.

Griffin: He says. And he flips a switch on that lectern, and are whole— the whole room lights up. And the disc in the middle you can see that you were just looking it is made of some sort of dark bluish green material in a perfect circle with some silvery trim, um, all around it. And this disc is levitating. But you realize as the lights go up, this room is filled with these discs.

[music plays in the background]

Griffin: And they're all arrayed in orbit around this central disc in rings around it, and there's ten other of these discs in the room, and they're all different colors. Bright reds, and oranges, and greens, and blues, and whites, and they're all displaying a wide array of scenes of impossible things. You look into this red disc—

Travis: Like what?

Griffin: Well, you see a world that looks kind of like the world, if the world was made completely out of lava and fire. And then there's a blue disc where it's just a— a giant ocean, a world made of water and ice. Um, you see a world where millions, millions of these living lights just float weightlessly through the air, and worlds where oceans of magical energy wash up on shores made of these brilliant white sands. You see these things—

Justin: There's a name for that one. It's Ibiza.

Griffin: [laughs] You see—

Travis: You see a world where everything's the same, except everybody's got mustaches.

Griffin: You see— well, no, that's not one of them. But you see all of these, like, incredible worlds, and you don't know where to look. And Lucas says—

Justin: Uh, I would. I would look at Buffett planet back there a couple planets back.

Clint: Yeah!

Griffin: [laughs] Uh, Lucas says...

Lucas: Taako, to answer your question, this is the next thing that's bigger. This is our planar system. This— this— this disc that you see, that represents our observable universe. This is actually our plane. This is the prime material plane. We're smack dab in the middle of the planar universe, and each of these are different planes of existence, um, and they each produce unique energies, and they share these energies. They— they inform the material and physical makeup of— of— of each other. Uh, some connections— they each have connections. Some are more tenuous than others. But these make up the real existence, uh, each plane having its own sort of energies and rules. It's— this! This is what's bigger than— than the universe.

Magnus: Okay.

Taako: Okay.

Merle: And then what's bigger than that?

Magnus: Good question.

Taako: Thank you. Good question, I think.

Lucas: Well, let's start with this. There are six building block planes, right? There's— and these—

Griffin: He points to these discs that are on, like, the outermost ring away from the prime material plane disc that's in the middle of the room. And he goes...

Lucas: So, you got your elemental planes: fire, air, water, earth, uh, and then you got the planes of light—

Magnus: Heart.

Lucas: —light and shadow. [laughs quietly] No. Taako, certainly you— you probably know a little bit about these during your studies at Wizard U.

Taako: Yeah, I've gotten balls deep in some of those other planes.

Magnus: I think he's got a secret room in one of 'em.

Taako: When I use Blink, I get all up in those other planes.

Lucas: Yeah, that's right. When you use Blink, you end up in the ethereal plane, and you see—

Taako: Yeah, you didn't list that amongst your planes.

Lucas: Well, there's more. I'm gonna run through 'em.

Griffin: But if you actually look, you can actually see underneath the disc that you were looking at first where you were, like, looking at your own universe, you actually another disc underneath it. And he's like...

Lucas: That one is the ethereal plane. And it's kind of like a filter. It's, like, where the raw energies of the rest of the planes are kind of filtered into the prime material plane, so it's not just, like, everything's on fire or drowning all the time. So, yeah. Anyway, that's the seventh. And then we got, uh, the planes that sort of inform the energies of life itself, like the plane of magic, where magic energy is born. And then on the opposite end of that, you see— there's the plane of thought, which is the source of logic and reason and emotion.

Magnus: So the boring one.

Griffin: Well, as you actually look into the plane of thought, which is this deep green emerald mirror, you see similar scenes to the things that you saw in the compact, Magnus.

Magnus: [gasps]

Griffin: You see, like— you see a large, uh, wide gray road with a bunch of vehicles just sort of sitting stuck on it.

Magnus: Metal dragons!

Griffin: [laughs] You see— yeah. You see scenes like you saw in the— in the— in the compact.

Magnus: So this plane is where all the creativity and energy for this world comes from, the creation?

Lucas: Uh, yeah! It's, like, where the— it's where the home of, like, logical thought is. That's why I call it the plane of thought.

Magnus: Show me Donald Trump.

Justin: [snorts]

Griffin: [laughs] He says...

Lucas: I don't know quite who that is. Although the fact that you guys make so many references to this world makes me think you have to have spent some time there at some point.

Magnus: I have a little house there.

Lucas: I can't tell if you're joking, which is, like, kind of par for the course. Anyway, there's the other higher planes. There's the celestial plane, which is inhabited by the beings that I guess some people would consider deities.

Merle: Then there's the meat plane... the vegetable plane, the dairy plane... the breads plane?

Taako: Soluble fats plane.

Merle: Yeah.

Lucas: Yeah, but you only want to visit that one sometimes!

Magnus: The plain plane that's not very exciting.

Lucas: I've been working on an updated version—

Taako: There's a plane plane that's just full of planes. [wheezes]

Magnus: Uh-huh?

Merle: And the plain plane plane with all these plain planes in the plane.

Taako: Yeah.

Magnus: Yeah, you gotta be careful with that one.

Lucas: I've been working on a new version of the food pyramid to kind of educate the people of Faerun, but it's kind of like a cube, and it's for people who like to party.

Taako: [laughs] That sounds— hey, listen. I gotta be honest. From me to you, that sounds dope as hell.

Lucas: Uh, and then the prime material plane, the ethereal plane, you know about those. And then, uh, the astral plane, um... which is where our unconscious forms or our souls retire when we die, here in the prime material plane.

Magnus: Is Merle's arm there?

Merle: Wait a minute! Wait a minute. That goes completely against my theology.

Taako: Yeah.

Lucas: Well...

Merle: Is there a Pan plane?

Taako: Please respect his beliefs.

Lucas: Well, Pan probably kicks it in the celestial plane.

Griffin: Um, you actually— as he was talking about the astral plane, you realize that there are on— there are— he's talked about 12 different planes, but there's only 11 in the room. And he goes... he says...

Lucas: Oh. The astral plane— so, anyway, let me explain. Crystals, certain types of gemstones, if grown into a perfect circle— they can't be cut. If you cut it, it doesn't work. They have to be naturally grown in a perfect circle— resonate with the different planes of existence, with the 12 planes that form our planar system, right?

Merle: Well, everybody knows that.

Magnus: Yeah, that's 101.

Lucas: Literally nobody outside of this family knows that—

Magnus: I knew it.

Lucas: —until now— until now.

Merle: Well, I knew. I knew it.

Magnus: Yeah, we knew it. We talked about it yesterday. Do you remember that, Merle?

Merle: Yeah, oh, [stammering]—

Magnus: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Merle: When I wasn't speaking to you.

Magnus: Yeah, exactly.

Taako: Listen, little man. These guys are just being braggadocios. Don't let 'em rattle your chain. Go ahead with what you were saying. I'm loving all of this. Lay it down.

Clint: [laughs]

Lucas: So, any—[sighs] anyway, uh... my great-grandfather found a crystal just like that. And it was a perfect emerald disc that had just grown like that naturally

in nature, and through that he was able to see into the plane of thought. And using that, we may have gained a little bit of inspiration for, uh... for our inventions, here in the prime material plane. Kind of cheating, I guess, if you want to call it that.

Magnus: Lucas?

Lucas: Yeah?

Magnus: Is it possible that through tampering and connecting with these planes that you might have gotten the attention... of something that we shouldn't have?

Lucas: Definitely not.

Merle: [laughs loudly]

Magnus: Mm, that really... that kind of feels like what's going on here.

Griffin: Can you guys give me a minute? Sorry, one sec.

[beep and clattering]

Justin: He's gonna go write— he's gotta go write a new story 'cause Travis guessed the story.

Travis: He's like, "Uhh— no, no, no! Give me 20 minutes."

Justin: It's like when the producers of *Lost* pretended that it wasn't about, um, Purgatory the whole time.

Clint: It was?

Justin: It was.

Travis: It was.

Clint: It was about Purgatory?

Justin: It was about Purgatory the whole time.

Clint: Oh! I thought it was inside, like, a snow globe thing and it was like—

Justin: No.

Travis: Here's the thing, Dad. The tricky thing is, even when it wasn't about Purgatory, it was, 'cause that's how Purgatory works.

Clint: Oh. [sighs]

Griffin: Hey, I'm back, sorry.

Lucas: Yeah, my family— we've sort of led the industrial revolution in this world for generations now because of that mirror. And so because of that, um, my mother, Maurine, started to sort of come up with this idea of we could create other mirrors and other worlds. But it's really hard to do, you know? Because you can't— you can't— like I said, you can't cut these gemstones to create these mirrors.

Magnus: Well, if it was easy everyone would do it, you know what I mean?

Lucas: That's— exactly. Everybody would have their own extraplanar sort of telescope situation.

Griffin: Killian's actually getting a little short-tempered about this. She's like...

Killian: Can you please just, like, explain what this has— why you used the Grand Relic to do all this stuff? 'Cause things are— I don't— this is cool and everything—

Magnus: He was trying to grow another mirror for the ethereal plane.

Killian: Okay, yeah, that's what I assumed, I was just kind of hoping he'd get to the point a little bit.

Magnus: Read between the lines, Killian!

Griffin: He says...

Lucas: Okay. So—

Merle: So she's not seeing anybody. Your mom—

Taako: Nice try.

Merle: —is not, like, dating or anything, right?

Lucas: Yikes. Okay. No, she's—

Merle: Maybe carbon dating.

Taako: Is she a plant?

Griffin: [laughs]

Taako: That's his thing.

Lucas: I mean, mother was very—

Taako: [simultaneously] [flatly] He nasty.

Lucas: —very much a botanist. She sort of helped—

Merle: Mm-hmm.

Magnus: Did your mom die, or did she, like, disappear one day?

Lucas: She... passed away, unfortunately.

Merle: Passed away into another plane...?

Lucas: Well, yeah! Into the astral plane, 'cause that's where you go. Um, anyway, [stammering]— I used the philosopher's stone to transmogrify just pools of water into these different mirrors. Um, and it took me some experimenting. I had to figure out, like, which gemstones correspond to which planes. Man, I made

so many gemstones. But yeah, the result is I created these 12. I unfortunately—
I was working—

Griffin: He flicks another switch on the lectern, and the discs start to sort of rotate around the central one, like they're moving like planets in orbit. He's like...

Lucas: I was trying to get their trajectories right, and I accidentally broke the astral mirror, so I gotta grow a new one of those, although—

Magnus: Smooth move, X-Lax!

Lucas: Yeah, I very much doubt that you guys are gonna let me keep playing around with that philosopher's stone, so I guess I'm just gonna have to cut my losses, there.

Magnus: Well, but then again, I get it, when you want the complete set and you don't have it and you're, like, one away, you know?

Lucas: Yeah, exactly. So—[sighs] anyway—

Merle: It's like Nascar plates.

Magnus: Yeah. I mean, I'm a collector too, man. I get it.

Lucas: This is what I was working on. This is what I was using the philosopher's stone for, is to create the cosmoscope, which I can use to see the whole planar system. And Merle, you asked a very important question earlier that I would also like to circle back to.

Merle: Ah, yes. What was it?

Lucas: [sighs] You've already forgotten. Of course that qu—

[pause]

Griffin: He freezes, and time kind of—

Travis: Well, you son of a—

Clint: [wheezes]

Griffin: Time kind of freezes. [laughs quietly] Um, and—

Travis: You're in complete control of this world, Griffin! You made that happen! Don't act like that was out of your control!

Griffin: Yeah, time has kind of frozen here. The orbit of these discs has stopped, and Killian and Carey and Noelle have just kind of stopped. And from behind you, you hear a voice ask that question, and it asks...

Voice: [distorted hissing] What's bigger than this?"

Travis: Oh yeah.

Clint: Oh, God. If he's got a raincoat on, I am not turning around.

Justin: [snorts]

Travis: Oh, like a flasher and his penis.

Clint: Thank you, Travis.

Travis: I just wanted to make sure that all of our listeners, especially the younger ones, really understand what Dad was implying.

Griffin: Yeah, you know, the children who listen to the podcast. Daddy.

Clint: [laughs loudly] Of course.

Griffin: Children who are gonna be very confused the first time they see an onion. Like, "I don't know what these are supposed to be for."

Justin: You shouldn't let your kids listen to this show. Griffin literally named a character King F-[censor bleep] D-[censor bleep]. And it's like, where does that even fight in, you know? Well, I mean, I know where it fits in. But... listen. I didn't mean that in the way that you thought I meant it.

[music plays]

Griffin: Hey, everybody! This is Griffin McElroy, your dungeon master, your best friend, your... dog... whisperer. Thank you for listening to episode 35 of *The Adventure Zone*, what turned to be an extremely exposition-heavy episode. Sometimes that just happens. We're trying to build bridges, trying to set some groundwork.

Got a lot to talk about in this week's commercial break, so let's get right into it.

[ad break]

Griffin: Got a personal message here. If you want to get a personal message for yourself or your small business on the show, just go to Maximumfun.org/jumbotron. It's the easiest thing in the world. You can find all the instructions on how to do that there.

This is one is for Michael Burcarski, and it's from Clara, AKA her Excellency Ladypants. Clara, AKA her Ex—[laughs quietly] her Most Excellent Ladypants says:

"I just spent too much money—"

Well... I won't be the... eh, you know... to each their own.

"I just spent too much money to be the first one to make a McElroy say something on our behalf. I think I win at friendship. And I guess friendship is now a sport about being the fastest to pay a podcaster to say things. Also, going to super fancy Japanese restaurants. We should do that again. PS: I win."

Um... yeah, I mean, I'm not crazy about being, I guess, the scoreboard for this bold new sport, but I like the direction that it's going in, and I would love to be a sponsor of your "make podcasters say shit" team.

And one final message. This one is actually a call to action to go give a read to a new book. It's called *The Cogs of Alusura*. That's A-L-U-S-U-R-A. By Sidney Lotto, which is available now on the Amazon Kindle for \$3.99! Three bucks 99. What is this book, you ask? Well, I'm about to tell you. Calm down.

Uh, *The Cogs of Alusura* is a steampunk adventure following the exploits of Eleanor and Simon Braider as they hunt down their former teammates who murdered their king, they discover a dark secret that will shake their country to the core and push their very marriage to the brink. Along the way, they must fend off hordes of ferocious elemental fungus monsters that prowl the night and feed on those who leave the safety of Alusura's walled cities. Just search Terra Finite, T-E-R-R-A F-I-N-I-T-E, for links to the Facebook page.

This is good— if you listened to our bonus episode, which is very steampunky, you got that flavor in your mouth and you want more of it, go here. Go check out *The Cogs of Alusura*! Give me one second. I'm going to just jot down... ferocious elemental fungus monsters... to steal that for a later episode of *The Adventure Zone*. Thank you very much.

So! This is very, very important. Starting next week, the Max Fun Drive, the 2016 Max Fun Drive kicks off, and it runs for two weeks. If you listened to the show last year you know all about the Max Fun Drive. We are a part of the Maximum Fun Network. We are happy to be a part of it. Us, with *My Brother, My Brother, and Me* and the other shows that we've been doing, we've been on the network for forever now, and we absolutely love it. It is a donor funded, supported network. Every year, we do bonus content, we do special episodes, we have exclusive gifts for new and upgrading members who donate to help support us and keep us going, and allow us to spend more and more time and resources on doing these podcasts, and that starts next week, next Monday on March 14th, and it runs for two weeks.

So, if you are a donor to the Maximum Fun Network, or you become a donor during this drive, you will get access to all of the bonus content that *The Adventure Zone* has ever done, including all the bonus content that all the shows on the Maximum Fun Network has ever done. It is tons and tons and tons of content, and that includes a new bonus episode that we did special just for this Max Fun Drive, where Travis was the dungeon master of a whole new game, whole new world, new characters, new everything. Uh, it's like an hour and 40 minutes. It was really, really fun. We're trying to figure out a way to do more of it, as an incentive for the Max Fun Drive, that we would give out to donors. But yeah, it was really, really fun. And if you want to hear it, you can become a donor, and you can help support us, and you'll get all kinds of pledge gifts.

So, that's sort of our incentive for donating. During the pledge drive, we are going to put out an episode for two concurrent weeks, so we are actually not skipping next week. We're gonna have a new episode next week. However, we are actually going to do *The The Adventure Zone Zone*, a dumb, dumb, bad, bad joke that we joked about, where we would do sort of a Talking Dead style discussion of the game and the story, and we would answer questions and sort of address fan theories and all that stuff.

So to sort of bridge the gap between weeks, or between biweeks, I guess, between fortnights, we are gonna have an episode up next Thursday where we to *The The Adventure Zone Zone*. If you have a question that you want to get on the show that you want us to talk about about D&D, or about this campaign, just go ahead and send that to adventurezonecast@gmail.com, and we'll probably end up talking about it.

I have no idea how this episode's gonna go, but we definitely wanted to do something for concurrent weeks, and so we are doing *The The Adventure Zone Zone*, and I'm really excited about it. And of course we'll have more details on how you can help support us and support the network next week, during the Max Fun Drive.

I want to thank everybody who's been tweeting about the show using the #TheZoneCast hashtag. If you tweet using that hashtag, you might end up as a character on this show, like the many characters that have ended up in this arc. There were no new ones in this episode, if I can remember correctly. But yeah, we probably got a couple more episodes in this arc, and then we're gonna move on to the next one, and that's always a big opportunity to get a bunch of new characters named after you. So go ahead and tweet about the show using the #TheZoneCast hashtag. We really appreciate you spreading the word, too.

This has gone on for roughly forever. Our next episode will be *The The Adventure Zone Zone*, and that's gonna go up next Thursday, March 17th, and then we'll have another episode up, back to more regular programming on Thursday, March 24th. So hey, see you next week.

[music plays]

Griffin: I'll do a recap of what happened before we started talking about dicks. You hear a voice from behind you say...

Voice: [distorted hissing] What's bigger than this?

Travis: I turn around. No, Magnus turns around! Which one am I?

Clint: [wheezes]

Griffin: Um... as you—

Travis: I'm lost within myself!

Justin: I don't know! Nobody does character voices except me, so—

Magnus: [gruff voice] I turn around!

Justin: That's fucking— that doesn't make any sense! Why would he say that out loud?

Griffin: [laughs]

Merle: [high-pitched voice] I turn around too!

Taako: I'm turning around. We're all turning.

Griffin: Um, as you all say that you're turning around as you turn around—

Justin: Out loud.

Griffin: Um, out loud, you see a floating figure in a bright red robe.

Travis: I attack it.

Justin: Yeah, I blast it with Magic Missile.

Griffin: Okay. Okay. Uh... Magnus, roll your dice.

Travis: That's 15 plus 7, 22!

Griffin: Okay. He is incorporeal, and your axe passes right through him, and—

Travis: I attack again! I get two attacks per turn.

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: 14 plus 7, 21!

Griffin: Your second attack hits! And it's a crit—

Travis: What?!

Griffin: No, it doesn't. He's incorporeal.

Travis: Fuck.

Griffin: It passes right through him. And Taako, you wanna Magic—

Travis: But does he seem miffed?

Griffin: Um... nope. Taako, you're Magic Missile-ing him?

Justin: No, I— well, I mean, it depends. Did I know he was incorporeal before, or did a watch him, Travis, attack first? If I watched Magnus attack first, I probably didn't blast it with Magic Missile.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, then as—

Travis: I step— Magnus steps into the place where he is and, like, kind of blends in with him and goes—

Magnus: [mockingly] Oh ho ho, I'm in a red robe!

Griffin: He phases— he phases—

Justin: Okay, now I do use Magic Missile.

Griffin: [laughs] He phases sort of upwards so he's floating above you.

Figure: Okay, excuse me.

Magnus: Uh-huh?

Figure: [sighs] 'Sup?

Griffin: No. Um...

Travis: [laughs] ASL!

Justin: ASMR!

Figure: I spoke to you about the hunger of all living things.

Magnus: When?

Merle: What? When was that?

Griffin: The last time he fuckin' saw you! Remember a thing! Remember anything!

Travis: No, that was in character, Griffin. That was Magnus.

Griffin: Okay.

Figure: The last one, in the office building.

Magnus: In the— oh! Oh, with Bain-Bain, with Captain Captain Bain.

Figure: Yeah, he tried to poison you.

Magnus: He tried to poison us?!

Figure: Okay. So a lot of things went unnoticed.

Merle: I'm not remembering. That one is by me.

Figure: Well, take it on credit! I warned you about the hunger of all living things!

Magnus: Mm-hmm?

Griffin: He motions to all of the different planes, and he says...

Figure: This is the power it seeks. The power of creation itself!

Magnus: Got it.

Figure: A billion billion lives have been devoured by this hunger, in pursuit of its power!

Magnus: A billion billion?!

Figure: Yes.

Magnus: That's a lot!

Figure: It sure is.

Griffin: Um, he waves a hand, and... there's a crate sort of in the back of the room by the lectern. It actually kind of looks kind of like a trash bin. And as he motions towards it, it tips over, and some small gemstone discs crash out of it. Um, and one of them you can see is a, uh— it's a very dark disc, kind of like black, but you can see definite, like, flecks of red and green and blue color in this black disc. And this disc begins to shake, and this horrifying black cloud sort of emerges out of it, and it slowly creeps towards these discs that are floating in the room, and one by one just consumes them. And as each disc is consumed you hear, like, screaming voices coming from it.

Magnus: Whoa, hey!

Griffin: It is an absolutely terrifying scene. Um, and it consumes the prime material plane, and you feel kind of sick watching it. And after it has consumed all

of them, this red robed figure snaps his fingers [snaps] and the cloud disappears. This vision kind of leaves you.

Um, and he says...

Figure: There's no more running. There's no escape. This world is life's last chance.

Magnus: Who are you?

Figure: It's not time for me to tell you that yet.

Magnus: What time will you tell me?

Figure: In, like, ten episodes.

Magnus: Okay. I'll put it in my calendar.

Griffin: He says...

Figure: You three are the onl— Taako! Taako, where did you find that umbrella!

Taako: Yeah, I took it off this, uhh... I took it off this dead thug with a red robe. This dead guy.

Figure: You found—

Taako: He had a red robe.

Figure: [breathing heavily]

Magnus: He was totes dead.

Taako: He was dead, though. I didn't—

Merle: You just killed the—

Taako: Listen, I didn't kill him.

Merle: [simultaneously] Did we kill him, or... ?

Taako: No, no, no, no, no.

Merle: Oh, okay.

Magnus: He was long dead.

Taako: We found him that way, no problem. No problem here.

Griffin: He's starting to... shudder? There's red electricity kind of crackling through him. Um... and he says...

Figure: [breathing heavily] Wh— what? Wait, you—[shouting] you found her?!

Magnus: I'm gonna step a little bit away [through laughter] from Taako.

Merle: It was a lady?

Griffin: As he shouts that, he bursts into flames and disappears.

Taako: Dag.

Clint: Wow!

Griffin: And the lights come back on, and Lucas says...

Lucas: What's bigger than this?

Travis: And we turn around and he's got his penis out.

Clint: [wheezes]

Taako: Listen, we've been through a few things just now. Time? It doesn't matter. Go ahead with your little presentation. I think we're all getting a big kick out of it.

Clint: [wheezes]

Griffin: Um—

Taako: Hey, by the way, I meant to tell you. This was a great PowerPoint.

Lucas: Thanks.

Taako: A lot of people forget to give props for PowerPoints.

Lucas: Thanks!

Magnus: It's not as easy as it looks.

Lucas: Thanks, I—

Taako: Not as easy as it looks. There's a lot of aesthetic decisions.

Lucas: Yeah, I worked—I worked—

Magnus: I like the font.

Lucas: I worked really hard on it. There's some good clipart. Li—free—free—fair use clipart.

Travis: Hey, it's me, Clippy! I see you're trying to explain the planar system! Might I recommend... Comic Sans?

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Noelle, uh— Noelle has her little satellite dish scanner thing out. Um, and it's glowing green. And she says...

Noelle: Well, that's weird. Um...

Travis: "I sense green."

Noelle: I had my scanner on from before when I scanned that crystal monster, and it's... I'm picking up some— it says it's... one of you guys isn't a lich, are you?

Magnus: A what?

Noelle: A lich?

Magnus: I'm not.

Taako: No, not to my knowledge.

Merle: No. But— but I have a couple of liches that are friends.

Magnus: Yeah, oh yeah. I've got lich friends.

Merle: They're cool. They're really— they're good people.

Noelle: I guess my scanner's on the bli— on the fritz.

Magnus: You're sensing a lich?

Noelle: Yeah, I picked up on a lich being in the room.

Merle: Like a lech?

Magnus: [simultaneously] And a lich— a lich—

Merle: Like, she means a lecher? I don't...

Magnus: A lich is like a undead... like a...

Griffin: You can make an arcana check and I can tell you exactly what a lich is.

Travis: Alright, yeah, rolling. I forgot about that. Okay, that's not gonna do it. That's a 4... plus 0.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: 4.

Griffin: Yeah. You have—

Clint: Alright, I'll make one. With my plant arm.

[dice roll]

15!

Justin: Nice.

Griffin: Um, yeah. Merle, between your sort of backgrounds in religion and arcana, you know that a lich is sort of this embodiment of a very powerful magic user who sort of, uh, combines their essence, their life energy, with their magical energy, and sort of transcends their physical form. Technically it's like an undead— imagine like a ghost made out of magic. Um, but that a magic user has to kind of willfully do that, um, although—

Clint: Like David Blaine.

Griffin: Kind of, yeah. Except what's interesting is that most liches, uh— when a magic user does this it's, like, way too ambitious a thing, and they can't really control that energy, and most liches are just, like, insane. Like, they have no control over themselves. They're just, like, hyper violent, hyper evil embodiments of, like, raw magical energy. They are not usually well-spoken beings. And Lucas also says...

Lucas: Well, that's weird. Did one of you guys knock over my rubbish bin? I had some things here that I was, uh— these were some mirrors that, like, didn't end up being anything. Did one of you guys, like, come over and kick this over?

Taako: No.

Magnus: No...

Merle: No!

Magnus: That does sound like us, but no.

Taako: That sounds like something we would do if we thought there was something—

Merle: We really— and you know, when we're staying at somebody's place we take really good care of it, so.

Taako: I don't...

Merle: So, yeah. No, mm-mm. Not us.

Justin: This is gonna be my final plea for everybody on the show to use character voices. I would do anything to make it more sonically pleasurable for our listeners.

Clint: Let me try it again.

Merle: No, it wasn't me! No, I didn't do it. Ah, nope! We're very careful about places.

Travis: [overly dramatic voice] It was me!

Justin: I can't. Now, I'm not gonna play with you, little kid.

Griffin: You guys could, like, essentially swap right now if you wanted to.

Justin: Oh, that's easy. I'll just talk like I always talk, 'cause that means I don't have to do a character voice, like Travis.

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: Or Dad, ever.

Griffin: Um, so the— the mirror on the floor that you actually— the black mirror that you saw that cloud come out of, from where you're standing, fairly fair away, you actually see some, like, faint, white, moving shapes in it.

Travis: I— I get closer to it.

Griffin: Okay, yeah. Standing over it, you can actually see what look like white eyes looking back at you through this black mirror. And, uh, as they sort of make eye contact with you, these eyes quickly shut and disappear.

Travis: I pick it up.

Griffin: Okay.

Magnus: Can I— hey, Lucas?

Lucas: Yeah, what's up?

Magnus: Can I, uh... have this?

Lucas: You know, I don't know— yeah, I mean, I guess it's... kind of valu— I mean, it's ethically unsound. You're not gonna, like— you're gonna sell it, right?

Magnus: Hmm... no!

Lucas: So, that one's made of— let me see. That one's made out of black opal, which is— I mean, it's inert. It doesn't resonate with any planes. Um... but yeah. I guess if you want to keep it you can hold on to that, if you want.

Magnus: I do.

Clint: And I chop his arm off.

Justin: [snorts]

Griffin: That's just gonna be a— just when you least expect it.

Clint: [laughs] Well, you know, I don't want his arm to turn into a black disc with little white flecks in it.

Travis: Nah, it's cool, it's cool. Nothing's happening.

Griffin: Yeah, no, it's not— all these things, all these crystals and stuff aren't— aren't spreading around. This room is not, also— I should've mentioned earlier, it's not crystallized with the pink tourmaline. He says, uh...

Lucas: Okay. Anyway, yeah, that's what I've been up to. So, uh... let's—let's—

Magnus: The spir— uh, sorry. Lucas, real quick. One second. The spirit that we encountered talked about seeing beyond the plane—

Lucas: This what that you what?!

Magnus: What?

Merle: Oh, nice one. Good one. Smooth!

Magnus: Yeah, there was a th— yeah, because we know so much. There was a spirit, a thing that, like, inhabited golems that we've been fighting, and that kind of stuff, that sang to us about seeing beyond the plane, and their crystal kingdom, and it really feels like this planar stuff might have something to do with that.

Merle: [gruff voice] We're sorry we didn't tell you before, Lucas.

Griffin: [laughs quietly]

Magnus: Are you Richard Nixon?

Clint: Was that okay? Was that good?

Griffin: Yeah, it's fun. I'm gonna—

Justin: You can't just do any voice!

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: You just told me to do a character voice!

Justin: You sounded like fuckin' Rich Little plays Dungeons & Dragons!

Clint: "Mommy."

Justin: You don't want a— you don't want a fuckin' tour of American history!

Clint: Well—! Make up your—

Justin: Just do one character voice and do it!

Clint: Well, you're doing a different character voice! Your—

Justin: Because my throat hurts! And again, that's two, to your zero voices!

Travis: Well, you're using up all the character voice.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Um... he says— he has no idea what you're talking about.

Lucas: What songs? What are you talking about?

Magnus: It goes like "[mumble-singing] Here in my crystal kingdom... "

Taako: [humming]

Magnus: "[singing] There is a castle on a cloud."

Taako: [simultaneously] "[singing] There is a castle on a cloud."

Clint: [wheezes]

Griffin: Um, I have been accused—

Magnus: "[singing poorly] I like to go there in my dreams. Here in my crystal kingdom."

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: That was Magnus singing in character voice.

Griffin: Yeah. I mean, the song is basically a mashup of that and the forest music from the *Super Mario RPG*, I've realized now in post.

Justin: Perfect.

Lucas: We should probably get a move on? 'Cause I think we're down to about 50 minutes now, and yeah, we should really get scootin'.

Taako: Let's go.

Magnus: Okay. Quick 20 minute nap.

Merle: [nasally voice] Hey, man. That'll be groovy. Let's go.

Justin: Okay, let's go, Sammy Davis Jr.

Clint: [laughs loudly]

Justin: As a gnome. As a dwarf.

Travis: Wait, so am I Jerry Lewis? Hold on. We got Dean Martin. We've got Sammy Davis Jr.

Justin: I'm out the door, so I can't hear this.

Griffin: So, back in the, uh— back in the sort of central hub of this floor, Lucas walks over to the central pillar, and it's got one of those, like, red hand lock things on it, and he puts his hand on it, and it makes a bing-bong noise. And you hear... uh, you hear an elevator sort of moving up to come to your level. And he says...

Lucas: Okay. Are you guys ready to go down to the lower level? You guys ready to stop this thing?

Magnus: What— what is down there?

Lucas: One of my robots just attacked me. I don't know. I think we can stop him, but— I think—

Magnus: Oh, cool, robots. Let's do it.

Lucas: Yeah. I believe in the power of our friendship and teamwork that we can all do it!

Merle: Ehh, well, maybe.

Taako: Hell yeah.

Griffin: And Carey and Killian actually draw their weapons. And they say... and Killian says...

Killian: Lucas, the only place that you're going is the pokey.

Magnus: Timing!

Killian: We received orders— we had to get— we had to figure out what he was doing— do you not remember our orders from the Director?

Magnus: No, I do! But you couldn't wait until after he helped us stop the thing?

Killian: I'm not gonna let him get anywhere near the philosopher's stone! I don't trust this dude as far as I can—

Magnus: So what are you gonna do with him right now?

Killian: I'm going to take him and we're gonna extract him, and we're gonna fuckin' lock him in prison, probably forever!

Magnus: And you're just gonna leave us here to deal with this shit?

Killian: You guys can handle it, you're Reclaimers! We can't do it! If we get too close to the thing, it might end up tempting us! It'll *definitely* tempt this motherfucker. We're taking this guy to jail!

[all laugh]

Magnus: I appreciate less help. Thank you so much, Killian.

Griffin: Killian is getting kind of aggro, and Carey's, like, trying to sort of—

Carey: Okay, guys, listen. We gotta take him away! We gotta take him out.

Griffin: And Lucas is like...

Lucas: Merle. Merle, Magnus, Taako, come on. Help me out. I can help you guys stop this thing.

Magnus: Alright. Here's the deal. Killian, Carey? Take him back to the lab, lock yourselves in where we just were. Lock yourselves in. Leave his necklace on him. If he helps us get through this through communication— Lucas, if you help, I will plead your case. I will say that you were cooperative, that you went easily—

Killian: We don't have, like, a court! We don't— this guy used a grand relic, and he knew not to do that. That's it!

Justin: Are you saying this out loud, or are you saying this, like, in character.

Griffin: Yeah, that's Killian's voice. I know it's confusing.

Justin: Okay, okay.

Taako: Hey, uh, well, you know, good plan Magnus, but suddenly she just blew up your spot. Way to play along, Killian. Really smooth.

Magnus: Yeah.

Killian: I don't tell you—

Magnus: Super cool.

Killian: Hey, I don't tell you guys how to recover relics. You don't tell me how to regulate!

Magnus: You actually have done that before.

Taako: You've said many times how to precisely—

Merle: [simultaneously] I can remember six times.

Killian: The first time we met, yes, I explicitly told you how to recover relics, but you weren't on the— on the payroll, then. Listen, you guys are good at this. We're good at *this*.

Griffin: She points at Lucas.

Killian: This is what we're good at, which is getting creeps away from destroying the fuckin' world.

Magnus: You would be locked in a fucking frozen room if we hadn't come along, so don't sit there—

Killian: [simultaneously] That's— we weren't—

Magnus: —and lecture me on how you know how to do your job. We're gonna get through this together! You got it?

Griffin: As you're, like, arguing with Killian, um, you notice that this pool of... it looks like blue? There's, like, a pool of the color blue is spreading out of the central elevator in this room. And then very quickly, like a— like a sound wave it, like, roars through the entirety of the room, and you feel like the labs shake a little bit, um, and you actually feel this wave of blue ripple underneath your feet, and then suddenly the whole room is blue sapphire.

Travis: [sings "Blue" by Eiffel 65] Abodee babodi, babodee, babodi, babodee babodi—

Griffin: And then very quickly before you can sing any more of the song, there's another roar and another wave, and the room is bright green emerald. And then another wave, and it is just shimmering orange topaz. And the room just keeps, like, fluctuating quickly between these different colors, and it kind of feels like there's an earthquake happening as the entire lab transmutes between these

different gemstones. And with each one there's, like, another deafening roar, and finally it all kind of settles on... we'll say amethyst.

Justin: What color's that?

Griffin: Purple.

Clint: Purple.

Griffin: Um, and it sort of—

Justin: Amber? Did you mean to say amber?

Griffin: Amber, yeah. It stops at amber. No, that's not good. We'll do amethyst.

Clint: That makes us look all washed out.

Justin: Yeah.

Travis: What color is the energy?

Griffin: Uh, I mean, the energy is 3/11ths amber, but... as—as—

Justin: Enough of this chin wagging.

Griffin: It kind of puts an end to the argument that you were having.

Magnus: Killian, I'm sorry. I don't even know what we were arguing about. Fwends?

Killian: Yeah. So you're gonna let us take this guy back and you're not gonna raise a big s—

Magnus: Oh, no, that's what we were arguing about. Thank you. I completely forgot.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Lucas says...

Lucas: Gang, listen. [pause] We don't have time for this.

Griffin: And I need all of you guys to make constitution saving throws.

[multiple dice rolls]

Travis: Not great. Yeah, mine is—

Clint: Holy!

Travis: —not great there, Ditto.

Clint: Um...

Travis: I had a 4 plus... 3? 7.

Clint: I rolled 18 plus 2, is 20.

Travis: Dammit!

Justin: Nice! 1 plus dick for me.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: As soon as Lucas says that, you all feel... the panels that are built into the wrists of your null suits that Lucas designed, you feel them very quickly heat up, and then you feel something very bad, as these purple volts of electricity just kind of, uh, surround you, emanating from that panel, and paralyzing you.

Travis: Goddammit.

Griffin: And Taako, you just fall to the floor. You are not moving. You have been completely paralyzed as you fall to the floor. Magnus, you're, uh... your, like, head is good and your hands are good, but your arms and legs are both paralyzed. And Merle, just your legs are paralyzed as you fall to the floor. But all of you go down. Carey and Killian go down like a sack of bricks. Um... and right as soon as that

happens, the elevator doors open, Lucas runs in, and as the doors shut behind him, he says...

Lucas: I am so, so sorry.

Magnus: Well, you know what, you dick hole? Like, I was fighting for you, you ass!

Griffin: Uh, and he is gone. And Killian says...

Killian: I am going to absolutely murder that man.

Magnus: Yeah... yeah, yeah.

Killian: I am absolutely going to kill him. Oh my god, I'm gonna kill him so good!

Magnus: Yeah. You and me both, Killian.

Merle: Great. Now I can't feel my legs. I'm down to one arm. One freakin' arm. Great.

Griffin: Both of your arms are actually pretty good. Um—

Travis: And you can throw one of them off and still control it! You're the most—

Clint: One of 'em's a weed.

Taako: [reedy voice] Hey, guys. Hey, guys. Check it out. [indistinctly] Oil can.

Clint: [wheezes]

Taako: Right? [indistinctly] Oil can. Right?

Griffin: Um...

Taako: Oil can. Like Tin— the Tin Man.

Merle: I think he's saying oil can!

Taako: Oil can.

Magnus: I thought he was saying [unintelligible mumbling].

Griffin: You hear crinkle tinkles.

Travis: [gasps] Fuck.

[music plays in the background]

Griffin: Uh, they're coming from the floor, you can tell, now that you're all on floor. You can tell that it's kind of reverberating through the crystal that's taken over this room. And yeah, the crinkle tinkles are building, and they're getting way louder, and you hear the beginning of a song start to play, and then through the very crystal that has encased this room, you hear another verse of the song.

Crystal: [singing] Saved from the darkness by my child, locked in a cage of glass and steel, but my true love remains in exile, beckoning me to break the seal into this crystal kingdom.

Griffin: I'm actually gonna say the lyrics out loud, 'cause I think some folks have trouble understanding Vocaloids. Most people, like, don't have an ear—

Travis: I don't speak Vocaloid.

Griffin: Yeah, they don't have an ear for it. Um, the voice just sang: "Saved from the darkness by my child, locked in a cage of glass and steel, but my true love remains in exile, beckoning me to break the seal into this crystal kingdom."

Clint: Can I ask a question?

Griffin: Yep.

Clint: Is anybody writing this shit down?

Travis: Yeah.

Clint: Okay. Good.

Travis: I mean, not me, but I assume somebody is.

Clint: Heh, perhaps they could send it to us!

Griffin: And as that verse wraps up, another rift opens in space. Merle, you're probably the only person that can really, like, get up to see this happen. Um, and out of that rift that white fire comes out of it, and those loose pieces of crystal shards that the golem kind of abandoned when it left this room start to self-form again. Um, Merle, you see your arm, your poor, poor crystallized arm sort of float into this mass, and come together to form another crystal golem. This one is actually way more, like, slender than the other one's you've seen. It looks weirdly, like, bony, almost like a crystal skeleton with these much longer, much sharper looking appendages. And this menacing apparition comes and stands over the five of you, all laying paralyzed on the ground, and through all of your Stones of Farspeech you hear a voice say...

Voice: [British accent] Well, this is hardly fair.

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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